

Series: God Saves #1395

Title: Romans 8.29-30

God & His Plan of Salvation

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, in our introduction to soteriology, we said that God has *the* plan of salvation and He has given it to us in the Bible so that we can know what His plan is. In this regard, Romans chapter 8, verses 28-30 and especially verses 29 and 30 are essential to see and to understand. Before I read the passage and make some general comments about it, this reminder: write to me this weekend and get a simple, one-page document that you can use to complement our study of these verses. Simply write *Salvation* and I will know what you mean. Email is mark@godisministry.org and the mailbox is God Is, PO Box 802, Winchester Massachusetts 01890. These addresses will be repeated at the end. Why delay? Write *today*!

If you have already written to me and received this document, now is a good time to have it in front of you. And you will notice I have included the Scripture reading right on the bottom of the page. Give ear now to Romans chapter 8, verses 28-30. **“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 those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”**

The church has historically referred to this as the *Ordo Salutis*, which is Latin for the *order of salvation*, and some have called this the golden chain of salvation. As we look into the salvation plan of God for us, it is important to remember that each part of the plan works together in concert with all the other parts. Just like the links on a chain – a nice piece of jewellery or even a chain linked fence – just as those links form an inseparable chain, the same is true here in the Bible. Let me show this to you.

Notice in verse 29 that “those whom He foreknew, He also predestined...” There we have the first link in the chain, or the first move in the order of salvation. Then we drop down to verse 30 and we find the second link. Notice in verse 30 the Apostle Paul says, “...and these whom He predestined, He also called...” The second link is calling. Verse 30 continues, “...and these whom He called, He also justified...” Justification is another link in the chain. And then verse 30 ends, “...these whom He justified, He also glorified.” Glorification is the final link in the chain. So in this passage we have: foreknowledge and predestination (which go together – that’s one link), we have calling, we have justification, and we have glorification.

And if you are looking at the document I sent you, there are other terms, other links in this chain. Do not worry about those for now. We will come to them later.

Foreknowledge and predestination (which go together), calling, justification, and glorification. At this point let me say this. Number one, we cannot separate these. We have to take them as a whole. Let’s say you had a precious, expensive, real gold chain. Well, you would find that each link is inseparable from all the other links. They go together. Likewise, in this golden chain of salvation, God has made it so we have to take each link as part of the whole. We cannot divide these. That being said, for the purposes of teaching this text, and given our time limitations, I will in a sense separate these doctrines, *briefly*. As a jeweller would put one link in a gold chain under the magnifying glass at his eye, so too we will put predestination under the magnifying glass. Then calling, then justification, and later glorification. But we do so only for the purposes of learning. I will remind you of this along the way.

Number two, we must identify God as the One who initiates each move in the order of salvation. Another way to say this, in keeping with Romans 8.28, is that God is the One who fulfils His purpose. Quoting Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, "God Himself not only planned the purpose, and thought of it, and initiated it; it is God ultimately who is carrying out and putting it into operation (*Romans Chapter 8.17-39*, 210)." He is absolutely right. You count this later for yourself, but I count eight times in these verses where "He" is used in relation to these words and "He" obviously refers to *God*. The Bible says "He," referring to whom? Referring to *God*!

Look at the Bible. Verse 29, those *He* foreknew, *He* also predestined (now verse 30) and these whom *He* predestined, *He* also called; and these whom *He* called, *He* also justified; and these whom *He* justified, *He* also glorified." That is eight times. Anytime the Bible repeats itself, we know whatever (in this case whoever) is being repeated is very important. Clearly, the Holy Spirit wants us to see that God sets the order of our salvation and He initiates each action in this process. He planned the purpose and He carries it out by putting the plan into operation. God implements *His* plan for those He saves.

Number one, we cannot separate these links in the chain. We have to take them as a whole. Number two, we must identify God as the One who initiates each move in the order of salvation. Number three, let's keep in mind the whole way through our discussion the setting of the plan of God's salvation. Lloyd-Jones again, "Their setting is pastoral; it is comfort for the children of God, for believers faced with trials and tribulations, who do not know what to pray for as they ought (203)." That's right also. And this is why I gave an overview of the entire chapter of Romans 8, and specifically the verses that precede verse 28. And, I gave extensive teaching on verse 28. I did that to set this context. A very comforting context for the Christian when God says that He is causing all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Most times Christians focus on verse 28, but to exclusion of the verses that follow it. That is a mistake. If one keeps reading, and believing what one reads, and if one studies these verses 29 and 30 and wrestles with their application to practical, everyday life, then one will find the impact of Romans 8, verse 28 is exponentially more powerful and life altering. You have heard of the mantra in real estate, "location, location, location." Well, in Bible study a good mantra is, "context, context, context." I hope that each one of us will grasp the pastoral and practical context in which Paul writes God's theology.

A lot of believers struggle with this word "theology." It seems to them complicated, too "over their head," too intellectual, sometimes boring, and mostly *irrelevant* to the problems, the questions, and just the busyness of everyday life in this world. But that's not the case at all. For those who love God, theology, the study of God is *very exciting*! And the Bible, God's Book, does a perfect job of laying down theology *in life*! If we just take the Apostle Paul, the author of Romans, we see him doing it in just these few verses. He connects the theology of predestination and justification and glorification to we who struggle and have bad things happen to us and who suffer and who do not really know how to pray as we would like and we who doubt and deal in conflict, etcetera.

God is *The* God of comfort. As the hymn says, "He leads His dear children along." Are you a child of God at this hour? Is Christ your Lord and Savior? If yes, then you can be certain that God applies all of Romans 8.28-30 to *you*. He lives *in* you by the power of His Holy Spirit. He is close. He will never leave you nor forsake you. You are the one He foreknows and predestines and calls and justifies and glorifies. So our journey into this text will be significant for you. I encourage you to be here each weekday and when you miss, visit our website and get all caught up on the God Is Podcast. The website: godisministry.org.

What have we learned today? In summary, number one, we cannot separate these links in the chain. We have to take them as a whole. Number two, we must identify God as the One who initiates each move in the order of salvation. Number three, let's keep in mind the whole way through our discussion the setting of the plan of God's salvation. If you can add these thoughts to what was said earlier in the week, then I believe it sets us up nicely for what follows, Lord willing, next week. Romans 8, verse 29 begins, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined..." What does that mean? Find out, beginning on Monday, as we continue to discover who God Is.

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