

Romans 8B

- God's plan of redemption has corrected for our spiritual problem
 - But it has left our body temporarily out in the cold
 - This is why we have a war within our members
 - But this waiting period of partial redemption is consistent with God's plan to redeem the world itself
 - Everything and everyone is groaning together under the burden of time
 - But the wait has good purpose
 - God is working to bring redemption to many people and even the creation itself waits
 - And therefore we must all be patient in our hope for the redemption of the body
 - And we take encouragement in the mean time knowing that God has the whole plan already in mind
 - And the Spirit is privy to the plan, and the Spirit is in every believer coaching us
- Give careful thought to what Paul saying
 - Can God be surprised by what comes our way?
 - Does He not already know?
 - Can He drive us forward into the land mines of our life knowing where we should step?
 - Even when we are poor listeners and make mistakes, can't God direct us back on track?

[Rom. 8:26](#) ¶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;

[Rom. 8:27](#) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

- Now as we ended last week, Paul began to explore the implications of God's sovereignty over all matters in a believer's life
 - Making that famous comment

[Rom. 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.

- Look at how that verse starts
 - And we know...
 - Paul begins with an assumption
 - He assumes we agree
 - He isn't trying to convince us of anything
 - He fully expects you and I are already on this same page
 - How do we know anything?
 - Because we must know this if we appreciate the enormity of Rom 1-8
 - God took us from the grave and brought us into a new relationship
 - He determined to save us, and then He died for us while we were still enemies
 - Sand then He sent His own Spirit to dwell inside each of us
 - To make His home in us
 - And meanwhile, God has asked us to remain here in this fallen world working with the Spirit to be sanctified, set apart for holy purpose
 - And knowing all that, what else can we possibly conclude but that God is in control
 - He's not passive while we wait, He causes (sunergeo)

- He works, He actively intercedes and brings to a purposeful and intentional end
 - All things for good to those who love God
 - The Creator is the complete and final authority concerning all matters on Earth and in Heaven
 - Nothing can happen that is not according to His purpose and will
 - For there is no actor, no power, no authority greater than He and therefore no other will that can supersede God's
- Paul's point is simple and yet profound
 - We must understand that as we wait patiently in hope for our resurrection, nothing we face here poses a threat to that outcome
 - Life may be hard, we will have trials, the enemy will bear down on each of us in his own way
 - But nothing comes between us and God, nothing can frustrate our hope, nothing has enough power to stop the good that God intends to bring His children

[Rom. 8:29](#) 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; [Rom. 8:30](#) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

- Understanding this verse properly rests on two things
 - First, are you keep Paul's point in mind and not stray into wrong alleys?
 - Secondly, are you willing to read the words and accept their plain meaning without explaining their meanings in novel and imaginative ways?
- Begin with an observation
 - There is obvious chain of events being described here
 - Paul connects his chain with the linking word "also"

- I.e., God does one thing, and then He also did another to that same group
 - And each link in the chain is without doubt according to Paul
 - If the first link is true, then all that follow will always be true
 - Paul never inserts a conditional phrase or thought
- Second observation, Paul is using these verses to support his earlier statement that we can be assured no bad experiences in this life will bring our undoing
 - You can see his point clearly by briefly looking at the succeeding verse

[Rom. 8:31](#) ¶ What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

- Clearly, Paul wants to assure the reader that what God has begun, He will certainly finish, since all the work is His
 - In fact, if any link in the chain could be seen as in doubt, then Paul's entire point becomes moot
 - If the entire chain is not unbreakable, then Paul's assurance is empty and worthless
 - He can only assure us of God's faithfulness and sovereignty if his example is without exception
 - Every link in his chain is an absolute certainty, because each step is accomplished in God's will and plan
 - And God's will cannot be challenged
- So now let's look at the chain
 - Those
 - Who are those in this verse?
 - All mankind?
 - No, they are the same as the ones in verse 28 - Christians

- He foreknew
 - Much has been made of this word – proginosko
 - Similar to the word prognosticate
 - To understand the future with certainty
 - God’s understanding which predates knowledge
 - He knew the Christians before time began
 - We were on his mind before we had a mind
- Those He foreknew, God also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren
 - Here’s where our careful observation of the plain language is key
 - Those He foreknew God also predestined
 - I can’t hardly think of a word in scripture more emotionally charged than predestined
 - Proorizo – It means to determine beforehand
 - One of my favorite uses of the word comes in an often overlooked passage of Acts

[Acts 4:27](#) “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

[Acts 4:28](#) to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

- In that context, the meaning of the word is easy to see
 - Stephen is speaking about how God had intended that Jesus would die on the cross
 - His death was no accident. It was bad luck
 - It didn’t happen at the whim of Pontius Pilate
 - It didn’t happen because the Jews conspired to cause Jesus’ death

- Stephen reminds the crowd what we all know from scripture

[Is. 53:8](#) By oppression and judgment He was taken away;

And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was due*?

[Is. 53:9](#) His grave was assigned with wicked men,

Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. [Is. 53:10](#) ¶ But the LORD was pleased
To **crush** Him, putting *Him* to grief;
If He would render Himself *as a guilt offering*,
He will see *His* offspring,
He will prolong *His* days,
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

- Stephen says that Jesus died because God predetermined that Jesus would die on the cross
 - And when the appointed time arrived, God's predetermined plan was carried out under God's guidance and direction
 - As Stephen says, they did whatever your hand and purpose predestined
- So let's take that simple meaning and bring it back to the text
 - God predetermined that "those" He foreknew would be conformed to the image of His Son
 - Image means likeness or representation
 - To be conformed to His likeness means to be a Christian, to be saved
 - But it's deeper than that
 - It's also to join Him in His suffering
 - And ultimately to join Him in glory
 - Remember Paul's point
 - Nothing can stop this train

- God knew you from before the beginning, assigned you to become like His Son and made that determination before the world began
 - How can anything in this world interrupt a plan that began before the world itself was established?
 - That's how Paul can bring the chain to conclusion in the next verse
- [Rom. 8:30](#) and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- Since God determined to conform you to His Son's likeness, then naturally God must act according to His plan to call you into a relationship
 - So that as you answer that call, you can be justified through faith
 - And surely if you have been justified through faith, then you can be sure that you will see the glory or resurrection on a future day
 - That's Paul's point
 - It's the culmination of his essay on righteousness
 - He has been describing a chain of events that led to your salvation
 - And for every believer who has ever read this letter, they can look back as see every step in this chain as a part of their personal history
 - Every link except one
 - No believe reading Paul's letter will have every experienced the last step
 - The step of glorification
 - This is the final step for all of us
 - And Paul wants the believer to be just as assured of the future fulfillment of that step as we are sure of our past
 - This assurance is possible because God had the whole thing designed before even step one happened

[Eph. 1:3](#) ¶ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
[Eph. 1:4](#) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
[Eph. 1:5](#) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
[Eph. 1:6](#) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

- Now Paul underscores our hope in the final verses of the chapter

[Rom. 8:32](#) He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

[Rom. 8:33](#) Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

[Rom. 8:34](#) who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

[Rom. 8:35](#) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

- If God was willing to make the death of His Son an essential part of His plan to redeem men
 - Then what isn't God prepared to do in seeing the plan to conclusion in each of our lives?
 - After all, who can bring a charge (or accusation or a debt) against God's elect?
 - Elect is another word for the believers who God foreknew and predestined
 - Remember, the One with authority to judge all creation is Christ Himself

[Acts 17:31](#) because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

[2Tim. 4:1](#) ¶ I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

- If Jesus is the judge of all creation
 - And He is the one who has assigned us His own righteousness
 - And He died for us, and He intercedes for us even now...
- Is He not going to see the plan through?

- Is there anyone, anything, anywhere that can cast doubt on our future glory?
 - Who can stand in judgment against us? Who can condemn us when the one with the ultimate power refuses to condemn us?
- I think Paul's concluding comments stand nicely on their own

[Rom. 8:35](#) Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

[Rom. 8:36](#) Just as it is written,

"FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;
WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

[Rom. 8:37](#) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

[Rom. 8:38](#) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

[Rom. 8:39](#) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- We gain this assurance solely because the entire chain lies within God's control and eternal purpose, so it's as good as happened
 - Only a few short years of life on this earth separate us from that final link
- Now as Gentiles, we finish this chapter with a smile on our face
 - After all, we've been given confident assurance of all that God has purposed to do in our lives
 - We have an assurance of no condemnation, a confidence that God is working out our lives for good now and eternal glory soon
 - We even have hope to persevere in the face of persecution and suffering
- But now the Jews aren't nearly so pleased
 - Oh yes, they probably take some a personal satisfaction with all that Paul has said concerning salvation
 - But something Paul said left a bad taste in their mouth

- And unless Paul addresses it head on, it's likely to drive his Jewish audience to distraction
- Did you see the problem?
 - It was in verse 36
 - Paul quotes from Psalms 44
- Now it's clear how Paul wanted to apply those verses
 - He was telling the church that even though God's people suffer innocently, God does not forsake us.
 - And in fact, we are considered by God as sheep to be slaughtered
 - For His sake, our lives may be poured out
- Calvin says:

That it is no new thing for the Lord to permit his saints to be undeservedly exposed to the cruelty of the ungodly. But this is not done except for their good; for the Scripture teaches us, that it is alien to the righteousness of God to destroy the just with the wicked, (Genesis 18:23); but that, on the contrary, it is meet for him to requite affliction to those who afflict, and rest to those who are afflicted. (2 Thessalonians 1:6, 9.) And then they affirm that they suffer for the Lord; and Christ pronounces them blessed who suffer for the sake of righteousness. (Matthew 5:10.) By saying that they *died daily*, the psalmist intimated that death was so suspended over them, that their life differed but little from death.

- Why did Paul's use of this statement cause so much grief for his Jewish audience particularly?
 - Well, Paul's use of this verse would have brought the entire psalm to mind for the Jew
 - Understanding what psalm 44 taught will explain their reaction
 - Read Psalm 44
- The psalm's basic thrust is that Israel was allowed to suffer at the hands of her enemies unjustly
 - Though they hadn't violated the covenant, God was forsaking them
 - Now the psalmist's perspective wasn't entirely accurate

- But the point of the psalm is something close to a lamentation
- A grieving and crying out to the Lord that expresses the perspective of the nation of Israel at the time of their oppression
- Now let's see this from their point of view
 - On the one hand Paul has gone to fantastic lengths to explain how God elects and justifies by the power of His hand, not by men's works
 - God holds the keys to unlock men's hearts
 - And His promise to see His promises through to the end is something we can all bank on
 - All God calls, He justifies, and glorifies
 - On the other hand, the Jewish audience is hearing this in about 57 AD
 - The Messiah has come
 - The nation of Israel saw him in the flesh, many of whom are no doubt still alive only 25 years later
 - Yet by this time it's clear that the nation of Israel hasn't embraced Him
 - At first there was some hope for those living in that day
 - Pentecost brought the church to life in Judea
 - Most of the early church were Jewish, and it grew rapidly...until the persecution began in Jerusalem
- Then the Jews began to turn against the Way, as Christianity was called
 - Many church leaders were dispersed into Samaria and then later the Diaspora
 - The Church found new converts among the Gentiles and began to spread through the Roman empire

- Even in Rome, what had started as a Jewish church was quickly becoming a predominantly Gentile church
- So what happened to God's promises to Israel?
 - Here's Paul telling us that our future inheritance, our hope for glory and the resurrection is assured because God is bringing it to conclusion
 - We can have confidence even amid our afflictions because God will not forsake us
 - And Paul even as the gall to quote from a Psalm speaking about the nation of Israel and how God has left the nation for dead in times past
 - It seems that all the signs point to a God that can't be trusted
 - After all, how can we rest in His promises to us concerning the resurrection and our inheritance with Christ if He didn't keep His promises with Israel
 - Didn't the Father promise that the nation of Israel would be His forever

[Deut. 31:6](#) " Be **strong** and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

- And yet here we are
 - The nation has all but forgotten about Jesus of Nazareth
 - He's merely a footnote in their history books
 - And as the nation has forgotten their Messiah, it's clear that this leaves them no hope
 - How can this nation ever find favor with God again having rejected their Messiah in such a decisive and violent way?
 - And if the relationship between God and Israel can fail, then how can we take seriously any promise today that our relationship with Christ can last
- What if God were to turn His back on us just as He apparently turned His back on Israel
 - Can this God be trusted? A God that forsakes His own people