

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 16 – Romans 8:28 - 39 (The steadfastness of God’s love)

Introduction

The third section of Romans 8 (v28-39) is one of the best known passages in the Bible and is all about the security of the believer in the love and care of God. Our Christian hope is grounded solidly on the unwavering love of God due to the eternal unchangeability of God’s purpose and the eternal steadfastness of His love.

“Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold of thee;
In this alone rejoice with awe –
Thy mighty grasp of me.”

- John Campbell Shairp

1. **Five unshakeable convictions (v28)**

- a. We know that God is at *work* in our lives.
- b. We know that God works for *our good*.
Being himself wholly good his works are all expressions of his goodness.
- c. We know that God works for our good *in all things*.
Nothing, no conceivable suffering, is the beyond the overruling scope of God’s providence.
- d. We know that God works in all things for the good of *those who love him*.
God’s ultimate plan for good in our lives is our salvation – this can obviously only apply to those who know and love him.
- e. *And have been called according to his purpose*.
God has a saving purpose – life is not the random mess it may sometimes appear.

2. **Five undeniable affirmations (v29 – 30)**

Paul traces God’s good and saving purpose through five stages from it’s beginning in His mind to it’s consummation in the coming glory.

- a. *Those God foreknew*
The word “foreknew” here is not used in the sense of foreseeing the future (as God knows everyone and everything – not just those who love and follow him) but the word “know” is used in the Hebrew sense of an implied close relationship of love and care. God is talking about those whom he knows will be in a loving relationship with him.
- b. *He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His son*.
God had decided beforehand what our ultimate destination is to be – like Jesus. He’s not a potter with a spinning lump of clay wondering what to make. He already knows.
- c. *Those he predestined he also called*.
His call comes to people through the gospel, and it is when the gospel is preached to them with power and they respond to it with the obedience of faith that we know God has chosen them.
- d. *Those he called he also justified*.
Once we accept the call God declares us righteous (See weeks 10, 11 & 12).

e. *Those he justified he also glorified.*

We will share in Christ's glory when we share in his suffering, but also it is our destiny to be given glorious new bodies.

3. Five unanswerable questions (v31 – 39)

a. *If God is for us, who can be against us? (v31b)*

All the powers of hell may set themselves against us but they *can never prevail* since God is on our side!

b. *He 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? (v32)*

God has already given the biggest, most lavish, most costly gift of all, his own Son. How could we doubt that he'd withhold any lesser gifts from us?

c. *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. (v33)*

The devil (the 'slanderer') may try to condemn us but we've been declared righteous by God through Jesus.

"He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
Who is he that will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up."
- Isaiah 50: 8 - 9

d. *Who 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. (v34)*

Jesus, who died for us and has been raised to life, is now in the position of honour and power at the right hand of God and he took our punishment and set us free. No-one can condemn us anymore.

e. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (35a)*

Paul lists some of the common answers that may be given and refutes them all – no matter what we face, be it earthly or spiritual, it can do nothing to separate us from the plans, purposes and above all love and care of God.

Q1. Do you feel your life is sometimes a random mess of happenings? If you look back can you see God's plan at work?

Q2. Have you ever felt separated from God's love? If so what got you through it?

Memory Verse:

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He 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?"

– Romans 8:31b