

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Guaranteed Glory

Scripture: Romans 8:29-30

Code: 90-427

Let's open the Word of God to the 8th chapter of Romans and we're going to look – essentially, we're going to look at just two verses – just two verses. But in order to set it in your mind, I want to read three verses, verses 28, 29, and 30. They really do go together. We've pretty much covered verse 28 already and at least the second half of verse 29, but I want to read them for you.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. And these whom He predestined, He also called. And these whom He called, He also justified. And these whom He justified, He also glorified."

Now, as we have been learning, just to give you the broad picture again, I don't want to belabor this point, but it is an urgent point to make. As we have been learning, the gracious, mighty, wondrous work of the Holy Spirit on behalf of every Christian is sufficient to motivate full-hearted, joyous, grateful worship, and worship is the priority for the believer. We are first and foremost worshipers. The Father is seeking true worshipers, and we are those who worship in the Spirit, according to the apostle Paul. We are first and foremost worshipers. The object of our worship is the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And basically speaking, we are well-informed in the worship of God the Father. We understand His attributes, we understand His mighty works, and we celebrate them in our expressions of worship, both individually and corporately. We're well-informed on the worship of the Son of God. We understand His life and ministry. We understand His death and His resurrection, ascension, His intercessory work, His return. We do well to worship the Son. But we don't understand fully, at least in the evangelical church, the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And consequently, we do not worship the Spirit as we should and, therefore, we do not worship the triune God in the fullest measure that He is worthy to receive.

Our worship of the Holy Spirit, like our worship of the Father and our worship of the Son, is only as true, only as pure, and only as accurate and only as extensive as our knowledge of the Spirit's person and work. And since that is a very glaring problem in the evangelical world today, we've been endeavoring to take a good look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit for which He is to be worshiped. And I want to say at the very outset that the Holy Spirit is no less the sovereign than the Son or the Father.

He is no less sovereign, He is no less in authority, than any other member of the Trinity. He is to be obeyed as are the Son and the Father. He is to be honored and submitted to as are the Son and the Father.

But the general, evangelical church in our time has been cheated of the understanding of the Holy Spirit as to His person and His work, His ministry. And consequently, our worship of the Holy Spirit is convoluted – or functions in ignorance. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, which starts at the beginning of the 20th century, has produced endless misconceptions about the Holy Spirit, endless misrepresentations of the Holy Spirit, much abuse and blasphemy of His holy name. And in the name of unity and in the name of love and in the name of acceptance, the evangelical church has decided not to correct this vast realm of propagated error. That is a serious thing to avoid. This needs correction; it needs exposure.

The Holy Spirit is perceived in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, no matter what might be said. The Holy Spirit is nonetheless perceived not as the sovereign God, not as the sovereign Spirit ruling, commanding the believer, not as the one to whom we submit, whose word we obey, but rather the Holy Spirit is presented almost in an impersonal way as a kind of a force, a kind of metaphysical force that serves the believer and submits to the will of the believer, the wish of the believer, the desire of the believer, the words of the believer and even, I suppose, the commands of the believer. Personal desires, personal wants, personal wishes, personal ambitions, desires for health, wealth, prosperity, a longing for mystical experiences, esoteric feelings are supposed to be the actions of the Spirit which are basically activated by the believer's demands, by the believer's words.

For example, perhaps as influential as any in the Charismatic movement is Benny Hinn. Here are a few quotes from Benny. "No, no, never ever go to the Lord and say, 'If it be Your will.'" Here's another one: "The activity of the Holy Spirit is dependent on my words. He will not move until I say it." So he is sovereign and the Holy Spirit is a metaphysical force that functions in response to his words. You will see that all the way through to all the word-faith positive confession preachers, all the way through to Joel Osteen, all the way – this all goes back to the – sort of the launch point of Kenneth Hagin, who stole these ideas from E. W. Kenyon, who twisted them out of Christian Science metaphysics. But that's the attitude. The Spirit is barely personal, a kind of force.

Benny Hinn actually says that this anointing of the Holy Spirit comes on him, particularly when he visits the grave of two dead women, heretical preachers, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Kathryn Kuhlman, that when he gets by their graves, the Holy Spirit anointing comes on him. He says this anointing is so strong on him that he can take his coat off, rub his coat on himself, the anointing goes into the coat, flail the coat in the air and say "Bam, bam, bam," and people in massive audiences all fall down because he's wielding this power called the Holy Spirit. This is what it means to be slain in the Spirit. People fall over individually; they fall over in groups under the wielding of this power. In fact, these evangelists like him are so in control of the Holy Spirit that they can demand that the Holy

Spirit show up in a certain theater at 7:30 on a Wednesday night and they can throw Him around at their will.

This is a false system. Again, it's metaphysics. It's the idea that the Holy Spirit is a mystical force and that there are certain laws that operate in the universe metaphysically and if you engage those laws, then the Holy Spirit moves in power. The Holy Spirit's name is used to give legitimacy to a false teacher. There may be spirits there, but they're not the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit's name is used because that makes the preacher seem legitimate. It also makes him famous and then it makes him rich. And he is honored and the Holy Spirit is dishonored.

How serious is this? In Exodus chapter 20 verse 7, where the ten commandments are laid out, one of them says this: "Do not take the Lord's name in vain." That's a very dangerous thing to do, but that's precisely what this kind of metaphysical treatment of the Holy Spirit is. It is taking His name in vain. It says, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes his name in vain." I'm not the final court on what happens to these people but God is, and they will not go unpunished. One could only wish that the punishment would come sooner rather than later for the sake of the people who are deceived.

Scripture ascribes to the Holy Spirit every attribute that is ascribed to the Son and the Father. Fully God, sovereign over all believers. He does not obey us, He does not fulfill our will. He does not act in response to certain metaphysical laws that we set into motion. He does not move according to our verbal confessions. He is not some kind of neutral force waiting for us to get Him going. The Holy Spirit is sovereign over the believer. We are to obey His words, submit to His authority. We are to walk in the Spirit, live in the Spirit, obey the Spirit, and be filled constantly with the Spirit. He is the authority of God in us and over us.

And we have been looking at the true ministry of the Holy Spirit in Romans chapter 8, so let's go there at this point. Here, we're learning the elements of His gracious work in believers. We could sum it up and say it this way – and I think, you know, giving you these sort of big pictures is important. The Father initiated the salvation plan in eternity past. The Father initiated the salvation plan, the Son validated it on the cross and demonstrated it in His life. He demonstrated what perfect humanity looks like. He demonstrated what a saved and fully sanctified and even glorified person looks like.

So the Father initiates this salvation plan. The Son both validates it at the cross and demonstrates it in His life, but it is the Holy Spirit who activates it. We don't activate the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit activates the work of God in us and that is inclusive. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to repentance. He convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment. It is the Holy Spirit who regenerates us, gives us life and understanding so that we can believe. Therefore, it is the Holy Spirit who both convicts us of sin and regenerates us. It is then the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us. It is also the Holy Spirit who secures us; that is, guarantees our future glory, and then it is the Holy Spirit who glorifies us. He will

raise us by the power of the Spirit as He raised Jesus.

So the whole work, the whole activation of the work of salvation, initiated by God, validated and demonstrated by Christ is then activated by the Holy Spirit. Another way to say it is the Father purposed to save an elect people, the Son provided the sacrifice to make that salvation possible, and the Spirit produces that salvation. He brings us to conviction, regeneration, sanctification and will one day glorify us. The Holy Spirit then regenerates, sanctifies, secures, and glorifies the believer. That's His true work.

Now, we've been looking at the work of the Holy Spirit in the chapter that's before us, all the way down now to this section in verses 28-30. And since we hit verse 17, we've been looking at one particular work of the Holy Spirit and that is this: the work of securing us. We talked about His work of regenerating us. We talked about His work of sanctifying us, separating us from sin and death, enabling us to fulfill the law, changing our nature, causing us to behave in a righteous fashion, adopting us into the family of God and making us sons, all of these elements of sanctification and identity and union with Christ.

We're now looking at the final work that is laid out for us, and that is the Holy Spirit's work of guaranteeing or securing our eternal glory. This is from verse 17 all the way down to verse 30. We look at this ministry of the Spirit of God by which He secures your eternal salvation, your place in heaven. And I read you from 1 Peter purposely because I wanted to remind you that you have been secured to your future inheritance which is reserved for you. It is protected by the power of God, namely the Holy Spirit. It's there waiting, imperishable, cannot be defiled, cannot fade away, reserved for you, and you're protected so that one day you're going to be there. That is the securing work of the Holy Spirit. He is, therefore, called the Spirit of promise. He is the guarantee, the down payment, the engagement ring, the seal of God that will bring you to final glory.

So starting in verse 17, the theme then moves from regeneration and sanctification to glory. In verse 17, we begin to talk about being glorified with Him. In verse 18, the glory that is to be revealed in us. Verse 21, the glory of the children of God. We all begin to look to the future. We come into the hope for that glory in verse 24. Again, hope in verse 25, and all the way down to verse 30 where we see the word "glorified." So the theme of 17 to 30 is our future glory and the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit who secures us to that future glory.

Now, it is demonstrated here that He does that in a most remarkable way in verses 26 and 27. He intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He is our intercessor. He goes before the Father continually in an unspoken language, an inner Trinitarian communion without words. It is the Spirit speaking to the Father without words – too profound for human language. Human language would limit this communion, and the Spirit is speaking without words, communing with the Father in perfect harmony with the Father's will. Verse 27, He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God and

He who searches the hearts – that is God – knows the mind of the Spirit. So you have the plan of the Father, known by the Spirit, the Spirit interceding within the framework of that plan according to the will of God, and thus in that marvelous intercessory ministry of the Spirit, we are secured to glory.

The Spirit is groaning for us to gain glory. The creation groans in verses 19 to 22. Believers groan in verse 23 to 25. But neither of those groanings are efficacious. But the groaning of the Holy Spirit is an efficacious groaning, it is a powerful groaning that secures us to final glory. This is what the Holy Spirit does for us. And because of this intercessory ministry of the Spirit of God, the Father Himself – verse 28 – works all things for our eternal good because this was His purpose and because He called us to Himself to love Him forever.

So we are seeing that the picture shifts to future glory, the glorious revealing of the sons of God, which is what God planned at the beginning, right? Now, that takes us to verses 29 and 30, just that brief summary. And we looked already at the purpose of salvation in verse 29. Let me touch it lightly. The purpose is to conform us. This is the secondary purpose, the penultimate, to conform us to the image of His Son. His secondary purpose, God's secondary purpose in saving people through all of redemptive history, His secondary purpose was to conform them to the image of His Son.

It is maybe best to be understood in this way: The whole of redemptive history is about the Father seeking a bride for His Son. The Father loves the Son, He loves the Son perfectly, He wants to give to the Son a gift of love. That gift will be a redeemed humanity that constitute a loving bride – a loving, submissive, joyous bride. And so all through redemptive history, the Father is drawing the bride – drawing the bride. Even when we get to heaven, the New Jerusalem is called the Bridal City, it comes down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. The church is seen to be the bride, the redeemed are the bride. Even the believing in Israel of old were the wife of Jehovah, to be the wife of the Son.

So the Father is seeking a bride. There's a price for the Son to pay, as there was in ancient times. When you took a bride, you paid a price for that bride and the price the Son was to pay was his own life. Not silver and gold, as Peter says, but the precious blood that flowed in His own veins as He gave up His life to pay the purchase price for the bride that the Father had desired to give Him. And so what is going to be heaven is going to be the collection of the bride brought to the bridal city. When the bride is complete, redemptive history will end, and all the bride will gather around the Son. They will love Him, adore Him, serve Him, worship Him, and with another element, they will reflect His glory. They will be in His image. We looked at that in detail, so we won't cover it any more. That's the secondary purpose. Then the primary purpose, the ultimate, in verse 29, so that He, the Lord Jesus, would be the preeminent one among many brethren. The ultimate goal is the preeminence of Christ. In the end, God will give Him a name above every name. And at His name, every knee will bow.

What is the purpose of redemptive history? The Father loves the Son, determines to give a bride as a gift of love to the Son that will serve Him and adore Him and worship Him and love Him and reflect His glory. And in some way, the reflection of that glory is greater than it would be without the redemption of that bride – if for no other reason than the fact that they will demonstrate something that without them would never be demonstrated and that is the grace of God. In order for God to put all the panoply of attributes on display that are part of His grace and mercy, He has to redeem unworthy sinners. And that's the purpose of salvation. In the end, we'll give all glory to Christ. We'll cast our crowns, as they did in Revelation, at His feet, will confess Him as Lord, preeminent one. That's the purpose of salvation. In the end, Christ will be all in all. And then you know how the story really ends. After the bride has been presented to Christ for His glory and His honor, Christ will take Himself and the bride and return them all to the Father in an act of reciprocal love. It's a staggering thing to be caught up in this.

Now, what about the progress to this end? That is the purpose of salvation. The secondary purpose is that we might be made into the image of Christ, the primary purpose is that He then might become the preeminent one, the exalted one. But the process to get to that is laid out for us in these two verses, 29 and 30. Now, just to kind of help you, sometimes you hear about Reformed theology, you hear that phrase, or the Doctrines of Grace, or Calvinism, and you wonder just exactly what that is. Okay, in a nutshell, it's what it says here – it's right here. This is the best summary of the Doctrines of Grace, of the essence of Reformed Soteriology, of the essentials of Calvinism, this is it. This is it in the saving side of it, and it's all bound up in a sequence, in a process.

It goes like this: Verse 29: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined." Then go to verse 30: "These whom He predestined, He also called. These whom He called, He also justified. And these whom He justified, He also glorified." Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Those are five cardinal realities that make up the great redemptive purpose of God in salvation, these five things.

By the way, again we are amazed at the economy of words which the Holy Spirit uses to bring these five things together in those few sentences. I might add that millions and millions of pages have been written on these five things. But let's take a look at them. Let's try to understand the process, if we can call it a process, because nothing's a process in God's mind because He sees everything in its fullness and completion. But for us, it's a sequence and that's the way it's presented to us here in the language.

Where does salvation begin? What's the primitive point at which it all launches? Verse 29: "For those whom He foreknew – For those whom He foreknew." Now, for some people, this is a meltdown point for accepting the sovereignty of God in salvation. They say, "Oh, that's the key. He foreknew." He, because He knows everything that's going to happen, looked ahead and He saw what people were going to do of their own free will, and since He knew what they were going to do, He chose them to

be His own.

Is that what foreknowledge is saying? He saw what was going to happen – now let me tell you, He does know the future. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows everything that's going to happen before it's going to happen – that is true. He does have prescience, if you want to call it that. He does have knowledge of what hasn't happened, full knowledge of it. But is that what this is talking about? Did God just look ahead at these fully independent people and say, "Well, they're going to believe and they're not going to believe, so since I know who is going to believe, those are the ones I'm going to elect."

Well, there's several responses I have. First of all, that would make the word "elect" nonsense because He didn't choose anything. So forget the doctrine of election because He didn't choose anything. It would be the doctrine of a reaction. I don't know if you want to try to preach the doctrine of divine reaction. Or perhaps you'd like to preach the doctrine of human sovereignty. Then you have to ask the question: By what power did they overcome their fallenness? By what power did these people that He looked at in the future, who had free will, overcome their depravity, their fallenness, their deadness, their blindness, their darkness? And then you'd have to ask this: If God looked ahead and saw that people would not choose the gospel and would not choose to believe and would therefore go to hell, why did He go ahead and create them? Because, you see, the only reason people come up with this idea that God simply reacted to what He knew would happen is to get Him off the hook for what happens. They're trying to save God from a bad reputation, like being responsible for people who go to hell. So they want to say we can't do that to God, so He's just reacting to what people do. But then if nobody's been created, why did He go ahead and create the people He knew would do that? Or you could even ask a tougher question: Why did He create people who had the potential to do that unless He had a purpose for that happening? You don't get God off the hook in the end any way you try. What's happening is within His purpose.

Well, then what do you mean by foreknowledge? What do we mean by that? Well, we all understand that it doesn't mean that God just knew what would happen and then He just reacted. We get that. Why? Because in John 3, Jesus says to Nicodemus, "You must be born from above." You must be born from above. In John chapter 6, Jesus says, "No man comes unto Me except the Father draw Him." At the end of the chapter, verse 65, He said, "The only people who come to Me are the people the Father draws to Me." We understand that. Listen to Matthew 11 and verse 27: "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

Wow. The only way you can ever know God is if the Son reveals Him to you, and the only way you can ever know the Son is if the Father draws you to Him. And by the way, did you notice the word "know" there? This is the first key. No one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son. You say, "Well, whoa, whoa, whoa. We know about the Son. We have

information about the Son. Holy angels have information about the Son. Demons have information about the Father and the Son. What do you mean no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son?" The word "know" must be different than having information. Okay? It must mean something different than having information because holy angels, fallen angels, and even people have information about the Father and information about the Son but it's not knowing. What do you mean knowing?

How about John 10? This is a passage that speaks using the same word. Verse 14, John 10, "I'm the Good Shepherd, I know My own and My own know Me and the Father knows Me and I know the Father." What kind of knowing is this? You mean when Jesus says, "I know My own," is He saying, "I have information about them" as if He has no information about anybody else? In Amos 3:2, God says, "Israel only have I known." Israel only have I known. What do you mean? You know everything. Israel only have I known. This is something different. In John 10:26, "You don't believe because you're not My sheep." Wow. "My sheep hear My voice and I know them." I know them. What kind of knowing? What are we talking about here? John 17, verse 25, "O righteous Father, the world hasn't known You. I have known You and these have known that You sent Me. I have made Your name known to them." What kind of knowing are we talking about?

Let me give you a helpful analogy. Genesis 4 – don't turn to it. Genesis 4 in the original language says this: "Cain knew his wife and she bore a son." Cain knew his wife. In the beautiful, veiled, euphemistic language of Scripture, that's a carnal knowledge. That's an intimate love relationship. And the shocking thing for Mary when Gabriel showed up and told her she was going to have a baby was that she had never known Joseph. She had never known him. This is the knowledge that we're talking about here. We're talking about a knowledge of intimacy. Hosea 13:5: "I knew you in the wilderness." What do you mean? I set My love on you. I established a love relationship with you in the wilderness.

This is seen in so many places in New Testament. "Many will say unto Me, 'Lord, Lord, we did this, we did that, we did the other.'" Matthew 7. "And Jesus says, 'Depart from Me I never' – what? "Never knew you." Didn't know who you were? Of course He knew who they were. He knows who they are. I never had an intimate love relationship with you, that's the kind of knowing we're talking about.

Let me show you a couple of verses – you might want to write these down because this question comes up a lot about foreknowledge, and I'm trying to help you to be able to answer it in your own mind and the minds of those that you can help. But listen to 1 Corinthians 8:3. It's very simple. It says it all. "If anyone loves God, he's known by Him." Got it? That's it. Put an asterisk by that. If anyone loves God, He's known by Him.

Let me ask you a question. We love Him because what? He first loved us. He first loved us, we love Him back, that means He knows us. When the Bible says that you are known by God, the Son says,

“I know the Father, the Father knows Me” – intimate love. In John 17, Jesus says, “The believers are known by the Father and known by Me.” Intimate love. I mean that’s what this knowledge is about. Why is it *foreknowledge*? Because before that love could ever happen, before anyone was ever born, it was ordained. That’s why it’s *foreknowledge*. That’s foreordination. That’s established before it ever happened.

Galatians 4:9 speaks of salvation this way: “Now you have come to know God, or rather” – I love this – “to be known by God.” What does it mean to be saved? It means to be known by God. What does it mean to be known by God? That He knows you exist? That He has information about you? No, that He has established a love relationship with you. Even in Romans chapter 11, that really significant chapter on the whole issue of sovereign election, at the very beginning of the chapter – verse 2 – “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.” God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. What does that mean? Whom He predetermined to love.

Go back to the writing of Moses. The question comes up, Why Israel? Why Israel? As Richard Wolffe once said, “How odd of God to choose the Jews.” Why Israel? He says, “I set My love upon you not because you were greater than any other people but because I chose to love you.” That’s a predetermined act of sovereign, uninfluenced love. That’s *foreknowledge*. And we read about it in 1 Peter. “According to the *foreknowledge* of God the Father, we have been sanctified by the Spirit, sprinkled with His blood.” The primitive truth and reality in the scheme of salvation, it starts with a sovereign determination to love certain people. And as John 13 says, to love them to the max, that’s *foreknowledge*. It is a predetermined, foreordained, and, of course, foreseen determination to love.

I just read from 1 Peter but I didn’t read the whole chapter, so let me read you again 1 Peter 1:2: “We have been saved according to the *foreknowledge* of God.” Listen to this. Over in verse 19 and 20, same chapter, same writer, it says this: “We were saved, redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world.” What does *foreknown* mean regarding Christ? Did God just look ahead and say, “Oh, wow, look at that. He’s going to end up on a cross. I’ve got to do something with that.” To say Christ was *foreknown* before the foundation of the world, to be offered as a lamb unblemished and spotless is to say that God determined it, established it, fixed it. And He has appeared in these last times for your sake. That’s how *foreknowledge* works. God determines it in eternity past and it occurs in time.

One other illustration of the use of this term that helps us in Acts 2:23, Peter’s preaching concerning Christ on the Day of Pentecost, and he talks about Christ’s death and the people nailing Him to a cross, but he says that Christ was delivered over by the predetermined plan and *foreknowledge* of God, delivered over to you to be crucified by the predetermined plan of God. Now, mark it. Peter is the one who wrote what I just read and Peter’s the one who preached this. Peter understood the meaning of *foreknowledge*. He, this Christ, was nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put to death by the predetermined plan and *foreknowledge* of God. The word plan is *boul*. It’s used in

classical Greek for a decision, a prescribed course of action coming from a decision. Predetermined is *horiz*, from which we get horizon, a line of demarcation. Something predetermined means to mark out the boundaries or the limits. God established by His own counsel the boundaries. He made the determination.

Another way to translate predetermined would be destined. By the destined purpose, plan, decision of God, marked out, pre-decided. And then he adds, “And foreknowledge of God.” That’s prognosis in English, prognosis. It is God’s foreordained decision marked out to save, to establish a love relationship with certain people. Set His love on them as He did Israel, before the foundation of the world. That’s foreknowledge. It’s a fact, it’s an established fact.

Now go back to Romans 8. In Romans 8 – and I just wanted you to get that foreknowledge because the others we can kind of draw out of our resource. We’ve talked about them in the past. “Whom He foreknew” – verse 29 – “He also predestined.” What is predestined? Well, that speaks of the end, the destiny. By the way, predestined is *prooriz*. It’s an intensified form of marking out the boundaries. This is the final purpose. He predestined, tells us, to become conformed to the image of His Son so that He would be the preeminent one among many. So by a decision marked out, foreordained, and established in eternity past, God predetermined an intimate love relationship with certain people. He established it by His decree, and based on that decision in the past, He predestined the future, the end, the final purpose. He marked out from the beginning the very end. Our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8, Revelation 17:8 says that. All that God intended to do was determined at the very beginning and predestined to its very end. That’s the big picture right there. In fact, it was in Acts 4:28 that we read that God does whatever His hand and His purpose predestines to occur. Acts 4:28. Whatever He predestines to occur will occur.

So foreknowledge speaks of His choice. You might say that’s election. Predestination speaks of the result of that choice, the end. So whoever He foreknew, He predestined. Therefore, drop down to verse 30, “These whom He predestined He also called.” Now we move into time. Now we move into human history. Those whom He called. What do you mean called? Well, we don’t mean like an invitation. We don’t mean like it says in the gospels many are called, go out and call them to come in. No, this is not that kind of a call. This is a different kind of call. We know from verse 28 in the same context that this is a calling connected, it says in verse 28, to His purpose. God works all things together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Now we’re talking about what theologians call an effectual call or an effective call or a powerful call or – I love these historic words – an irresistible call. It’s a gracious call. But it is nonetheless an effectual call. It is not an external call. It is not a call that comes to the ears to be rejected or accepted; it is an internal call, and that’s what sets it apart.

It is really the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in the full scope of regeneration. It is God’s saving call. And that’s how we are referred to so often – Romans 1:7 – “To all who are beloved of God, called” to

be holy, called saints. “To all who are beloved of God, called.” That puts it together. Since God predetermined a love relationship with you, He called you internally, regenerated you, saving, redeeming, regenerating call.

Listen, every time you see the idea of call in the epistles and the writings post-gospel, wherever you see that, it always refers to this saving act of the Spirit of God in regeneration. And it follows all the way through that we are called. Romans 8:28 being as good as any: “To those who are called according to His purpose.” It is a call connected to His purpose. His purpose is to save and He calls to fulfill that purpose. In fact, in the New Testament and even now, of course, we follow that up, we’re called the church. You know what church is? It comes from a Greek word *ekklesia*, which is a noun that draws from the verb *ekkaleo*. *Kaleo* is call, *ek* is out of. *Ekkaleo*, we are the church because we’re called out, out of the world, out of death, out of darkness, out of ignorance. We’re the called. This is the grace of God to us, to fulfill His eternal purpose.

Listen to – you can’t really improve on 2 Timothy, I don’t think, in chapter 1, I think it’s verse 9 – yes – “who saved us.” The power of God, that would be the Holy Spirit, who is the power of God, “who saved us and called us with a holy calling.” That means it’s a calling to holiness. It’s a real transformation. It’s a true regeneration, calling to holiness. Calling to ultimate holiness. Calling to final perfection. Calling to eternal glory. And it comes by the gospel. It doesn’t happen apart from the gospel. Isn’t it – you know this, right? Faith comes by what? Hearing the Word concerning Christ, so they have to hear, they have to have a preacher, the preacher has to be sent. So the calling comes by the gospel.

Listen to 2 Thessalonians 2:13: “We should always give thanks to God for you, beloved by the Lord.” I just enjoy that phrase, “beloved by the Lord.” That’s a phrase that ties into His election. He set His love upon us before we were ever born, before anything was ever created. But we now are beloved by the Lord because God has chosen you from the beginning. He has chosen you from the beginning for salvation. Then he says this, “It was for this He called you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.” It’s all there. He chose you. Then He called you by the gospel in order that He might glorify you. Again, this is a sovereign call. This is an effectual call. This is the call that we know as salvation. “Whom He called” – back to verse 30 – “He also justified.”

And now we come to the fourth of these great realities, the great truth of justification. What is that? That we have been declared righteous before God. It’s a legal term that God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ for all our sins, and since God is satisfied with that sacrifice, the penalty paid in full, justice is satisfied, divine justice. Our sins have been paid for in full, imputed to Christ in His death. By grace, God imputes His righteousness to us. And that’s what causes us to be declared righteous. Not that we are then righteous in ourselves, not that we have any inherent righteousness, but we are granted righteousness in an act by which God declares us just based upon the sacrifice of Christ which covers the punishment that we are due and based upon the imputation of Christ’s

righteousness to us. He covers us with the very righteousness of God in Christ. We know a lot about that. He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

So God foreknows in the sense that He predetermines a love relationship in an intimate, eternal relationship with a certain group of people, He predestines that that relationship will end up in eternal glory, all of that before time began. In time, He calls those whom He has chosen and He justifies those whom He calls. And then the final – verse 30 – “These whom He justified, He also” – what? – “glorified.” We all get to glory, folks. “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me and I will lose none of them,” Jesus said. He intercedes for us against all accusations. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us from within us and secures us to eternal glory.

Would you just notice something? All the verbs in that verse are past tense. That works for foreknowledge. He foreknew, that’s a past tense verb. Works for predestination because those happened in the past. But what about called? Shouldn’t it say He “will” call? What about justified? Shouldn’t it say He “will” justify? I mean He’s not done. And by the way, what about glorified? Why are these all in a past tense? That is another little nuance of the Greek. One writer calls it a proleptic aorist, and that is a wonderful reality that you see in Scripture, the use of the past tense to speak of something so secure that you can talk of it as if it had already happened. Your glory is as secure as predestination. Predestination happened in the past. Foreknowing happened in the past. And as far as God is concerned, both your calling and your justification will produce your final glory, and He can speak of it as if it has already happened.

I hope you’re feeling secure. The work of the Holy Spirit – what is the work of the Holy Spirit? To secure us, to intercede for us, to witness that we’re the children of God, to enable us to fulfill the law of God, to live righteously, to cry “Abba, Father,” enjoying our sonship, our intimacy with God, to sustain us supernaturally.

What do you think about when you think about the comfort of the Spirit? After all, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, isn’t He? Jesus said, “When I go away, I’ll send another Comforter.” Where does the comfort of the Holy Spirit come from? Are you looking for a buzz? Are you looking for that like something doesn’t go right in your life and you’re saying, “Where’s the Comforter?” Look, I do think the Holy Spirit ministers grace to us in times like that, but your comfort by the Holy Spirit comes from the knowledge of what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life to secure your future glory. Is that comforting enough for you? Is there anything more precious than that, than to know that your eternity is secure in the care of the Comforter? That’s your greatest comfort. There is no comfort equal to that.

Any other comfort is a temporary comfort, and I believe the Spirit of God dispenses those kinds of things. I think casting all your care on Him because He cares for you is a real experience that believers have. I think the Spirit of God ministers comfort, but I think that comfort doesn’t sort of

come, you know, just out of nowhere. That's why we read the comfort of the Scriptures. It's when we know the work of the Holy Spirit, connected to the work of the Son, connected to the will of the Father, that our comfort is secured. He is our Comforter. He comforts by the assurance that His gracious power will bring us to eternal glory. Now, I don't know how you respond to that, but if you think that's pretty good, wait until we get to verse 31 and the rest of this chapter next time.

Now, as we've been saying the last couple of weeks, I'm going to pray and then we're going to have you just kind of wait meditatively and quietly while the organ plays for a few moments, and let these things sink in. But I do want to say that our prayer room is open to my right. We would love to minister to you there. The visitors center is out there. The members center, for those of you interested in baptism or church membership, any spiritual need, salvation, anybody to pray with you, you need someone to do that, you need some counsel, some help, please, we're here to serve you in that way but particularly if you're not sure that you have the Holy Spirit, that you're on your way to heaven, we would love to talk to you about salvation. So let's pray and then you can meditate a while and let these things settle in your heart.

Father, we thank You for all that overwhelms us, floods us in the great glories of this sweeping redemptive purpose. And what is so staggering about it is how we have been brought into it, due to nothing of our own, no choice of our own, no accomplishment of our own, no merit of our own. You have determined to set Your love on us and to love us forever and give us the privilege of knowing You in the intimate sense and loving You forever and being loved by You and by Your Son. And we are now loved by the Holy Spirit who loves us and loves You enough to secure us forever. Thank You for the power of the Word of God to deliver these truths that become our comfort, and may we rejoice in that comfort and do all we can to demonstrate that joy in this life, even in the midst of trials, even though various trials, as we read from Peter, shall strike us here. And help us to love these truths enough to share them with those who don't yet know the truth of the comfort of eternal glory that can be found in faith in Christ. Use us to that end, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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