

Series: God Saves #1384

Title: Romans 8.28c

Our View, God's View

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. Yesterday we finished our brief review of what we have learned thus far in the New Testament Book of Romans, the eighth chapter and verse 28. Allow me to read this verse off the top, **“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.”** What a promise, given to those who love God! I ended last time with the question: do we trust God? Do we believe the truth of this verse applies to *us*?

Have you heard the story about the two older Christian gentlemen who were talking together? One says to the other, “It is hard for me to trust God in the dark passages of my life.” “Well,” said the other, “If you cannot trust a man out of your sight, he is not worth much; and if you cannot trust God in the dark, it shows that you do not trust Him at all (*Commentary on Romans*, WH Griffith Thomas, 228).” That is so true, isn’t it? My prayer for each one of us as we make our next step in this verse, and the two verses that follow this one, is that we will trust in God. No matter what we are going through, no matter how dark life gets, God is trustworthy.

I want to pray for listeners who may be struggling right now with knowing in absolute certainty that God is causing all things to work together for their good. Lord, we remember Your servant Jacob who once said, ‘All things are against me.’ He was wrong. As we read the rest of his story in Genesis we learn that the whole time You were working all things together for Jacob’s *good*. I pray now for believers within the sound of my voice who feel like, ‘All things are against me.’ I pray You will comfort them with this verse that is Your promise for sovereign and providential protection and victory over what confounds and confuses them, disturbs and disrupts them at this hour. Please, may each one of us trust You wholeheartedly. See us through our trials and tribulations this day. As You did for Jacob, do for us. In Christ’s Name we pray, Amen.

We come now to the last part of Romans 8, verse 28 and this phrase: “according to His purpose.” And let me make sure I state the obvious: His purpose is God’s purpose. “His” here refers to God. So, we can read this, “according to God’s purpose.” The Apostle Paul is saying that God has a purpose for letting us know with absolute certainty that God is causing all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called. I want to talk with you about God’s purpose a lot in the days ahead, but first I want you to notice that with this phrase Paul introduces a change in viewpoint. Thus far, you and I have been dealing with this verse from the human viewpoint. Now we will see this verse and the ones that follow from God’s viewpoint.

Certainly, you have had this experience where you look at something from your viewpoint and someone else looks at the same something from their viewpoint and when you compare viewpoints it is interesting to see what you both saw. Sometimes this also happens just within our own perspective. Recently I visited the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania. During the United States Civil War a significant three-day battle was fought there in July of 1863. I am very interested in the U.S. Civil War, and have visited several battlefields, but Gettysburg always captures my heart and my imagination in a way that others have not. I love it there. There is so much to learn and to think about and to be challenged on.

Anyway, I made my way down to the corner of the extensive terrain on which this three-day battle was fought and came to a series of rock formations known as “Devil’s Den.” This is a hill strewn with big boulders and was a key spot used by artillery and sharpshooters on the second day, July 2, 1863. It has good views towards Little Round Top another famous, and crucial hill, on which fierce fighting took place between the Union and Confederate armies. Anyway (and I could say much more about this, reminding myself this is *not* a military history podcast!), my viewpoint when I started, at the bottom of the rock formation at Devil’s Den was a lot different than when I ascended the rocks and took in a second viewpoint.

The view at the bottom was different than the view at the top. In my first view I looked up at the big boulders. In my second view I looked down upon the big boulders. In my first view, yes, I could see across to Little Round Top, but in my second view I could see the Round Top with much greater clarity. Very different views. Both were valid. Both told me information I needed and wanted to know. Both viewpoints were included in this recent visit to the Gettysburg National Military Park. In a similar way, Romans 8, verse 28 (the first part) is written from the human viewpoint. Romans 8, verse 28 (the last part) is written from the divine viewpoint.

Different views, both are valid, both tell us something we need and want to know, and both viewpoints are included in our visit to the Bible. The human perspective is “those who love God.” The divine perspective is “those who are called according to His purpose.” There is our perspective, and there is God’s perspective. There is our viewpoint, “those who love God.” And there is God’s viewpoint, “those who are called according to His purpose.”

This is also a key turning point in the text. From here, at the end of verse 28 to the end of verse 30 the Apostle Paul (author of the Book of Romans) lays out *how* God saves us from our sins from the viewpoint of...*God*. This will be the divine perspective. And guess what that means? Ah, we will sometimes struggle to comprehend and make sense of what’s coming. God is God and we are not God. God moves in mysterious ways. He has a viewpoint and perspective that we do not and will not. So when we talk about doctrines (teaching) like divine election and predestination, calling, justification, glorification, and more we are depending on the grace and wisdom of God to see these truths from the *Lord’s* viewpoint.

It is fascinating to me that the Apostle never frets about reconciling the human and divine viewpoints presented in these three verses (Romans 8.28-30). He does not attempt that. Paul just lays out the truth, he teaches the doctrine, and allows both himself and his readers to acknowledge that we are mere men and women. We are fragile creatures with *very* limited minds. And when God presents salvation in the Bible there will always be much we struggle to grasp. *But*, on the essential matters the Bible is always *very clear*. So clear in fact that even a little child can understand. Each of us are sinners, in desperate need of salvation, and Jesus Christ has come into the world and died for our sins. By our faith *in* Him, we are then saved – forgiven and set free from the sin that has so easily entangled us.

That is salvation. But, again, there is more behind this for us to uncover and discover. And that is what we will be doing. Now, to help us, I have someone I would like to introduce you to, and His name is Jesus. I think if we can hear from our Lord and listen to what He said about salvation from sin in the divine perspective, we will more easily capture this in our minds, hearts, and souls. Let us look to Jesus! And, let us *always* look to Him and listen to Him and give Him our undivided attention. Jesus is our Master Teacher and all of us His students.

A logistical note then: if you are able to have your Bible with you and open when you listen to *God Is*, be prepared to turn to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and the earthly ministry of Christ. And keep a finger here at Romans 8, verses 28-30. We will also make reference to other passages of Scripture. Should you be otherwise occupied when you hear *God Is*, let me encourage you to read the Bible in your own time later that same day or night, so that you can see what I see in the passage before us. This content is best learned with an open Bible and an open mind! I hope you will bring both to our study.

And the first insight I want us to grasp is that Jesus Christ had a purpose during His ministry here on earth. Romans 8.28 talks about, “those who are called according to His purpose.” And so we must ask: what is the purpose of God? And we listen now as Jesus, the Son of God, answers our question.

But that will have to wait for tomorrow. I thought for sure we would get to the Gospels today, but that clock has no mercy! So here’s what you can do. Read Luke chapter 5, verses 27-32. (Luke 5.27-32.) And we’ll discuss that tomorrow here, because God Is.

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