

Series: God Saves #1330

**Title: Romans 8.28
For Our Good**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. This will be our last day reflecting on this twenty-eighth verse in Romans chapter 8. I want to make some concluding comments, because on Monday we are turning ourselves towards Christmas with a very special series focused on the birth of Christ the King. Do carve out some time to be with us during the whole month of December as we prepare our hearts to worship Jesus born in Bethlehem. His birth is the most important birth, and we shall go into the Scripture and read about it yet again. That begins on Monday. Invite someone to join us, if you would.

Let me get Romans 8.28 back on your busy radar. The text says, **“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.”** We talked about “And we know...” We talked about “God causes all things...” And we have talked about “to those who love God, to those who are called...” Yesterday I gave a brief insight into the words (one word in Greek) “work together.” Today I want to remind you what was said last time about “work together,” then comment briefly on “for good.” And what that leaves us with is “according to His [meaning God’s] purpose...”

And because “according to His purpose” relates directly to verses 29 and 30 of this same chapter, we will continue to follow the Apostle Paul’s logic and theology when we come back to Romans 8. Remember, we are not finished with Romans chapter 8. Verse 28 was only the first of three verses we will study. This series is based on Romans 8, verses 28-30. So, after the New Year, we will return and dig into the end of verse 28 and verses 29 and 30. I hope you will hide away in your mind and heart what has thus far been covered and we will come back again to this *great* text, Lord willing, in 2023.

The Apostle tells us that, “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called...” “Work together,” what does that mean? In the Greek language this is one word. And we get our English word synergy from it. God takes the good things and the bad things and makes them cooperate so they work together for our good. There is synergy. And here is what else I want you to know about this word. It is in the present tense. That is, God working together happens without pause. He’s doing it now. All day every day and all night every night, God is doing this in our lives. He is always working all things together for our good! Furthermore, this word is in the active voice. Active. *Action*. God is on the move. And this word in Greek is in the indicative mood, meaning this is a statement of *fact*.

It is factually correct. It is actively happening. It is happening in our lives at this very moment, and every moment. More often than not we are oblivious to this. We are living without being conscious of what God is doing. We may wonder about certain circumstances, but in general we are busy buzzing about, going here and there, working and attending class, parenting and being parented, traveling, commuting, shopping, eating, sleeping, on the computer, at the video game console, watching TV, and yes (I certainly hope), serving in church, active in worship, prayer, and Bible reading, and loving others as we share the gospel.

And as we live, God is causing all things to work together – in the present tense, in the active voice, in the indicative mood – for our good. Aren’t you glad that God is God and you are not God? I am. What a relief. He bears the responsibility and I receive the benefits!

And what about this all being for our “good”? What is the good? Well, I have already submitted to you that the good is well summarized in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 18, **“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”** Anything that causes us to grow in the grace and knowledge of God is for our good. That is true. And there is something else here. I believe that in Romans 8, verse 28, “for good” connects with Romans 8, verse 29, which speaks of, quote, **“To become conformed to the image of His Son...”** Anything that causes us to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, who is Jesus, this friends is for our good!

We hear so much in our society about conformity. We have to conform to this and that. We have to comply or be made to comply with recently developed societal norms. And those who do not comply must be cancelled, punished, and in every way be persuaded to *conform*. But as Christians we know that we have One Person to conform to; one Authority; and one Ruler. He is Jesus the Christ. We must behave like Christ, act like Christ, talk like Christ, live like Christ, witness like Christ, pray like Christ, love like Christ, suffer like Christ, die like Christ, and be resurrected from the dead like Christ. And so on. Being conformed to the image of Jesus *is* for our good.

And so, will you join me in reflecting this weekend on how Romans 8, verse 28 has been applied to your life? Can you look back and see the fingerprints of God in your life? Can you say, “*I know* that God has caused all things – the good things, the bad things, the sad things – God has caused all things to work together for my good, because I do love God and have been called according to His purpose”? This is a worthwhile reflection.

Thinking about this verse, I want to end with a story that will solidify the truths we have talked about in our minds, hearts, and souls. I get differing opinions on who this preacher was, but many recount this story. I share it here in the words of Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

“An old preacher said, ‘Here is a statement which appears contradictory, ‘All things work together for good to them that love God.’ How can that be? The good things, I can see, are working in that direction; but look at those other things – they seem to be working in the opposite direction. How can you say that things which are working in opposite directions are for my good?’

The old preacher answered by the illustration of a watch. He said, “Take your watch and open it. What do you see? You see that one wheel is turning in an anti-clockwise direction, but it is attached to another wheel that is working in a clockwise direction. You look at this machinery and you say, ‘This is mad; this is quite ridiculous; here are wheels turning in opposite directions; the man who made the watch must have been a madman.’ But he wasn’t. He has so arranged this watch and put in a main spring to govern all the wheels, that when it is wound up, though one wheel turns one way, and another that way, they are all working together to move the hands round the face of the watch. They appear to be in contradiction but they are all working together to the same end.

Our lives are like that. Look at life, and you ask at first what is happening? I can see that certain things are good for me, but other things seem to be all against me. But think again of the great Watchmaker [God] who has planned it all. Do not jump to conclusions, look for the ultimate purpose, look for the ultimate end. And if you do so with a spiritual eye you will soon begin to see that God knows what He is doing (169-170).” End of story. End of a great analogy: the watch.

With a verse like Romans 8.28, ultimately, here is the question: do we trust God? Do *you* trust God with your life? Do *I* trust God with my life? How much do we trust Him? My prayer for all of us is that we will understand what this verse means biblically and theologically, yes. But also, experientially. In daily practice we will apply what the Scripture says. In the words of Proverbs chapter 3, verses 5 and 6, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.**” Amen.

Let me end the week in prayer, “Lord, thank You for these words of intense comfort to every believer in Your Son Jesus Christ. ‘We know that You cause all things to work together for good to those who love You, to those who are called according to *Your* purpose.’ We cherish this verse. And we love You. Amen. Join us again on Monday because Jesus Christ is born!

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