

Romans 8:28
March 30, 2020

The News.
Instagram.
Facebook.
Radio.
Friends.
Family.

Everyone is singing a common refrain. Over and over we can read and hear sentences that begin, “What we need most is _____.” Some say:

Social Distancing
Surgical Masks
Government Intervention
Stimulus Package
Data on the virus
Testing
Ventilators
Hospital Beds
Information
Self-Quarantine
State Lockdown

Some of those things are necessary and important.
But can any of those things be what we need most?

You know what we need? A PROMISE from God.

The primary way God comforts his people FROM
THE WORD during uncertain times are through his
PROMISES.

You can gain confidence today based on God's promises

You can build a life on God's promises.

You can find certainty in God's promises.

You can find hope in God's promises.

And the Bible is full of them.

So Let's pick a big one—shall we?

Not a manageable promise but a big, outlandish one.

We need a big, unmanageable, unapologetic, unruly promise.

A promise that defies simplistic explanations and neat expectations.

We need the kind of promise that will make our ears tingle.

We need the kind of promise that will excite our senses.

We need the kind of promise that will inflame our insides.

We need the kind of promise that will makes us gasp.

We need the kind of promise that will cause us to say—really?

We need the kind of promise that will help us navigate the perplexing and angry waters of this pandemic.

A global pandemic calls for a universal promise.

Big problems DEMAND bigger promises.

The kind that:

- Will make your ears tingle
- Will excite your senses
- Will inflame your insides
- Will make you gasp.
- Will cause you to say—really?

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

How many things? All things.

Even things in this pandemic? Yes.

“There are some promises (John Bunyan says)...that I would not have out of the Bible for as much gold and silver as can lie between York and London piled up to the stars.” John Bunyan

Again.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

My goal this morning is that simple but far beyond my abilities.

That this promise give today.
That it would give you a place to stand.

Even though you might not know what is coming next—you can know for sure and for certain—God is working for my good.

Again.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

PRAY

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Four reasons for confidence today.

1. God is always working for those who love him

Who is it for?

Those that love God.

This promise stands like a citadel, a fortress against a howling wilderness of darkness, doubt and the devil—but it is not for everyone.

Just as we can be certain that God never stops working for the good of Christians, we can be doubly certain that God has never started working for the good of those that are not Christians.

Is God working for you?

Sure—you might say—I love God.

How can you tell? Do you want to please Jesus?

The question is NOT—do you know about God. It is not can you spout facts about God. It is—do you love him?

God only works for those who love him.

Worse, you can have no confidence that the things you face will work for good.

I hope you don't think I am being too harsh. I have not told you half. The wrath of God is fierce and unquenchable.

If you do not love Jesus you do not know him. There are other words for you this morning--

Jesus himself announces, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."

Thirst shows itself as conviction for wrongdoing. What the Bible calls sin.

What do you bring to him?

Good intentions?

Good deeds?

Nothing but your need.

He can wipe the stain of sin from your heart because

Jesus himself was punished for sin.

Then,

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Can be true for you too.

This promise is for whom?

‘for those who love God’

You might follow Jesus and wonder—do I love him enough?

This does not say for those of you who love God 5 out of 10. He is not inviting us to measure how much we love God to ask—is it enough? Nor is he saying that all things work out for our good when our love is strong—but when it is weaker, not so much.

This promise is for you if you love him. Do you?

Do we love him as much as we ought? No.
Do we love him the same in every moment? No.
Do we love him with the same fire all the time? No.
Do we love him as much as he deserves? No.

But to all genuine Christians love him?

Yes.

The promise is for you.

God is working for those who love him.

2. God is always working for your good

God works “[All things work together for good.](#)”

To say that God is always working for our good does not mean that we have to pretend that everything that we go through is good. It is not. We Christians know the difference between good and evil. This promise does not ask us to ignore evil.

All things we experience ARE NOT GOOD.

But God is always working IN all things—no matter what—for your good.

He doesn't turn bad into good—he does something far more fundamental—he uses bad situations to bring about good things for his glory.

This text does not promise that will have an answer to all the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ it promises instead that God will use all these situations and every other thing, for good.

Always.

There is no promise here that says you will see how God works for your good. We just read that he DOES work things together for our good. He is always working.

“God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may be aware of three of them.” John Piper

Things in our lives do not just work out. God must do the work to make anything good.

If you expect to see HOW God is bringing about the good in your life you will be disappointed. That is not the promise.

The promise is NOT that you will be able to see how next week.

The promise is not—wait around and you will see how God uses it for good.

No.

A year.

A decade.

A quarter-century.

No.

If we say we will only trust him if we can understand all the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of life, we necessarily say that we have to follow a God that we can understand.

I would not wish that on any of us.

A God that we can understand completely is not a God any of us would want to worship. The power of God is not limited to the strength of our perceptions.

Can we ever truly understand all the purposes of an infinite God? No.

But we can know that the infinite ALMIGHTY God will use ALL things for our good.

What are the contours of our promise?

God is working for those who love him.
God is always working for your good

3. Christians go through all kinds of things

This might be the hardest part. The part that causes the most confusion.

We can think that because we follow Jesus our lives will just go better and we will be protected from some of the worst things life spits at us.

Right?

Do good and expect good?

Right?

That is not the promise.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Christians should expect to go through all kinds of things. Even the nasty things. It is here where we might be tempted to think that following Jesus—

doing our best to do our best—kinda gives us a leg up. And we can think—I'll be protected from the BIG catastrophes.

False.

Christians—like everyone else go through all kinds of things.

The difference is that we know that God will use it for our good.

This is hard.

But it is in this hardship that we understand the preciousness ear tingling affect of this promise. When things fall apart—God is still working.

And not just working, but working for your good.

That makes a world of difference.

Christians should expect to go through all the same things as anyone else. The promise for our lives is NOT that we will be spared bad situations, but that he will use it for good.

God is working for those who love him.
God is always working for your good
Christians go through all kinds of things

4. Your good may not what you might think is best

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

What is the good?

We have a clue at the back end of verse 28—'for those who are called according to his purpose.'

This means he has a purpose for us. He has an end-goal in mind.

What is that goal?

Vs. 29,

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:29 (ESV)

Conformation into the image of Jesus Christ. Or in other words, that we would become more like Jesus. That is the good.

Your great calling is not to be someone great but to be more like Jesus.

You are being conformed into his likeness. That is the good he is after.

Why is this so important?

Here's why: Whenever we face times of uncertainties like these—our lives lose their normal moorings and we wonder—what is happening?

How can God use this in my life?
Did I do something to deserve this?

We can hold onto—

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

As he makes you into someone more like Jesus it is natural for us to ask, “Why?”

Jesus asked why. He knew the plan of salvation and that he would have to die but still, as he hung he cried out,

**“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
Matthew 27:46**

Christ Jesus asked the ‘why’ question.

He asked, but the answer from God was utter silence and complete rejection.

The reason all things work for good is because all things did not turn out for good for the ONE that really did love God.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

How do you know?

Because Jesus was destroyed.

How can you gain confidence? Because

The one that really did love God enough.

The one that really did love God every moment.

The one that really did love God & was crushed.

Jesus was destroyed.

The reason we have this promise from Rom. 8:28 is because Jesus didn't. He did everything right and yet was treated as guilty for all my sinful things.

He loved God and he received God's unfiltered wrath.

We are not promised answers—we have the promised one.

If you want to ask something astounding—why? Why? Did he give his beloved son for us? Why did he trade him for us?

We may ask—why did you let this or that happen in our lives—but those will not be the questions we ask the longest. A million years from now we will not be befuddled about the pandemic of 2020 anymore we will be asking,

“Tell me again why did you kill your sin so that I might live?”

God is working for those who love him.
God is always working for your good
Christians go through all kinds of things
Your good may not what you might think is best

The most evil can do is become an instrument in
God’s hand for him to do good.

He is working in you to make you like him.