

The Ultimate Security of Our Salvation

Scripture: Romans 8:29-30

Code: 45-66

Let's open our Bibles tonight to Romans Chapter 8. This most thrilling wonderful chapter on the security provided us in the Spirit. And as we're looking now at verses 28 through 30 we're talking about the ultimate security. And this is our third message in these verses. I'd like to read verse 28, 29, and 30, so you'll have it in mind as we look together at God's word.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the 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 first born among many brethren, moreover whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified and whom He justified them He also glorified."

People have for many, many years wondered and debated about the issue of whether or not a Christian may lose his or her salvation. It has been such an issue that really the whole of the Christian church has been split over that issue. There's a whole group of people within Christendom who believe you may lose your salvation. There is another group that believe you may not. And perhaps more than any other single doctrine this has been a dividing issue in the church.

Now this is really very sad because I don't think the Bible is unclear on this at all. Certainly not unclear so that an entire segment of Christianity would deny what I believe is a very clear and straightforward presentation of the doctrine of security in Romans Chapter 8. I believe that you find the security of the believer, that is when you come to know Jesus Christ it is indeed eternal in many places. But perhaps no one place is as dramatically pointed and clear as is this text. In fact, these three verses constitute the most powerful, the most clear of all scriptural statements in regard to our security. They guarantee to us without variation and without exception the final glory of all those redeemed by Jesus Christ. For once we have become believers all things then work together for our good, so nothing can work for our ultimate evil. And those who are justified, without exception, will also be glorified.

Now in many ways the key phrase in this trilogy of verses is at the end of verse 28, and I want us to just springboard off of that phrase called according to His purpose. The "His" is implied in the Greek text and rightly so. It is the purpose of God. According to His purpose. You see we are forever secure because God purposed it so. God planned it so. God designed it so. And we've been learning how both the Son of God and the Spirit of God intercede for us that the plan of God and the

purpose of God may in fact come to pass. So our security is guaranteed not only by the purpose of God but by the outworking of that purpose through the intercessory ministry of the Son and the Spirit.

Now if you just look at the phrase at the end of verse 28, according to His purpose, you get really the key to the next two verses. For in the next two verses His purpose is explained, His purpose is explained. Here is God's eternal 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, moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified." That was His purpose.

We're going to look then, in our study tonight, into the mind of God, into His purpose for salvation. Now let me just give you some ground rules as we go, all right? We're going to be over our heads, folks. You have to know that at the outset. It's going to be impossible for us to totally get our arms around these concepts. And so we affirm the fact that we believe the Bible to be the word of God and we accept what we can't ultimately fully understand, that we accept it by, what, faith. Somewhere along the line you're going to have to jettison your reason. You're going to have to say bye, bye to your logic and your human wisdom, because we're going to be plunging into unfathomable truths, and as we try to grasp them in our puny little heads, as we try to understand the mind and the purpose of an infinite God, who is bigger than the entire universe. We are embarking on a journey that ultimately leads us to divine infinity, which is to us incomprehensible.

We have great limitations, great limitations, and the temptation is going to be, and you watch it happen, the temptation is going to be when you come to a part of the divine purpose of God that you don't understand instead of recognizing your limitation, you're going to want to assume that God has a limitation. In other words, that God has done something inconsistent and when you don't understand it you're going to think it's God's limitation not yours, because you see we believe that we are really ultimate in understanding all things. But if you find yourself thinking ill of God, or if you find yourself questioning God, or if you find yourself wondering if God hasn't made a terrible mistake or whether God isn't, in fact, unjust then know this, will you, you have played the fool, because you are now saying that I and my mind are ultimate and if you don't fit into it God there must be something wrong with you. That is the ultimate sacrilege, the ultimate sacrilege.

So please resist the temptation to question the wisdom of God, to question the love of God, to question the justice of God, to question the integrity of God, the holiness of God because your mind or my mind is feeble, is absolutely ridiculous. And another thought, too, try not to make any conclusions until I'm finished because somewhere along the line you may feel that things are out of balance and I will try to give you the balance that the word of God gives to things that are ultimately utterly incomprehensible. And another thing, please don't stoop to the absurd, as we've all done, by saying well I think it's sort of like this. Or my concept of this whole thing is thus and so, but rather come humbly to the sacred infinite mind of God, take what you can take and what you can't quite

stretch your mind to reach except by faith, and don't impugn the character of God. Human reason, human logic, human understanding are not adequate to the task, we cannot ultimately reconcile this kind of truth with our own understanding. We can't, we can't.

So if you know that going in it's helpful. You say, "Why are we even discussing it?" Because it's here in the Bible and God intended for us to do that. As far as we can go we're going to go. Now the general truth in these verses is very clear. God causes all things to work together for our good. That's very clear, all things, all things, all things, why, because that is according to His, what, purpose. He designed it that way. I mean there's no other answer. There's no other way to explain why He does this other than that's exactly what He wanted to do and He is totally free in His decision making to do whatever He wants and this is what He wants. He wants it so that when we come to Christ and are redeemed from then on all things work together ultimately for our good and glory, as we saw last time. Nothing can change that, nothing. That's His purpose. And by the way we were saved in accord with His purpose.

In fact, if I could put it simply, I'd say this: You're not a Christian because of something you decided. You're a Christian because of something God decided. To be honest with you, folks, it really wasn't your decision. It was His. It was His. Look back with me for a moment further in your Bible to Ephesians Chapter 1, and hear the words of the apostle Paul. Verse 3 of Chapter 1, that great benediction; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Now here is a benediction, a statement of praise to God and he blesses the name of God who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. In other words, the praise belongs to God. It wasn't what we decided; it was what God decided. So the praise is His. Why do we praise Him, why do we bless Him, because verse 4 says, "He has chosen us in Him." It was His decision. It was His choice. He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, His purpose, His plan, that we should be holy and without blame. In other words, ultimately we're going to be holy and without any blame, all sin is overruled is another way of saying all things work together for our ultimate good because sin is always being overruled. You say, "Why so?" Verse 5, because He has predestinated us under the adoption of sons. It was again His predetermined choice to make us sons. Watch this one, end of verse 5, according to the good pleasure of, what, His will." His will. You see it's God who purposed our salvation to glory; therefore, it's God who carries that out, and so we are saved by the purpose and plan of God; we are kept unto glory by the same purpose and the same plan. Our security then is wrapped not in our ability to stay saved, but in God's ability to keep His own word to Himself.

It's reminiscent of Genesis when God came and it was a great covenant made with Abraham only Abraham didn't have anything to do with it. Animals were killed and cut in half and laid on the ground and a dead bird over here and a dead bird over here and men in those days would make a covenant that way, splitting animals and laying them on two sides and the men making the covenant would

walk between the split animals. It was a way, a symbol of a covenant being made. And God was going to make a covenant with Abraham. It's a wonderful thing. You know what he did? He just knocked out Abraham with a divine anesthetic. He went to sleep and God went through by himself because God was not making a covenant conditioned upon Abraham. He was making a covenant with himself to bind himself to bless, as He promised He would.

And the covenant of salvation, in a sense, is just so. It is a covenant that God makes with Himself, which He will fulfill and by the divine purpose He has ordained before the foundation of the world who it is that is to become a son by Jesus Christ according to His will. And that is why it is, "To the praise of the glory of His grace," verse 6, because He did it, He did it.

Verse 9, "He has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure," and here it comes, "Which He has purposed in Himself." God covenants with Himself, and so both parties, that is God and God, being absolutely perfect and without flaw and without error and without the ability to violate their word within the Trinity, the covenant is kept. It's a tremendous thing.

Verse 11, "In whom also we have been made an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worships all things after the counsel of His own will." The word work there is *energeo* energizes all things according to His own will, His own purpose, it's His plan, it's His purpose, it's His glory. And that's the way it is all the way through. God has purposed to redeem us.

So salvation, again I say, is based not on what you decide but on what God decides. In John 1, do you remember verse 12 and 12? Just as a starting point now, "But as many as received Him to them gave He the authority to become the children of God." "As many as received Him," sure we have a part in responding, "to them that believe on His name." We receive Him, we believe on His name, but the next verse says, "Who were born," this is regeneration, "Not of blood," that's not a physical birth, "Nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man," but of whom," of God." So we are redeemed by the will of God. And, again I say, it's not what we decide it's what God has already decided. We come in behind the decision God has already made and we respond. So much of contemporary modern evangelism leaves people the idea that salvation is predicated on their decision for Christ when truly salvation is really predicated on God's decision for them. That's the emphasis of Scripture. You see how could man ever make a decision for God? The natural man understandeth not the things of God. To him they are absolute, what, foolishness. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. The God of this world has blinded their minds lest they should believe. They are dark, they are ignorant, they are dead in trespasses and sin, there's no way possible that they could ever muster enough of whatever it takes to turn around and decide for God. Man can't make the move to Christ. Man can't do that until God makes the first move in line with His eternal purpose.

Now this is important, beloved, because what it says is that if God decides for us in eternity past, then He has decided that He would redeem us unto eternity future and there can be no loss in between

understood? because it is His decision that we would be sons unto glory. So, the ultimate security is found in the purpose of God, the purpose of God.

I want you to look at verse 29 now. This is so wonderful. Now here we find the purpose of salvation. Let me give you two thoughts if we have time tonight: the purpose of salvation, the progress of salvation. The purpose: It says in verse 29 mid way through, "To be conformed to the image of His Son, that He," that is the Son, capital H, "that He might be the firstborn among many brother." Now that's the purpose of salvation. The purpose of salvation is that we would be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He, that is the Son, might be the prototokos, and I'll explain that Greek word in a moment, among many brethren.

Now here we have a secondary and a primary phrase in this purpose. Let's look at the secondary one. It says that we have been called according to His purpose and His purpose is to conform us to the image of His Son. Now listen to me. You were saved, time past, to be made like whom? Christ. And all of life is just a moving toward that, that ultimate reality of being like Him. You see God's plan was to save men to make them like Christ and if men could be saved and become lost and never become like Christ then they couldn't be saved because they were saved to be like Christ. That is God's covenant with Himself. That is His eternal purpose. Forgiveness of sin, the removal of guilt, the gifts of love and peace and joy and wisdom all of those things are only a part of the reality of salvation. Even heaven is only a part. The real goal is that we be conformed to the image of His Son. In other words, watch this one, God is redeeming an eternally holy Christ-like glorified race of humanity.

That's why we were redeemed and when you believed that process of being conformed to Christ began and it must be fulfilled. That is God's holy purpose. That's why we read back in verse 24, "We are saved in hope." "We are saved in hope." That's why we read in verse 17, "That we are children, and if we are children then we are heirs." If you are ever a child of God, then you are an heir of God, and if you are an heir of God, you are a joint heir with Christ since we suffer with Him that we may be also, what, glorified together with Him. The same idea. We were made sons that we might be heirs and our inheritance is to be like Christ and to inherit all that belongs to Him. It's tremendous; it's absolutely tremendous.

So, you see if you come up with a doctrine that allows for people to lose their salvation you've just invented an unbiblical salvation because salvation is to make us conform to the image of Christ. By the way the verb to be conformed means to bring to the same form with, to bring to the same form with, and that's exactly what it says. We're going to be brought into the same form with Christ. This is just a marvelous thing. You say, "What do you think He means by that?" Well Philippians 3:21 says that the Lord is going to change our lowly body that it may be fashioned like His glorious body. So one thing it means is His glorified body becomes the standard and our glorified body is going to be like His, so it is a bodily promise, isn't it? In other words to be conformed then to the image or to be

made into the same form with Christ has to do with our body, whatever that glorified body is like, that post resurrection body of our Lord.

So outwardly we're going to be conformed to that same kind of body. I don't think we're all going to look alike, but as human beings, although we're all different, we're conformed to the same body, aren't we? We have basically the same body. It works in the same way, in the same environment and so forth, and by the same principles. And so when we go to glory we're going to receive a glorious body that works in the same environment and according to the same principles, as does the resurrected glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I think it's even more than that. I think we're not only going to be like Him in whatever that glorified body is, but I think we're going to be like Him in the spiritual dimension as well. We will be outwardly perfect and we will be inwardly perfect.

And so residing in us will be the very holiness of Jesus Christ, the divine incorruptible given to us at redemption. We'll be freed from the encumbrance of the humanness, which we now possess, and we'll be liberated, as it says in this chapter, unto the glorious liberation of the children of God. We will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, back in verse 21, and so we will have an outward appearance like that of Jesus Christ, and an inward holiness like that of Jesus Christ.

I mean I've heard of wanting to be like your hero, but that's just incomprehensible, but that's what it says. The word is image, interesting word, conformed to the image *icon*, you might have heard of an icon, which is a statue made to look like someone. This is not an incidental image. This is not an accidental image. This is a calculated image. It is a replicated image. It is a derived likeness. It is used of a son who is the image of his father. How about Hebrews 1, where it says that God has spoken by His Son who is the expressed image of His person. And so we are not going to be accidentally in the image of Christ; we are going to be directly replicated in His image. It's just a marvelous thing to think about. And it's what John had in mind when he said, "We'll see Him and be like Him, for we see Him as He is."

In II Corinthians the verse that I love and I write it a lot of times when I sign my name, in II Corinthians 3:18, it says, "We all with an unveiled face," the veil is taken off in salvation the veil is removed, "we see clearly in a glass the glory of the Lord." I love this. Once you come to Christ the veil is off. You're no longer blind. You can see. And then you begin to look at the glory of the Lord, now follow this, and "You are being changed into the same image," from one level of glory to the next level of glory, to the next level of glory, "Even as by the Spirit of the Lord." What a statement. When you become a believer and your salvation is initiated in time and space the process of taking you from one level of glory to the next level of glory to the next until little by little and step at a time you move more toward Christ likeness till the day you see Him and become like Him. That's what God is doing in salvation. He's forming us into the image of His own Son.

Listen to I Corinthians 15:49, "As we have born the image of the earthly, or the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," a marvelous statement, I Corinthians 15:49. We are like the earthy. We will be like the heavenly. That's His purpose to make us like His Son.

We'll look for just a moment at Hebrews 2:10, and this might give you another little insight. It says that Jesus suffered death and so forth in verse 9, then in verse 10 it says, and the reason, "It was fitting for Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," in other words everything was made for Him and by Him, "in bringing many sons unto," what, "glory." You see He was made it says there, "The captain of our salvation to bring us to glory," to bring us to glory. So that the process of going from one level of glory to the next level of glory to the next level of glory by the ministry of the Spirit of God could begin. And I love what it says further down, it says that, "He's not ashamed to call us brothers," verse 11.

So beloved we've been redeemed to be made like Christ. That's the first phrase in the purpose. Now go back to Romans 8 again. That's, however, only secondary. Let me show you the primary purpose, so wonderful. "In order that," and here's the purpose of the secondary, in order that He, and make a capital H there, that He, that is the Son, might be the *prototokos* among many brethren. What does that mean? *Prototokos* means the firstborn, but in the sense of preeminence, not in the sense of chronology. In the Jewish culture obviously the firstborn was the one who inherited everything. The firstborn was the one that was elevated. The firstborn was the one that uniquely represented the dignity of the family and carried the name. He was the supreme one, the preeminent one, and that's exactly what it's saying here. The reason we've all been saved is to make us like Christ, and the reason God wants to make us like Christ is so that there will be a whole redeemed and glorified humanity over which He will be the supreme one. That's what it is saying. That is the purpose.

So your salvation doesn't end with you. Your salvation could be explained another way in Chapter 2 of Philippians 9, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." You see what God wants to do is to bring into glory, to bring into heaven, to bring into eternity a redeemed humanity who will spend all of that eternity giving glory to the one who stands above and beyond them all, the *prototokos*, the preeminent Christ. That's the purpose, marvelous, wonderful purpose.

Colossians 1:18, And He's the head of the body, the church. Who is the beginning, he *prototokos* from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence. You go all the way back to God's creation. What did God create us in the first place? It's a tough question. He created us for His glory. He created us so that there would be a group of people who would give Him the glory due His name. And there was a rebellion, a wholesale rebellion begun in the Garden of Eden and God set out to redeem back humanity. And by His marvelous sovereign wisdom He called for a salvation that could bring those who rebelled against Him back to a place of giving Him glory, who could bring them all the way to glory and create an eternally redeemed community who would be like Jesus Christ and

yet over whom Jesus Christ would stand as the preeminent one and; therefore, be glorified and adored, and worshipped, and revered and praised and blessed forever and ever and ever and ever. Now you understand why you're saved? It isn't just to keep you out of hell. That's a nice by-product. It isn't just to make you happy here and now. You've been redeemed to be made like Christ so that you can be a part of a redeemed eternal community who will give to the preeminent one glory due His name.

The glory of the Son then is the end of salvation and the ultimate objective of bringing us to His image is that we may be able to give Him the glory who is most glorious, who is most glorious. Just the idea that He is the *prototokos* among many brethren is beautiful. He didn't have to make us His brethren. He could have made us His servants. He didn't have to bring us all the way into the family, but He did. And so while we see God who has the perfect right to seek glory creating a redeemed humanity who can spend forever and ever glorifying and glorifying and glorifying the One who is worthy of it, we see not only God's desire for glory, but God's desire for intimacy because when He brought that redeemed humanity into the plan He not only brought them there to give glory but He brought them there to be one in essence with Himself. So we are brothers, we are brothers, marvelous thought. God gives us joy, He gives us peace, He gives us heaven, all of that is an element of His grace to sinners, but that's not our happiness or even our holiness, which is the apex of salvation. It's not for us that we've been saved; it's for Him. So Christ is the central point of redemptive history, not you. So if God saved you He'll bring you to glory because that's why He saved you and God's purposes don't get thwarted else He's not God. What a thought!

So the purpose of salvation is to bring us to the image of Christ so we can exalt the One who is over us and above us forever and ever and ever and ever. Now look at verse 29 and 30 and see the progress to salvation.

How did it all happen? I mean what was the unfolding of the plan that reached that purpose? Five steps: and you can't always split these up chronologically in a comfortable way, but they're here and we want to understand them the best we can. Now we've discussed all of these other places, so I'm not going to turn this into a very long drawn out theological series. I just want to touch each one. There are five elements in the unfolding purpose of salvation, the progress. Number one is foreknowledge, foreknowledge. Verse 29, "For whom He did foreknow." Now I want you to mark this, folks. This is the most primitive and essential of all because it's where it begins. It's where the whole redemptive purpose and plan of God begins. It begins with foreknowledge, foreknowledge.

Now the question comes immediately, what does this mean? What does it mean foreknowledge? In other words if our salvation starts with God's foreknowledge what does that mean? Well some suggest it means foresight. In other words they have God up there in heaven and He's got His binoculars on and He's looking way down history and He says, "Oh yeah, I see what they're doing. All right, uh huh, I know before hand what they're going to do so; therefore, based on what they're

going to do I'm going to do this." And they say, "Well you see God looks down and He sees whether you're going to believe or whether you're not going to believe and based on whether you are going to believe or you aren't going to believe He chooses you and if you are going to believe He chooses you, if you aren't going to believe He doesn't choose you."

You want to know something? He does have foresight, that's true. He can see all the way down the end of history. He can see. Foreknowledge includes foresight. He can look down history all the way and see exactly what people are going to do. That is not beyond His understanding. He's not limited in any sense, so He does know. He does have foresight. But when you say it's just a matter of God up there and He just looks down history and sees what's going on you have to ask yourself a couple of questions: if He knew you weren't going to believe why did He create you? Right? I mean if He could see far enough ahead and know you wouldn't believe long before you were ever created why not, not create you? You see you eliminate any problem at all with that. Just believing that God knows what's going to happen doesn't change anything because the ultimate problem we have in our little puny persurfulous minds is well how come God lets people go to hell and so we try to solve it by saying well it isn't His choice. He just knows what's going to happen. Then you've got the problem of if He knew that why did He make you when He knew you were going to do that? So you don't really solve anything.

And the second problem you don't solve is where in the world did that person get saving faith? You mean to tell me that some dead blind person who can't understand the things of God to whom the preaching of the cross is absolute foolishness, who is locked in sin, who is blinded by the devil, who cannot understand the truth, who has nothing in his heart but evil and evil continually, the best of whom is filthy rags all of a sudden exercises saving faith? A corpse should sooner get out of the grave and walk. So that doesn't help.

So even if we grant the definition of foreknowledge as God just knowing something before it happens we really have some problems, folks, we really do. So we say this: God foresees faith, He foresees who is going to believe, but the faith that He foresees is the faith that He Himself creates. The faith that He foresees is the faith that He Himself creates. You want to hear it in the words of Jesus? John 6, "No man comes unto me except the Father draw him. All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me. We're born again not of the will of men, but of the will of God. It is not of ourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2:8-9. The Bible is very clear on that.

So God does foresee the faith, but it is the faith that He Himself creates. This is illustrated in Acts 13:48. Listen just to this brief verse. You don't need to look it up. "And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord." They heard Paul and Barnabas preaching and listen, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." What were they ordained to? Eternal life. You can't have a salvation that doesn't end in eternal life. You can't have a salvation that doesn't ultimately end in glory. You can't

have a salvation that doesn't ultimately end in the person being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, a part of a redeemed humanity for the purpose of exalting the One who is over and above them. And the reason they believe was because they were ordained to that.

So we go a step further with foreknowledge then, and we say that it not only has the idea of foresight, that God can see what's going to happen, but it also has the idea secondly of foreordination. That He not only sees what's going to happen, but He ordains what's going to happen. He not only sees the faith, but the faith He sees is the faith that He Himself creates. It's a clear choice on His part. And this is indeed what the Bible teaches.

Are you ready for I Peter 1? "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Verse 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father." You know what that says? That we are elect by foreknowledge, so foreknowledge has in it an electing purpose, a choosing purpose. Very clear. Let me give you an illustration of this by having you look at Acts 2:23. Acts 2:23, and in Acts 2:23, we read concerning the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "That He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Now wait a minute. He was delivered to be crucified by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Now there you see the word foreknowledge used in a context that must mean choice, plan, purpose. It wasn't that just God looked down and said, "Oh, look what will happen. Jesus will be crucified." Hardly. "For this cause came I into the world," He said. It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. the word counsel *bouleis* used in classical Greek for a convened counsel, which makes a decision. It becomes then a pre-decided course of action. *Bouleis* a pre-decided course of action. The word determinate is a perfect participle. It's *horizo*, we get the word horizon from it. It's to mark out a clear boundary. So a clear line of demarcation was predetermined and pre-decided in the counsel of God based on His foreknowledge, which must include His foreordination. In fact, I think it's Dr. Wuist who says this is where one of the sort of traditional Greek language rules comes into play, what's known as Granville Sharps law, that two nouns in the same case connected by *ki*, first with an article and second without must; therefore, refer to the same thing. And so we could say that foreknowledge and determinate counsel mean the same thing.

So God planned the death of Christ by His foreknowledge, which therefore teaches us there is encompassed in that term foreordination. And so when we see foreknowledge elsewhere in Scripture we conclude it means foreordination there as well.

Now you say, "Why does God use the word foreknowledge? In English it sounds just like He has foresight. It doesn't sound like foreordination. That's because we don't understand the fullness of that word.

Let me give you a third element of it. It has in it the idea of being fore loved. It's got foresight, foreordination and fore love in it. It implies a predetermined love relationship. The word know is the key. This is the word *nosis* with a pro in the front, prognosis, which means to know before. And the word know used so many times in Scripture in so many ways, is often used of a love relationship. Cain knew his wife and she had a child. Now that doesn't mean she knew who she was or knew her name or where she lived. It means he knew her intimately. Joseph was surprised when Mary was pregnant because he had never known her. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and I, what, I know them." In Amos 3:2, God said, "Israel only have I known." You mean the only people you know about in the whole world are the Jews? No, no, no. "Depart from Me you workers of iniquity for I never," what, "knew you." It doesn't mean He knew who they were. He knew who they were. It means there was no predetermined love relationship, as when a man knows his wife. There was no predetermined love relationship there. That's the way the word needs to be understood, and so foreknowledge basically carried in it that God predetermined a love relationship with certain people, foreordained the redemption of those people, and could look down through history and see the reality of that very event. So we say that foreknowledge is a predetermined, foreordained, foreseen love relationship, born in the eternal purpose of God.

And that's what it says at the end of verse 28, "We're called according to His purpose." And what was His purpose? To foreknow us, that is to determine to love us before the world ever began and to redeem us that we might be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Don't you love what it says in II Timothy 2:19, "The Lord knows them that are His." You mean He doesn't know anybody else? You have to understand what the word know means, right? Knows intimately, knows intimately, knows intimately. That's the whole point. It is an intimate knowing that is in view here.

So it starts with foreknowledge; it moves to predestination. Back to Romans 8 again. "For whom He did foreknow," verse 29, "He also did predestinate." And then verse 30 picks it up, "Moreover whom He did predestinate." So twice it says He predestinated. He did predestinate, *proorizo*. It's the word horizon with a prefixed pronoun. It means to appoint before, to mark out before. It's really the word to predestine, to predetermine. That's very clearly its meaning. There's really no argument at that point. Predestination, predetermining destiny. In fact it is used also in Acts 4:28, where it talks again about the death of Christ and it says that "Herod and Pontius Pilate with the nations and the people of Israel gathered together to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel predestined to be done."

So the word predestined along with the word foreknowledge, both of them are used to speak of the crucifixion of Christ and if we're going to say then that foreknowledge simply means that God looks down history and sees what's going to happen and just responds to what we decide, then God did the same thing with Christ, just looked down history, saw what Jesus, on his own prerogative, and reacted to it. Absolutely heretical and if foreknowledge and predestination mean that God

predetermined and planned the death of Christ for the redemption of man, chose Christ to be the agent of redemption, then they must mean in relation to us the same thing. He chose us, predetermined us to be the redeemed. And that is what it says, as I read you earlier, in Ephesians 1. "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world and predestinated us under the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will." And you know what it says in Revelation 13? If you still wonder about this Revelation 13:8 says, "Whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the Lamb who has been slain," the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. In other words Revelation 13:8, it's also Revelation 17:8, says that our names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the world began.

Foreknowledge, predestination. Third word is calling. And we're not going to spend time on this because we've already talked about it a little bit in our study a couple of weeks ago. Verse 30 says, "Whom He predestined, He called, He called. Now listen folks, here is where God's eternal plan intersects with your life. In eternity past He predetermined to have a love relationship with you; therefore, predestined your salvation. The calling is the time when God moves in your life. And now we come into time. We've been in eternity past, now we're in time. And this is the central truth. The first two preceded, the last two flow out of it. We are the called. Verse 28 says, that God is working all things together for them that love Him and them who are the called. And we pointed out then and we remind you again that it has reference not to an outward call but an inward call. It has reference to the work of God turning the heart, the heart that could never turn to Him, the heart that could never know Him, that could never understand the gospel, blind, dead, ignorant, all of those things, without God, without hope in the world. And we know it must be a saving call because of where it's fitting here. It says, Them He called, whom He called, them he also, what, justified. So all the people that were called were also, what, justified; therefore, the calling must be an effectual call. It must be a successful call. It's not just a wild invitation to anybody and everybody. It is a call to salvation. And if God, in eternity past, predetermined the love relationship and foreordained our salvation then He has to bring it to pass in time, by moving into our life, right? That's why I say you're not saved because of something you decided, as if you could decide it alone. You're saved because of something God decided a long time ago.

Now you say, "I don't understand that. It doesn't seem to jive with my own choice." I told you, you wouldn't. And if it makes you feel any better I don't understand it either and I've been going over this thing for years and the longer I study it the more I'm aware of the fact that my knowledge doesn't increase. I still don't understand it as much as I didn't understand it the first time I heard it. I just believe it and I'm happy to believe what I don't understand.

And so God's saving call in time moves in. Well what happens? God moves and begins to convict the heart, to draw the heart away from sin, to draw the heart toward the Savior. You see in II Timothy 1:9, it says, "He has saved us." How? "He has called us with an holy calling," listen to this, "Not according to our works." He didn't call us because of something we did, "But according to His own

purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began." Now that's what it says. You were called to Christ, called to salvation to fulfill a purpose that was planned before the world began.

Now beloved, this is why we're secure, because we're not in some whimsical come see come saw deal. The reason we are saved is to be saved unto glory, to be saved unto glory, to be like Christ, to be like Christ, to be a part of a holy humanity that can exalt His glorious name and if that is the end and God began it before we were ever born, then God will bring it to pass and there will not be any fall out. And so all the way along the line all things are continually overruled to be working together for our ultimate glory. That's what it's saying. Just a tremendous passage! That's the promise.

You say, "How does the call come? Through the gospel. The call comes to us through the gospel. If Thessalonians 2:13, "We're bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God, listen here, hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." How could you stumble over that? "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation unto which He called you by our gospel, listen to this, and why did He call you? "To the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. See there it is again. We have such a, in our contemporary Christianity, such a shallow view of salvation don't we? We don't understand the sweep of this thing. He, from the beginning, chose us to salvation and to, it says, to belief of the truth, and that's our response, and that has to be there. It is the choice of God and the believing heart response, and the receiving heart response. And I don't understand how those things come together. I don't understand that. You say, well then you mean all those people who go to hell because God didn't choose them. No, If they go to hell, the Bible says, it's because they rejected the gospel. You say, "Wait a minute, that doesn't make sense." Right, exactly right, to you.

Isn't it wonderful to know that God is smarter than you? Would you want a God who was the equal of you? I wouldn't. And just in case you think this is a problem that's isolated there are a lot of problems like this. If I ask you a simple question like who wrote the book of Romans, what's the answer? Speak! Who? Paul? God? They alternated verses? Paul wrote a verse. God wrote a verse. Paul wrote a verse. Well you say, "Wait a minute. It's all God. Every word is God. Every word is pure, every word from the mind of God. But yet every word is Paul's and it's out of his heart and out of his vocabulary. How can it be all God and all Paul? Well it can't be in my mind, but it is.

If I ask you this question is Jesus God or man? The answer is yes. But how, how can it be blended? It isn't blended. It's not blended; it's just two hundred percent of something. It can't be, but it is. Or, if I say to you, who lives your Christian life? You say, "I do, I do, I beat my body to bring it into subjection, I'm doing it." You say, "No it really isn't me, it's the Holy Spirit." And Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." So I don't know. It's all of you and all of Him, and that's the way it is in every major doctrine in the Bible. When you bring God down to our level you got a lot left over. And if you try to resolve it all in your mind it'll burst your

brain.

So all I know is the Bible says if I reject Jesus Christ I'm responsible, but if I come to Jesus Christ it's because I'm chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, and if that's true then He'll keep me to the glory to which I was chosen. It comes through the gospel. It also comes by grace. You think you're better than somebody else because He chose you? No. You say why did He choose you instead of somebody? I don't know. I don't know why. There is no answer to that here and now. I don't know. But I think there's a hint, a small hint in Ephesians 1:6, "He chose us to the praise of the glory of His grace." Whatever the reason is it's for Him, not us. It's for the glory of His grace that we have been chosen.

And so by the gospel and by the grace of God we've been chosen. In fact Galatians 1:6 says, "Called you into the grace of Christ." And may I add another thing, that it's irresistible. In Romans 11:29, we're going to get more into this when we get rolling here. But in Romans 11:29, it says, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. In other words they can't be violated, they can't be turned away from. So God has called us, through the gospel, by grace, and through the Spirit of God, irresistibly to salvation.

So, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, next word justification. We don't need to spend time in that. We've said much about it. Whom He called He justified. It means made right with God. So when He moved into your heart and called you to Himself, you were made right with God. You say, "Well how close are calling and justification? I don't know. I really don't know. I guess it'd be like putting together two pieces of paper and shooting a bullet through them and asking which, how much time was between the bullet going through the first sheet and the second sheet. It's just a distinction in theological terms, not necessarily in time. For He calls you to be justified. He calls you to be right with God. But you understand the sequence. The calling is the moving in to turn your heart. The justification is what happens.

What does it mean to be justified? To be made right with God, that's all. The word just means to be right, to be right, to be right with God. How do you get right with God? You got to get rid of something. What is it? Sin. How do you get rid of sin? God takes it and puts it on whom? Jesus Christ. And listen, if He predetermined to love you, and He predestined you to be redeemed, in eternity past before the world began, and in time He moved in and called you away from your sin and through your faith made you right with Him through Jesus Christ it says whom he justifies, verse 30, them he also, what, glorifies. See anybody dropping in the cracks? I don't see anybody in the cracks. I just want you to see this one thing, folks. Whom He justified, them He also glorified. What tense is that? You want to know something? Your glory is so secure God speaks of it in the same breath, in the same tense that He spoke of your salvation. And your salvation was so secure that He uses the same tense to speak of your calling and your justification as He used to speak of your predestination. In other words, in one great moment of eternal time, and I know that's a conundrum,

but I can't think in any other terms, God said it is done. And in the moment that God predetermined to love you, your glorification was so secure He could speak of it as if it already happened. Marvelous thought, glorious thought. You were saved unto glory and all things are working toward that. That's His purpose, to make you like Christ, so that you could be a part of a redeemed humanity, over and above whom Jesus Christ would be the *prototakus*, the preeminent one, and to Him you will give your praise and your glory forever and ever. And the plan worked this way: before the world began He predetermined to set His love upon you and foreordained your salvation in time and moved in, called you away from your sin, and lostness, made you right with Himself through Jesus Christ and set you to glory. Beloved that is our security. That's our security.

Now let me close with this: I don't expect you if you're an unbeliever you don't know the Lord, you're not a Christian, tonight, I don't expect you to understand this. Even Christians are having a tough time. But don't you worry about election. Don't you go around saying, "Well I don't know if I'm elected. Maybe the Lord didn't choose me you see. I don't know." That's not a factor you're to be concerned about. That's not for you. That's God's eternal purpose. Just know this: that if you find in your heart a hatred of your sin, if you find in your heart an emptiness in life, if you find in your heart a desire for something better, a desire for God, a desire for righteousness, if you find in your heart a desire to turn from your sin and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ then you can be sure of one thing, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. So work on what you know and if you come to Christ that settles it. You were called; you were chosen.

To those of us that are Christians, does this doctrine teach that God chooses people for damnation? That is taught nowhere in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible is that taught that God chooses people to damnation. Jesus with tears, no doubt, says, "You will not come unto Me." You will not come. The book of Revelation closes the whole Bible by saying, "Come, let him that is a thirst come, take of the water of life freely." You say, "But how can God extend the invitation to all? Don't try to resolve it. God knows it's very simple for Him. You say, "But how does this fit into God's love? How can He love people and they go to hell?" God knows. And love says this, if I may, Love says I won't make you have a relationship with Me. That's not love. You say, "Well wait a minute. Doesn't this election business and this eternal security business lead to lawless living? Doesn't it make you say man I'm in for good folks, I can't get out, so am I going to have my time." No because John says, "He that has this hope to glory in himself purifies himself." When I know that I'm being taken from one level of glory to another to be like Jesus Christ, that doesn't make me want to be sinful. It makes me want to be righteous.

In fact, Martin Lloyd Jones said one time, "The man whose life is not turned toward godliness is a believer in philosophical determinism, not in the truth of God." And so we leave it there. I don't understand how God resolves all those things, but I'll tell you one thing, folks, when I know things like this I feel secure in Christ.

Let me give you an illustration. This was used by Augustus Toplady, who wrote many hymns. He said, "Security or salvation is like a finger." I have a wedding ring on my finger. Salvation or the security of the believer is like that finger. The ring that a bride places on her bridegroom's finger is like assurance. I can lose my ring, but that doesn't mean I'm not any longer married, does it? And there are a lot of Christians who had the ring, the seal of the Spirit, the *arabon*, the earnest, the engagement ring put on the finger, that's their assurance, and they feel secure in Christ. Then they get into sin and they loose their ring. It doesn't mean the salvation is lost. It doesn't mean the marriage is off. It just means we've lost our assurance, the symbol, the outward evidence. And as a bridegroom or bride that looses their ring they're not content until the ring is found and put back on the finger, a believer who has security all the while won't be content until with the security he has assurance. You see you are saved forever, but if you get into sin you're not going to be able to know that because I believe assurance of salvation, that is knowing that I'm secure, is a gift of God's Spirit to those who are obedient. So be obedient. I mean you are secure, you might as well enjoy it, right?

Let's pray. Thank God for a moment, would you? Just thank Him. Just thank Him, praise Him in your heart. Father we just ask that you be with us in a special way. Fill our hearts with thanksgiving and hope for the glory that awaits us. In Christ's name, amen.

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