

Romans 8:26-30

The will of God in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death.

We need God's Spirit to express it.

26 And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us} with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to {the will of} God.

We need God's sovereignty to experience it.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose. 29 For whom He **foreknew**, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He **predestined**, these He also called; and whom He **called**, these He also justified; and whom He **justified**, these He also **glorified**.

FREE WILL and PREDESTINATION

Romans 10:9-13

“9 if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; 10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says ‘*Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.*’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same {Lord} is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; 13 for ‘*whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*’”

*sending
preaching*

*hears
believes*

Romans 8:29-30

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose. 29 For whom He **foreknew**, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He **predestined**, these He also called; and whom He **called**, these He also justified; and whom He **justified**, these He also **glorified**.

foreknew
(chose)

predestined
(decreed)

called
(convicted)

justified

confesses

(faith)

glorified
(fulfillment)

Romans 8:28

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His or a} purpose.”

- It is assumed that we should know that **GOD IS SOVEREIGN** over the affairs of life.
- This promise refers to the experience of **CHRISTIANS**.
- God’s control extends to **ALL THINGS**.
- God works all the events of life **TOGETHER** for good.

- God's notion of "**GOOD**" is not always what we may want.
- The **TIMETABLE** of God's working may be longer than we would like.

Lessons

1

God shepherds us both through
"intercession for" and "intervention in" life.

2

God does not so much expect us to escape suffering
as to respond to it correctly.

3

Much of our comfort must come from what we **KNOW**
and **BELIEVE**,
as opposed to what we see and feel.

4

We are to be assured that God is **FOR** us,
not passive or against us in our suffering.

A. ILLUSTRATION

In the midst of the movie THE HIDING PLACE, there is a scene set in the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany. Corrie ten Boom and her sister, Betsy, are there, along with ten thousand other women, in horrible, degrading, hideous condition. They are gathered with some of the women in the barracks in the midst of the beds, cold and hungry and lice-ridden, and Betsy is leading a Bible class.

One of the other women calls out derisively from her bunk and mocks their worship of God. They fall into conversation, and this woman says what so frequently is flung at Christians: "If your God is such a good God, why does he allow this kind of suffering?" Dramatically she tears off the bandages and old rags that bind her hands, displaying her broken, mangled fingers and says, "I'm the first violinist of the symphony orchestra. Did your God will this?"

For a moment no one answered. Then Corrie ten Boom steps to the side of her sister and says, "We can't answer that question. All we know is that our God came to this earth, and became one of us, and He suffered with us and was crucified and died. And that he did it for love."

B. When we suffer, we often ask two questions.

1. What did I do to deserve this? **WHY?**
2. What am I supposed to learn from this? **WHAT FOR?**
3. Some times all we need to know is - **HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO THIS?**

C. In Romans 8 Paul is talking about what it means to walk in the power of the Spirit and it is in that context that he spends a good bit of time talking about suffering.

1. Verse 17 indicates that if we are going to walk in the Spirit we are going to share Christ's suffering and His glory (character).

2. Paul gives advice to those who share His suffering.
 - a. It is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
 - b. Now he continues with verse.26-30

OBSERVATIONS

A. This text makes two points

1. Vs.26-27 speak of the Spirit's intercession for us.
2. Vs.28-30 speaks of God's working all things for good.

B. What is Paul telling us about the Spirit's work here?

1. In verse 16 he talked about the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
2. Now he is talking about another ministry of the Spirit - who helps us in our weakness.

3. When we are weak we experience the Spirit's power.

- a. This is true not only with respect to Christ using our weaknesses to confound the strength and wisdom of the world

But also with respect to the groanings of our hearts when we suffer. The Spirit prayed for us or through us to God when we don't have words to say.

- b. **ILLUSTRATION:** Lose of a child, chronic depression, broken relationship, etc. render us weak and confused as to what to pray. We just groan and cry - help. It is at these times, Paul assures us that the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) comes to our aid and meets with God in order to converse with Him in our place.

4. Walking in the Spirit involves knowing that we commune with God at times when words are not enough. There is a communion at a deep level where words do not work. We are not left as orphans, alone without a voice.

C. What is Paul mean when he speaks of working all things together for good?

1. This passage has been often misunderstood because it is too often divorced from what immediately follows.

2. There are a number of observations that are critical here.

a. **First** - we must note that this is applied to those who are called (not to everyone). I take this to refer to **Christians**.

b. **Second** - God works all things **TOGETHER** for good. Not everything is going to be good - lost loves, children, health, fortune etc. are not good. But God ultimately is going to bring about His good purposes through these things.

ILLUSTRATION: an artists studio or a mechanics shop or a chefs kitchen are not places most of us want to be unless we appreciate the process of creating great art, building a fine machine or serving a grand dinner.

c. **Third** - The good in view here is not necessarily the same as our **want**.

d. **Fourth** - The **timetable** (or scope) in view here is revealed in vs. 29-30.

1. This is not to say that God does not intervene in time to deliver us.

2. But we can't always expect that and in this case Paul is assuming that the "good" is to be seen in a broader context.

D. These verses raise a question about God's sovereignty and our responsibility.

1. Some would point out that "**foreknew**" comes before "**predestined**" and has to do with God's looking into the future and **seeing who would choose to believe**.

2. Others point out that this "foreknowledge" is of a personal **relationship and not insight into the future**.

3. **Ether way we cannot escape** the fact that the "predestination" is clearly taught. Whether it is based upon

foresight or arbitrary decree, something is fixed before it takes place. (We will see more of this in Romans 9)

4. The **purpose** here however is not to teach that we have no free will but rather to make the point that the plans of God for His people are not unfinished or subject to our weakness or failure but are secured by God.

IMPLICATIONS

A. God does not so much expect us to escape suffering as respond correctly to it.

1. One of the **common impulses** we all have when suffering is to try to do something to alleviate it. What can I do? Often - nothing.
2. **Paul does not encourage us to change circumstances** that cause suffering either by escaping or by manipulating.
 - a. Certainly there are times when we should do both.
 - b. But Paul realizes that there are many times when following Christ we will not be able to and it is in those times that we need these words.
3. **We can help others** who suffer by recognizing this point. Don't always feel as though you have to fix it or explain it or repress it.
 - a. "I know it hurts."
 - b. "I'm sorry you have to face this."
 - c. "It is not fair."
 - d. "God shares your pain and understands."

B. Much of our comfort must come from what we know and believe as opposed to what we see and feel.

1. Have you noticed how often Paul says in Romans "we know" or "don't you know".

C. We are to be assured that God is FOR us not passive or against us in our suffering.

1. This will become more evident as we read into the rest of this chapter.

2. One of the common reactions we have to suffering is that God is trying to tell us something which means that God is behind it and not at all sympathetic to our state.

