

**Title: Our Glorious Purpose**  
**Series Living Free**  
**Text: Romans 8:18-29**

**Introduction:** One of the greatest needs we have as human beings is that of purpose. Why am I here? Is there a divine purpose at work in my life? What is the big picture?

A person without a clear sense of purpose is like a ship without a rudder – there may be a lot of movement but you never get to port.

The Bible says we each have a *Purpose*, however, are more than the *purpose* of a career, a family or even a ministry. The purpose for our lives involves not only the big decisions of our lives but also the hundreds of small daily ones.

*God has a plan for your life* is not platitude but it must be understood rightly – but when it is grasped your whole world will change. No one is left out. Everyone is destined for glory.

**Text: Romans 8:18-29**

## **I. Future Glory Keeps Suffering in Perspective – Rm 8:16**

*18. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

This versed is a continuation of verse 17). *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together*

**A. Paul ties suffering and future glory together.** Since they are neither of the same degree or source, he says you really can't compare the two. He doesn't deny that he is going through some hard things but He knows in His Spirit that nothing escapes a good and benevolent God.

There are **many categories of suffering**

- *Outward suffering:* war, famine, disease, lack –
- *Inward suffering:* broken hearts, unfulfilled dreams, emotional battles and frustrations of all kinds
- *Suffering related to persecution* for righteousness sake.

Some suffering we can escape, some suffering we can not escape. Here Paul has in mind the kinds of suffering that happen because we are **part of a broken world**.

**B. Glory in us.** The Lord is concerned about our suffering and encourages us that it is not 'worthy' to be compared to the *glory to be revealed in us*. It is key to see it doesn't say 'glory to be revealed *to* us'. This is not something like receiving a gift but rather something that happens in us. We are going to be glorious all within – transformed into someone glorious from the inside out.

## **II. Creation, too, awaits redemption Rm 8:19-22**

*19. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

*20. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*

*21. because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

*22. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*

**A. Birth Pangs.** How great is our future glory? All creation – all things animate and inanimate are waiting for it with ‘eager longing’! Creation is said to groan and labor with *birth pangs* – this is essentially what Jesus says in Matthew 24 when he said there will be an increase in earthquakes, etc in the last days. It is like a woman crying out in pain as a child is delivered

The earth has been cursed since Adam – ‘*cursed is the ground for your sake*’ **Gen 3:17**. But a new heaven and a new earth will be come **Rev 21:1**.

This is not pantheism where God is in nature and indistinguishable from it but rather it is the created order awaiting its promised renewal – the promise of its full redemption.

- Song:

*The heavens declare your greatness.  
The oceans cry out to you.  
The mountains they bow down before you.  
As I join with the earth and I give my praise to you*

**B. What is creation waiting for? - the *revealing or manifestation* of the sons of God.**

One commentator put it this way: It like a dramatic play where the curtain raises at the end and the actors are seen for who they really are. Creation is ready to applaud the real you – it longs to see how you have been transformed – how you have changed – you in your destiny.

### **III. We are restless until full adoption Rm 8:23-25**

*23. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

*24. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?*

*25. But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

**A. Yearning for something more.** All of us, if honest, knows that there is something within us that is wired for something more, something future, something transcendent

- **Eccl 3:11** *God has put eternity in their hearts*

**B. The desire for full sonship.** We have been adopted with God as our Father but it is not a complete experience yet, for we eagerly await our full adoption – the redemption of our physical body

In our spirits you are already a son – one day your body will be too. Our **purpose** is to be full grown son of God – in spirit and in body.

#### IV. The Spirit Himself Intercedes For Us Rm 8:26,27

*26. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

*27. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

A. *Likewise* – since the Spirit of Adoption has started the process of your full adoption He is not going to quit on you until you come into your complete purpose as a son or daughter of God.

**B. Prayer is the link between heaven and earth.** Prayer is the channel through which blessing, forgiveness, revelation, fellowship and power flow. It is the conduit of faith. Paul describes that every Christian knows they should pray but many times doesn't know what or how to pray.

- Example: Have you ever had a situation where you didn't know how to pray? Is there some situation in your life that seems to have no apparent solution? Maybe there is something you do know exactly what is needed, e.g. salvation, healing, provision – but you still don't know how to pray.

#### C. The Holy Spirit helps our weaknesses.

- *Help* – only used twice in NT. It is the word Martha used when she asked Jesus to make Mary 'help' her in the kitchen.
- *Weaknesses* – this word that sometimes is translated disease and infirmity but it could imply moral weakness or even weakness in prayer.

What is the focus of Spirit's work? To help our weaknesses!

The Spirit knows exactly what 'the will of God' is and He makes intercession for us precisely as needed. He *searches the hearts* so He knows precisely how to *make intercession for the saints*.

**D. Groanings which cannot be uttered** - We read where we *cry* out "Abba, Father" but there are also groanings of the Spirit.

Who is groaning here? Me or the Spirit? Is the groaning audible or silent? Are we conscience of the groaning or does it take place at an imperceptible level?

*Groaning* is used only one other time in the NT: **Acts 7:34** *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them*

I believe, Paul is speaking of an audible, deep, moaning that comes from our spirit as moved upon by the Holy Spirit

**E. *Can not be uttered*** – is not the same silence but rather that words are not adequate. There are 38,000 entries in an average English dictionary – but taken all together they are still inadequate to express some things.

Jesus is said to have cried out in a loud voice in prayer **Hebrews 5:7** *Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear.*

Commentators said that the early church undoubtedly had prayer meetings with groaning that was normative especially in personal prayer

- My personal experiences in prayer meetings and in personal intercession

**F. This speaks of *glossolalia*.** Groaning is not restricted, however, to only praying in tongues. The point is the Holy Spirit through us, with us and for us – often in tongues

- **I Cor 14:15** *“I pray with my spirit”*. This happens when we are being moved on by the Holy Spirit.

Groaning in prayer can't be worked up. It happens when a burden, need or joy so overwhelms your capacity of rational speech that the Spirit groans through you.

**G. Intercession helps us in our suffering and our weaknesses.** God is very concerned about our suffering and His Spirit has been sent to help us. We are to pray for help and not presume upon sovereignty of the Lord as if ‘He is doing something – just grin and bear it’.

- **James 5:13** *Is anyone among you suffering? let him pray.*

## **V. All things work out for good Rm 8:28**

**28. *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.***

**A. All things – everything – works together for our good** – even that which was meant for evil. Like Joseph, God will ultimately make everything work out.

- *And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. **Genesis 50:20***

**B. God doesn't cause all things** – He redeems all things. He is an accommodator. He takes whatever happens and uses it to fashion something good in you and for you.

Question: Has anyone here experienced suffering? Can you verify that God did something good in it?

Is Paul saying, "Whatever happens is good?" **No.**

Is he saying that suffering and evil and tragedy are something good in disguise? **No.**

Is he saying that we will be able to understand why God allowed everything that happens to happen? **No.**

**God is sewing a tapestry.** On one side it looks like random thread, it is not beautiful, and it may even seem coherent – but on the other side is an incredibly beautiful design

#### **B. Two criteria for this promise to be yours.**

1. *Love God* – For someone who loves God even bad things will ultimately work for your good. For the one who doesn't love God even the good things will one day become bad.

2. *Called according to His purpose* – this is really another way of saying you are saved. It is the eternal plan that God has for your life. The present life is a part of that plan but it is not the whole plan by any means.

There is a third criteria, however, that is implied which has been previously addressed; *intercession*. Romans 8:28 is given in the context of praying with the Holy Spirit where He helps us in our weakness, etc.

#### **VI. Our Eternal Purpose Rm 8:29,30**

*29. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

*30. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

**A. What is the purpose of every Christian's life?** To be conformed to the image of God's only begotten Son – Jesus Christ - that is to come into the fullness of Jesus Christ – to come into the completeness of being a son or daughter of God.

Jesus is to be the *first born of many brethren*. Jesus called His disciples first servants, then friends and finally brethren.

*Conformed to the image* was also said of Jesus in **Romans 8:3** where God is said to have sent His son in the *likeness of sinful flesh*. Jesus *became* sinful flesh and so in similar fullness we become 'like Jesus Christ'.

This may seem a little ambiguous for some for it is partaking of all splendor of being a child of God Himself.

This is the glorious purpose of your life – to be the image of Jesus Christ. – to look like you are His brother or sister.

## **B. Great Golden Chain of Salvation**

### **1. Foreknowledge**

God has infinite knowledge both past and future. How long has God loved you? From eternity past. You are not a surprise. Nothing about you or that which affects you catches God by surprise. The Lord never says, “*Man, I didn’t see that one coming!*”

- **Ps 139:16** *Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance, in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.*

Illustration: It is like parents waiting for the birth of their baby. They can hardly wait for him or her to be born – for they have wanted to be parents it seems forever. They have talked to the baby while in the womb, they have prepared a nursery, got the baby clothes and even started saving for college. They have names picked out. They do everything they can to be ready for the baby to come into the world.

### **2. Predestination**

God prepares the destination of all His children. The doctrine of predestination is the result of God’s sovereignty

Predestination is not foreordination where by decree some are sent to heaven and some to hell. This technically is referred to as supralapsarianism. There is not a limited atonement in this sense. Whoever calls on the Lord is saved. A person is condemned only because he or she refuses to trust Christ.

*Predestination* need not be a frightful word for believer but in fact a wonderful doctrine which should bring comfort, encouragement and thankfulness to our hearts. God is in control. He has a plan that will not fail.

- **Philippians 1:6**. “*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

Illustration of Bus God gets a bus ready for His people that are going to heaven. There is no way the bus will break down, get lost, or run out of fuel. It cannot be high-jacked, detoured or miss its destination. It has a predetermined destination. It is like the subway that is on auto-pilot and has no room for error.

### **3. Calling**

This is the Christ’s initiative of choosing or electing for salvation. Man can not save himself but only by the grace of the Lord.

**Ephesians 1:4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world

This is amazing for God chose us even *before* **Genesis 1:1** “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*”

Calling is an act of the Holy Spirit upon a person hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Effectual calling** is calling that is united with **faith**. Without faith calling is not effectual.

- Jesus said *Many are called but few are chosen*

Illustration of bus: God has the bus ready (predestination) and now God makes the phone call inviting you to join the bus. Without the phone call you can not get on. Will you pick up? The bus is waiting for you.

Some may wonder if once you are on the bus can you get off the bus. In other words does predestination mean you no longer have free will in this regard?

- Reformed – no. Once on the bus always on the bus.
- Lutheran – yes. If you stop the bus and insist on getting off, you can't get back on. (Hebrews says to do so would be to trample underfoot the grace of God)
- Arminianism – yes. You can get off and you can get back on if you want to.

To me too often foreknowledge, predestination, and calling have been used for 1) fear – don't get off you can't get back on, 2) Don't worry about anything – you didn't save yourself anyway – do what you want.

I think the best use of the truth of foreknowledge, predestination and calling is: You have always been loved by God. You are special to God. He has been planning for you since eternity past. His future plans are wonderful, preplanned and assured. He loves you so much He takes the initiative towards you to rescue you and you respond to His gracious act by faith.

#### **4. Justification**

When the call comes and we respond in faith we are justified – i.e. saved. Paul wrote extensively about justification by faith in the first part of his letter to the Romans.

One is said to be 'justified by faith apart from works of the Law.' When God sees your faith, He declares you are saved.

Bus Analogy: Justification is your ticket to get on the bus. The bus has been prepared. The destination fixed. You have received the call that you have been invited. Now, when you show up at the bus stop you give your faith (ticket) in exchange for a seat on the bus.

(Paul doesn't talk about it here but *sanctification* is learning to get along with everyone else that is on the bus!)

#### **5. Glorification**

This is the ultimate purpose for which you were saved by God: our glorification.

So certain of its fulfillment Paul uses the past tense! Paul is using the Hebrew idea of the "prophetic past" by which a predicted event is marked out as so certain of fulfillment that it is described as though it had already taken place.

No longer will we *"fall short of the glory of God"* (**Romans 3:23**) The Bible teaches us that it is certain that one day we will be with Jesus Christ and completely like Him in all glory.

Bus Analogy: Glorification is the final destination. When you disembark you arrive at a place prepared for you. The lays are out. The music is playing. There is a huge welcoming party for you

This glory is the partaking of the glory of the Son of God. All creation is eagerly awaiting you to come into your full sonship – The party is ready!

**Closing**: This future is glorious for the children of God. Our Father causes all things to work together for that end. The Holy Spirit constantly is aiding our passage through this life through Spirit-inspired intercession and that which we do suffer in this life pales in comparison to our inheritance yet to be revealed

God's eternal purpose: God want sons and daughters.

Is the Holy Spirit leading you into intercession that 'groans' in the Spirit? If so, release your inner burdens in the Spirit.

Are you having trouble sleeping over decisions, failures or problems? Love the Lord and pray – and everything will work out for your good. Beginning today you can sleep like a baby! But your heavy head on a soft pillow of Providence.

Are you afraid of losing your salvation? God will never allow anyone to through you off the bus! God can get you to your destination.