

The Doctrines of Predestination & Effectual Calling

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[0:00] Take your Bibles tonight and let's turn to Romans chapter 8 and find verses 28 to 30.

! That's where we're going to begin. We're working our way through this passage. The famous part of it, of course, being verse 28. But again, to remind you that this all goes together.

You can't pull verse 28 out and, you know, just kind of camp there and not realize that it's part of a larger text. Let's go ahead and read this or let me read this and you kind of follow along.

And I'm going to kind of stop at a few junctures here to kind of make a point in order to set us up for what we're going to focus on tonight. Paul writes here, and we know that all things work together for good.

The word good is there. All things work together for good to those who love God. Now, let me stop there a minute and ask you, what is the good for which or toward which all things are working?

[1:27] Well, skip down to verse 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.

That's the good that all things are working toward. Now, I haven't finished verse 28, so I want to go back to verse 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.

Now, the word to emphasize there is the word purpose. And so I would ask a similar question. And if you were here a couple of weeks ago, you know the answer to this. What is this purpose to which God has called us?

Verse 30 is the answer to that. Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called. Whom he called, these he also justified.

And whom he justified, these he also glorified. All right. So this is God's purpose for his children. His blood-bought children. It is his ultimate purpose.

[2:37] Grand scheme. These things that we find here, really, in verses 29 and 30. And that purpose encompasses all of eternity for us.

Past, present, and our eternal future. All of that is included here in these couple of verses. This is God's purpose. His grand scheme.

We might call it God's big picture of redemption. And it is. Some have preferred to call it the golden chain of redemption. I mentioned that last week. And so look at it again.

Verses 29 and 30. All right. You might be looking at different translations, so maybe it throws you. But they're pretty close here. For whom he foreknew. Remember that word.

He also predestined. There's a key word. Predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

That, of course, is Jesus.

[3:40] That he, that is his son, might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called. There's the third key word.

Whom he called, these he also justified. There's a key word. And whom he justified, these he also glorified. All right.

So, as you might remember a couple of weeks ago, I mentioned or pointed out to you, there are five theologically significant, weighty words, incredible words, that appear in these two verses.

And here they are, just in case you missed them. Four new. Predestined. Called. Justified. Glorified.

Two observations right off, at least that you ought to be able to make, even if you don't know or aren't quite certain about the meaning or an implication of all these words.

Number one, they're all in the past tense. This is God's view. With that, I would say that there are words missing here that you might expect to find here.

[4:51] Like the word faith. For one. Sanctification. Some of these other words. They're not there. Because, you see, this is from God's viewpoint.

They're all past tense. And so, in the mind of God, these are already done in behalf of those who have believed in his son. Already done. Already, it's a done deal for me.

All in the past tense. You might also notice, and this should become even more clear as we work our way through these words, that there's a progression, of course.

Very logical progression. Starting with something God foreknew in the past. And all that that word means. And we covered that a couple of weeks ago.

To predestined. To then called. Then justified. Then glorified. There's a very obvious progression of things here. Even though in the mind of God, these are all done.

[5:47] They're all past tense. From our experience, these are progressive. They move from one thing to the next, to the next, and to the ultimate thing, of course, embodied in the word glorified.

A couple of Sundays ago, we considered the first of these five words. We looked at the word foreknew. Foreknew. Or the doctrine of foreknowledge. Foreknowledge.

And I said that, if you remember, that God's foreknowledge is not like man's foreknowledge. I explained that we really, to an extent, can experience some measure of foreknowledge.

Some knowledge of something before it happens. In some very limited sense. But even if we could actually tell the future, which is not possible for us, even that kind of foreknowledge would not be like God's foreknowledge.

Because God's foreknowledge is divine. His divine, sovereign foreknowledge. Entirely different. God's foreknowledge is His divine ability to know what is going to happen before it happens.

[7:01] Because He intends to make it happen. He intends to make it happen. And He alone is able to do that because He alone is sovereign. Completely sovereign.

And knows all ends. And He knows the end from the beginning. In fact, I think, you know, when we think of history or time and events that are occurring in time, we don't know anything about the future.

We know only what has happened up to our point. Up to the point in which we live. But we are kind of, in a sense, linear. We're in that timescale.

But God is apart from that. It's almost as if God can take all of time and put it out in front of Him and see the beginning and the end.

And it's not that He just sees it. He is determining. What's going to take place. He intends. Those things that He intends to happen.

[8:05] That's the sovereignty of God. John MacArthur put it this way, and I think he's right. God's foreknowledge is not a reference to His omniscient foresight, but to His foreordination.

Foreordination. He not only sees faith in advance, but ordains it in advance. Again, that's God's perspective on it.

This is not knowledge you and I have. And so we cannot hope to have that. And so we do not conduct our lives as believers based upon a knowledge that we do not have.

It's quite interesting. I thought to me that, and I read the letter that Scott had shared with Tom this morning.

And here's Scott and Mary immersed in a totally different culture from the one that they're used to. And, you know, kind of a godless, self-sufficient kind of culture, and they don't care for the gospel.

[9:19] And, you know, Scott is very strong in his convictions about sovereign grace and the work of God and salvation. And he's still just as strong in that, but now he's immersed in a culture where he is sharing the gospel.

And it's almost, and he'd kill me if I said this, it's almost as if he's conducting his evangelism as if he were an Arminian. But he believes as a Calvinist.

See, when you get to the front lines and you realize what your role is as a believer, that your role is to proclaim the gospel to everyone and plead with them to come to Christ, that's our part, that's our perspective on this.

That's not what we have here in Romans 8. What we have here is the lofty view of a sovereign God as he looks, as he allows us to look at his process, the processes of redemption.

And it begins with foreknowledge. Foreknowledge. Now, I attempted to prove foreknowledge from Scripture, but really the best proof is what follows in this passage.

[10:33] In fact, the very next word tells you that what we're talking about here is something more than just, well, the technical term is prescience, something more than just knowing what's going to happen before it happens.

It is a determination. It is a foreordination that's involved. And we know that from the second word. And that word is predestined.

Because those he foreknew, he also predestined. Predestined. Now, you might argue that foreknew is just simply God looked down into the future and saw that Don Coleman would believe.

But you cannot then add to that predestined and eliminate God's determination and what he planned to do, what he in his sovereignty will bring about.

So let's consider predestined or the doctrine of predestination. It probably is a more scary word to many than even the word foreknowledge.

[11:48] Predestination. Ooh. Wait a minute. What is this? Well, the Bible says, For whom he foreknew, he also predestined.

Predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. That's Jesus. That Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren. That's what the Bible says here in verse 29.

All right, so then Paul's description of our redemption begins with foreknowledge. And logically, that is where it would begin.

And I shared with you that's the word *prognosco*. *Pro* is a Greek preposition. It means before. And *gnosco* means to know.

And so to know something before. And then he moves to predestination, which is another compound word. *Prohorizzo*.

[12:43] You're not going to remember that, but you might remember. Again, the word *pro* means before. So this is, again, something that has happened before. And the word *horizzo* is the word we get our word horizon from.

And that's very interesting, isn't it? So what does it mean? Well, the word *predestinate* means to draw a boundary around.

So he foreknew me in the sense that he predetermined that I would be his. And so then he drew a boundary around me. He predestinated me.

It means to mark out. It could also mean to appoint. Or determine a destination beforehand.

In fact, in the English, we have the word destination. Before destination. A predetermined destination. And so really in the sense of God's calling.

[13:52] Begins with foreknowledge. That's the beginning. Look at it. And predestination is the ultimate end of it. Where he draws a boundary around us.

See, God has predetermined the destiny of every person who will believe in his son, Jesus Christ. He foreknew me. And he predetermined my horizon.

And he drew boundaries around me. And he says, you're mine. You're mine. Let me illustrate it this way. When you board a plane, hopefully you're going to get to where it's supposed to be going.

You know. That you get to that destination. You know. And your ticket says, say, Dallas. And so you expect to land in Dallas, don't you? I know. Sometimes things happen.

You don't get there or whatever. But that's what you expect, isn't it? That's your predestination. You know you're going there. And it's Dallas.

[14:57] But suppose you get on the plane. And before the plane starts to taxi out and take off, you hear the pilot come over the speakers.

And he says, welcome, ladies and gentlemen. We've got a choice today of seven destinations. San Francisco, Seattle, Memphis, Birmingham, New York, Boston, and Cucamonga.

I don't know where Cucamonga is. And so he says, let's spin the wheel and see where we're going today. I don't know. I want to go any of those places.

Well, Memphis will be all right. On the 11th of November. That's when I have my oral examination, by the way. You can be praying for me. And so you wouldn't want that, would you? And you'd be looking for the exit.

Try to say, hey, I need to get off of this plane because I want to get on a plane that is predestined to go exactly where I expect it to go. You see, that's the way our salvation is.

[15:55] That's the way God's sovereignty is. There are not many possibilities that could happen. Many destinations, just one for you. And it's predetermined by a loving God, a sovereign God.

So Paul is saying that God has predestined you to reach a certain destination. What is the destination he has set for you? Well, God has predestined that you would someday be like Jesus Christ.

That's what verse 29 says, doesn't it? Very clear. That you would one day be conformed. That's the word in the English text, conformed to the image of Christ.

And the word conformed just simply means to be shaped and molded into something. Okay? And so God is determined that one day you will look like Jesus.

Now, it hasn't happened yet. You haven't arrived yet. You and I have ways to go in that. And that's not something that we're going to achieve or God's going to achieve in us totally right here in this life.

[17:04] That's why I say predestination is God's choosing put way out into the ultimate future. And so one day we're going to look just like Jesus.

That's what he has predestined you to be. Now, that's the same as being saved. You can't be conformed to the image of Christ if you're not a born-again believer.

Okay? So that's all wrapped up in this. I want you to look at a passage. In fact, Tom read it to us tonight. But I want to read it again.

Ephesians chapter 1. And I'm going to begin with verse 3. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3 says, 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, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

That is almost exactly what Paul is getting at here in Romans 8. Holy and blameless in love. Having predestined, and there's that word, proherizo.

[18:28] Predestined us. He's marked out the boundary for us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will.

It's all according to God's will. This is his good pleasure. To the praise of the glory of his grace by which he made us acceptable in the beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

Abound. I really do prefer. I don't know what translation Tom was reading from, but the word is lavished. Having made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself.

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in him.

And that's exactly what Paul is saying in Romans 8 when he says that he would be the firstborn of many brethren. In him, and I'll just read verse 11, we'll be finished with this passage.

[19:39] In him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

God is not doing any of this because we have counseled him. Not doing any of this because we are deserving.

Not even in the sense of potential that somehow we might be of use to him. And so he chooses us and predestines us.

No, it's all according to his good pleasure and the counsel of his own will. And if you don't like that, you'll just have to take it up with God when you see him, if you see him.

And I hope you do. One theologian put it this way or put it in these terms. He said, God has predestined every Christian to three particular things or ends.

[20:37] Number one, you are predestined to go to heaven. If you are a believer, you are predestined to go to heaven. Number two, if you are a believer, you are predestined to be like Jesus when you get there.

And number three, if you are a believer, you are predestined to be part of God's great eternal family over which Jesus reigns as the exalted head. When we finally get to heaven and when we finally look like Jesus, In that day, the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted as the firstborn among many brethren.

And we, his blood brothers and sisters, will forever praise and worship him as the exalted head of the redeemed family of the people of God. Between now and then, he went on to say, God is shaping us by all that happens to us and he's shaping us into the image of his son, Jesus Christ.

All right, third. The third theological word in the golden chain of redemption is the word called. And this is the doctrine of, and I'll go ahead and name it this way and we'll explain some of this here in a minute, but the doctrine of the effectual calling of God.

Because that is the calling of which Paul refers to here. All right, so this is, and he says here in verse 30, Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called.

[22:06] He called. That's very logical, isn't it? And really, this is where God's infinite foreknowledge and predestination intersect with our finite lives.

This word touches us. The call. Now, I would divide this in several kind of different sections or terms.

In terms of man's point of view when it comes to calling, there are two aspects of this, of this calling. There's the outward call. I'll put it in these terms. Again, we're talking about in terms from man's perspective, man's point of view. There's the outward call.

All right. Romans 10, verse 14. And again in 17. Let me just quote those. How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?

[23:11] That's the outward call. And in verse 17 of that same chapter, faith comes by hearing. And what is it we're hearing? The word of God.

In fact, literally, that passage could read, faith comes by the thing heard. And that thing heard is the word of God.

And that's the outward call that is issued to everyone. And it's very important, isn't it? Isn't it? I mean, we cannot put that aside. I'm afraid there are those who have become so enamored with a certain theology that they have minimized the importance of the outward call.

Where we just simply proclaim the word of God. And that's important. That must be there. God has ordained the power of the outward call.

[24:16] Romans 1.16. For I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes.

The gospel. That's the written. And then we make verbal specifics about the good news of Jesus Christ.

And it, he says, is the power of God. And so we need to involve ourselves in that outward call. And not minimize that.

It's very important. God has ordained it. But there is also the inward call. Again, these are put in terms from man's perspective, experientially, perceptibly.

So the inward call. Ephesians 2.1. Let me read that. And you, he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins.

[25:21] He, like the King James, he quickened. Made alive. Who did that? God did. Made alive those who were dead in trespasses and sins.

In which you once walked according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air. The spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh.

Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. And were by nature children of wrath. Just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy. Because of his great love with which he loved us.

Even when we were dead in trespasses. Made us alive. Made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

And I could go on in that chapter. This is something God does on the inside. Quickening. Making us alive.

[26:21] We could use the word regenerated. And it's an inward thing. Now, I maintain, again, because I'm speaking of this from man's perspective.

Man's point of view on this. We certainly experience the outward call. And I'm saying that there is a point. Though it begins to occur long before we even know it and have any perception of it.

But there's a point when we know. That there's that inward call. So that when we, in the past, have heard the gospel.

We've heard about Jesus. And it made no difference to us whatsoever. And then, our hearts were attuned to it.

And open to it. Now, we didn't do that ourselves. God did that. But it is perceptible to us. So there's the outward and the inward. And the outward call, by the way, cannot be responded to in faith apart from the inward calling of God through the Holy Spirit.

[27:35] Now, in terms of God's point of view. And by the way, the inward call is what Paul is talking about here in Romans 8 and verse 30.

In terms of God's point of view. We need to use a little different terminology.

Now, it's the same call. Don't misunderstand me. We don't have different calls out here. It's the same one. But it is how it is applied. How God intersects our lives with it. From God's point of view, there are also two aspects of this calling. The general call, first of all. Very much like the outward call.

But now I'm talking about God's initiative. From God's starting point. The general call is His call of salvation that goes out to all people.

[28:41] Without discrimination. To all, generally. To everyone on this planet. It's universal, this call.

It's non-discriminatory. In any sense of the word. It is the invitation that God gives to the whole race. You and I, as the church, as His followers, you and I are commanded by God to communicate the gospel to all people of the world. We then have been called to participate in this general call of God. And no matter what we may believe about how God saves people, we still involve ourselves totally in that general call.

And plead with people to come to Christ. It's universal. The general call is related to verses like Matthew 28, 19.

[29:55] We've been studying all these passages in this month. Go and make disciples of all nations. That's the general call. And we are duty bound through our relationship with Christ to obey that commission.

To go to all nations. Mark 16, 15. Go into all the world and preach the good news to how many people? All. All creatures.

Even John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

It's indicative of that general call. That's the call that's given to everyone. Everyone. But also there is the effectual call.

And you've heard about this, I'm sure. The effectual call is the same as the inward call. This is God's work. And no one's saved apart from it.

[31:00] The effectual call is the work of the Holy Spirit. The effectual call comes with the ability to respond. That's why we call it effectual call.

It comes with the ability to respond. And then the implication is apart from the effectual call of God, you and I would have no ability whatsoever.

To respond to the gospel. Because we're dead. And I think the perfect example illustration from Scripture is the story of Lazarus.

Such a familiar story. And I don't know if you have related this story to the truth about God's effectual call, but I think it's a good fit here.

And you know the story. Lazarus was Jesus' personal friend. And he'd been dead for four days.

And to Mary and Martha's dismay and grief, Jesus had not yet shown up.

[32:06] And so I kind of imagine, let's just say, that Mary and Martha, each day, going down to the tomb, they're standing outside the door of the tomb, and they're calling to Lazarus.

Oh, Lazarus, come forth. Can you picture that? Now, that's kind of silly, but how many people have you known that have dead loved ones and even there in the casket are speaking to them, please come back.

Can you imagine Mary and Martha doing that? It's possible. They're calling out, Lazarus, come forth. Don't you understand, Lazarus? We miss you. And we want you to be here with us.

And Lazarus, we love you so much. If only you would just get up and come to us. We would gladly welcome you back into our family. Please come back to us.

Lazarus, come forth. They might be crying out there at the tomb. And inside the tomb lies a dead man. He's dead.

[33:18] His ears cannot hear. His eyes cannot see. His lips cannot speak. His limbs cannot move. And they might shout and shout and cry and cry, but Lazarus does not respond.

And he can't because he's dead. And we might ask, or they might ask, what's the matter? Doesn't he want to come back?

Doesn't he want to live? I mean, what's going on here? Why doesn't he answer the call? And my call is so passionate and so sincere.

And I could not want anything more than for this dead person to come back alive. Why doesn't he hear my call? But then Jesus comes and he stands in front of the tomb and Jesus opens his mouth

and he cries out, Lazarus, come forth.

And inside the tomb, there is a stirring. And, you know, inside the tomb, the body of Lazarus is, that's been dead now for four days, is now experiencing a spark of life and his ears begin to hear and his eyes begin to see and his lips begin to speak and his lips do and his limbs begin to move again and Lazarus comes back from the dead.

[34:43] Why? That's an obvious answer, isn't it? The same words were used in this scenario. I know, albeit fictitious, at least half of it.

same words used, but there was a different result when Jesus used those words. See? Lazarus hears his master's voice and comes back from the dead.

Somebody has asked, why did Jesus say, Lazarus, come forth? Why did he not just simply say, come forth? You know the answer to that, don't you? Because I really believe this would be true. If he had not said, Lazarus, come forth and every dead person in every grave on this earth would have come alive and come forth out of their grave. Now, that's not just a neat thought to have.

The point is that Jesus is the mighty Son of God. And when he calls, he not only calls specifically, but he calls effectually effectually, he gives the ability to respond.

[36:02] An ability that you and I do not have apart from his calling. So, he foreknew me. We put all three of these together and then we'll end it here and take up Justified next time.

He foreknew me and marked me. He put a boundary around me as his own and he called me. Praise In His name.