

30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory . - Romans 8:30 NLT

25 In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory." - Isaiah 45:25 ESV

7 The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. - Galatians 3:7 NLT

In verse 30 Paul reminds His Jewish audience of what they were promised in Isaiah 45:25, to be justified and glorified in the Lord. But we know from Galatians 3:7 that as believers we too are Abraham's children and so the promise belongs to us as well. The Spirit of Jesus dwells in us, and when God looks upon us, he sees Christ's righteousness. That is why we have right standing (justification) with God. And as Paul said in verse 17, we are heirs of God's glory, which is His dignity, worth, status, rule, or power. We are partners in God's purpose. His love for us and in us is so intertwined with God's love through us they can't be separated.

When God calls us, he invites us to join Him. To do that we must first come to Jesus in faith. But as God's children he also calls us to join Him in carrying out His purpose in this world. How do feel God has (or will) use you in doing His good work?

WRAP-UP

Our examination of this passage of scripture is probably a departure from what you've previously understood it to mean. At this point you might regret the loss of its familiar meaning. That's ok. But don't let that stop you from reflecting on and embracing its meaning as a continuation of Paul's theme of our integration and collaboration with God as he works towards His purpose for all of creation; that we would be free from the corruption of sin and death and restored to our original place to dwell with God and wisely steward His creation.

MEMORY VERSE

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. - Romans 8:28 NLT

Challenge- Reread all of Romans 8 with this new perspective in mind.

A New Perspective – the Jesus Mold Romans 8 - Week 7

INTRODUCTION

For those who have been in the church for a while, you are probably familiar with one of the verses in our key passage this week. Like so many of those "coffee cup" verses, we tend to simplify Romans 8:28 and hope it means what we want it to mean. But in our deep dive into this chapter of Paul's letter to the Roman church, we are looking closely at the surrounding text and the theme of Paul's message as we unpack this section of Romans 8. And as we do, we may discover new meaning within our key passage, Romans 8:28-30.

Ice Breaker

Did you ever discover that the lyrics you thought you heard being sung were really saying something totally different?

Key Passage

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. 29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. - Romans 8:28-30 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1 It's All Good, or is it?

It is dangerous to lift one sentence out of scripture and try to make sense of it, because normally there is more being said than a single sentence can convey. That is true of Romans 8:28. When taken alone the verse seems

to say that everything that happens will have a good reason or a good ending if we love God. But is that really what Paul meant? If so, then the pain and grief suffered by believers is caused by God but will be used for some good purpose of His. That hardly sounds like a loving God.

Have you ever struggled to make sense of, or to find something good about a particularly difficult or painful situation? How do such tragedies influence your view of God?

This verse refers to “those who love God.” How do we know who is included in that definition? To the Jews, it was a part of their identity, because they were taught to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. But Paul has already identified those who love God in several of the preceding verses.

What are some of the identifying characteristics of those who love God as found in these verses, especially concerning their interaction with God’s Spirit?

1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ... 4 He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. 5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ... 9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ... 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ... 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. ... 23 And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. - Romans 8:1, 4-5, 9, 14, 16-17, 23 NLT

2. Working together for God’s good purpose

In our study last week, we saw how, in the verses immediately preceding this passage, all creation, believers and the Spirit are groaning in anticipation of a future time when God will create a new heaven and earth free from the effects of sin and death. The very next statement is that God

works all things together for good. But we are only familiar with the English version which may be translated in a variety of ways. Sometimes the nuances of the original language can be lost in translation. Paul uses the Greek word *synergeō* which we read translated “work together”. This is the same root as our word *synergy*. It means to partner in labor, a collaboration of parties.

*What is the difference between God working things together **for** our good versus God partnering **with** us to do good? How do we see God working together with believers in Verses 26 and 27? What is the good result we are working towards? Does this change your previous understanding of this verse?*

26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. - Romans 8:26-27 NLT

3. Foreknown, predestined, conformed

29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. - Romans 8:29 NLT

5 "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." - Jeremiah 1:5 NLT

We have always been known by God. In Jeremiah 1:5 God says he not only knew Jeremiah before he was in the womb, but God set him apart for a purpose. In Romans 8:29 Paul says God knew His people in advance and chose them to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Like Jeremiah, God has a purpose in mind for us. This is not a statement about choosing who will be saved. Paul is continuing his description of the purpose or vocation of the believer as God’s partner in doing His good will.

God is constantly working to mold us into the image of Jesus. In your group, take a moment to encourage each other in the ways you see Christ reflected in them.

God’s purpose for his people is to reflect Jesus to the world around us.