

Romans 8:18-30

The Truth with a Target

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things 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 be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

It is one of the most well-known, often quoted, memorized, printed scriptures in all of the Bible, second only to probably John 3:16.

A)The Passage I am referring to is Romans 8:28 – Most of you don't even need your Bibles today – because you memorized that verse a long time ago.

B)Let's say it together “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

C)We can quote it – we have it memorized – we use in conversation – sometimes in ways that we shouldn't – but do we really understand what it is saying. – Really? Many don't

Many believers think that Romans 8:28 means that if your situation is bad – cheer up it is going to get better.

A)So If you lose your job – cheer up *all things work together for good* – means – you are going to get a better Job.

B)If your Boyfriend breaks up with you – cheer up all things work together *God has a better guy in store for you.*

C)Your spouse dies – I don't even want to repeat some of the crazy things I have heard people say in regard to that one and how they think – *Romans 8:28 fits into that.*

D)Now sometimes situations do change- *Testimonies* – Job loss that resulted in a better Job

1)A Break up that resulted in a better guy.

So Sometimes the situation does change for the Better – but many times it does not!

A)It didn't for Paul – He went from being jailed beaten and ship wrecked to beheaded.

B)It didn't for Jesus – He went from being loved, to ridiculed, to betrayed, to crucified.

C)The situation doesn't always get better – *But God's purpose is ALWAYS carried out.*

D)Situations don't always get better - It hasn't for many people in this room who live with an illness, who have lost a love one. Lost a job

1)But the question is – *Have they got better?*

See this is the problem that we face if we interpret Romans 8:28 to mean that our situation is always going to get better.

A)When it doesn't for many people – they are left to wonder and struggle and think – *I must not love God enough – it says ... to those who love God...*

B)Which usually leads them to wonder – Or is the problem that God really doesn't Love me?

1)Maybe I am not called according to His purpose

C) So Romans 8:28 is not saying that our situation is always going to change for the better.

1) But it is saying God's purpose is ALWAYS carried out.

Key for understanding is Context and The immediate context of Romans 8:28 is suffering.

A) V.18 The Lord introduces the concept of suffering and how God is using it – Focus - last week

B) You know what accompanies suffering?

1) Groanings – Right

Life is full of groanings

A) Our text reveals three kinds of groanings the first two make perfect sense to me and are predictable

B) but the last one sort of surprises me at first glance, but then delights me the more I consider it.

CREATION GROANS V.19-23 – With birth pains – Creation is in labor

A) Birth pangs – not talking a whimper here – Travailing

We can look at various parts of Creation and think – So beautiful, many places are. Great sunsets living on the coast like we do.

A) But it's incomplete/ creation is not what it once was. It is not what it was intended to be.

It's filled with flaws now because of the fall.

B) Adam sin in the garden – sent everything into a major tail spin.

1) Man was affected, Atmosphere affected, the animal kingdom affected

C) Creation is travailing – longing to be restored. it was subjected to futility at the fall – meaning creation cannot change itself.

Have you ever noticed that in every fairytale they all have this in common the kingdom has crumbled but A HERO ARISES and it is restored why is that?

A) I think there's something inherent in the heart of man that knows that something is not right that things are out of whack.

B) So these stories are made up of a fallen kingdom of a fallen world and then all of a sudden the hero comes to the rescue. {WE NEED RESCUED!}

1) Paul says the very creation around us knows this and it's longing for the day it's groaning, it's a longing to be rescued.

C) All of creation as one theologian put it is singing in a minor key.

1) But there is hope

D) A savior is coming – restoration is on the way.

Something amazing is going to be birthed. – Creation is expressing birth pangs

So creation is groaning / We also are groaning

23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Idea this body is going to be replaced by a new body.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:1-7

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “*Death is swallowed up in victory.*” 1 Corinthians 15:53

⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?”

All of those verses are in reference to the redemption of our bodies – Paul is referring to in v.23

24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

We are groaning: Getting out of bed in the morning? Aches – sometimes I feel 80

A) Our focus is not on what we can see – what we can see is not getting better – getting worse.

**B) They can say 40 is the new 20 – 50 is the new 30 all they want – but most of us know – NOT TRUE
1) THE OUTWARD MAN IS FADING**

C) What we are eagerly waiting for is when Jesus comes – sets everything right

1) Taken to heaven – new body – no more suffering

1 John 3:2-3

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

C) Whoever has this hope purifies Himself – just as He is pure.

Like a bride getting ready for her wedding day!

A) She wants to look beautiful – her dress perfect – hair just right

B) She is not going to hop in her car wedding dress – go through the drive thru at in and out – order a DD animal style to eat in the car with her dress on, on the way to the Church. - **What is that stain?**

C) Thank you for the Blood of Jesus that continues to wash us clean –

SO creation groans – We are groaning – There is another that groans **The Spirit is groaning V.26-27**

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The Holy Spirit also helps us in our weakness. In this context, weakness refers to our human condition in general, not to specific weaknesses.

A) Weakness of our fallen nature, our tendency to sin and doubt and struggle.

Aa) To supersede that weakness Jesus has given us His spirit.

B) His Spirit supplies us with all we need to be faithful, effective, and protected children of God.

**C) Here Paul is illustrating another way that the spirit is working in us – { ALREADY SEEN
1) V.4 HS is helping us to walk toward Sanctification.
V.11 The Spirit of God is empowering us V.14 Leading us, v.15 In our hearts crying out Abba father**

D) That is what the Spirit of God is doing in your heart

Here Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit inside of us is interceding for us with groanings Uttered.

A) He is praying for us – according to the will of God

B) Times I don't know what to pray – Holy Spirit is praying – connecting my spirit.... The will of God

C) Always moving us in the direction of God's will and God's way for our lives

See the Holy Spirit is always focused on the goal for us! – What is the goal?

A) This is the context of Romans 8:28-29

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

This is what we forget- All things are working together for God's purpose –

A) That is the good – that Paul is referencing

B) See what don't see the good in things – we get disillusioned – what is the purpose? Keep reading

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, {That is where all of this is heading Big picture – Make us like Jesus } that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

C) That is His Specific purpose – the thing that is true of all believers – His desire to **Conform us into the image of Jesus.** Ultimate target – bullseye

D) God the father is seeking to work out in each one of our lives

1) Make us more like Jesus- all things are working together for good – to that end – part of His purpose.

He has a specific plan that fits into that – how you are going to reflect Jesus to your culture and world –

A) How your life fits into the greater plan of God – His mission to redeem lost humanity.

B) He is working in us a specific and unique plan that fits into **that overall purpose of God.**

C) When I say that the plan is to conform us into the image of Jesus

1) That doesn't mean – little robots or clones

D) But each one of us is to be this unique expression of Christ to the World

E) Our sufferings and life experiences all become a part of our unique depiction of Jesus

1) That is the good that God is wanting to produce in us!

Joseph is a classic example of how God orchestrates a life for His Specific plan and purpose.

A) **Joseph was this remarkable young man** who had this deep heart for God./.. dreams and visions.

B) One of them was on the **sun and the moon** and the 11 stars bowing down before his star.

1) Well his whole family took that to mean that hey one day – I think all of you are going to bow down before me.

C) Arrogant – little bro – plus he was the favorite son of their father because he was the first born of his favorite wife Rachel –

1) **The one he worked a long time for in order to marry her.** {Another story for another time

Joseph life takes a dramatic change at a place called Dothan.

A) Pops say go check on your bros – Joseph sets out to find them –

B) He discovers they are camping in this place called Dothan – little village – **they are just outside of it.**

Bb) Bros recognize – Joseph – **Coat of many colors** – here comes the promised one –

1) Debate ensues – **kill him or sell him?**

C) Get nothing for him if we kill him so let's sell him –

1) Midianite traders — **Bros take coat** – sorry dad found this Joe is dead.

All things work together for good right?

A) Joseph's situation is going to get better right? because that is what that verse means right.

B) Well the Midianites take Joe and sell him to the Egyptians as a slave – **Better ? Not really ?**

C) Joseph ends up being sold to a High ranking official – guy name Potiphar

1) **Good gig** – important guy –

D) Joseph quickly proves Himself trustworthy and Potiphar promotes him and puts him in Charge of his whole house.

All things are working together – situation is changing for the better – really?

A) **Still a slave, still separated from his family,** still far far far away from home.

B) And then it happens – Potiphar's wife gets the hots for Joseph – pursuing him –

1) The boss's wife wants to have sex with him – **He is resisting her advances.**

C) One day she grabs him – lie with me Joseph – Joseph flees youthful lust – runs right out of his clothes – first streaker in the Bible

D) Potiphar's wife humiliated and angered by the rejection – accuses Joseph of attempted rape – she is holding his cloak. He did flee naked or close

E) Joseph is thrown in prison – where he stays for several years – but hey all things work together for good –
1) Situation didn't change for the better.

Years go by – Joseph becomes known as one who can interpret dreams –

A) He gets an audience with Pharaoh – appointed to 2nd in command..... great blessing

B) See the situation changed – yes – after years 13 years of being a slave and being in Prison.
1) But yes the situation did finally change.

But listen it was not to bless Joseph primarily – THE PURPOSE OF GOD was to save His family.

A) See this is what we read about Joseph – four times in Genesis – each time his situation changed.

B) God was with Joseph – each time

C) He is always with us in the storm.

1) Same way Jesus was with the disciples in the boat – sleeping storm –
2) Amazed – who is this wind and waves

D) He is always working all things together for good – for His Purpose.

God was with Joseph !

A) Bros come – Finally revealed – they are going to be saved

B) Joseph makes this statement - Genesis 50:20

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Genesis 50:20

“You meant to hurt me, but God turned your evil into good to save the lives of many people, which is being done.” NCV

C) Suddenly the 27 year plan and purpose of God is unfolded that day when Joseph is used by God to preserve the family of Jacob –

1) Genesis 46:27 tells us that 70 people total from Jacob's family are brought to Egypt.

D) The family grows and spends the next 400 yrs in Egypt – becoming a large nation – slavery

1) Rescued – led to a new land – where the nation of Israel is birthed

E) Messiah would come – a savior for the world –

What took place that day at Dothan when Joseph was sold to the Midianites was all a part of God's ultimate plan of redemption.

A) The story of Joseph reminds us that God does accomplish His purposes – His purposes are not forgotten. { Delays are not Denials

B) Life is like the weaving of a tapestry – yarn side – random colors –

1) other side is a beautiful design or picture. – OH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

There is always a bigger story within the Story!

A) Here is the point – Romans 8:28 doesn't just mean that something good that is going to come out of this

B) But there is a SPECIFIC GOOD -

1) The Truth has a target – God's good, God's good, God's purpose

V.29 Conform you into the image of Jesus

A) We want to interpret Romans 8:28 to mean that God wants me Happy = situation changes for better

Happiness is based on Happenings

B) But more than your Happiness God is concerned with your Holiness – Holy = Set apart – Whole

1) What He is doing in us to make us like Jesus

C) So when our situation changes difficulty strikes – and we want to embrace Romans 8:28 –

1) the question we need to be asking – is not when is the situation going to change for the better.

D) But rather – Lord how are you going to use this situation to make me Better. –

How are you wanting to use this situation in my life to make me more like Jesus.

A) That is the Target of this truth.

B) If the situation changes for the better – great!

1) but the thing that will keep me from getting bitter when God delays is realizing He is using this to make me BETTER.

C) He is using this to make me Like Jesus!

So let me give you some examples of what this can look like Practically

A) Gal who has her boyfriend break up with her – well meaning friends say “All things= Another guy.

B) 15 years go by – there isn’t another guy – now she is looking at potential of being single forever.

C) Here is how God is working into her to make her like Jesus –

1) God is working into her this incredible compassion for those who are lonely.

D) He uses her to impact other singles to find their fulfillment in Jesus not in the hope of a spouse.

1) She is becoming this tremendous encourager

The gal who loses her spouse. – She is not even interested in another. {Not better situation

A) Here is how God is using this in her life.

Aa) God is working into her the same type of heart that was in Jesus – she has this greater longing for eternity.

B) She is losing her grip on the temporal and becoming much more focused on the eternal.

1) Through it she is more open than ever more willing to go wherever the Lord would send her.

Take the guy who lost his job – now he has a job that doesn’t pay as much as his old job.

A) Here is how God is working that into His life so he too is losing his grip on the material.

B) Jesus is working in him to be more free – and he is in a job that gives him a greater opportunity to share Jesus with others.

D) He is now in a place where he used to be on the top end of the economic scale/ now he is on the bottom. –

1) Like Jesus He has a Greater compassion for people who are struggling financially

Take the woman whose life was turned upside down by adultery.

A) Her husband cheated on her and then ran off with his mistress – leaving their family in shambles.

B) She loved this man – loved their family life together.

C) All things work together doesn’t necessarily mean – new husband – she is not interested.

1) That is not what she is waiting around for

D) But here is what God is doing – through this experience –

1) God has worked deeply into her a profound understanding of what Jesus went through to be betrayed by someone He loved.

She has a keen awareness of the Fellowship of Christ suffering.

A) She has a greater understanding of that pain – and

B) Jesus is working in her a willingness – to trust again – to love others.

1) Like Jesus what it means to love others – and make her self vulnerable to others – even though she might get hurt

C) Jesus gave to those He knew would turn on Him

D) He is using all of it – Make her like Himself

We will close with this thought tonight promise in V.30

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.