

The Security of Our Future Glory

Turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 8, and today we will cover, Lord willing, verses 18 through 30. Here we come to another section of this incredible book that is like a steep mountain that needs to be climbed if we want to see the view from the top. And this book, as we have already seen, is truly the highest peak in the Pauline writings. What has become clear to me is that this book has several peaks in it. There are several sections in this book that must be understood correctly if we are to understand the message that Paul is giving to these early Christians, so that we can apply it to our Christian lives in the 21st century. I related chapter 5 to the Hillary Step on Mt Everest, and how we really had to work hard to get through that section to understand how we are sinners through the sin of Adam, and how Christ is the only answer for our sin problem. Chapter 7 was another steep peak that needed to be scaled as well, as we discussed how the believer in Christ needs to properly understand how the sin nature operates within his mind, how the Law entices us to sin, and how we deal with all that. Chapter 8 is another steep section as we plod our way up the Mt Everest of Bible books. There is so much doctrinal truth in these verses that it is nearly impossible to take it all in. But, when we get through these verses we will be able to enjoy the view from this peak as Paul launches into one of the most reassuring passages in all of Scripture in verses 31-39. We can't see the view from the top unless we make our way up the rock face, so we'll get started by reading chapter 8 verses 18-30. **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. 26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 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.**

Pray

We are coming to the close of this section on sanctification that began in chapter 6. We have seen that this book is all about faith. Paul starts out by saying in 1:16-17 that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes it. Righteousness comes by faith! This is the theme of the entire book. His goal is to dispel any thoughts that salvation comes by being born into a certain family, or that it comes by doing good works, or that it comes from just being a good person. Salvation comes by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He paid the penalty for your sin. Faith is the theme of this book. We need to remember that as we work through this section today. This book is about faith in Christ. Paul so wonderfully lays Romans out for us in a perfect outline. In chapter 1 he tells us what it is all about, faith. In 1:18-3:20 he points out how all people are sinners, and that there is nothing that we can do within ourselves to save us, we are wholly incapable of doing anything to make ourselves acceptable to God outside of Him. We can only be justified, or declared righteous in Christ, Rom 3:26, and that is what he is talking about in 3:21 through chapter 5. In chapter 4 he gives us a personal example of a man of faith, Abraham. And, as we will see in a couple of messages, he uses the example of Abraham for a very specific reason. Then chapters 6-8 are about sanctification, or holy living. Basically, Paul is saying, ok we are all sinners, we can only be saved by faith in Christ, now what? Now we have to live the rest of our lives in these bodies that are tainted by sin. We still have our sin nature, and how do we deal with that? That is Romans 6-8. In chapter 6 we saw how we deal with our sin, how we are dead to sin, and alive to God. We talked about how the gardens of our lives show where we are in our Christian life. We cannot serve to masters, if we aren't working in our garden, then the weeds of sin take over, and our lives are indistinguishable from the unsaved. In chapter 7 we saw how the Law in itself is good and perfect, but our sin nature uses it to entice us to commit sins. We saw how there is a conflict within our minds between the Spirit who indwells our God given new nature, and the old sinful flesh that remains after we are saved. Now in chapter 8 we have seen how we are no longer in bondage to sin, since the Holy Spirit dwells in us. We saw that the Spirit lives inside of Christians and He testifies to our spirit that we are the adopted children of God. And all through this we have seen Paul reminding us of our future glory. He keeps telling us that we have a future with God, he keeps pointing out that God has promised to give us a glorious future with Him, in glorified bodies. 5:2, 5:21, 6:5, 6:22, 7:24-25, 8:11, 8:16-17 all at least hint at a future glory that we have with Christ. Here in our verses today we see that Paul really expands on that promise of a future glory, and there are two distinct sections within this section of the book. The first section is verses 18-25, and in these we will see how our present sufferings are incomparable to our future glory. The future glory is so great that even the creation longs to be released from the curse that it is under. We too, long to be released because this promise of God is so great. Then in the second section of the paragraph or thought, we get a real insight into why we can persevere, why we can wait patiently to be delivered from our present sufferings into this future glory.

Present Suffering versus Future Glory

It really is imperative that we use a literal interpretation of the Bible everywhere, including prophecy. Paul is here talking about a future time in this passage. We see that in verse 18, **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy TO BE compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.** The PRESENT sufferings cannot be compared with the glory that is TO BE. The fact that he is talking about things that are TO BE makes this section prophetic. He isn't switching gears here at all; this is the logical progression of his topic. He has been talking about how we can live holy lives, now we are nearing the conclusion of that section, so he is talking about the conclusion of sanctification, which is glorification, which is in the future. Now, prophesy really scares some people, I mean these things haven't taken place, how can we know that they will happen the way we think that they will? All kinds of images of conspiracy theorists, or old sages like Nostradamus are brought to mind. Or we think of a gypsy with her crystal ball, or palm readers, or fortune tellers, perhaps we even think of the daily horoscope that will supposedly tell us what our day is going to be like. Well, all those "prophets" have one thing in common; they are all false prophets. Some of the things they say may actually happen, but they are not based on the Word of God, therefore, they are either completely made up, or they are under some sort of demonic power to come up with their ideas. The Bible is not like that at all. It is sure, it is fact, it is based on the sure testimony of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says **But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of ones own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** Know this first of all, he says. Before we study anything in the Bible we need to know FIRST that this Word came from men moved by the Holy Spirit who spoke the Words of God. And, did you realize that almost two-thirds of the Bible is prophecy? Much of this prophecy has been fulfilled, and all that has been fulfilled happened just exactly the way that God said that it would in His Word, literally. This gives us the confidence to realize that those prophecies that have not been fulfilled will also be fulfilled just the way God said they would, literally. We don't need to be scared of prophecy, or avoid it; it is what much of the Bible is about, and it is intended to give us hope for the future, knowing that we can rely on the sure word of God, and we will see that today. Unfortunately, today in Christianity there is a movement away from prophecy. Prominent Christian speakers will say that we should not study prophecy; it is none of our business, or a tool of the Devil used to distract us, like Rick Warren said. Another tactic used by some Covenant Theologians is to say that all the prophecy in the Bible has already happened, this is known as preterism, and this is touted by the likes of RC Sproul and Hank Hennegraf, the Bible Answer Man. Now, this is not to say that these men aren't sincere Christians, or that they don't desire to know God, but that they do not interpret prophetic scripture literally. Make no mistake, we are not living in the Millennial Kingdom today as it is described throughout the Bible, as they would have you believe. A variation of Covenant Theology first written about in a book by Augustine, in the fifth century, entitled "The City of God" espouses a school of thought called "amillennialism", which is the belief that the Millennial Kingdom is a metaphor, representing a spiritualized kingdom in the heart of the Christians that began with Christ's first coming. Well, if we are in the Kingdom now,

I personally am living on the wrong side of the tracks. I don't see the many promises that God gives about this future Kingdom that He is talking about here in Romans 8. I don't have a glorified body, incapable of sin, and I certainly don't see a rejuvenated earth that produces abundant fruit, one that has been released from the curse. The Apostles looked forward to the implementation of this literal Kingdom in Acts 1 when they asked if Christ was going to establish His Kingdom now that He had risen from the dead. Acts 1:6, **So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?** This kingdom that they are asking about is the Millennial Kingdom of Revelation 20; it is the Kingdom that was offered by Christ to the Jewish nation that they rejected, it is the Kingdom that was prophesied about in the OT. It is this Kingdom that the Jewish people are still looking for today. But, I'm getting ahead of myself. Verse 18 says that our present sufferings, as difficult as they may be (and they can be tremendously difficult) do not compare with the glory that is to be in the future.

Verse 19 goes on from here, and we see that even the very creation is longing for this day in the future. **For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.** Paul is here using a literal technique known as personification. He is giving personal thoughts to an inanimate object, the earth. No, this doesn't teach that the earth has feelings too. He is trying to show how great this glory is in the future. It is so great that even the earth itself can't wait. It "waits eagerly" it says here. This term, "waits eagerly", is only used 7 times in the NT (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28) according to the Bible Knowledge Commentary by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck. Every time that it is used it refers to Christ's second coming, which is exactly what Paul is talking about here. Christ will come again in the future to set up His Kingdom on the earth, the one that Israel rejected the first time He came, and the creation itself cannot wait for this yet future event to happen. Why does the creation wait eagerly?

Look at verses 20 and 21. **For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.** The word order in these two verses can be kind of confusing. What they are saying is something like this, and we need to realize that he is explaining why the creation is waiting eagerly. Why does the creation wait eagerly? Because the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because God subjected it; and it was subjected in hope because the creation itself will also be set free from the curse of slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. The KJV reads a little more clearly here. **For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** The creation was subjected, or cursed, at the same time that Adam received his punishment for sin. Remember Genesis 3. The earth was created "very good", but after Adam sinned something happened. Verse 17 of Genesis 3, **Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of**

your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.

The earth was cursed because of the sin of Adam, and here in Romans 8:20 and 21 we see that the creation cannot wait to be released from this curse, which will happen when Christ comes again to establish the Millennial Kingdom. In verse 22 we see that the creation groans with the pains of childbirth.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

This is reminiscent of the words of Christ when He was talking to His disciples on the Mount of Olives. This was no accidental conversation, as Christ was talking about the things that will happen before He returns, and God's Word says in Zechariah 14:4 that He will return to the earth in the very spot where He was talking to them, the Mount of Olives. The disciples ask Christ what the signs will be of His return, and the end of the age, the end of this age that we are living in. Christ tells them of all the false teachers who will come, and the wars, and famines and earthquakes that will happen, but then He says in Matthew 24:8, **But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**

That is what Paul is talking about here. All these horrible things that are happening on the earth now, all the wars, and disease, and famine, and natural disasters; these are birth pangs, these are the earth crying out in pain, like a woman giving birth. I was in the room when all three of my children were born, and I don't need to personally experience that pain to know that it hurts! Incidentally, that is part of the curse of sin as well, which is not a coincidence that this analogy is being used. Paul is saying here in Romans 8:22 that the earth is groaning in pain because it wants to be free from the curse that it is under, and then we see in verse 23 that we Christians have the same feeling within us. **And not only this, but also we**

ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Not only does the creation long to be released from the curse, but we long within ourselves, and there is that "waiting eagerly" again, for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. We are waiting eagerly for something to happen in the future, and that something is the redemption of our bodies, and this will happen when we receive our glorified bodies. This is when we also will be released from the curse of sin, we will have a body that does not have the propensity to sin, it will be perfect, perfected. Paul says here that we presently have a down payment for this future promise. We see that we have the "first fruits" of the Spirit. Jesus promised that He would give us the Spirit in John 14:16-17 **I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.** Then in 2 Corinthians 1 we get some more revelation about what the Holy Spirit really means to us. 2 Cor 1:21-22 **21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.** So, we have the Holy Spirit within us when we put our faith in Christ, just like Christ Himself promised us in John 14, and then we see in 2 Corinthians that we have the Spirit as a pledge, a pledge of something that is to come

in the future. Christ talked about that also in John 14, when He told the disciples not to worry, that He would come for them again. He gives us the Spirit as a promise that He will come for us again. That is what the first fruits are. They are an offering that is made of the first fruits that are harvested in the year. Christ actually rose on this Feast Day in the Jewish calendar, which is a whole other message entirely, but that is what first fruits is; it is a gift given with the hope of more to come in the future, and here we see that we have the Holy Spirit within us as a promise of more to come. The *more to come* is the adoption that we are promised and the redemption of our bodies.

Then we see in verse 24 that we have been saved in hope. **For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?** We have been saved in hope just like the earth was cursed in hope that we saw up in verse 20 and 21. The earth was cursed in hope, knowing that it will be released from the curse at some point in the future. We are saved in hope also, knowing that we will be released from the curse of sin in the future. Faith and hope are very similar concepts. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the assurance of things hoped for. Faith is the foundation for the hope. We have been saved through the foundation of faith, with a hope for our future deliverance, and Paul says here that if we could see the deliverance it wouldn't be hope anymore. This is why love is the greatest of faith, hope and love. When we are in eternity with Christ we will no longer need faith and hope. We won't need faith because we will have our glorified body, we will be incapable of sinning, and we won't need hope because we will be face to face with the Lord. Our salvation will be complete, so all we will need is love; love for the God who saved us. Then in verse 25 we see a little bit more about hope, **But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it,** and this gets back the suffering that Paul referred to in verse 18. We eagerly wait for the Lord's coming with perseverance. And do you remember how we build perseverance from chapter 5? **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.** We are saved by faith in Christ, and we exult in our tribulations, our trials, our suffering, because those things build perseverance. So, not only are those sufferings incomparable to the glory that we have in the future, but they actually prepare us to wait for the Lord. We need to endure that suffering as a good soldier of Christ, knowing that it builds the perseverance that we need to carry on in this life and be what God wants us to be. But, that raises several questions. How is this all going to work out? How are we going to get from this condition that we are in now to this future glory? How is God going to carry out this plan for the universe? How are we going to move from the state of the earth today to a Kingdom wherein He rules and reigns over a rejuvenated earth? Well, that is verses 26-30.

Why We Can Hope with Confidence

Fortunately for us Paul gives us the answer to those questions in verses 26-30; here we see why we can hope with confidence. We do not blindly put our trust in Christ as if we have no real, concrete reason to trust in Him. That will become clear as we make our way through this section. We serve an almighty, sovereign God who has promised to deliver us from this body of death, and here is why we can trust Him. Notice verse 26 **In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.**

This is a promise of God that we can count on. He says here “in the same way the Spirit helps our weakness.” In the same way that He helps our weak flesh to have life in spite of sin, He helps us in prayer. This takes us back to verse 11 that says **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** So, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead has promised to raise us from the dead, and this is the same Spirit who we see here in verse 26 who intercedes for us. What an amazing thing that is. He takes the sin out of the way so that we can have life in the future, but not only that He takes the sin out of the way now so that our prayers can be heard by the Father. And there is even more to it than that. The verse goes on to say that we do not know how to pray, and so the Spirit does it for us. The second half of the verse says **for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.** Literally what this is saying is that we don’t know the extent of what we should pray for, because we don’t know where our lives are headed exactly. God does, and we see in verse 27 that the Spirit does also. **and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.** We see here the intimate knowledge that exists between the Father and the Spirit here. All three parts of the Trinity have perfect, intimate knowledge of one another, and like we saw earlier this is why Jesus was in such anguish in the Garden, because He knew that He would be separated from the Father for a time while He took on the sin of the world. Here we see that the one who searches hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, so He intercedes for us according to the will of God. Psalm 139 is a great place to go to see the knowledge that God has of us, **read Psalm 139:1-7.** That same Spirit who knows the mind of God, knows our minds as well. This is the reason why the battle with sin starts in the mind. God knows our thoughts and intentions before we do; He is outside of history, He is outside of our time scale, so He knows the beginning from the end. This kind of knowledge is what gives the Spirit the ability to truly pray for us according to the will of God. He knows the will of God perfectly, He knows the path that has been laid out for the world, and He knows each one of our parts in that plan, so the Spirit intercedes for us to God, to help us carry out that plan. This, of course is why Christ could say if we ask anything in His name it will be done. This isn’t a magic formula or anything, but it does show us that if we do ask for things that are part of the plan of God for our lives then it will be done. But, the problem arises that we are not omniscient, we do not know the plan perfectly like the Spirit does. We can know some generic things, like it is always God’s will for us to obey

His Word. We can take that to the bank, we can know for certain that He always wants us to obey Him, and not sin against Him. So, that is something that we can pray for with confidence. Other things are more difficult, and this is why Christ told us to ask for God's will to be done when we pray. The Spirit knows God's will, and He knows the plan for the universe, so He can perfectly intercede of us to the Father, and that is what we see in verses 26 and 27. As we should be well aware, however, some of the things that God has in store for us in His perfect plan are not completely pleasurable. Some of those things could be classified as suffering, in fact, like we saw earlier, He promises that we will suffer for Him, and we see the reason for that in verse 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. Notice that it says "all things". This includes the suffering that we will indeed go through. These aren't just empty promises from an aloof God. This is a promise from the God who knows our heart, and the God who is sovereign over the universe. He is working all things together for good for those who love Him. By the way, if we love Him, we will obey Him. This word for "work together" is the word that we get synergistic from. All things are working synergistically for our good. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines synergy this way: the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. That is exactly what we have here. Imagine all the things that are working together in this world right this moment to produce an effect that is greater than the sum of the parts. Every trial, every pain, every heartache, every blessing, every everything is working together in the hands of Almighty God to bring about something that is greater than the effects of all those things individually. That is why Paul could say in verse 18 that the sufferings of the present can't compare with the glory in the future. The suffering that we go through now is working together to bring the culmination of this age. That is what the Apostles asked about in Matthew 24. What will be the signs of the end of this age? They wanted to know how all this was going to culminate, and here we see that all the events in our lives, the good things and the bad things, are working synergistically to bring about this promised Kingdom with Christ ruling and reigning on the earth. We can know this because Paul talks about the creation being released from the curse in the earlier verses, and this will happen in the Millennial Kingdom. At the beginning of chapter 9 we are going to see how God has been working with the nation of Israel as part of His plan for the universe, and how the covenants that He made with them, in the Old Testament will all culminate in this Millennial Kingdom, but for now we just need to see how our Sovereign God is allowing us to go through the trials of life now to prepare us for, and in fact to bring about this Kingdom that He has in store for the earth. This brings a whole new aspect to the concept of sin for me. When I sin, or I live outside of the will of God, I am working against God's plan for the universe. That is what makes sin so horrible, and such utter rebellion against God. Just the eating of fruit from a tree is what started this process of sin in the world. It seems harmless enough, but it was outright rebellion against God and His purpose for the world, and it led to the all the sin and rebellion that has gone throughout history. So, that should help us to

realize that we need to live in obedience to the Lord. And here we have the promise from God that He is working all these things together for good for those who love Him, and those who are called according to His purpose. If we love God we can be assured that we are called according to His purpose. God's purpose is our sanctification. He desires for us to be fully sanctified, and to be holy because He is holy. That is what sanctification is, being holy. And, here Paul is wrapping up this section on sanctification by showing us what the ultimate goal of that sanctification process is, and it is being glorified and living in perfect harmony with God, as life was originally intended to be. This is what we see here. God is working all things together for His Church, for the ones who have responded to the call by loving Him and believing in Him for good. He is moving all things towards our perfected sanctification and the Kingdom on earth where we will live as He originally intended. We get more detail on that in verse 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. We need to keep a couple things in mind here as we make our way through these verses. The first is that as I have mentioned, God sits outside of time. This is hard for us to get our minds around because it is so far from our experience. Everything we do is based on time. We need to be at church at a certain time, we need to be at work at a certain time, we need to be at appointments at a certain time. God is not like that. He sets the time; in fact He has set the time in eternity past. We also need to realize that this is talking about a group of people here; the use of plural pronouns here is significant. He is talking about us corporately here. For those whom He foreknew (those people who would respond in faith to the calling), these He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. This is the conclusion of sanctification, right here in verse 29. Here we have the goal of the whole process, and it is being conformed to the image of His Son. This doesn't say that we are predestined to be saved. This verse says that we are predestined to be holy. We are predestined to be sanctified. We are predestined to be in the image of Jesus Christ. Remember that Adam was created in the image of God. He was created "very good", but he fell; he decided to eat the fruit against the will of God and his nature was changed as a result thus casting the world into sin with all of us as we saw in chapter 5. But, here we see the culmination, we see the God ordained intended conclusion of this age, and that is for us to be conformed to the image of Christ. And we see here that Christ is the firstborn among many brethren. Remember that the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead, and that same Spirit will raise us from the dead in the future, or we will be changed in an instant at the Rapture, either way, we will receive our new bodies at that point, and then we will truly be in the image of Christ; we will be like Christ then. We won't be gods, but we will be like Christ with a glorified body. Again we get more information in the following verse, verse 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. We need to see that verse 29 and 30 are all one sentence, and they are built on the idea that started in verse 28. When you read this whole passage at once you see that the word "for" is at the beginning of nearly every sentence. Paul is here making one point after the next that is built on the previous point. It is like a giant crescendo; if

this, then this, and if that, then this, and this. And here in 29 and 30 we need to see that this is saying that all those who respond to the call, all those who put their faith in Christ will be justified and they will be glorified. Christ, the Good Shepherd, will not lose a single one of us along the path to eternity. This is what it means to be predestined in this particular passage. We don't see anything about the predestination of the lost here; we would have to read that into these verses. This is talking about the predestination of those who put their faith in Christ. They are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. Dr. Charles Ryrie defined predestination as follows: "God has determined beforehand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and be conformed to His Son." That is just precisely what we see here in these verses. God determined beforehand that those who put their faith in Christ would be justified, and therefore be adopted into His family, but not only that, we will be conformed to His image with a glorified body. What an incredible promise of God. We have God's word that these things will happen, and God's word cannot be broken. We need to remember this as we move into chapters 9-11, because that is what they are all about. God's word cannot be broken; He cannot lie, He cannot take back a promise that He made. And here we see that He has promised to perfect us. In fact it is such a sure thing, that He can say it here in the past tense. All these verbs here are in the aorist tense. They are completed actions, similar to our past tense. God can say with absolute confidence that we are justified, we will stand before Him as righteous since we have put our faith in Christ. He can say with absolute confidence that we will be glorified in the future, because He is the God of the universe. Our completed, perfected sanctification is so sure God can say it in the past tense in these verses. We can rest on that promise.

Conclusion

We serve a mighty God. He is over and above all things like we see in Colossians 1:15-23. These verses are a great complement to what we have seen. They sum up perfectly what has been presented here today, particularly these last few verses. Col 1:15 **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.** We have been reconciled to God through Christ, so that we can be presented to God holy and blameless, a spotless bride, and this is God's desire for us. We are to live sanctified

lives now with the help of the Holy Spirit, knowing that we have the promise in the future of being perfected, or glorified as we read in Romans 8, and living with Him forever.