

The Sovereignty of Salvation, Part 2

Sunday Sermons

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Well, I'm excited to look into God's word yet again with you tonight and I want to invite you to take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Romans, to Romans 8 as we continue to build upon what we looked at this morning. I'm so encouraged by the feedback that I've received from many of you regarding how Romans 8:28 was used in your life in a very positive and edifying way, and with others even bringing about conviction of sin to bring them to Christ. And what we want to look at tonight now stands on the shoulders of Romans 8:28 and reaches yet higher, and we'll be looking at verses 29 and 30 but I want to begin by reading the passage, Romans 8. I'm going to start reading in verse 28 but our focus tonight is on verse 29 and 30. God's word says,

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

What we find here is the most comprehensive statement of the sovereign saving grace of God to be found anywhere in the entire Bible. What we have here in verses 29 and 30 is what is known as the golden chain of salvation. We find in this chain five links, five inseparable links that stretch from eternity past to eternity future. This chain begins in eternity past with those whom he foreknew and those whom he predestined. This chain then extends and sweeps through time to the next two which those whom he called and those whom he justified. But the chain does not stop there, it continues on into eternity future and we see those whom he glorified. What is so amazing about this passage is that the group he begins with in eternity past is the group that will stand before his throne of grace in eternity future, that no one is added along the way and no one drops out along the way from the group that he foreknew and predestined in eternity past, and it is this very group that God calls out of the world into saving relationship with Jesus Christ that God justifies and declares them to be righteous. This very group that God begins to shape and mold and conform into the image of God's Son progressively throughout the whole of their Christian life, and it is this very same group that he will glorify one day in

heaven, in fact, it is so certain that this group will be glorified in heaven, you will note, it is put in the past tense. Though the church and believers in Rome are still on the earth and are still being sanctified, their future glorification is so certain that the Apostle Paul puts it in the past tense, actually it's an aorist tense that's translated as a past tense, and that is the eternal security of all believers. What a broad brush stroke we find here in this one passage and it is as close to what theologians refer to as the *ordus salutis*, the order of salvation. This one passage includes more of the order of salvation than any other text in the entire Bible.

So the group that God begins with in eternity past, those whom he foreknew and predestined, is the very group that he calls and justifies, is the same group that God will glorify in heaven. Let me say it again: no one drops out along the way and no one is added along the way either. This begins with God, it is executed by God, it is consummated by God, it is all of God, and the longer that we are Christians and the more that we read and study our Bible, the more we come to the realization that our conversion was all of God. When we are converted, when we first come to faith in Jesus Christ, from our limited perspective before we begin to study the Bible, we think that it is part God and part us, that God provides the atonement in Christ and we provide the repentance and faith, and that a conversion occurs when God's part and our part come together. Well, the fact is that even the repentance and even the saving faith with which we believe in Jesus Christ are gifts of God and in reality it is all of God, and the more we study our Bible, the more we realize it is less of us, it is more of God, until we come to the place of greater spiritual insight and understanding that we see it is all of God and none of us.

So I want us to look at this passage and I want us to look at it very carefully because if you're a believer in Jesus Christ tonight, you find yourself very easily in this passage of Scripture. This morning, we looked at the sovereignty of God in providence in verse 28, tonight we will look at the sovereignty of God in salvation in verses 29 and 30. So let's now begin our walk through this passage and these five links in the golden chain of salvation.

It all begins, number 1, with the first golden link and it is the link of foreknowledge. Paul begins in eternity past with God and his foreknowledge. You'll note at the beginning of verse 29 it says, "For those whom He foreknew." The very first word is important in verse 29, it is the word "For," which introduces an explanation. This lets us know that verse 29 and 30 is actually an enlarged explanation of verse 28; as Paul has addressed the eternal purpose of God, Paul now opens the lens and gives us a much larger perspective of the last word of verse 28, the eternal purpose of God. So the eternal purpose of God begins with foreknowledge, that God initiated our salvation when he foreknew us.

Now I need to begin, first of all, to tell you what this does not mean and then to tell you what it does mean. First of all, this does not refer to God's intellectual cognitive knowledge. This does not mean that God has looked down the proverbial tunnel of time from eternity past, looked into time to see what you would do with the gospel and to see what you would do with Jesus Christ, and when God sees someone believe in Jesus Christ, God then foreknows that they're going to believe in Christ and God makes them

his chosen one. That is a blatantly false understanding of what this text says, and for many years in my Christian life, I actually thought that that's what these verses taught but it was not because I knew too much of the Bible, it was because I knew too little of the Bible that I would have such an erroneous understanding of this passage.

Let me give you three reasons why that is not the teaching of the word of God. The first two are theological reasons, the last is an exegetical reason. Reason number 1 why that is false, that this is saying that God just simply looks down the tunnel of time to see what people will do, that is wrong, number 1, because God has never learned anything. God has never looked into the future and learned anything. That would be a pagan view of God, that there is some knowledge that is outside of God that God did not possess, that God who is immutable and unchanging would actually be gaining knowledge that he did not previously possess. No, that is a gross misunderstanding of who God is. I want to say it again: God has never looked into the future and learned anything that he did not already know, and the fact of the matter is, what God foresees in the future is only that which God has foreordained previously. So that's number 1.

2. If this means that God looks into the future to see what people will do, all God would see is that no one would believe in Jesus Christ. Sinners who are dead in trespasses and sins cannot believe in Jesus Christ. Sinners have moral inability and have no capacity whatsoever to exercise their will to believe in Jesus Christ. What can a dead man do? The only thing a dead man can do is stink. A dead man cannot make a choice to believe in anything or anyone because he has no spiritual life whatsoever. So if this did mean that God looked down the tunnel of time, I want to say this again, all God would see is that no one would believe in Jesus Christ and that is abundantly clear from earlier in Romans 3 which is the most definitive text in the Bible on the total depravity of the human nature. It says in verse 11, "There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside," verse 12. Verse 18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Do you think that group's going to believe in Jesus Christ? Do you think that group is going to come running to the cross and throw themselves upon the mercy of God? That is not going to happen.

But a third reason which is exegetical in this passage why this does not refer to foresight, look again at verse 29, this does not say what God foresaw, it says whom God foreknew. This is not dealing with events and circumstances, this is dealing with people. This is not saying what God foresaw, it says whom God foreknew. This has nothing to do with circumstances or events that God would foresee, so what does it mean that God foreknows someone? Well, it's a compound word, two words brought together in the Greek language, *proginosko*. *Ginosko* means to know in the sense of knowing someone in a loving relationship; it means to choose to love someone; it means to choose someone to set your heart of affection upon them, and I'm going to show you that in multiple passages. The prefix *pro*, *proginosko*, means beforehand. And what the word foreknowledge actually means is those whom God previously chose to love; it means those who before the foundation of the world God chose to set his heart of distinguishing love and redeeming love upon them. That's what the word foreknowledge means. It has

nothing to do with foresight. It has everything to do with those whom God previously chose to love.

Now I want to walk us through a number of passages and I want you to see how the word know, k-n-o-w, is used. So go back to Genesis and I'm going to do a quick fly-through the Bible. Genesis 4:1 and it will be worth your effort to go on this journey with me, so let me hear some more pages in Bibles turning. Okay, that's what I need to hear. Genesis 4:1 and I hope you've got a pen and I hope you'll underline each one of these that I'm going to designate to you. Genesis 4:1, "Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain." Do you see the verb "had relations"? We understand what that means, that Adam entered into the most intimate, physical, sexual relationship that he could possibly have with another person, he literally set his heart of love upon Eve and she conceived. Now what you need to know, in the Hebrew language those two words, "had relations," it is a Hebrew word yada which means to know. Most literally translated and I know you want it literally translated, this would read, "Now the man knew his wife Eve and she conceived." That doesn't mean that he knew what her hair color was, it doesn't mean he knew what the color of her eyes were, it doesn't mean he knew where she lived. It has nothing to do with intellectual cognitive data, it has everything to do with making love, it has everything to do with a loving, intimate, personal relationship with another person.

In the same chapter, look at verse 17, Genesis 4:17, we see it again, "Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch." Again, literally Cain knew his wife and she conceived and gave birth. So from the very beginning of the Bible, the biblical authors, in this case Moses, used the word know, k-n-o-w, not in an intellectual cognitive way but in an intimate relational way.

If you would, now come to Psalm 1 and I'm passing over so many verses, it's killing me to pass over a lot of these verses but I've got a lot to cover in Romans. But I want you to see this and here's why I want you to see this: there's a domino effect going on here from foreknowledge to predestination to calling to justification to glorification; if you understand foreknowledge, it's a domino effect, all of the others just fall in place. And if you think that it means foresight, you're not even going to understand the doctrine of predestination, you're not going to understand the doctrine of God's calling, you will miss the boat completely. So it is absolutely critical that we understand how the Bible uses the word "to know."

So in Psalm 1:6 we read, "the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." God does not know the way of the wicked, he has no relationship with the wicked, he has no association in a love relationship kind of way with the wicked or the way that they are on. The only way that God knows is the way of the righteous and we read the Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked he does not know. He has no loving relationship with those who are on the way of the wicked. They are perishing.

If you would, come to Jeremiah 1:5, and I'm just cherry-picking some of a vast number of verses to which I could turn us tonight. In Jeremiah 1:5, God is speaking to the prophet and God says to the prophet Jeremiah, you're familiar with this text, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." That does not mean I knew about you in an intellectual way. No, it means, "I knew you, I had already chosen you to be my prophet and I had set my heart of distinguishing love upon you." That's what the word know means. "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." That's foreknowledge. "And before you were born, I consecrated you, I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." There is foreknowledge, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you."

All right, come to Amos 3:2. I'm going to start in verse 1, "Hear this word which the LORD has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt." Now verse 2 is what I want you to see, Amos 3, "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth." It's the very same verb, yada, which means chosen to love. That's what foreknowledge is, that God previously chooses to love, in this case, it is the nation Israel. Out of all of the nations of the world, God chose to set his affection upon this little nation there in the Middle East. God passed over the nations in Africa. He passed over Europe. He passed over Asia. He passed over the Americas. God set his heart upon the nation Israel. He chose to love Israel in ways he did not love the Egyptians, in ways he did not love the other nations of the world. That's what the word foreknowledge means. In fact, in some of your translations it will even read, "You only I have loved among all the families of the earth."

But come to the New Testament, come to Matthew 1:25. After the angel came to Joseph and brought the announcement that Mary will bear a child though a virgin, in verse 24 we read, "Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife," verse 25, "but kept her a virgin." Literally in the Greek it reads "he did not know her." He did not enter into the physical expression of carrying out the love desires that were in his heart because, as translated here, to know means to love.

Come to Matthew 7:23, and this is all necessary for us to lay this firm foundation with foreknowledge. In Matthew 7 beginning in verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Verse 22, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who work iniquity.'" For Jesus to say, "I never knew you," he knew everything about the unbeliever intellectually. In fact, the books contain every sinful thought and every sinful deed, sins of omission, sins of commission, God knows everything about the sinner man but he does not know the sinner man in a personal, intimate, loving relationship. For God to know you means that God loves you and for God to foreknow you means that he chose to love you from long ago.

Come, if you would, to John 10 and I want to drive a few more nails into this board and just nail this down in our understanding tonight. John 10:14, Jesus said in the good shepherd discourse, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know

Me." What that means is, "I have a personal relationship with My own. I love My own and My own have a relationship with Me and they love Me."

Look at verse 27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them." That is in contrast to the previous verse in which Jesus said to the religious leaders, "You are not of My sheep." Jesus does not know everybody in a loving saving relationship. He only knows his sheep.

If you would, please, come to 1 Peter. Let me just give us one more verse and it's hurting me to pass over so many verses in my notes. I can come to your house later tonight and just kind of fill you in on these. [laughter] This is good stuff I've got right here. But let me just give you a slam dunk verse, okay? 1 Peter 1:1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen." Stop right there. Do you think that was encouragement to those early believers who were run out of town by persecution and scattered from city to city, having to live on the run? Do you think that was an encouragement to them to hear the doctrine of sovereign election? You bet it was because while the world is rejecting you, you need to know God has chosen you. You are a lottery pick with God. You are a first round lottery pick with God and though this world is running you out of town and this world is causing you great tribulation, you need to know in heaven that before the foundation of the world God chose you and he set his heart of love upon you.

Now look at verse 2, "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," and someone may say, "Oh, you see, election or being chosen at the end of verse 1 is only according to foreknowledge, therefore foreknowledge is the tail that wags the dog, therefore he chooses only those whom he foresees." Not so fast with that thought. Look, if you would, at verse 20 in the same chapter. It's a package deal and in verse 20, I can begin reading in verse 18, "knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." Verse 20, "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world." What does that mean that Jesus was foreknown? Let me tell you what it does not mean. It does not mean that in eternity past God looked down the tunnel of time to see the entrance of his Son into this world and he continues to look and he cannot believe what he is seeing, he is seeing this world rising up in opposition against his Son, he did not anticipate this. He sees Jesus being taken to the cross, there he is crucified, there he sheds his blood, the Father then would say, "I guess I will just have to adopt that as My plan." Of course it doesn't mean that. That's blasphemous. What it means is that God the Father in eternity past set his heart of love upon his own Son Jesus Christ and commissioned him to come into this world to go to the cross and to lay down his life a ransom for many; that God the Father sovereignly chose the Son to be the Savior of sinners; that the Father passed over the Spirit and the Father set his heart in a distinguishing way upon the Son and commissioned him to come into this world on a mission of redemption and salvation. That was all marked out long ago. Long before Adam ever sinned, God already had the solution. Long before this world fell into sin, God had already appointed his Son by foreknowledge to come into this world.

So come back, if you would, now to Romans 8 because this is where our salvation began. Verse 29 of Romans 8, "For those whom He foreknew." It began with God in eternity past choosing a people to be his own possession and choosing to love them with a distinguishing love according to his sovereign will for reasons known only to God, not based upon anything that was foreseen in the future, God choosing to love them not because of them but in spite of them, choosing to love them because God is love and this love originating within God himself. So what this says is you love God because God first loved you. He first loved you in eternity past when he chose to love you and you know God because he first foreknew you in eternity past.

Now I want you to look at this verb, foreknew, for whom he foreknew. Foreknew here is what we call a second aorist which means he chose his elect all at one time. It's not like the NFL draft where there's a first round draft picks and then those who are less talented go in the second round, and then there's a third round, and then there's a fourth round. That's not how this happened. God chose all of us who are in Christ tonight, God chose us all at once. There was no upper tier, lower tier, medium level. He chose us all at once. This is in the indicative mood which means this is a statement of fact. It's in the active voice which means God acted to do this. It is third person singular meaning he didn't choose groups, he chose individuals. This isn't referring to nations, it's referring to individual people within nations. So this is where your salvation began, it began with God the Father in eternity past choosing to love you and choosing to set his heart of affection upon you. How could we ever doubt the love of God, that God in ages past, before he even created the world, had already set his love upon us. How great is the love of God.

So those whom he foreknew, here's the second link, his predestination. The next three words, "He also predestined." From foreknowledge God now moves to predestination and each of these words are very important. The word "also" is very important. It doesn't say "or" it says "also." It's not that he foreknew some or he predestined others. No, all whom he foreknew he also predestined. What does the word predestination mean? It's a Greek word. I'm going to pronounce it because you're going to hear an English word in it, it's a compound word: proorizo. Pro is the prefix which means before, and in this case, long ago before in eternity past. Horizo, you can hear horizon. And when someone would begin a journey, the destination was way out there on the horizon, that's the destination. And what this is saying is that God marked out your destination before the journey ever began, before time even began, before this world even began God had already marked out on the horizon your eternal destiny.

That's exactly what this means and what predestination does is it guarantees the outcome of those who are foreknown. If something is predestined, it will come to pass. It is irrevocable. It is unalterable. And let me say at this point, predestination is just a good old Bible word. It was not coined in Geneva in the 16th century. It was not invented in Wittenberg. The word predestination was not birthed in Hippo of North Africa in the 5th century. It was not coined in North Hampton during the Great Awakening. Predestination is one of God's words and those who love God love his word. This is one of God's words and how we should love the word predestination. We can't say the word enough. Do you

know what you call a preacher who preaches on predestination? You call him a Bible preacher. Bible preachers preach on predestination because it's one of God's words and Paul was a faithful Bible preacher who wrote the book of Romans under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and this is exactly the truth that God led him to write.

Now he goes on to say in verse 29 that this predestination has, what is that destination that's marked out on the horizon? He continues in verse 29 to say, "to become conformed to the image of His Son." The word conformed here means to be shaped and molded. It comes in an English word for something to morph into a certain form or shape and God has predestined that all of his elect will become conformed into the image of God's Son. This is how you can know if you're one of the elect, there are other reasons that I could give, but one compelling reason to make your calling and election sure is that you see the evidence of Christ-likeness being supernaturally produced in you. You can't fake that. You can't just put on an act and give the appearance of being like Christ. It is something real that God does down in your soul and God does it in every single one of his chosen ones, and it is so certain to come about that God has predestined that you will be conformed into the image of his Son.

Predestination is not just to a place, it is to purity. It's not just that you're predestined to heaven, you are predestined to holiness in this life, and it will be brought about by our sovereign God in heaven. So this answers the lame argument that someone says that, "Well, if we tell people they're predestined for heaven, they'll just live in open sin." Please note they are predestined by God to be conformed to the image of God's Son. They're not going to live in open sin if you tell them they're predestined, the very opposite will be true.

So predestination is a very important word, and then he goes on in verse 29 and adds, "so that," and he gives "so that" introduces a purpose why we are predestined to become like Christ, "so that He," referring to Jesus Christ, the one to whom we are being conformed to his image, "so that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Just quickly to address this. This does not mean that there was time when Jesus came into being. This does not mean that there was a beginning point for the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. What this means is that Jesus has all of the rights and the authority and the prerogative of a firstborn son. And when we read in Psalm 89:27 it becomes very clear that the meaning of this is that the firstborn son is the one who receives from the father the rights and the privileges of his estate, and for Jesus to be the firstborn is drawing off of that Old Testament image, in fact, it says that David was the firstborn son. Well, if you know your Bible, you'll know that David was not the first son born of Jesse, he was the eighth son born of Jesse, but he's called the firstborn son because it was to David that God gave the throne rights of his kingdom, and that is exactly the meaning here. So we are being conformed into the image of Christ as a part of God's master plan so that Jesus Christ would be in the place of preeminence.

Now all of this is in eternity past, foreknown, predestined. That's all in eternity past, we now move into time and you'll note the third link in God's golden chain of salvation, it is God's effectual sovereign call. You will note in verse 30, "and these," and we could add

really the emphasis "and these only, these and no one else, and these whom He predestined, He also called." Now to be called by God we need to understand that there are two calls used in the Bible and I can hear R. C. Sproul in my ear right now saying a theologian makes careful distinctions, and there is a careful distinction we need to make here or are you going to lose your ball in the weeds? There is an external call and there is an internal call. The external call is the call that goes out from God through the voice of the preacher when the gospel is preached to invite sinners to come to faith in Jesus Christ. It is the call of the parent to their children to be saved. It's the call of the Sunday school teacher to his or her students to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The external call can only go to the ear. It can go no deeper. There must be the internal call which is the sovereign call of God that goes from the ear to the heart, and only God can step into the heart. I can only preach the word to your ear tonight, I cannot go any further. Your heart is off-grounds to me. God must be at work in your heart. God must be working and willing for his good pleasure in your heart. That's God's territory. That's God's place to work and the external call of God is a call that is so powerful that God overcomes any and all resistance that the person would mount and God guarantees that they will be brought to faith in Jesus Christ. This call is so powerful, it is a call that apprehends the heart, it captures the soul, it draws the sinner to faith in Christ. It is a call that is so powerful that it literally subpoenas the sinner, lays hold of the sinner, and draws them and even drags them into the kingdom of heaven. That's how strong this call is and if God did not call, no one would ever believe the external call.

Now God will never call anyone internally until the external call has been given. This is why we must witness. This is why we must preach the gospel. This is why we must sow the good seed far and wide and for the external call to go out far and wide. But every time I preach the gospel there are people who push back and push away. My external call cannot draw anyone. There must be the operation of God himself into the heart and into the soul that draws and brings the sinner into faith with Jesus Christ.

As Jesus himself said in John 6:44, Jesus said, "No one can come to Me." The word "can" is a word of ability. The word "may" is a word of permission. Jesus did not say no one may come to me, he said no one can come to me. It is the doctrine of total depravity. It is the doctrine of moral inability. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him," and this word "draw" is used later in the New Testament for "drag." It's the word that is used in the book of Acts when Paul was in Philippi and he preached the gospel and God opened the heart of Lydia and she received Christ and a church was birthed but a riot broke out in town, and they came and literally laid hold of Paul and they drug him through the streets of Philippi and stuffed into a jail. It's the very same word. It is a powerful drawing. It's the very same word that is used in John 21 when Peter was on the sea of Galilee on the shore and he saw Jesus in a boat, and he laid hold of the net and he drew the net with 153 fish in it. It's the very same Greek word that overpowered that net and drug it onto shore. This is inherent in the call of God.

So this call is an individual call. God never calls a group. God calls us by name. "Zaccheus, come down. Matthew, follow Me. Lazarus, come forth." If he had just said come forth, the entire graveyard would have emptied. The call of God is individual and if

he foreknew you and if he predestined you, he will call you and he will not take no for an answer, and he will secure the result that he desires. It is a call that is so penetrating, it plunges into the very soul of the one who is called and reverberates within the very depths of their heart. It is a call that is so powerful that it captures the soul and apprehends them and draws them. It is a call that is irresistible as Psalm 110 says. He makes us willing in the day of his power. It is a call that is inaudible. We do not hear an audible voice. It's much louder than that as God calls us into relationship with Jesus Christ.

And this third link stands in the very center of these five links and it is the touch point, the connecting point from eternity past into time. This is when salvation becomes real in your life. It is not real before he calls. It immediately and suddenly becomes real in your own soul in the day that he calls you which now leads to number 4, justification and we see in verse 30, "and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified." By the way, who is the "He"? Well, it's not God the Son because God the Son is distinguished in verse 29 as "His Son." And it's not the Holy Spirit, he's distinguished in verse 26 and 27. This "He" is God the Father. God the Father is the architect of the eternal purpose and the eternal decree. God the Father is the one who commissioned his Son to come into this world. God the Father is the one who commissioned the Holy Spirit to come into this world. God the Father is the author of the gospel. Everything is flowing from God the Father. The Father is the architect and the author, the Son provides the atonement, the Spirit is the one who applies the atonement under the direction of God the Father.

So justification, "and these whom He called, He also justified." I know if there is a doctrine that I do not need to elaborate here, it is the doctrine of justification, especially as we just celebrated the 500 year anniversary of Martin Luther's great stand, but just to remind you, in justification God declares the guilty sinner to possess, to be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ based upon their faith in Jesus Christ.

This justification occurs immediately. Sanctification, being conformed to the image of Christ is a lifelong reality in our lives but justification takes place in a moment. It takes place in the twinkling of an eye. Everyone is fully justified. There's no one here tonight who's more justified than anyone else. It takes place freely. It is irrevocable. Once we are justified by God we are forever justified by God. God will never reverse his justification and no matter how sinful your past, no matter how guilty your soul, no matter how defiled your heart, God fully, freely and forever justifies those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

So this leads us now to the fifth and final link and it is glorification and we see that now at the end of verse 30, "and these whom He justified, He also glorified." Now here's a question for you: why doesn't he say "and these He also sanctified"? Why does he skip over sanctification and go to glorification? Here is the answer: everything that is mentioned in this golden chain is what we call monergistic. There is only one active agent and it is God and God alone. God alone foreknew us. God alone predestined us.

God alone called us. God alone justified us. And God alone will glorify us. But sanctification is what we call synergistic.

There are two active agents in sanctification. Philippians 2:12-13 makes this abundantly clear. Verse 12 it tells us to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." We are an active participant in our sanctification but the next verse, verse 13 of Philippians 2 says, "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." So in sanctification there are two active agents in your sanctification, one is primary, that's a capital A, that is God, the other is secondary with a small "a," that is you and me and we bear great responsibility in our sanctification to apply ourselves to the means of grace, to the word of God, to prayer, to worship, to fellowship etc. So Paul does not include sanctification here because Paul is an outstanding theologian and Paul also knows he has already instructed us in sanctification in verse 29 when he speaks of us being predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, but because Paul must be consistent in his teaching sound doctrine, he goes from justification all the way now to glorification because he is dealing with only those doctrines in which God is monergistic, where there is only one active agent.

So what does it mean for us to be glorified? Well, for us to be glorified means that in our soul and in our body we will be made as fully like Jesus Christ as a creature can be made like the eternal Son of God. It means that God will finish what he starts, that God never begins a work of grace and then abandons it because of some unforeseen difficulty. God always sees it through to the end. God never saves someone initially but not save them eternally and ultimately. It's the truth of the eternal security of the believer, a believer can never lose his or her salvation and a true believer will never become an unbeliever. So all those whom he foreknew and predestined, whom he called and justified, these he will also glorify. You'll notice in the past tense in your English version, you are as certain for heaven this moment and your future glorification as though you have already been there 10,000 years. It is that certain that God speaks of it as already an accomplished fact.

So this is the sovereignty of God in salvation and this is what God has done toward you if you are a believer in Jesus Christ. How should this affect your life? Well, number 1, this is the greatest pride-crusher there is, that your salvation is rooted and grounded in God and God alone and it had nothing to do with you. The only thing you contributed to your salvation was the sin that was laid upon Jesus Christ at the cross. And every one of us here tonight who are true believers in Jesus Christ should really look up to heaven tonight and say, "Why me, God? Why have You chosen to love me? Why have You chosen me for salvation?" And every time I come back to this truth, it strikes me a hard blow and crushes my pride and reminds me of exactly how it is that I came into the kingdom of heaven.

Second, it should be worship-inspiring, should it not? That this high theology would produce high doxology because it causes us to look up to heaven to God and give all the glory for our salvation to God and to God alone. It is also holiness-producing when we realize that the whole purpose of our predestination or God's predestination is to make us

like his Son Jesus Christ. That makes me want to line up with God's eternal purpose and plan that he has predestined that I would be conformed to the image of his Son.

This truth is evangelism-igniting because we know that there are people out there who God has already marked out, God has already chosen to be his, and when we bring the gospel to them, God will issue the call at his perfect time and God will overcome their resistance and bring them into the kingdom. God guarantees the success of evangelism. God guarantees the success of world missions. God will bring a chosen bride to his Son Jesus Christ. There are not enough demons in hell or out of hell to circumvent the eternal purpose of God to build the church. So as we go out to witness, this does not demotivate us, this actually motivates us, that there are those out there that God has already chosen to save, and when we come with the gospel, if that is their appointed time, God will have already prepared their heart and God will sovereignly birth them into the kingdom of heaven.

There is so much more that could be said by way of application, I'm coming to your house to give you all the rest of the application. Time does not permit. I can tell when your tank is full. But understand this: God is sovereign and God is sovereign in salvation and he is the potter and we are the clay, and God has taken the lump, the marred, foul, dirty lump of humanity and he has chosen that there will be vessels of mercy which he prepared beforehand, and there will be vessels of wrath, and if you are a vessel of mercy, as I am a vessel of mercy, there should be zero reason for any pride and every reason for humility before Almighty God. And Paul's testimony is our testimony, "I am what I am by the grace of God."

So tonight, let us give glory to God and that is why when we arrive in heaven one day and God gives the crown, that crown will be on our head for about half of a millisecond and you're going to remember this sermon. [laughter] Yes, you are, and you're going to remember he foreknew me, he chose to love me from eternity past, he predestined me, he called me, he justified me, he glorified me, what is this crown doing on my head? And you will take this crown in an act of worship and you will cast it at his feet and you will fall on your face and you will say, "Worthy is this God who was and who is and who is forever, who has brought me into this place of heaven. It has all come from the sovereign grace of our God."

If you're here tonight without Christ and this is over your head, in a sense, this is family business. Here's all you need to know: you're a great sinner and Jesus is a great Savior. That's all you need to know. You're a great sinner and if that hurts your feelings tonight, you can come up to me after the service and apologize to me because we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You desperately need the saving grace of God to wash away your sins. You're a great sinner but we have an even greater Savior in the Lord Jesus Christ who died upon a cross for sinners, bearing our sin, suffering under the wrath of God, shedding his blood, and providing the only way of salvation and means to the Father, and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And if you will call upon the name of the Lord tonight, he will save you, and if you will call upon

the name of the Lord tonight, I will tell you, he foreknew you and predestined you and now he has called you to himself. May God give you ears to hear the truth of his word.

Let us pray.

Father in heaven, how we praise You for the profundity, for the magnitude, for the immensity of this salvation that spans from eternity past to eternity future. Lord, surely salvation is of the Lord and so, Father, we just humbly bow our head tonight and we look upward to You and say that eternity will not be long enough for us to ascribe to You the honor and the praise that belongs to You alone. So Father, we give You all the glory. I pray that these words tonight will sink deeply into our souls and even as we get into bed tonight, that You will bring them to our remembrance and these truths will become a precious treasure to us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.