

Predestination

Romans 8:28-30: *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

In Christianity there is a school of thought that is known as Armenianism. People who hold this view typically believe that man cooperates with God by initiating their own salvation. They say we choose to believe in Christ when we are ready. They also believe that we can stop believing at any time and, thus, we become lost again. Basically, according to them, salvation is based upon the choice and will of man.

Then, there is a school of thought that is known as Calvinism that believes that we can only be saved by grace - through faith. Within Calvinism there are more than one interpretation of this truth. In extreme Calvinism it is believed that God elected some people for salvation and others for hell and that those elected have no say in the matter whatsoever. In extreme Calvinism, the free will of man is forfeited to the sovereignty of God. This is not the main stream view within the Reformed faith, although opponents of Presbyterianism often are mistaken about this and create the perception that all Presbyterians believe this.

But what does the Bible say? Romans 8: 28 - 30 deal with some of the Biblical teaching on election. It teaches that salvation is shaped by God and enjoyed by man; that salvation is one of those things that we, by ourselves, can not make a reality in our lives by ourselves. These verses also give us the strongest possible assurance of the unconditional, eternal security of whosoever believes in Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

As we dig into these verses we are walking in deep waters! Yet, for the assurance of salvation, these thoughts are of utmost importance to make our own.

In all things God works for the good of those who love him.

Life is filled with trials and troubles. It is comforting to know that everything is being worked out for our good according to the plan of a great God. God's reputation depends on this verse being true, and it is! The Word does not say that all things are good, but that they will work for good. It is a promise that is as good as the God who made it!

When we experience troubles, we need to know that God is in control.

Yet this promise is not for everyone. According to verse 28 it is only for those who love God. If all things work together for the good of those who love God, the opposite is true for those who do not love him! *For them everything that happens in their lives work towards their judgment and towards being lost for ever.*

This often quoted and much loved verse *must never be divorced from the verses that immediately follow it - 29-30: For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.*

God's purpose in turning everything to our good is to make us more like Jesus! **God's work in you was not completed at salvation.** He will continue to shape you until you reflect his image perfectly. The whole purpose of Romans 8:28 is to teach us that God has an eternal plan and that nothing will ever be able to change that plan! God is busy preparing his people to become more and more like Christ and he will perfect this work in heaven.

God is working out an awesome eternal plan for the life of every child of God.

God's will can never be a prisoner of man's will. That can never happen! God will never be held captive to the whims of men. It takes away from the glory of God's sovereign grace and of man's complete inability to do good by himself, without the intervention of the Spirit.

So what does the Bible tell us about getting saved?

1. **Man does not initiate salvation** - Man's ability to do this died as a result of sin. Therefore, he is incapable of coming to God on his own. As a result, salvation is dependent upon the sinner being called to come to God by the Spirit of God. Salvation always begins with God. He takes the initiative.

2. But, on the other hand, the Bible is clear that the **death of Christ on the cross was for the sins of all men and women** - When Jesus died, he was dying for the sins of the world, 1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:21.

3. And **only those who receive the atoning death of Christ through faith are saved by his blood** - Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-10; John 5:24; John 3:16.

4. There is also no escaping the fact that believers were chosen by God to be his own, before the world began - Eph. 1:4-6.

5. **But, wait, the Bible says "whosoever will" may come**, Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13!

Doesn't this mean that anyone can be saved?

Yes, anyone! If I have been called by the Spirit of God and responded to this call in faith, I will know that anyone can be saved, even me.

Verse 28 tells us that God is working out his purpose in us. What is that purpose? He is remaking us in the image of Jesus.

Verse 29 tells us that God has already decided that we will be like Jesus some day. It is a done deal!

Verse 30 uses several words to speak of our journey of salvation. In the past tense.

A. **We were predestined for salvation.** - Past tense.

B. **We were called** - Past tense

C. **We were justified** - meaning declared innocent on the grounds of Christ's atoning work. - Past tense.

D. **We were glorified** - Past tense.

It means that if you are saved, you are saved forever. Nothing can or will derail the purpose of God concerning you. If you are in Jesus, you will be in Jesus forever.

But it **does not say** that anyone was predestined to go to hell!

Therefore, if you are not saved, know this, ***anyone who has the desire to be saved, can be.*** That desire is the voice of the Spirit of God calling you to come to him. If you feel that pull towards him today, then come to Jesus and you will be saved, forever.

Now bless the Lord by rejoicing in the words of Romans 8: 31 - 39:

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. ³⁷No, ***in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*** ³⁸For I am convinced that

neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.