

Romans 8:28-29 All Things -- For Our Good!

Sometimes life just doesn't make sense! Did you ever wonder why? I have, many, many times over! Why is there so much evil in the world? Why is there so much sorrow & suffering in our world? Why do bad things happen to good people?

I have been studying this whole question of "why" for several years, & I continue to ask God some rather hard questions. I do not even begin to have the answers; & maybe I never will this side of eternity but I have been drawing some important conclusions along the way. I have come to the conclusion that **God is fair! Life is not!** I have come to the conclusion that God has a plan for my life, & the unfairness I suffer **may be part of that plan!**

The Bible teaches that God's goodness is rooted in His very character; & His goodness is the same whether our circumstances are good or bad! And in the midst of the bitter experiences of my life I am reminded of the fact that **God loves me; God love you!** Whatever happens on the pathway of life, **God always acts in love toward you & toward me!**

My friends, when life does not seem to make sense to you, there is a beautiful statement in God's Word that speaks clearly to our hearts. It is in the hardships & difficulties of life that the promise found in **Romans 8:28** becomes significant to us as the people of God! Are you familiar with Romans 8:28? You ought to be! It is a promise that everyone of us as Christians need to know & need to memorize. Can you quote it with me this morning from the familiar KJV, together, "**We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.**"

This is one of the most meaningful verses in all the Bible! It has brought untold encouragement to many Christians across the centuries. It is **not** a passive "whatever-will-be-will-be" kind of concept. **This is a dynamic, life changing truth!** This wonderful verse is **easy to quote**, but often **hard to apply**. But with this wonderful promise **there is always a patch of blue in the Christian's sky!**

Dr. J. B. Chapman used to say that Romans 8:28 was not a promise; rather it was **a statement of fact**. However, I want to look upon it as one of God's great promises in His Holy Word, to you & I!

The Apostle Paul speaks with such assurance when he says: "**We know...**" His own uncertainties, doubts, fears, & questions had all vanished, being swallowed up in the knowledge that **God is in control!** It is because Paul speaks with **such assurance** that this verse holds the significance that it does. Paul might have said: "We pray that...." "We hope that...." "We think that...." But instead, Paul says: "**We know that...**"

There is an unusual fruit which grows in Africa called the "taste berry." It was given this name because **after it is eaten**, everything else takes on a sweet & pleasant flavor. Anything sour or bitter becomes appetizing & delicious even if several hours have passed since consuming this rather exotic fruit. Well, **Romans 8:28 is the Christian's taste berry!** There are three observations we ought to consider when looking at this wonderful promise in God's Word : --

1. First, let's observe **The Scope of the Promise!** -- "All Things"

Oh, the blessedness of those two words: "all things...." Notice how **wide** the scope of this promise is! It does not say: "some things...." nor, "most things...." nor, "joyful things...." **but "all things...."** From the smallest to the largest, of all things! From the **humble events** of daily living, to the **great crises** of life. Whenever something happens that you do not understand, you can say to yourself: "**This must be one of those 'all things' of Romans 8:28.**"

One day Charles Spurgeon, that noted English preacher of the 1800s, was out riding in the country side when he noticed a farmer's weather vane on top of a barn with the words "**God is love.**" He turned in at the gate & asked the farmer: "What do you mean by that? Do you think God's love is changeable? ever changing? that it veers about as that arrow turns in the wind?"

"Oh, no!" cried the farmer. "I mean that **whichever way the wind blows, God is still love.**" How true it is that in spite of the storms & testings of life, sometimes coming with hurricane force, **God never forsakes those who put their trust in Him!** God has **not** promised us a life of ease or security from storms & temptations. But, thanks be to God, His love & His presence will be with us, "whichever way the wind blows." Nothing is accidental with God! All events are planned & filled with divine purpose!

We may view certain experiences in our lives as meaningless misfortunes, but later we may discover they were sent to clear the way for something better! Nothing that happens to us can do us permanent damage, if we will only take the position that this is one of God's "all things" for us!

God may permit & allow many things to come to me as the results of the sins of others; He may even allow some things to come to me as a result of my own ignorance & foolishness; **but God will not permit anything to come but what He & I can handle together!** God can see the past & the present & the future, & He can weave all things together in His perfect plan for our lives!

The Chinese tell a story about a man who had a horse & an only son. One day the horse broke out of his corral & fled to the hills. The neighbors exclaimed: "What bad luck!" "Why?" said the old farmer. "How do you know that?"

The next night the animal was back for his usual watering & feeding, & with him were twelve wild stallions. Quickly the son slipped out & closed the gate. Now they had thirteen horses instead of none. When the neighbors learned of this, they came to the farmer excitedly. "My, what good luck!" they congratulated. Calmly the old man replied: "How do you know that?"

Some days later while his son was trying to break one of the wild stallions, he was thrown off & broke his leg. Quickly the neighbors returned saying: "What bad luck!" Again the wise farmer answered: "How do you know that?"

A few days afterwards a warlord came through the town & conscripted every able bodied young man, taking them off to war. **These men never returned.** But the farmer's son remained at home because he had broken his leg.

What is your attitude to the good or the bad things that come your way? For the Christian who truly loves the Lord, there is a good purpose in every adversity! Sometimes it is not clearly seen at the moment, or maybe not

even in our life time, but even then we are able to say through our tears: “While I do not understand, I know that whatever **God allows to happen is working for my good**, & that includes **all things**.”

2. The Benefit of the Promise! -- “Work together for good.”

Underline that word “good!” Notice it does **not** say all things work together for the “best.” The best is what **we think** is good for us. But only God knows what is **good!**

The “good” is not to be interpreted in terms of comfort, or success, or pleasure, or power, or even fulfillment of our fondest & most praise-worthy ambitions. **“Good” is to be understood from God’s perspective, not ours!** Not all things work for our enjoyment, or pleasure, but they do work for our **good!**

The world often talks about “the good life” but God has a different perspective of the “good life.” God’s perspective is eternal! The things of this world can be wiped out in a moment.

What God considers “good” is defined in the context by verse 29, that we might become **conformed to the image of God’s Son! Christlikeness is our goal!** God’s purpose in turning everything to good is **not** to bless you, make you happy, or make you wealthy. God is doing all that He does in order to make you **more like Jesus!** God didn’t finish with you when He saved you; that is just the beginning! He will continue to shape you & mold you, until you reflect His image perfectly! Through our difficulties, God can refine us & polish us! Struggles build character; trials produce fruit.

According to those who study such things & know, **trees need the powerful March winds** to flex their trunks & their main branches. The flexing draws the sap up the trunk, & out the limbs, in order to nourish the budding leaves. **Perhaps the gales of life serve the same purpose for us!** A blustery period in our lives is often the prelude to a new & better future.

As a young lad I remember getting all excited when my dear mother said she was going to bake a cake. I would watch her with anticipation, knowing how good her cakes always turned out; hmmm, I loved them. She would begin by setting out some unsweetened chocolate, sour milk, baking soda, & flour. By themselves, separately, they would make “very poor eating.” But when they had been blended together in just the right proportion, in some magical way, they produce a mighty appetizing cake.

The greatest benefit in those “all things” God allows in our lives is that they help produce true “Christlikeness” & that is good!

3. The Invitation of the Promise! -- “To Them That Love God.”

This promise comes as an invitation for you & I **to love God!** This promise is **not** for everyone! It is only to those who love God! “Loving God” is the key that unlocks this amazing treasure! **The promise is open only to those who truly love God.** It is a promise “to them that love God” & to them who are willing to follow His plan & purpose for their lives!

Do you love God? Have you trusted Him with your all & all? Have you surrendered your will to God's will? As long as we continue in our love toward God, then we have assurance, & we know, that God is working for our good. But let us neglect God, & put our love for God into the past tense, then God must, of necessity, put His plan for us into the same past tense!

These two actions are interlocked: our love for God, & His working in our behalf! **We possess the key!** It's that simple! If we truly love God, & trust God, & accept His will for us, then we can be fully convinced that He is an all-wise & all-loving Heavenly Father. God wants to work His good & perfect plan in your life if you will only love Him & trust Him with all things! God wants to help you, bless you, lead you, & use you, **but He has to have your cooperation.** God cannot work all things for good in your life if you do not love Him enough to submit all you are, & all you have, to His complete control.

Many years ago, a young man & his wife were accepted by the missionary board & assigned to an African mission field. But when they arrived in New York City for the final arrangements, it was discovered that the wife's health would not permit them to enter missionary work. Brokenhearted & discouraged, the man put it before God in prayer. Because he loved God & trusted God, the young man was willing to submit to God's total wisdom & to God's complete will.

The man's father, a dentist, operated a sideline business of making unfermented wine to be used in Communion services for many of the area churches. This missionary candidate returned home, took over the business, & developed it into a large company. The family name of "**Welch**" is still on the labels of grape juice. We no doubt have all heard of "Welch's Grape Juice." This missionary-turned-businessman gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to support various missionary enterprises.

What at first seemed cause for great discouragement, became the avenue to far greater blessing, & an extension of God's kingdom. In the end, God made everything turn out for the good! In the same manner God will work in our lives, if we will only love Him & trust Him, & surrender ourselves to His good & perfect will!

Conclusion: Do the events of life make no sense to you at times? Do you need reassurance today, because calamities, or distress, have been sudden & overwhelming? Has sorrow & disappointments come into your life? Are you being tried in the furnace of affliction? Are you asking the age old question: "why?"

Remember dear friend that **God loves me; God love you!** Whatever happens on the pathway of life, **God always acts in love toward you & toward me!** Being a Christian does not mean that we will be carried through life on "flowery beds of ease." **The disappointments in our lives are only God's appointments!** Let the reality of God's overruling & blessed providence calm your heart. Discover inner strength & a lightening of your load, by frequently reminding yourself of this great promise found in Romans 8:28. As we hold to this truth that all things work together for good, then **our faith will increase** & we can walk in greater confidence! We will become more patient! Our lives will change for the better! **We will begin to see all things in a whole new light!** Delays & changes will no longer upset us, for we know that the ultimate outcome will be for our good -- & for God's glory!

My friends, let me challenge you to **make a mental file marked: Romans 8:28.** Into that file put a variety of things: disappointments, irritations, "accidents," unanswered questions, both large & small. **File the things you cannot understand.** But also put some nice things into this mental file: the unexpected windfalls, the sense of fulfillment, the kindness of a friend, & the silence of enemies. Remember that the file contains an **ingredient** described as "good" & "perfect" & "acceptable." As you place your items into this mental file, God will place in **His ingredient**, which is the will & the purpose of God for you.

Life consists of a series of events, some glad, some sad, & even some bad. **Life is not always fair; but God is always good!** And as Christians, “we know that all that happens to us is working for our good, if we love God & are fitting into His plans” (Romans 8:28, LB). J. B. Phillips helps give us clarity in his translation of Romans 8:28, “Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good.” This, my friends, is an ironclad promise from Almighty God Himself! God has a plan, a marvelous plan for all His children!

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