

[Romans 8:28 - 39]

~ Our Spiritual Safari is observing truths in this section of Scripture that only the Spirit of God can make real to the heart and life of a man or woman. Pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment now, readers. Then read this passage in your own Bible. Then, pray again for growth in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. *THEN* read this report, *including Bible text*. Only the Holy Spirit can make sense of this; and only then if we are sincere about knowing the wisdom of God; which the world calls foolishness. Our previous report concluded high on the mountaintop of God's government; but tucked into a comfortable and safe bed of truth in verse twenty-eight where we begin again....

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

~ Oh, how I wish we could just stop the safari and stay in this place forever. Friends, "*all things*" means "*all things!*" That's a comfort to the saint; it is condemnation to the lost. Remember Joseph, as he looked back over a life full of vicissitudes, disappointments and suffering caused by his own brothers, said to them, "*.... you thought evil against me, but the Lord meant it for good!*" The lost man does not have those words of blessed assurance. If you are a genuine Christian, you are going to look back over this life of suffering someday and say, "*.... it all worked out for good!*"

Job said, "*.... though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!*" That's the kind of faith we need in men of God today, friends. We know God will make good on His promises because He is the One Who is energizing and motivating His Own glorification to begin with! Jeremiah cried to God, "*.... why did you let me see trouble?*" Do you know anything about that question? I do. Many dear saints have that problem today. Let's not kid ourselves.

And let's get personal, shall we? Can you rejoice that you have a God that can shake the earth and destroy a city in an earthquake or hurricane? Can you face life – and death – unafraid? Paul asked, "*.... what mean ye to weep*

and to break my heart?" Paul's friends tried to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, you will recall. Paul said he was ready to die but Paul *DIDN'T* say he *WANTED* to die. There's a big difference. Either way, many of us would like to reach that place of total commitment to Christ.

This report is for called saints and it is according to His plan and purpose. My credentials to you come directly from the Lord Jesus Christ via the Holy Spirit; and there is no question of authority if you have prayed as instructed. I understand the entire safari in Romans so far has been different and difficult, but these truths are going to be borderline traumatizing to the right-thinking mind. This particular report is a call to those who have received an invitation and have accepted it; they were born from above, and they know the love of God in experimental form. Others stopped reading a *LONG* time ago!.

Alright, Paul describes three groups of people, and they are the same three groups of people we have in the world today. Paul says, *"... but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."* That's first Corinthians in chapter one.

The Jew trusted in religion and ritual in Paul's day; and still does. To them, the cross was a stumblingblock. The Greeks trusted in human philosophy and human wisdom. To them, the cross was foolishness. But then there are those who are called. They came from both Jews and Greeks! The few who were chosen were not chosen for their religion, wisdom, intellect or superiority; they were chosen because God chose them. The called heard God's call and responded of their free will.

Paradoxically, there isn't a person on this earth who is forced, predestined, preordained or elected to be lost, either! Those who are lost have chosen their eternity by willfully rejecting Christ after being presented with the Gospel. See, the invitation is legitimate and open; whosoever will may come! Whosoever believeth shall be saved. Henry Ward Beecher said, *"... the elect are the whosoever will and the non elect are the whosoever*

won't!" It's all according to God's plan and purpose; and, my Christian friend, if you are not reconciled in your mind and in your will to God Almighty – it's past time to be doing that. You're living on borrowed time.

The purpose of God *IS* going to be carried out; and God has the wisdom and power to do so. Whatever God does is right; and when He does something, He does it right at that time. That includes the bad stuff. Anything God does is just and loving; and that is a truth so difficult to accept that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived by some of the things God does and permits to happen. An old theologian named Simeon said he always preached only on Romans chapter eight because it lays the ax to the root of pride and presumption – and simultaneously to the root of despair! I like that, friends — very much.

We're never going to attain a state of being whereby we can pat ourselves on the back and say, "*... we're smart, we did it!*" This is all His wisdom, His plan and His purpose. His sovereignty is not in question; you and I will bow to Him one way or another. The deity of Christ comes from eternities past surrounded by angels who are praising Him as Holy! You and I have absolutely no influence whatsoever over how God moves or acts; and that goes for how God allows Satan to move in your life, too, by the way! This just happens to be the way God is doing things....

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

~ No one is elected to be lost; predestination and election are not used in connection with the lost person. The implication is *always* towards the saved. The ones Paul is talking about here are the ones he is talking about in verse twenty-eight! The Bible teaches that when God saves us, He promises He is going to see us through.

This is also another amazing section encompassing sanctification, but Paul doesn't even mention being sanctified; because that's the work of God in the heart and life of the believer! This is God's eternal purpose, friends. When the Good Shepherd moves with His one hundred sheep, He is going to arrive on the other side with *one hundred sheep!* He won't lose one! That means I will be there! This is not some frightful doctrine – although it is terrifying – this is wonderful and comfortable news in these uncertain end times. Remember, Jesus gave a parable about the Good Shepherd – that's a parable about Himself....

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

~ These are incredible verses, my friends. If we are safe as sheep, it's not because we're smart or capable of defending ourselves; it's because we have a Good Shepherd. Our Great Shepherd says we're safe – I'm just repeating Him! See, God is going to give us everything necessary in this life and in the life to come. We can't ask for anything more than this; because we wouldn't know what to ask for! God has placed His throne behind justified sinners.

Christ did four things for us: (1) He died for us (2) He was raised for us (3) Delivered for our offenses (4) Raised for our justification – but that's not all: Christ is presently at the right hand of God making intercession and prayer for *YOU* – right now! Jesus is the Living Christ! If you need Him – go to Him, because He is there for you; and He cares for you. And He promises us He will never leave us nor forsake us....

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

~ That's a frightful picture of sheep for saints; even in light of the day of grace, if you ask me. It took me a long time to process this verse. If you stand for God today, it will cost you something. If it doesn't cost you something, then you are not a child of God. Terrible things are happening to saints today. I believe with all my heart that *easy-believism* is the attitude of a Satanic apostate system aimed directly at the child of God today. It generally annihilates those claiming "... no weapon formed against them will prosper." I would be *super-duper careful* about citing that verse, friends. Thank Him that none of that will separate us from Him....

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

~ How can a sheep be more than a conqueror? Most people use this verse without a clue of the paradox we have presented in Scripture. To "*be a conqueror*" means to gain the victory for a battle we did not fight! Furthermore, with Christ fighting for us, He never allows us to be defeated. He gets the victory; it belongs to Him alone and not to us. The "*victorious life*" is not our life – it's *His* life. We share in that by standing with Him....

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

~ Did you pray for yourself this morning? You should have; but – if you forgot – then Christ remembered; and He prayed for you. He remembered you because He loves you. Christ never forgets to pray for us, friends. Nothing will ever separate us from that love. This is one reason that

nothing can be laid to the charge of God's elect. Does it feel like God has let you down? I think we have a brief biography of Paul's life in verse thirty-five – and God loved Paul.

Death will take us, as believers, into His presence. Your death as a saved person will transport you directly into the presence of all saved saints! Interestingly, Paul says, "... *life*" won't separate us from the love of Christ! Let's face it: it's much more difficult to face life than it is to face death! Life has temptations, disappointments, failures, uncertainties, suffering – we can thank God none of that will separate us from the love that is in Christ!

I think "*angels*" in verse thirty-eight means "*fallen angels*." "*Principalities*" are spiritual enemies; "*powers*" is a subject we'll not deal with right now but will extensively on safari later in eschatology – "*present*" means immediate circumstances. "*Things to come*" means the future. There's nothing in the future that will ever happen that will be able to separate us from the love that is in Christ! That's a remarkable prophetic statement I rarely, if ever, hear cited.

Height and depth speak directly to our space-age technical world. If man colonizes the vast outer reaches of the universe, he is going to find out that God is already there with a Bible in His hand waiting. No invention is ever going to make the Lord Jesus obsolete. Salvation is a love story, and we love Him because He first loved us. And love endureth forever. We can rest knowing that nothing is going to ever be able to separate us from Him!

We took much type and space – four reports – nearly ten thousand words – in chapter eight of Romans in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. We began with "...*there is no condemnation to those who love God...*" And we ended with "...*all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose...*" There is no separation from God. Can you improve on this wisdom? Perhaps there are portions you would like to counter? If you can find something better than this to write about – then, by all means, please let me know ~