

Sovereign Grace

Sunday, May 10th, 1987

Romans 8:28-31

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

It is very important that you listen carefully to the reading of the Scriptures today. I am going to be reading from Romans 8, verses 28 through 31. If you have a Bible handy, I would recommend you that you open your Bible and follow along as I read these verses of Scripture.

I am speaking to you on the subject: “SOVEREIGN GRACE.” I believe in sovereign grace. I believe and preach the sovereign, free, grace of God. I am going to speak on that subject today and I would like for you to listen, even if you don’t follow along in your Bible; listen carefully to the Word.

In Romans 8: 28, the Scripture says; *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”*

Now, the most significant thing that I note in this passage of Scripture is *“All things are of God.”* I have read and preached this hundreds of times from the Eighth Chapter of Romans. I’m talking about all things that pertain to redemption, all things pertaining to salvation, all things pertaining to eternal life and all things pertaining to eternal glory. These are all by the will, the purpose and the power of God Almighty.

In other words, salvation is the gift of God. It says this several times in the Scriptures; *“The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* It says, *“This is the record; God has given us eternal life.”* Speaking of Christ, it says; *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”*

So, the first thing that I note from the Scriptures is this; all things pertaining to life, salvation and redemption are of God. Read it again; it says, "*Whom He foreknew, He predestinated and whom He predestinated He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.*" Who predestinated and who justified? God did!

The question comes forth from the apostle Paul, "*If God be for us, (in divine purpose, if God be for us in divine salvation and redemption, if God be for us), then who can be against us?*" Who in heaven, earth or hell can be against us? Salvation is of the Lord. "*We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus.*"

One of the writers on the book of Romans is a man named Robert Haldane who lived many, many, years ago. He had this to say about these few verses, Romans 8: 28 through 31. He says, "In looking over this passage of Scripture, every man ought to observe that man plays no part in the redemption of his soul; all is done by God. Everything pertaining to the redemption of a sinner is done not through a cooperative effort but by God. He elected, He predestinated, He called, He justified and He glorified. God has undertaken for us."

There is no room for chance and there is no room for change or failure. God will fulfill all that He purposed and all that He planned. God will fulfill His divine purpose. This is the ground for the believer's comfort and the ground for the believer's confidence.

Paul wrote in Romans 11:29, "*The gifts and callings of God are without change.*" We have been talking about salvation being the gift of God. In Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, God says; "*I am the Lord; I change not.*"

Again, in Hebrews, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.*" So, the most significant thing in these verses is this, "*All things are of God.*" He is the author and the finisher of our faith. Salvation is of the Lord in its origination, in its execution, in its application, in its sustaining power and in its ultimate perfection.

What do you mean preacher? Well, salvation is of the Lord in its origination in that it began with God. With whom did He take council? The covenant is an everlasting covenant. Salvation is of the Lord in its execution; the Scripture says, "*It pleased God to bruise Him.*" God sent His Son to the cross. Wicked men crucified Christ but they only carried out what God determined before to be done.

Salvation is of the Lord in its application. Paul said that, he said; "*God, who separated me from my mother's womb was pleased to reveal His Son in me.*" "*You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.*"

Salvation of the Lord in its sustaining power in that, *“We are kept by the power of God through faith. Wherefore, He is able to keep you from falling.”* You can’t keep yourself, God keeps you.

Salvation is of the Lord in its consummation in that He raises us from the dead. *“He changes our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body.”* You can’t do any of these things; it is all of the Lord. That is what David said when he wrote, *“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.”*

The other important note that we know from these Scriptures and verses is this; the wonderful manner in which these mercies follow each other. Did you notice that? Did you notice how they follow each other? Each one leads to the other until the grand purpose is accomplished.

God knows something beforehand because He purposes it by Divine foreordination and brings it to pass by foreordained means. You and I don’t know what is going to happen in the future because we have no control over the future; we have no power over the future. The only one who knows what is going to happen is the one who brings it to pass.

God’s Divine foreordination leads the way in love. He loved us. We didn’t love Him; *“Herein is love not that we love God; He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sin. We love God because He first loved us.”*

What kind of love is this love that God has for His people in Christ? It is an everlasting love. He said, *“I have drawn you with an everlasting love.”* It is an infinite love and is an indescribable love. It is also an unchanging love.

That love in foreordination led to predestination. You see, next follows predestination charting the path and fulfilling the purpose. God said, *“I have spoken it; I will bring it to pass.”* Did you ever read that before in Isaiah 46? *“I have purposed it; I will do it,”* God says. *“I have spoken it; I will bring it to pass. I purposed it and I will do it.”*

Then comes the calling; first God purposed and then God planned and predestinated and chartered the course that we would walk and the path that we would take by His grace. The Holy Spirit finds these who are the favored of God; the Holy Spirit seeks out the sheep of Christ and the Holy Spirit summons that child of God. *“No man can come to Me except My Father which sent Me draw him.”*

Christ said, *“You will not come to Me that you might have life.”* Men come to God because God comes to them. Someone asked me one time, “Do you think that I will go to heaven?” I told them, “You will if heaven comes to you first.” We call on Him because He called us. We love Him because He loved us. We seek God because He sought us.

Man doesn't take the initiative. Christ said, *“I've come in My Father's name and you won't receive Me. Let another come in his own name and him you will receive. My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me and I give them eternal life.”*

Justification follows next. Through the obedience of Christ we have imputed to us a perfect righteousness. Through the blood of our sinless Substitute we have a perfect standing before God. Justice satisfied and the law honored. *“He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*

God purposed it and God planned it. God called us and God justified us. And when completing that great work of redemption, God said; *“I glorified them.”* The redeemed of every tribe, kindred, nation and tongue will be perfectly conformed to His image. When all the redeemed of every generation, when all the redeemed of the Old Testament and the New Testament stand before God, each and everyone will be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ.

Everyone having on the wedding garment will be perfectly conformed to His image. John said, *“Beloved; now are we Sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. We know this, when He shall appear; we will be like Him.”* We will be just like Him. There will be a number which no man can number. They will sing with perfect unity of heart and voice, *“worthy is the Lamb.”*

Third: (Watch this carefully)! Let me quote this Scripture again; *“And we know that all things, (everything, good, bad, past, present, future, heaven, earth and under the earth, success, failure, sickness or death) all things work together for good to them who love God who are called by His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that His Son might be the firstborn among many brethren. In whom He predestinated He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.”* This is for God's purpose and for our eternal good.

Would you observe that there is no suggestion of failure? There is no hint of failure. There is no suggestion of interruption of the Divine purpose of God. God said that He would do it. *“Whom He foreknew; He predestinated.”* He lost none! *“In whom He*

predestinated; He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.” There are no ifs about it!

I hear all the preachers talking about “If, if, if or perhaps or even maybe.” It does not say that. There are no “ifs, no buts, no perhaps and there are no maybes.” There is no force in heaven, no force on earth and no force in hell that can change God’s decrees or change God’s purpose.

Paul said, *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* Where is the force or council that can be against God? Who can resist His will; who can say unto Him, *“What doest Thou?”* God said, *“Can I not do with Mine own what I will?”* Are you going to stand in the way of God accomplishing His purpose, fulfilling His will and fulfilling His design and bringing glory and preeminence to His Son?

He told Pharaoh, the mighty monarch of Egypt, “I raised you up for the one purpose; to get glory out of thee.” Pharaoh, even in his wrath, fulfilled the will of God.

There were men who spat in the face of Christ and who drove the nails in His hands and feet. They were the ones who pierced His side and did what God determined before to be done. While they carried out their wicked designs and wicked wishes, they carried out the will of God. All things are ordained of God in His directive or permissive will.

You will accomplish the will of God also, just as Pharaoh did and just like Judas did, who was the son of perdition from the beginning. You will accomplish His will just like Paul did, whether you will fulfill the glory of God in justification or fulfill the judgment and wrath of God in condemnation. You will do the will of God because *“He works all things after the council of His own will.”*

Listen to Daniel 4: *“The Most High ruleth in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth and giveth it to whomsoever He will. None can stay His hand and none can say unto Him, what doest Thou?”* God will accomplish His purpose.

There are no ifs, but, maybe, or perhaps. His will shall be done. Having foreordained, He predestinated. Who can stay His hand? Having predestinated, He calls. *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”* That is what David said in the Psalms 110. *“Having called, He justified. Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God who justifieth.”*

“Who is He that condemneth, it is Christ that died? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, distress, famine, persecution, the sword? Having justified,

He glorified. *“He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?”*

Christ shall have all that He came to accomplish. He will have all that He purposed through His precious blood. He will have all that He ransomed and He will have all that He redeemed. He will not lose a one.

He said, *“All that My Father giveth Me shall come to Me and Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. I came down from heaven not to do My will (or your will or anybody else’s will); I came to do the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me; I will lose nothing.”* There is no failure.

It is just like when they came out of Egypt; there wasn’t a hoof, a cow or even a dog left behind. There wasn’t an invalid or a child; they all came out. When our Lord delivers up the Kingdom to the Father; He will deliver the whole Kingdom, all that He purchased. *“He that spared not His own Son how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?”*

Now, for a little while, I want us to examine each link in this chain of redemption. Someone called this, *“The chain that binds us eternally to our blessed Lord and Saviour.”* You know, words are powerful, especially when they are His Words.

Did you note that when I read that text, *“Whom He foreknew He predestinated, whom He predestinated, (that word is used twice) He called, whom He called, (that word is used twice), He justified, whom He justified, (that word is used twice) He glorified.”* Did you notice those five words, the five golden links in the chain of redemption? Three of them are used twice. Let’s look at them one at a time and see the power in these words.

First of all: He said, *“Whom He foreknew.”* Even a grade school child knows what that means. It means that He knew before; *“He foreknew.”* In other words, those to whom the Lord knows He knew before. Those whom the Lord knew, He has always known. God never learns anything and God never forgets anything. God knows all things. Those whom He foreknew, He has always known.

Acts 15:18 says this; *“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”* Everything that God carries out in time, He predestinated in eternity. God never changes; *“I’m the Lord; I change not. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”*

Do you want to know something about God, the foundation of God? Listen to 2 Timothy 2:19, *“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, (this is the seal) the Lord knoweth them that are His.”* He said, *“I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep; I know them and are known of mine.”*

He said to Jeremiah, *“Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. Before you came out of your mother’s womb, I sanctified you and set you apart; I know you.”* He foreknew them and He has always known them. He’s known them before and He knew them before the world began.

You know, it is a strange thing in Matthew Chapter 7:23; He told some people that, *“He never knew them.”* They stood before Him and they said, *“Lord; we have preached in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works.”* He said, *“Depart from Me; I never knew you.”*

You see, this knowledge, this Word of God teaches that this knowledge is a knowledge of intimate love and a relationship and communion. The Word of God teaches that the Father chose a people out of every tribe, kindred, nation, tongue and people under heaven before the world began. He chose them in Christ. That is what God’s Word teaches.

He gave them to His Son. He made Christ the Surety of these people. He is the Prophet, Priest and King of these people. He is their Representative, the Federal Head and the Redeemer of these people to be redeemed and brought to glory by His hand.

In John 17:2, when our Lord prayed that High Priestly prayer, said; *“Thou hast given Me and power (authority) over all flesh that I should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Me.”* Six times in this one chapter (John Chapter 17), the Lord uses that phrase; *“As many as Thou hast given Me.”*

In verse 9, He says; *“I don’t pray for the world; I pray for them which Thou hast given Me.”* In John 10:24, the religious people came and said; *“Now, if you are the Christ, tell us plainly. He said, “I told you and you didn’t believe Me.” You didn’t believe Me because you are not of My sheep. Every plant that My Heavenly Father planted shall be rooted up.”*

I said unto you, *“My sheep hear My voice and I give them eternal life and they follow Me and they will never perish. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all. No man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand; I and My Father are one.”* Then the Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

You see, this gift of love and life was not based on foreseen faith for, *“faith is the gift of God.”* God didn’t know us because we knew Him; He knew us before we knew Him. God didn’t love us because we loved Him; *“We love Him because He loved us.”* This life and love and gift of grace was not based on what you would do. Faith is the gift of God. Repentance is the gift of God.

This life and love was not based on foreseen merit; *“there is none good, no not one.”* This life and love was not based on foreseen desires; *“there is none that seeketh after God.”* It is not based on foreseen perseverance because *“He is able to keep us from falling.”* We are not even able to keep ourselves. The gift of life and love and grace in Christ is based on the free love, mercy and grace of God to sinners in Jesus Christ.

He plainly said to His disciples; *“You didn’t choose Me; I have chosen you.”* In John 1 we quote this so often, *“As many as received Him to them gave He the power, the right to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”* You will notice there is no period there; there is a comma.

The next verse says, *“Which were born not of blood, (not of fleshly inheritance), not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but they were born of God.”* He foreknew us, we didn’t know Him. We were in darkness, we were in death, and we were in a spiritual grave and He quickened us. Salvation is the gift of God. It is the gift of His free, sovereign grace.

Look at the next word, *“predestinated.”* Some people think that election and predestination are the same and they are not. They are not the same; they are parts of the same purpose but they are not the same. You see; election has to do with people; *“God chose a people.”* I don’t know who they are but God knows who they are. *“The foundation of God is sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.”* I don’t know who they are.

Election has to do with His choosing a people in Christ. Predestination has to do with making those people like Christ. In other words, election puts the sinner on the path to glory and predestination charts the way and charts the path for that goal. *“He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.”* God elected a man and put him in the path but He predestinates the path and the way that he shall walk in coming to that goal and to that glory.

Every person whom God saves will by His grace make him like Christ. I quoted that Scripture to you a little while ago; *“It does not appear what we shall be but when He shall appear we will be like Him.”* That is what the word *“predestination”* has to do with

every time it is mentioned in the New Testament. It is mentioned four times. It is mentioned twice in Romans 8 and twice in Ephesians 1.

Every time it says, *“We are predestinated to the adoption of children; we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.”* That is what it has to do with. God charts the path what a man will walk in bringing him to be like Christ; *“Whom He predestinated He called.”*

There are two kinds of calling mentioned in the Word of God. There is what we call a general call that is issued to every son of Adam. One way that men are called is by nature. In Romans 1, it says; *“The invisible things of God are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that men are without excuse.”* Nature tells you that there is a God. Your conscience tells you that there is a God. *“The Law of God is written in the heart, your conscience bearing witness.”*

The preaching of the Gospel is a general call. There is an effectual call given to God’s sheep whereby His Holy Spirit comes with the Word and brings that sinner to Christ. Just like the Ethiopian Eunuch; God sent him a preacher and he heard the Gospel and believed it. That is the effectual call through the Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel.

Then, He justifies. *“How can man be just with God?”* Justification is the act of God’s free grace wherein He pardons all of our sins by the death of His Son and accepts us as righteous in His sight by the obedience of His Son. *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be like Christ. Whom He predestinated to be like Christ, He called. Whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.”*

When by the gift of His wonderful grace
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face
That my friend will be glory for me.

I will tell you this, when I stand there I am going to say; *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift; salvation is of the Lord.”*