

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Romans 8

We are continuing in our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Holy Spirit inspired Apostle Paul to write to the believers in Rome and to us this morning about the fundamentals of Christianity.

About the Gospel of Grace

That our justification, our sanctification and our glorification are all works of God.

The theme for the book of Romans - The just shall live by faith -

And we have pitched our tent on top of the spiritual mountaintop that is Romans Ch 8 as Paul describes what walking in the Spirit means and what walking in the Spirit provides for illustrations of what walking in the Spirit looks like.

As we lean into the Holy Spirit and stop leaning into our own understanding – we start walking toward the things of God and we start walking away from sin.

Again – this is a work that He is doing in us and through us and sometimes God uses our circumstances to do this work.

But even as we walk in the Spirit –

We have learned a few biblical truths over the last three weeks –

that not everything will go our way,

that not everything will happen in the manner that we will want it to happen,

that not everything goes according to plan,

that not everything in life is welcomed,

not everything in life is wanted.

And Paul has told us that as long as we live in this broken world, our lives will full of sorrows and difficulties.

As a believer – we are not immune to the difficulties of life –

[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 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.

We are all going to suffer –

We serve a Savior that suffered – so why would expect our walk to be void of any suffering.

Believers long before us suffered, there are people here in this room who are going through a season of difficulty –

And believers after us are going to suffer.

Some of you are probably thing – wait a minute, isn't this supposed to be a message celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior – a message about victory and hope?

It is a message of victory and hope – because the amazing promise that we find in Romans 8:28 is only made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray...

[Rom 8:28 NKJV] 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.

Again - everyone

[Rom 8:28 NKJV] 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.

There's a saying--"Familiarity breeds contempt."

Our repeated exposure to something can cause that thing to lose its importance to us.

We become so used to it by reason of repetition, that it ceases to hold value anymore.

And so -

After the sudden loss of a loved one

After receiving an unfavorable diagnosis about either our own body or someone we love.

The loss of a job

A troubled marriage

And a brother or sister, in an attempt to minister to us, to share in our burden, they may send a card or a text or a message quoting Romans 8:28

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.

And because we have heard it so many times or because we have shared it so many times to others who are suffering – because we are in the midst of suffering and because we don't see how our current circumstances can be of any value – we may easily fall into the trap of dismissing Romans 8:28 as a religious cliché'.

“If they only knew how much pain I am in right now”

“If they only knew the suffering I am going through – they wouldn't send me Romans 8:28 to comfort me.”

Brothers and sisters – if we ever find ourselves in circumstances like this – my prayer is that we may receive and embrace this verse no matter how many times we have heard it or said it.

You see -

It is because we see the pain and suffering in your faces

It is because we hear it in your voice

It is because we haven't experienced what you are experiencing

That we search the scriptures looking to encourage you and bring you hope and many times Romans 8:28 is where the Holy Spirit leads us to..

This verse is meant to be a comfort and encouragement to the believer.

This is the verse where we can rest our weary head as we go through the ups and downs in this life.

It is a verse that reminds us that – yes, God is at work.

It is a verse that reminds us that God cares for us. That God has not abandoned us.

It is a verse that reminds us that God is still on the throne and sovereign over everything that happens in our lives.

And a reminder that God is using all our circumstances and situations for His eternal plan.

So we don't quit.

We keep pressing on –

We don't turn to the world because the world has nothing to offer us.

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Cor 4

One of my favorite bible verses – It is one of the bible verses that I have written on the first page of my bible –

Paul speaking o the church in Corinth -

[2Co 4:16-18 NKJV] 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward [man] is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction,

Pause right here –

Remember – Paul is writing this

This is a guy who has been stoned and whipped, imprisoned and shipwrecked multiple times.

This is a guy who experienced opposition everywhere he went and even heartache from those who served alongside him –

But Paul tells us – that everything that he has gone through and everything that he was currently going through – he characterizes it all – as light affliction.

Not only does he say they are light affliction – but keep on reading – he says -

which is but for a moment, **is working for us** a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory,

And make a note of this verse – we will talk about this later.

18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen [are] temporary, but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

I had you make a note of those four words –

Is working for us – this light affliction that Paul spoke about.

First of all, did you notice that Paul didn't say that this light affliction is working against us – it may feel like the affliction is working against us – but the scriptures say that it is working for us.

How does our affliction work for us – because God is in control.

And His promise to the believer – is that we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to [His] purpose.

As He fashions us and molds us into the image of Jesus Christ – through the power of His Spirit who lives inside of us – we are going to look at that verse next Sunday.

Romans 8:28 does not mean that all things are working together for our comfort –

It doesn't mean that all things are working together to make our life here on earth easier.

It doesn't even mean that God is working all things in our life so that we can experience happiness.

It doesn't even mean that all things we are going to experience are good – because certainly, we will go through many things in life that are not good. Ugly things.

And yet – for the believer, all these things work together, by God's great power to come out for our good and His glory.

The good things and the bad things – God uses all of them for our good and His glory.

You guys know I am an Old Testament guy and love using OT examples – and two weeks ago, we looked at the life of Joseph –

An individual who trusted God – who endured plenty of suffering and we saw how God used all of it for His purpose – to save His people, to preserve the Messianic line.

And we saw how at the end of ch 50 – Joseph's brothers felt that because their dad has passed, that Joseph was going to take revenge on them for what they had done to him early on in life –

But instead – Joseph gives to us the Romans 8:28 of the Old Testament –

Joseph understood this

He lived it

And Joseph tells his brothers -

[Gen 50:20 NKJV] 20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as [it is] this day, to save many people alive.

That was the end results that God was after –

Joseph understood that God was at work

Now –

I want to give you an example of someone who is the opposite of Joseph –

Someone who couldn't grasp that God was working all things for our good and His glory.

Turn to the left to Genesis 42

Here we are going to look at the life of Jacob

By the time we get to Ch 42 –

Jacob has been walking around with a limp for some time – as a result of wrestling with God

Jacob has gone through a period of suffering

- Rachel, the wife that he loved – died giving birth to Benjamin
- He believes that Joseph is dead because of the report that his sons gave to him.
- One his daughters had been defiled
- His sons – are bunch of goofs
- Two of them, Simeon and Levi slaughtered all the men in a city in order to avenge what was done to their sister.
- Reuben – the oldest slept with one of dad's concubines
- There was adultery, prostitution
- And also – there is a famine in the land.

So, here in ch 42 –

The sons come back from Egypt where they were sent to go bring grain and they came back without Simeon –

They were forced to leave Simeon back in Egypt as collateral because Joseph wanted to see Benjamin.

[Gen 42:36-38 NKJV] 36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no [more], Simeon is no [more], and you want to take Benjamin.

All these things are against me." 37 Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying,

"Kill my two sons if I do not bring him [back] to you; put him in my hands, and I

will bring him back to you." 38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Jacob says – all these things are against me

That is not true

Because we know once we get to ch 50 that they were not working against him but they were working for him.

Do you want to know what was the difference between Jacob and Joseph????

Remember that verse I ask you to make a note of –

From 2 Cor 4

18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen [are] temporary, but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

Jacob was only focused on the outward circumstances

He had set aside his faith in God – was overwhelmed by what he saw and concluded that it was all against him.

Jacob was allowing fear to overtake him and he was falling into a time of despair.

Joseph did not set aside his faith – he sat in prison for 13 years for a crime he did not commit, he was faithful to God and never do we find him complaining about his circumstances.

Because he knew that God would be true to the promises God had made to him.

Jacob looked at how big his problems were

Jacob knew and understood how big his God is.

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.

Did you notice that Paul doesn't say – and we see that all things work together for good -

Paul says that there is this certainty for the believer

Because of the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross and His resurrection –

We can be certain that all things work together for good

That we know that we know that we know

It's a fact!!!!

And the conclusion – as Christians is that we know.

Because of our relationship with Jesus Christ – we have certainties in life.

And for the believer – we can't give up on things that we know for the few things in life that we don't know.

Thing we don't know -

"I don't know why this is happening to me – God doesn't love me"

Things we do know

[Jhn 3:16-17 NKJV] 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Things we don't know –

Maybe the reason for this adversity upon my life is because God has forsaken me or given up on me.

Things we do know -

"I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb 13:5)

When we don't know the answers – we always fall back on the things that we know to be true.

Our circumstances will change – but God doesn't change.

We may not always understand what's or the why's of our circumstances – but the bible reminds us that we know our God

And we can rejoice – not in the trials

But we can rejoice in the Lord and His faithfulness in our lives – because we know.

The next thing I want us to look at is the word all

And we know that all things work together for good

All means all church

Turn to the person next to you and tells them – hey, all means all.

Paul doesn't say and we know some things work together for good or most things work together for good or everything but this works together for good – it says all things

The truth is that God is at work in all things with all things in our life.

Some of the things – He sent our way

Some of the things – He has allowed to come our way

But we know that in all things – He is at work.

The tragedies that we have faced

The big mistakes that we have made

The big mistakes that have been made against us –

God is at work in all of them.

And to tell you the truth church – this is probably the hardest part of Romans 8:28 for us to grasp.

Because many believers struggle with one or two circumstances in their lives where they see Romans 8:28 and say – how can this episode in my life work for good.

And we start allowing our feelings and emotions to want things to be different than what they really are.

You see church, the truth is that even as believer who are putting aside the flesh and growing in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit – sometimes we are selfish and sometimes we are self-centered and sometimes we want our own way.

And sometimes when we want our own way – we don't welcome any other way – even if that means that it is God's way.

And when we dismiss God's way and we dismiss God's will

and we don't seek God's will and we don't want God's will – we become like Jacob and think that everything is against us.

And so we are reminded that God is at work in all things.

And all things work together for good.

The collection of everything that we go through in our life –

The good and the bad

The bitter and the sweet

God is using all of it for good – again, not everything is good – not everything is going to bring us happiness.

Joseph being thrown into the pit by his brothers – that is not good

Joseph being sold to slave traders – that is not good

Joseph being accused of rape and spending 13 years in prison – abandoned and forgotten – that is not good.

God knows the end product.

And the last part of Romans 8:28 – that I want to look at this morning.

Is who this promise is for -

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.

Romans 8:28 is not a blanket promise – this promise is reserved for the believer

This promise is reserved for those who have faith in Him

You see loved ones, for those who are apart from Christ – those who have rejected God's grace and rejected the sovereignty of God

For them, all things don't work together for good in their case – because really, they don't want it to.

They would much rather embrace the sovereignty of self.

When things get difficult in their life – their response is, I will take care of it.

I will work harder

I will fix it

But for the believer – we rely on the sovereignty of God.

We know that whatever we are going through – there is a reason for it – He is at work and we trust in Him.

[Rom 8:28 NKJV] 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.

Because God is all-powerful, all-wise, all knowing & perfect in love & goodness, He's able to take EVERYTHING & work it in such a way that it furthers His great, good plan.

So church –

Embrace Romans 8:28

Let it be an encouragement to you

Memorize it

Hide it in your heart -

Because we never know when the Holy Spirit will bring it up and encourage you with it.

Yes, God is in it

Yes, God is working it out

God is using this somehow

God cares for me

He hasn't left me

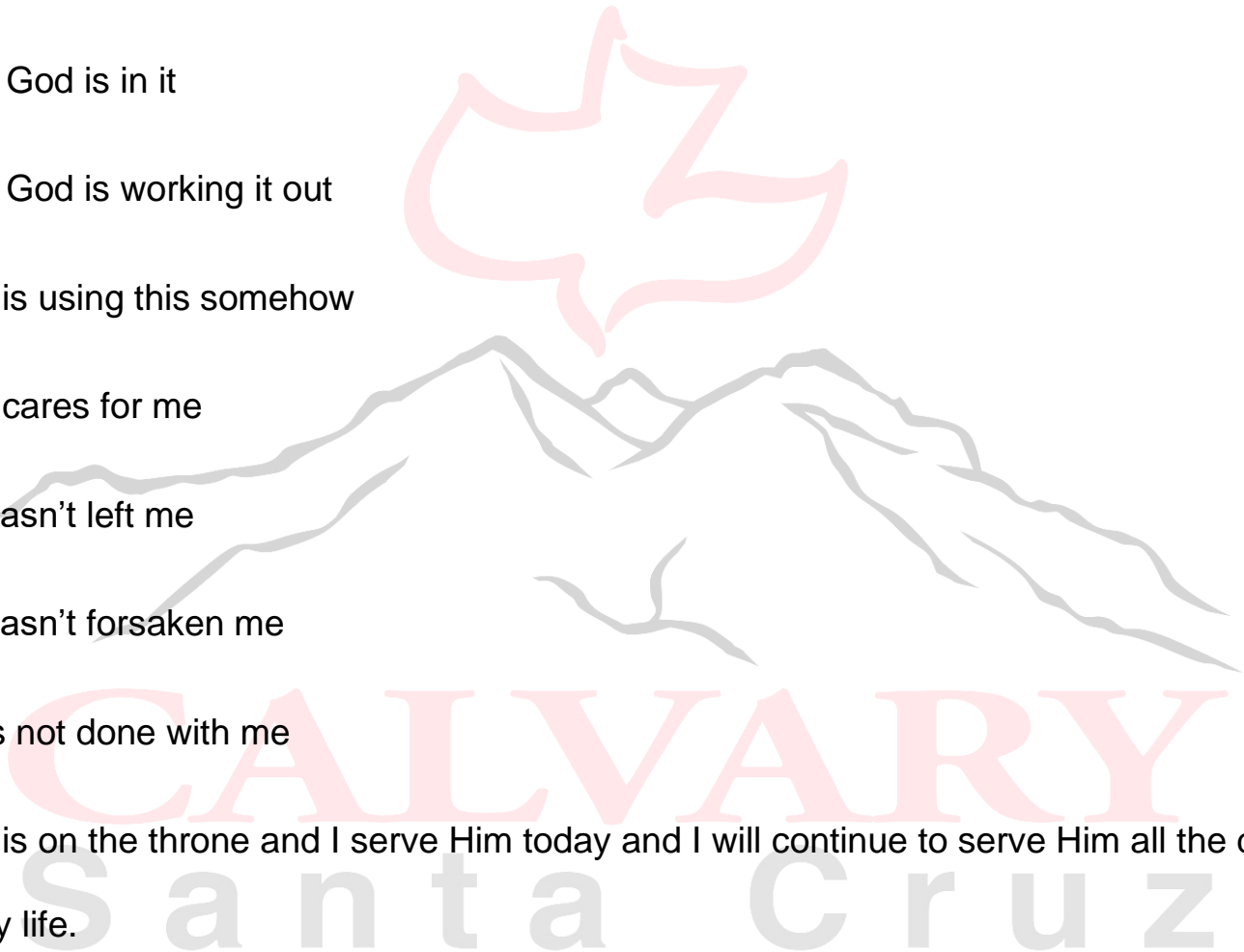
He hasn't forsaken me

He is not done with me

God is on the throne and I serve Him today and I will continue to serve Him all the day of my life.

He is faithful and has shown Himself faithful all the way through

Amen!!!!



Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word

and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

