



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Eternally Secure

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Romans 8:29-30

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²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 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. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

(Pastor prays)

We tried this last week, let's try it again this Sunday. If I say to you, "God is good," you may say "All the time." And if I say, "All the time," you may say, "God is good."

That's what Romans chapter 8 says. *²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.* Some of you had that put to the test this week as you walked into unforeseen junk and unrelenting pressure and you've been holding onto that diamond as a priceless promise and for many of you, God's sovereign goodness has become the pillow on which you can lay your head to rest at night.

But as wonderful as Romans 8:28 is, it doesn't stand by itself; it rests on two spectacular pillars of verses 29-30. These beautiful verses contain five undeniable affirmations that are anchored in God's mind and end in God's glory and assure us of God's amazing grace.

One of our most beautiful doctrines is the perseverance of the saints. We usually call it, "once saved, always saved." What we mean by that is "genuinely saved is eternally saved." And Romans 8:29-30 is the clearest most explicit statement of that truth in the Bible. A life-giving medicine for every anxious soul and a beautiful encouragement for anyone who struggles with doubt or discouragement when you think about God. This passage is here for a reason. It's given to us to encourage our hearts, deepen our faith and to incite us to worship. Here before

us are five snapshots of God's unbroken, unbelievable grace. And as we look at them today, I hope your heart will love God more and cherish Christ supremely As we celebrate His unquestionable goodness to us in Jesus. Because...

God's Grace in Jesus is the ground we stand on

Because of this passage, there are five things we should do with grace.

We should love the genius of God's grace

We should love it; not debate it, but marvel at it. We need to bring that joy from verse 28 into verse 29a. *For those whom he foreknew* See the word "for"; it could be translated as "because." Verse 28 tells us God is good and working all things together for good. Verse 29 says, "here's how you know that's true – because those whom he foreknew."

I'd circle that beautiful word. The genius foreknowledge of God translated from the Greek word *progenoskō*. **Pro = before**, *genosko* = knew. To know ahead of time. This is telling us that those of us in Christ are not God's after-thought, but His forethought. This is not secondhand love; it's firsthand love. This is the promise that God knows His people and watches His people. Psalm 1:6 says, *God knows the way of the righteous*. But it's more than information. It's "to know." This word promises us that He cares for His people. Hosea 13:5, *It was I who knew you in the wilderness*.

Let's press on that a little further. This foreknowledge is a distinguishing kind of affectionate knowledge, a knowledge of closeness. Adam *knew* his wife, Eve. Here is the fountainhead of God's covenant love for us in Jesus. This is the genius of grace. This is what Moses meant in Deuteronomy 7:7 when he told his people, "*It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples*, But it was because the Lord loved you. And this knowledge is beforehand.

Foreknowledge, we recognize that as grace. That we love Him because He first loved us. It's while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us.

There is a genius in this grace. Ephesians 2:38-9 says, *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast!* That's genius! The first link of this chain called grace is anchored deep in the eternal mind of God, and if it's anchored like that, He will never let you go. We should love the genius of grace. Let me show you what else we should do.

We should trust the plan of grace

Let's go back to verse 29 and see grace. *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.* Let's take a look at that word "predestined." It's the Greek word, *poorizo* and it means "to decide beforehand." It reminds us of what we already know to be true, that God is the author of our salvation and He does it in love. Ephesians 1:5, *In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption.*

God initiates the whole process. It says in John 3:16, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* God gave His only son Jesus to die on the cross in the place of sinners so that whoever believes will be saved. Salvation is a gift God gives to us. We need to be clear on this. Repentance and faith are absolutely essential to salvation, but these things in us are a response to the finished work of Christ on the cross and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit! It's what Jesus said in John 6:44, *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.* This in no way is denying that we decide for Christ and we do so freely; we just affirm that He first decided for us. If you are saved, it's all of God's grace. If you go to Hell, it is all because you rejected the free gift of God at the cross of Jesus.

But there is something else here. Let's go back to verse 29 and look at the plan of God. *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Decided beforehand for what? – to be conformed to the image of His son. There is the punch of predestination and God's plan for any of you who are Christians. He is taking you along this tough road for His eternal purpose and the eternal purpose is to bend you and hammer you and shape you into the image of Christ. He is sanctifying you.

You were made in the image of God but are terribly disfigured by sin. The cross of Jesus and your faith in the cross have put you on a lifelong planned-out journey of being remade into the image of Christ. So through all the hurt and hardship and struggle and frustrations, remember that you are saved by grace and love and you should trust the plan of grace. We should love the genius of grace and we should trust the plan of grace. There is a third "should."

We should rest in the power of grace

Let's take a look at the third link in this chain of grace. Let' start at verse 29. 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.* ³⁰*And those whom he predestined he also called,* This is where God's plan intersects our lives and He does it with power. Every person who ever gets

saved knows the power of God's saving call when you hear of God's holiness and you are awakened to your sinfulness and separation from God, and then the Gospel comes that says God loves you and He's placed His anger and judgment on His son Jesus at the cross and will forgive you and love you and save you and cleanse you by grace.

So come to Jesus. Come to him. Hear the call. Come to Jesus and see His wounds, see His agony, see that it's for you. Come to Jesus and be healed and forgiven and made new. That's the call, and the call of God creates what it commands. We see it in Genesis 1 with the creation and in Ezekiel 37 when Jesus calls Lazarus from the dead and out of the tomb. It's a summoning by God into a relationship with Him through faith in Jesus. With God's call comes the power to respond. It's what we pray when we pray for lost people. That God would give them ears to hear the call and eyes to see the greatness of Jesus. We pray the Spirit would take them from being dead in sin to being fully alive in Jesus.

This is where we rest in the power of grace. We do the witnessing; God does the saving. The power is not in the messenger, it's in the message. Because we want others to be able to say with Peter in 1 Peter 1:3-4, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,* Salvation is one of those things only God can do. I really want you to love the genius of grace, trust the plan of grace and rest in the power of grace. And if you are a believer...

You should relish the joy of grace

Let's go back one last time to the chain in verses 29-30. Those whom He foreknew He predestined (called), justified and glorified.

Justified and glorified. I'd like to take those two words together because they are inextricably linked. If belief and repentance are the human side, then justification and glorification are the divine side. Justification. This is justified by faith alone and is more than forgiveness or even acceptance. It is a declaration at the cross that we who are sinners are now righteous in God's sight. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* And those whom He justified He also glorified. Here's the "Already but Not Yet." What Adam lost for us at the garden, Christ Jesus gained for us at the cross and here in verses 29-30, a future reality is stated as an accomplished fact. Here it is, brothers and sisters, a salvation that begins in the eternity of the past and ends in the

eternity of the future. Every link in the chain is a divine act of grace. We should love the genius of grace. We should trust the plan of grace. We should rest in the power of grace and we should relish the joy of grace. It's the good grace of God given to us at the cross of Jesus.

(Pastor prays)