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## **God Weaves Together All Things for Good Romans 8:28-30**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The word from God through which the Holy Spirit draws us to Jesus is Romans 8.

*And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he knew in advance, he marked off in advance to be conformed to the exact likeness of his Son so that he might be the first in line among many brothers. Now those whom he marked off in advance, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)*

This is the Word of the Lord.

Dear friends in Christ, fellow saints washed clean in the blood of our risen Savior:

A mother sobs at the grave of her six-year old. What good could come from a life cut so short?

A once powerful man no longer has the strength to lift a spoon to feed himself. What good could come from lingering on, so helpless and dependent on others?

A student suffers through another day of hurtful taunts. What good could come from such bullying?

God works all things for good. So often when we need those words the most, they seem to ring hollow in our heads. "What good?" we ask. "What good could come from this?" Let's humble ourselves before the Holy Spirit and take to heart these words he speaks to us through the pen of the Apostle. For through these words he strengthens us to say with confidence: God weaves together all things for good. That's the theme. He does it for those who love him, and he does it to bring his people into glory. God weaves together all things for good.

### **A. For those who love him**

"We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Romans 8:28 HCSB). How do we know that? History gives us many examples of God's people suffering at the hands of the ruthless. Science says there is no divine hand guiding and protecting, but that all happens according to the predetermined laws of nature or else it's due to the probabilities of subatomic particles, in other words, by chance. Even our own experiences often fail to find the good that's supposed to come.

So how do we know that God weaves together all things for the good of those who love him? Because that's what he has promised. Despite what you see or feel, despite what reason or experience surmises, believe the promise of your God: "All things work together for the good of those who love God." He weaves them together in ways that we cannot see or imagine. So we hold on to his promise by faith alone.

He promises to do this with all things. The good and the bad, the joys and the sorrows, the victories and the failures, the delights of life and the sufferings—all things. Like a pile of threads of all shades, hues, and colors, he weaves all things together for good.

But notice whom this promise is for. He does it for those who love him. He's not promising some sort of earthly utopia for the human race. He's not promising that mankind has some sort of destiny to achieve an ultimate good. These are not words to speak to people who do not trust in Jesus as their Savior. Only through Jesus do we know and love the true God. And this promise is only for those who love God. Whatever hope or comfort anyone else finds in them is a false hope and comfort. This promise is only for those who love God.

By the way, this is one reason it's so foolish for someone to think that being a Christian takes the fun out of life or that it's better to get serious about God only when death is close. Why would you want to rob yourself of this wonderful promise that let's you live each day with the confidence that God is weaving together all things for good? This promise isn't for those who put God off for some other time, but only for those who love God.

Now why do you love God, dear friend? None of us started out loving God. Earlier in this chapter Paul writes, "The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God, nor can it do so" (Romans 8:7 NIV84). And we all began life filled with sinful desires and empty of all good. We were God-haters. We could not come to him much less love him. We were his natural-born enemies. And God has made it clear: He hates all who do wrong. He will punish all who oppose him. He will punish, not with a slap on the wrist, but with hell, the unending torment of unbearable fire, pain, and tears. Who could love such a God?

So why do you love him? Some people imagine a different kind of god, a god more to their liking, a god whose easier to love. Maybe it's a god who has easier standards or a god who will accept us if we try hard and do our best. But such a god is no god. Such a god cannot weave together all things for good. Don't fool yourself into thinking that you love God because you've redefined him into something else.

Why do you love God? Go back to the text. Paul explains how any of us sinners could love the holy God. Notice how he defines "those who love God" as "those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28 HCSB). You love God not because of who you are or because of any choice, decision, or action on your part. You love God because he called you according to his purpose. He called you to faith in Jesus. He called you out of the darkness into the kingdom of the Son whom he loves. He called you according to his purpose and plan, moved by his grace, his good will and pleasure. He called you based on what Jesus Christ has done for you, because his blood washes you clean, because his death ransoms you, because his resurrection justifies you. He called you through the Gospel, the Good News of forgiveness in Jesus, the Good News brought to you by the water of Baptism and the word of the Scriptures. Why do you love God? Because he called you according to his purpose, by grace alone, in Christ alone, through the Gospel alone.

So dear Christian friends, when your love for God dims in its fervor, when you wonder how you will make it through the day's troubles or what good could come from your suffering, don't look into yourself. Don't try to pump up some sort of loving feelings for God, as if you could entice him to help you. Rather listen to him calling to you through the Gospel. Listen to his Good News, which his word and Sacraments bring to you. Listen to the Good News of his love that gave you rebirth into his family through Baptism. Listen to the Good News of his love that sacrificed his Son for you and now invites you to often eat his body and drink his blood so that you know his love all the more. Listen to the Good News of what he is weaving together for you. For he weaves together all things for good to bring his people into glory.

## **B. To bring his people into glory**

God was weaving together all things to bring his people into glory long before any of his people, including you and me, existed. His work extends from eternity to eternity. The Apostle writes, "For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29 HCSB). From before he created the world he knew you as one whom he had chosen to save. He didn't simply know about you. He knew you and marked you off to be his own child and lamb. He knew you, dear Christian, predestining you to be adopted into his family, giving you rebirth through Baptism. He knew you as a father knows his child. He knew you as a sheep he would call by name, a wandering lamb whom he would place on his shoulders to bring into his flock. He knew you and marked you off as his own.

To accomplish this which his grace had determined to do, the Father sent the Son. He became one of us, flesh and blood yet without sin. Then to bring us into his family, to make us his brothers and sisters, he laid down his life paying for our sins, ransoming us, freeing us. He has risen from the dead, the firstborn from the grave. We too will be like him. We will be conformed to his image. Now through faith in him he lives in us and we reflect his image in part. But when he returns in glory and raises us from the grave, then he "will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21 NIV84). Then "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2 NIV84). Then God's purpose from before the creation of the world will be accomplished. We will be conformed to the image of his Son, and live in glory as his brothers and sisters. God weaves together all things to bring his people into glory.

And to accomplish his plan from before creation and bring it to completion in eternity, here in time he has called you and justified you. Paul writes "And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified." When he called you to faith, you then knew and believed that in Jesus you stand before God justified, acquitted of all sin. For Jesus paid for your sins and freely gives you his righteous record. In Christ you have no mark against you, you are justified before God.

And what glory awaits! For God's promise will not fail. Why would we not love our God who has done so much for us? Why would we not devote our time, effort, skill, ability, and wealth to honor and serve him in whatever he place before us to do? Why would we not strenuously resist sin and all that displeases him? Why would we not bear

up no matter what our trouble or suffering? For his love will not fail you. He weaves all things together for good for you who love him, who are called according to his purpose. He weaves all things together to bring you into glory. And in heaven we will no longer see the tattered backside of his work and wonder how all those loose threads could be worked together. In heaven we will see the marvelous patterns he has weaved, working all things, the good and the bad, the joys and the sorrows—weaving together all things for good. What a God for us to love, honor, and serve with all our hearts! Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.