

The End

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] Paul to the Romans chapter 8, Romans chapter 8 and reading at verse 28, Romans 8, 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. To them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

For over whom he did predestinate, them he also called. For whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified.

I would like just to read these verses again, this time from the Good News Bible. We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him.

Those whom he has called according to his purpose. Those whom God has already chosen, he also set apart to become like his Son. So that the Son would be the eldest brother in a large family.

[1 : 22] And to those whom God set apart, he called. And those he called, he put right with himself. And he shared his glory with them.

We look particularly at verses 29 and 30 this evening. Paul reminds us in this chapter that there is a purpose running through history.

And not only is there a purpose running through history, but there is also a purpose running through the life of every child of God.

Paul is looking at the big picture, we might say, in this chapter. He is looking at the cosmos in the light of the redemption which Christ has purchased for it.

But he is also thinking of the experience of the individuals, people, who are followers of Christ.

Those who be described as the called according to God's purpose.

[2 : 37] They know that God is overruling all things. Even the adverse things of life. God is causing these things to work together for good.

The key phrase, perhaps, in this section is the description of the people of God as the called.

According to God's purpose in verse 28.

In verses 29 and 30 expand on the meaning of the phrase. What does it mean to be called? What does it mean to be those who are the called?

Literally, the called according to his purpose. In verse 29, Paul focuses upon the purpose. And in verse 30, he focuses upon the calling.

So we see here Paul's expounding those who are called according to his purpose. First of all, in terms of the purpose to which they have been called.

[3 : 47] And secondly, in terms of the calling with which they have been called. So what we have in verse 29 is, as it were, a panoramic view.

You know how sometimes on television we see a great panoramic view of a landscape. We see the whole of a valley, the whole of a mountain, a panorama.

And then suddenly the camera zooms in on some single object. Which would be lost in the big picture. But the camera zooms in on it.

And that's what Paul is doing here. Verse 29, we have the big picture. We have the panorama. We have the cosmic sweep of God's purpose for his people.

And then in verse 30, the camera zooms in to individual experience. To the experience of the people of God. So first of all, the panoramic sweep in verse 29.

[4 : 51] Here, Paul deals with the purpose of God. The purpose of God from its origins to its objectives.

The purpose of God from beginning to end. From eternity to eternity. From before the world began. Until after the world will cease to be.

The origins of God's purpose. Are summed up in two words. The word foreknowledge. And the word predestination.

For whom he did foreknow. That is God did foreknow. He also did predestinate. To be conformed to the image of his son. These two words.

To foreknow. And to predestinate. A sum up. The origin. Of God's purpose. For us. And the two phrases. Which sum up.

[5 : 56] The objectives. Of this purpose. Are that. Christ's people. Are called to be conformed. To the image.

Of Christ himself. And that. Secondly. That Christ might be the firstborn. Among many brethren. These are the two purposes. Are the two objectives.

Of God's purpose. First of all. That Christ's people. Might be conformed to his likeness. That Christ himself. Might become. The firstborn. Of many.

Brothers. And sisters. Well then. Let's say. Look. Tonight. At the origins. First of all. The origins. Of. God's purpose. It's. The origins of God's purpose. Are found in the foreknowledge of God. And in the predestination. Of God.

[6 : 54] Those. God. For you. Now. We. Often. Use the term. Foreknowledge. In the terms of. In the sense of.

Foresight. And. Some people understand. That to be the meaning here. That God. Because he is omniscient. Because he is all knowing. Foresaw.

He knew beforehand. Those who in the course of time. Would come to believe. However. This is not the meaning. Of the Greek language. Which perhaps is.

A. Is. Not accurately translated. By the word. Foreknowledge. The word that is used here. Is a word which is much more specific. It's used in 1st Peter chapter 1.

Verse 20. Where we read that Christ was foreordained. Before the foundation of the world. The word. Translated foreknowledge here. Is translated. Foreordained.

[7 : 50] In 1st Peter. In that 1st Peter. Reference chapter 1. Verse 2. The New English Bible. Renders it. Those chosen of old. In the purpose of God.

There is a sense of. Of choosing. And it's not just a question of. Knowing in advance. Or foreseeing. But actually of choosing. There is initiative. As well as omniscience.

Peter used the word again. About the death of Jesus. In his speech. In Acts chapter 2. In his sermon. In Acts chapter 2. Verse 23. But it tells us.

That Jesus was delivered. By the determinate. Counsel. And foreknowledge. Of God. The word there is much more.

Than simply. A God. Forseeing. Forseeing. Forseeing. What would happen. Again. I might quote. The rendering of the New English Bible. Of that verse.

[8 : 47] It is as follows. He. Had been given up to you. By the deliberate will. And plan. Of God. And that is the idea. The idea of a plan.

The idea of a choosing. A divine choosing. And this is the way. Why I read from the Good News Bible. Because it renders. For. The phrase thus.

For those whom God. Had already. Chosen. That is the meaning. Of the term. That is the origin. The origin of God's purpose.

For us. Goes back. To eternity. Goes back to his election. Goes back to his choice. The second word. Is the word.

Predestinated. He also. For those who made it. For no. He also did. Predestinate. The verb here.

[9 : 42] Means. To mark out. In advance. For a special purpose. That's what the word means. To mark out. In advance. For a special. Purpose. I know that sometimes.

Some of you might go to auction sales. I remember meeting Mr. Jack one night. At an auction. Car auction. Market. Here in Edinburgh. We often go to auction sales.

And. If you want to buy wisely. At an auction sale. You go before the sale. You look around. And you have a good look. At the items. Which.

Are on sale. You preview them. And you select those you like. You require. And those you like. Those that serve your purpose. A.

And that is the idea. That is. Behind this word. To. A. Predestinate. To mark out. In advance. For a specific purpose. You might go to an auction sale.

[10:38] You see a wardrobe. And you say. Well. That wardrobe would suit me. Exactly right. And I would like to. To. To. To. To bid for that. And so you bid. With much more confidence. Than somebody who might be bidding blind.

Or again. An example. Might be taken from a shepherd. Separating some sheep. Of the flock. And. You see that sometimes.

At the. The. The. The. Sheep dog trials. Sheep can be separated. From others. For a specific purpose. Perhaps they're going to be put on show.

Perhaps they're going to. A. Be sold. A. Separately. And so the idea of setting apart. Of marking out. And setting apart.

For a specific purpose. Again. That is the rendering that we've. Noted. In the good news bible. So. These are the origins. A.

[11:36] These are the origins. Of God's purpose. The origins are. That. Lie in the foreknowledge of God. And in the predestination.

Of God. This action took place. Before the world. Began. He chose. Us.

His people. Long. Long. Ago. Or as the new english bible puts it. God knew his own. Before they ever were. That sums it up.

God. Knew his own. Before. Before. They ever. Were. And these two words. For. To foreknow. And to foreordain.

Constitute. What theologians call. The decree. Of God. Or the decrees. Of God. This is the decree of God. Concerning. His people. Concerning his church.

[12:34] Which will be. A great multitude. Which no one can number. Which will indeed be. Which will indeed. Fulfill his original purpose. For the whole.

Human race. This is the beginning of God's purpose. For. His people. And so. A. Paul's camera. As it were. Is looking right back.

Beyond the horizon. Way back. Beyond the horizon. Of time. Looking back. Right back. A. To the end of time.

And then. A. Paul. A. Sweeps. A. Or. His camera. Moves. As it were. To the other end. Of the. It doesn't. Close in yet. But it.

It's. It's covering. It's focusing. At the beginning. Now. It's focusing. On the other side. At the end. On the purpose. The objectives. Of the. The purpose of God.

[13:33] And there are two phrases. That we've already noted here. Which sum this up. First. To be conformed. To the likeness. Of his son. And the second. That he might become. The firstborn. Among many. Brothers. Or many.

Brothers and sisters. And the second. The glory of. Or the. For the glory of Christ. Is the ultimate objective. Of the purpose of God. The glory of God. The son.

And the subsidiary objective. Is the glorification. Of the people of God. God. And the. Here Paul's camera. Is as it were. Looking. Beyond the horizon. The other end.

He's looking. Beyond the horizon. Into the future. To the. The glory of Christ. And to the glorification. Of.

The people. Of God. Now let's look at these. Just for a few moments. First of all. The subsidiary objective. Which. We have. In verse 29. To be conformed.

[14:30] To the image. Of his son. That is. The subsidiary objective. That we. We have been called. We have been chosen. We have been saved.

In order that. We. That we might be conformed. To the image. To the likeness. Of. Jesus. Christ. The word image.

Means a derived likeness. It's the likeness. That you have. On a coin. Or. On a postage stamp. It's. The likeness. That we would. See.

In. The. The son. Or daughter. Of. Their parents. You see. A. A derived likeness. You see. A family likeness. And.

The. The. The. The objective. Of. The. The. The. The. The. Plan of salvation. Is that we. Who are the people of God. Might bear the family likeness.

[15:25] Of the Lord. Jesus. Christ. You remember. That originally. Adam was created. In the image. And likeness. Of God. But that through sin.

That image was defaced. Not. Destroyed. But defaced. And disfigured. And that Christ. Has come. Perfectly made.

In the image of God. Paul tells us. In Colossians 1. 15. He has come. As the second Adam. He has come. As the perfect. Man. And the objective.

Of God's saving purpose. Is. To restore us. To perfect conformity. To the image. Of God. In. Jesus. Christ. And that is a process.

Which. Theologians call. Sanctification. It's a process. Which goes on. Day by day. Among those. Who are justified. By faith in Jesus.

[16:22] They are being conformed. To the image. Of Jesus Christ. Day by day. You remember. What Paul said. Writing to the Corinthians. In chapter 3. Verse 18. That we all.

With open face. Beholding us in a glass. The glory of the Lord. Are changed into the same image. From glory to glory. Even as the spirit. Of the Lord.

We are changed into the same image. From glory to glory. Step. By step. Sanctification. Is a process. As to think from. Justification.

Which is an act. Of God's free grace. We remember from our catechism. That justification. Is an act. But sanctification. Is a work. A process. Of God's free grace.

Whereby. We. Are. Transformed. Progressively. Into the image. Into the family likeness. Of. The Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:19] And our sanctification. Will not be complete. Until we are glorified. In heaven. Until. We are. Called.

Into. His presence. And that is. What glorification. Will be. It will be. When we. We will be. Perfectly conformed. Made. Perfectly like. The Lord Jesus Christ.

When. We shall be shaped. In our characters. In our personalities. As he. Is shaped. When we shall become.

Like. Him. Let me just. Read to you again. That phrase. In the good news bible. Those whom God has already chosen. He also set apart. To become.

Like. His son. As translating it. In a more dynamic way. Translating the meaning. Rather than the words. Literally. He has chosen us.

[18:16] In order that we might become. Like the son. And that is the. The. The. The. The purpose. Of. Our salvation.

But it is not the ultimate purpose. And this is very important. This is the purpose. This is not the ultimate purpose. The ultimate purpose. Is. Not the glorification.

Of God's people. But the glory. Of the son. Of God. Look at verse say. The last part. Of verse 29. That.

He. That is Christ. Might be the firstborn. Among many. Brothers. Or. Or let me remember again. From the good news bible. So that the son.

Would be the eldest brother. In a large. Family. The first. The word. Firstborn. Means the most important.

[19:13] As we have here. In the good news bible. Would be the eldest brother. Would be the first. Would be the first. In the family. And that.

Is indeed. What. The object. Of God's plan. Of salvation. Is. That Christ. Will be exalted. Christ. Will be glorified. As the first. As the one.

And only. Ephesians chapter 1. Verse 10. Paul tells us. That God's plan. Which he will complete. When the time is right. Is to bring all creation.

Together. Everything in heaven. And earth. With Christ. As head. Christ. And. So what is being anticipated. Here is not simply. Our.

Being glorified. But. A new order. Being introduced. In which Christ. Is the head. God. God. God. God. God. God. God.

[20:08] Remember. The phrase. In Colossians 1. 18. That in all things. Christ. Might have the. Preeminence. In all things.

He. Might have the. Preeminence. Or. Literally. That. He might. Have the first place. In everything. He might have the. Supremacy.

And that is. The ultimate objective. Of God's plan. Of salvation. And we must. Be careful. That we. We. Don't get. Involved.

In a kind of. Individualistic. Over individualistic. Concern about. The outworking of salvation. Yes. There is. The glorification. Of the people of God. But that is a subsidiary objective.

The primary. Ultimate. Overall. Objective. Is that Christ. Will be glorified. That he might become. The first. The one and only. That he might be.

[21 : 03] The preeminent one. In the whole universe. And that there will be. A new order. A new creation. In which Christ. Will be. The head.

Unmistakably. Unopposed. Unanimously. The head. Of this new order.

Unanimous. This new order. Has already began. We look forward. To that day. When it will be. Consummated. So.

Paul. Gives us. This panoramic. Sweep. From. What. Beyond. The horizons. I was. Some of you may know. Since I was here. Last. Three weeks ago.

I visited Peru. And. I. I. Part of the. Of the. The visit. There. On the main purpose. The visit. Was to participate. In the.

[21 : 59] 50th anniversary. Of the Peruvian Bible Society. And they had. A series of. Of conferences. Of meetings. For pastors. We had four days. Conference. With 300. Pastors attending.

And. Part of. That. Was a history. Of the Bible in Peru. And. It was interesting. How many Scots people. Have been involved. In the work. Of the church in Peru.

And the. The first. Person. Who brought the Bible. To Peru. Was a Scotsman. James Thompson. From Cretan. In. Down in. Denfriesshire. And there was.

Also reference. To John A. Mackay. Who founded. The free church. Work there. And. Somebody quoted. What somebody else. Had said. About John Mackay. When he went there. In the. About. 1915. This was a. A. A. A. Peruvian intellectual. He said. This man came. And he presented. To us. Horizon. A horizon. Without limits.

[22 : 56] And what John Mackay. Was doing. Was simply. Sharing. With them. The vision. Of Paul. And that's what we have. In this chapter. It's a horizon. Without limits. He goes beyond.

The beginning. To eternity. Beyond the end. To the glory. That is the vision. That Paul paints. For us here.

This great panorama. But. We must also. Look at the close up. And we must do this. Quickly. In verse 30.

The camera. The camera. Zooms in. Looks. At. Individual. Personal. Christian. Experience. Moves away. From the panoramic. Cosmic. Sweep. Moves into. The experience. Of the individual. Do. This is. Always. Our starting point. Because.

[23 : 53] Although God's purpose. Included us. From before the foundations. Of the world. We. Came into existence. Only when. We were conceived. And born. And so.

Our starting point. Is the starting point. Of our. Experience. Paul begins. With Christian experience. In verse 28. And it's interesting. That he begins. With Christian experience. Rather than. With theological. Speculation. We know. That all things. Work together. For good.

To them. That love God. To those. Who are the called. According to his purpose. He speaks about. Those who love God. And those who have been called.

By God. So Paul here speaks. Of three basic steps. In which God.

[24 : 49] Breaks into our experience. As it were. Conscious experience. First of all. He calls us. He says. He calls us. Moreover whom he did predestinate. Then he also. Called. There is a general call.

In the gospel. And that's why. It's so important. That when we preach. The gospel. And when we witness. To the gospel. Because God. Calls. Men and women. Through the gospel.

God. Does not. Call people. Through thin air. It's important. For us. To remember that. God works. Through the gospel. And it is your privilege. And my privilege. To be bearers of the gospel.

And witnesses. To the gospel. Who knows. When you witness. To the gospel. Whom God will call. And that's what gives. Our witness. So much potential.

Because. God. Wants to call. Men and women. Through us. You may find. Someone who's. Absolutely hard. You may feel.

[25 : 44] It's not worthwhile. Witnessing to them. And so often. That has been the case. And yet. God has used. Often. That word of witness. To call that person. Broken into their experience.

He has called them. There's a general call. Of the gospel. Summed up. In the book of Proverbs. Chapter 8. Verse 4. To you. Oh men. I call out.

I raise my voice. To all mankind. It is true. That. Many don't believe. But some do. And in many. In some cases. Many do.

And those who believe. Are those who are called. Effectually. People believe. Because they want to. But they did not always want to.

And they now want to. Because God has. Inwardly. Secretly. Quietly. Persuaded them.

Unobtrusively. Enabling them. To take Jesus Christ. As their savior.

[26 : 39] And Lord. So unobtrusive. Indeed. Is the work of the spirit. That. That we think. It is we. Who took the initiative. Remember how Jesus. Had to tell his disciples. On one occasion. It was not you.

Who have chosen me. That I. Who have chosen. You. The first step. Is that God calls us. The second step. Is that he justifies us.

Whom he called. Them he also. Justified. The word to justify. Is a legal term. The term. Which is used. By a judge. In a law court.

It means to acquit. Someone who is accused. It is the opposite of. To condemn. It is to acquit.

It is to. Declare. The person. To be just. It is much more than forgiveness. God declares. When we come to Christ.

[27 : 37] That we are completely guiltless. That we stand before him. Covered by the goodness. Of Jesus Christ. And that is why. Justification. Is a. Is an act.

It is a once. For all. A one. Only. Act. If it was simply. That God forgive us. Then. God is to forgive us. Again and again.

Because we sin again. And again. But this is a legal act. In which God declares. That those who trust. In Jesus Christ. Are guiltless.

In his sight. Yes they are still sinners. But the guilt. Has been borne by Jesus Christ. And a transaction. Has taken place. Upon the cross of Calvary. And that they are no longer.

Under condemnation. They are no longer. Under judgment. They are acquitted. They are free. This follows God's call.

[28 : 31] Because. We are justified. By faith. It is as we respond. To the call of God. That we are justified. We must. Believe. In order to be justified. And that's why.

It is so important. Again. For us. To challenge people. To believe the gospel. It is through believing. That people. Are justified. And the third step.

That Paul describes here. Is. That he glorifies. Us. And whom he justified. Then he also. Glorified. So. Glorified. He glorifies us.

There are. There is much reference. To glory. In this chapter. Chapter 8. Of the letter. To the Romans. Verse 17. Paul tells us. That. The purpose.

Is. For the people of God. That we might be. Glorified together. With Christ. That we might. Share his glory. Glory. In verse 23.

[29 : 33] He speaks of our adoption. As sons. The redemption. Of our bodies. He's already spoken. In the previous verse. Of being conformed. To the likeness. Of God's son.

The word glory. Glory. Has sometimes been. Translated. Splendor. It means the radiant. Presence. Of Jesus. And all his majesty. And splendor. And.

Sublimity. And we will have the privilege. We who are the people of God. Of sharing that glory. Christ sharing his glory with us.

The ultimate purpose. Of our salvation. Is that the son. Might be glorified. In the cosmos. In the whole universe. And we.

Our glorification. Is simply sharing. In that glory. That glory. Shining. Upon us. And it's notice how Paul. Speaks here.

[30 : 32] In the past tense. Quite significantly. Whom he justified. Then he also. Glorified. Paul is so certain. Of this. That he declares it.

As an act. Which has already taken place. As it were. In the mind of God. That has already happened. And you see. God sees us. Not only as justified.

In Jesus Christ. But he sees us. As glorified. In Jesus Christ. He sees us. In terms of what we will become. In Jesus Christ.

Whom he justified. Them he also. Glorified. And this is why. By the grace of God. We can enjoy. Complete assurance. Of. Salvation. There is between. As we've already said. Between justification.

And glorification. There is the process.

[31 : 28] Of sanctification. This is omitted. Explicitly. Here by Paul. Because it is a process. Rather than a step. To step. And Paul is here.

Speaking about. Steps. Or specific acts. Of God. But as F.F. Bruce. The. Well known commentator. Says. Sanctification. As glory began.

And glorious sanctification. Completed. Again. We come to the consummation. Of God's great purpose. This time in close up.

When we will share. The glory. Of Christ. This is the tremendous. This is the tremendous. Aspect. Of our salvation.

And it's an aspect. In which we should rejoice. In which we should boast. In a humble sense. About which we should be excited. And enthusiastic. This is why.

[32 : 27] We. By the grace of God. In the church of Jesus Christ. Are the community. Of the future. We've seen empires. Rise and fall. In history.

We've seen the communist empire. Disappear. In our own. Experience. Not just. In the last few years. And other empires. Will come. And go.

But the church of Jesus Christ. Is the community. Of the future. The church is not the community. Of the past. The church of Jesus Christ. Is the community.

Of the future. And I believe. That we need. To communicate. That fact. To the world today. We need to be much more positive. Than we often are. When we speak about the church.

Yes. The church has many weaknesses. Many scars. Many blemishes. Which cause us to be ashamed. But at the same time. There's a purpose.

[33 : 24] That God has for the church. That will be fulfilled. The church is the community. Of destiny. And our responsibility. Is to invite men and women.

To come. Not simply into the four walls. Of a church building. But to join the mystical church. The body of Christ. By faith in him.

And become part of this great purpose. Which Paul. Delineates. For us here. With such grandeur. Such majesty. In this chapter.

Through the gospel. God is calling. Men. And women. And young people too. I wonder. Is there someone here tonight. Who has not yet.

Responded to that call. And perhaps tonight. You may feel that God. Is speaking to you. God is touching your heart.

[34 : 22] God is knocking. At your door. And if God is knocking. At your door tonight. Then I would urge you. To open that door. I would urge you. To respond.

To that call. Because the gospel call. Does not come lightly. It's like the. Migratory instinct. You know how just now.

We've got birds with us. That have come. From the. Other times. But when the weather will change. They will disappear.

They will go south. To the Mediterranean. And they go. Because. An instinct. Tells them to go. A naturalist. Tell us. That if they resist. That instinct.

Then they. There comes a time. When they can't go. When they lose it. And that's a spiritual parable. I believe. God gives men. And women.

[35 : 19] The opportunity. To repent. And to believe. And if God is therefore. Knocking at your door. I say. Grasp that opportunity tonight. Don't. Fritter it away.

Don't let it go. God. Is calling. May each and all of us. Respond to that call.

By faith in the Lord Jesus. And be justified. In God's sight tonight. Be accepted by him. And it is possible. Tonight. In an instant of time.

For the most important change. In a human life. To take place. In your life. You can move out. Of condemnation. Into justification.

Just like that. Through believing in Jesus. Not something you do. Not something good work. That you have to perform. You simply.

[36 : 18] Cast your life. Upon Jesus. Ask him to take care. Of you. Ask him to be your saviour and Lord. Cast yourself upon his mercy. And upon his grace. That miracle of gospel.

Will take place. May God grant. That that may indeed be the experience. Of all of us. Let us pray. Our heavenly fathers.

As we come. Before you tonight. We give you thanks. For this tremendous. Picture. That we see. In this letter. To the Romans. And especially. In this chapter. We give thanks.

For this. Cosmic panorama. We give thanks. Also for this. Close up. Of what it means. To become part. Of God's saving purpose.

Grant oh Lord. That tonight. We may hear. And heed. The call. Of the gospel. That through faith. We might be justified. And through being justified.

[37 : 20] Be given the hope. That one day. We will be glorified. Grant Lord. That that may be. Our hope. And that we may share. That glorious hope.

With everyone we meet. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.