

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Sermon Title: All Things For the Good, Romans 8:28-39

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**INTRODUCTION:** We are continuing our study in Romans this morning. We've spent a good amount of time in the first part of Romans Chapter 8—focusing on the future glory and our hope in this future glory—the glory that will be revealed in Christ when he returns. Christ might return today. He could, and we would experience the fullness of our adoption as his children and would receive our new spiritual bodies. But, right now—we still are falling short of this glory.

It doesn't take much convincing for us to realize—we are in a state of “less-than what-should-be.” The state of what should be is one we are falling short of. Physically, we are falling apart. Mentally, we are falling apart. And, things will continue to fall apart because the Earth and creation are not fully living up to what God wants it to be. We are experiencing sin and suffering and seeing its affects in the world.

In tragic situations—it's easy for us to know the “right” thing to say like... *“It's all a part of God's plan.”* Maybe you've been told this after a death of a loved one or a hard relationship or a loss of a job... *“It's all a part of God's plan. He's working it for your good.”* Maybe this brought you peace at the moment, or maybe you felt bitter about it—and responded in anger or frustration that someone was just giving you a scripture when you are going through a tough time. What you really needed was compassion and understanding.

However you responded—this is a verse we should not take out of context from its intended meaning.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:28 <sup>28</sup> *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

We memorize this verse and cling to it for hope during hard times, and this is for good reason. But, today, I want to explain some important truths this verse is telling

us about this “good” God is working for us. First of all, when we say, “good,” I want you to realize in the Greek, there are two words for “good.”

1. The first word for “good” is *kalos*. It means: “beautiful, as an outward sign of the inward good.”
2. The other word is *agathos*, which translates as “intrinsically good.” The longer definition [from Strong’s Concordance] is “intrinsically good; good in nature; good whether it be seen to be so or not...”

In Romans 8:28, the “good” God is working for us—is *agathos*—intrinsically good. It is good even if it doesn’t appear to be good.

If you accept the fact that God is working out all things for the good, even though you do not understand it and you do not see it, you are accepting a truth. Knowing God is working out all things for the good is an accurate understanding and perception of the truth. Sometimes we have a hard time believing things if we do not see immediate results. *If God is working something out for the good, it must not be because I do not see it, I can’t feel it, I cannot understand it.* But, the original word here for good lets us know God is working things out for the good even if they are not seen, even if they are not known at that time.

Today we are going to look at the who, why, and when, of the truth in this scripture:

1. Who—The good is for a specific group of people.
2. Why—The good is for a specific reason.
3. When—The good is for eternity.

Hopefully, after studying the scripture, we will see God’s “good” for us is way better than the “good” we could ever plan for ourselves.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:28-30 <sup>28</sup> *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* <sup>29</sup> *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.* <sup>30</sup> *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

## **First, The who: THE GOOD IS FOR A SPECIFIC GROUP OF PEOPLE.**

**SCRIPTURE:** Verse 28: <sup>28</sup> *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**EXPLANATION:** Many people take this verse to mean everything should be worked for everyone's good. But, listen to this phrase—*of those who love them.*

1. The first characteristic of the people God works all things for good—is that **they love him**. They love God. The promise is for...those loving God.

**BIBLICAL EXAMPLES:** What does it mean to love God?

- If you love God, you keep his commandments. Jesus said, *"If you love me, keep my commands"* (John 14:15).
- If you love God, you take care of his people. Jesus said to Peter for the third time, *"Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep"* (John 21:17).

So, God works things for the good of those who love him. And, as Jesus said, those who love God, keep his commands and feed his sheep.

2. The second characteristic listed of people (of whom God is working everything for good) is **they have been called according to his purpose.**

**APPLICATION:** Both loving God and being called according to God's purpose would change your definition of good. Your "good" would no longer mean your selfish desires. Your "good" would no longer mean your own dreams or your own earthly wealth, or staying comfortable.

The "good" is for those who love God and who are called according to his purpose. God has a purpose for your life, and this leads me to the next point—

## **Second, The why: THE GOOD IS FOR A SPECIFIC REASON.**

Have you been called according to God's purpose?

**SCRIPTURE:** Go back to verse 29 again: <sup>29</sup> *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

Verse 30: <sup>30</sup> *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

**EXPLANATION:** God’s purpose is for us to be made into the image of Jesus. This scripture tells us God knew us before we were born. He also knew his plan for those who he called—to be conformed to the image of his Son. We will be like in him spirit, and ultimately like him in his glorified body.

**APPLACTION:** A friend of mine recently said, growing up in church she never really learned the gospels. Her preacher always preached from other passages and he might pull in one of the gospels here and there to bring context to the scripture. But if we focus on the gospels we will discover what Jesus was really like, we will discover the values of Jesus because the gospels tell us the story of Jesus with four different points of view.

And, if we focus on the gospels and we learn who Jesus really was, what he was like, what he valued, what his character traits were as relived in the gospels, we will realize the Jesus we thought we knew may not be the Jesus who really was relived in scripture. And, so if the goal of this journey of life on earth—as we understand it—is to conform us into the image of Jesus, we need to know what that image is.

We went through the Book of Mark a while back, and many of you shared with me that you learned so much from the simple Book of Mark. Learning about Jesus, who this Jesus was—and when I say “was,” I also mean “is.” Who he was in scripture and who he is has not changed any. If this entire journey is to conform us into the image of Jesus, we need to know what image we are being conformed into. The scripture tells us God knew us before we were born. Ephesians 2:10 tells us God had good plans for us before we were even created

There is a sequence. He planned, then he called, then justified and glorified—all through Jesus. What does it mean that he called us? The Greek word comes from the Greek verb *kalen* meaning “to call, or invite.”

But, this word *kalen* is also the same word “church” originates from. Church, in the Greek, *ekklésia*, is a group of people called out from their homes, from the world, and called to God in Jesus.

We are called to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ...

**SCRIPTURE:** Verse 29: <sup>29</sup>*that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

**EXPLANATION:** Jesus is the first-born. He was in the beginning when the world was established—when the earth was created, as the Scriptures tell us.

As the firstborn, Jesus—God’s Son—has brought and continues to bring many more Sons of God into the family of God. From the time before creation to eternity, Jesus was there, is there, and will be there. Jesus was the firstborn—the way all of creation would be restored in a relationship with God.

**APPLICATION:** So, we know God is working all things for the good of those who love him—and we know the reason—to be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ. Children listen to me; God wants you to be conformed into the image of Jesus. God wants you to be like Jesus, he wants you to live like Jesus. He wants you to treat other people like he treated people. He wants you to give up yourself so much that you will do what he wants you to do not what you want to do. And, to belong to this great family of all who call on the name of the Lord—through Jesus Christ. This is the good. And, we know God is working all things together for this.

**ILLUSTRATION:** C. S. Lewis said in his book *The Great Divorce*:

“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, *“Thy will be done,”* and those to whom God says, in the end, *“Thy will be done”* (C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*).

So, some people are praying for *“Your will to be done, Lord,”* and others are just doing their own thing. And, in the end, God is saying, *“You have it your way...”* ultimately ending in hell, a separation from God.

**APPLICATION:** Which one are you? The rebellious spirit or the submissive spirit? Are you praying for God’s will to be done and for you to accept it, or are you praying for your will to be done? We can choose to follow God—acknowledging him and praying for his will to be done in our lives—or we can choose to follow ourselves and whatever we want. But, if we exchange God’s glory for what is not of God—he will give us over to the sinful desires of our hearts.

So we have the who, the why, and now the when...

**Finally, the when question: THE GOOD IS FOR ETERNITY.**

Once we have the greatest good—the love of Christ—nothing will be able to separate us—not even death.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:31-36 <sup>31</sup> *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* <sup>33</sup> *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.* <sup>34</sup> *Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.* <sup>35</sup> *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* <sup>36</sup> *As it is written:*  
“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

**EXPLANATION:** Paul asks a bunch of rhetorical questions here—meaning he wasn’t expecting an answer. But, Paul ends the section, and he references Psalm 44:22.

**EXPLANATION:** We cannot follow Christ and expect to avoid all suffering. Because, if we are in Christ, we are supposed to be taking up our crosses daily and dying to our own will

The bad will be not be forever. Evil will cease. But, the good...will be forever. Christ is victorious over the Enemy, who wants so badly for us to be separated from Christ’s love.

Can anything or anyone separate us from the love of God? Listen to the answer:

**SCRIPTURE:** Verses 37-39: <sup>37</sup> *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* <sup>38</sup> *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,* <sup>39</sup> *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**CONCLUSION:** We are more than conquerors. How? Through him who loved us. It is through Jesus' love, we are more than conquerors.

Everything... God is working for our good, Paul writes to the Romans. Remember these were people who knew what suffering was. They were being tortured, killed, set on fire, seeing family members and friends die because they were Christians. But, God is working...even what appears bad and what hurts... everything... for our good.

- For who? For those who love God and who are called according to his purpose.
- For what? To be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
- For how long? Forever victorious.

If he is calling you, today: Please respond. He has known you from the beginning of time. He wants you to experience all the good he has planned for you. He wants to renew your mind. He wants to transform your mind so you no longer think about yourself all the time and what you want all the time but what it is that God wants you to do with your life. He wants you to be brought into his family—the one that will never end.

This past week, I was talking to Joan on the phone, and we talked about what in the work do people do who don't have the family of God to come around them? I don't know—grieve as others who have no hope I guess. I just cannot imagine. But, in the family of God, either we believe it to be true or we don't. Either we believe by faith God is working out all things good for those who believe him and are called according to his purpose, or we don't. There is really not a middle ground here. There may be an area we are still learning. But, we either believe it or we don't.

You may feel separated from the love of God, and that's logical if you never repented of sin and believed in Jesus.

Have you repented of your sin? Have you trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior? You can do that today. It is a conscious decision that you make. You let go of your own pride. And, you let go of all the things you think you figured out about eternity. You let it go, and you say *God forgive me a sinner*. And, then trust Jesus as your savior. Jesus died on the cross over 2,000 years ago. He paid the price for your sin so you wouldn't have to die in your sin and face eternity without God.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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