

**Title:** The Golden Chain of Redemption

**Scripture:** Romans 8:28-30

**Series:** God's Saving Grace

1. Introduction:

- a. Our passage contains one of the most quoted verses in all of Scripture, Romans 8:28. It is a passage that is meant to offer great hope to God's suffering people.
- b. The beauty of our passage is also magnified in that it contains what theologians call the *Ordo Salutis* or the Order of Salvation. Verses 30-31 compose this Golden Chain of Redemption, teaching us that Salvation is an act of God from beginning to end.
  - i. We learn that the salvation order begins with God's:
    1. Foreknowledge
    2. Predestination
    3. Effectual Calling
    4. Justification
    5. Glorification
- c. Up to this point, Paul the Apostle has taught the absolute truth of the doctrine of man's total depravity in chapters 1-7. This doctrine teaches that humankind is, as a result of the fall, not inclined or even able to love God with heart, mind, and strength; rather, they are enslaved by nature to serve their own will and desires and reject God's rulership. In other words, humanity is sinful to the core!
  - i. **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and

unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

- ii. **Romans 3:10-12** as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; (11) no one understands; no one seeks for God. (12) All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
  - iii. **Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
  - iv. **Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
  - v. **Romans 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
- d. Having proved man’s depravity, Paul now focuses our attention on the sovereignty of God in saving sinners. It is here that we encounter the rest of the Doctrines of Grace.
- i. We know that the Doctrines of Grace, man’s total depravity, the Father’s election, the Son’s limited atonement, the Spirit’s irresistible grace, and the Triune God’s assurance of the saints’ perseverance all stem from God’s absolute sovereignty. These doctrines exalt God to His rightful position of ultimate power and authority. This is where we’ll start.

2. Verse 28: Sovereignty of God: And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- a. Our passage starts by firmly asserting God's omnipotent sovereignty.
    - i. This doctrine affirms that God's sovereignty encompasses all, with Him in control and accountable to none. He is the ultimate Creator, while everything else exists within His creation. This implies that nothing can obstruct His will or alter His intentions. In practical terms, this means that when God makes a promise, no force in the universe can hinder its fulfillment.
  - b. Paul the Apostle reminds the faithful of what we ought to know and that we must be sure of. What is this truth?
    - i. We discover that even in our toughest times of suffering and hardship, everything ultimately leads to **good**. God has planned every aspect of a Christian's life to bring us closer to Him and form us into the image of His glorious Son.
      1. Beloved, as we walk in this life, we are confident people. We know that our lives will glorify God and prepare us for the eternal realm. God's sovereignty has decreed so! What more can there be? What better assurance can any Christian have?
  - c. However, Beloved, we need to be careful when applying this verse. Our verse doesn't promise us a trouble-free life. Instead, it guarantees that every aspect of our lives, even the sorrowful and painful

parts, will ultimately serve a good purpose, though we may not see it clearly in this world. But when Christ inaugurates the new kingdom at the end of the ages, we will comprehend the significance of every chapter of our lives, including our sorrows. Every moment of our lives has been and will be redeemed by our loving God.

d. Now, I want you to notice to whom this incredible promise is being made. This amazing promise is for **those who love God**, specifically those chosen by Him. In short, believers can trust that everything **will work out for the good**, per God's decree. Sovereignty bends the purposes of men to fulfill God's decrees. It always has and always will accomplish the very thing God wants to accomplish.

i. However, the unbeliever doesn't receive such a promise. Those who die in sin are guaranteed certain destruction and eternal torment. This is also part of God's sovereign decree.

1. The Bible warns in **Psalms 1:4-5** The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. (5) Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

3. Verse 29A: The Father's Unconditional Election: For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,

a. This portion of Scripture declares the first two links of the Golden Chain of Redemption:

i. God's **foreknowledge** and **predestination**.

1. **Foreknowledge** is God's prior knowledge of those whom he would bring to salvation. Foreknowledge is not God predicting human faith or willingness but His covenantal dedication to those He chose and loved even before the world began.

- a. Foreknowledge could never mean that God looked down the corridors of time and learned who would come to Him, and therefore, He chose them in eternity past.
  - i. First, God can never learn because He is omniscient. He cannot change because He is immutable.
  - ii. Second, God never reacts but decrees.

b. **Ephesians 1:4-5** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

2. **Predestination** is God's eternal decree determining what will become of every individual. In our verse, the group is predestined for salvation.

- a. **Jeremiah 1:5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I

appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

- b. So, these two links in the Golden Chain of Redemption are the basis for the Doctrine of Unconditional Election. The doctrine of Unconditional Election holds that God chooses specific individuals for salvation before their conversion and is independent of any foreseen faith or good works. It states that God's election is based solely on His sovereign will and grace and not on man's merits.
    - i. **Romans 9:10-13** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, (11) though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— (12) she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” (13) As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”
  - c. Beloved, if you are in Christ, be humbled! Be incredibly humbled! Before the world was formed, God foreknew you and predestined you to be His elect. Hallelujah!
4. Verse 29B: The Son’s Limited Atonement: to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
- a. In this portion of Scripture, we come to the purpose of God’s electing love of the saints. God’s sovereign choice always leads the elect group to Christ. God has

chosen a specific group so that they **would be conformed to the image of his Son so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**

i. In other words, the Father's election requires the Son's Limited Atonement. Christ, in time, died for the group that the Father had chosen from eternity past. The elect are sure of salvation because Christ came to die for them exclusively.

1. **John 17:6 and 9** "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word... (9) I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

2. **Matthew 20:28** even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

b. So, what does this mean for you and me practically? We learn that not one ounce of Christ's blood was wasted at the cross. Christ bled only for those who would be saved. Beloved, if you are in Christ, Christ bled for you to wash you clean. It is because of His Limited Atonement that you are being conformed more and more to His image every day. Praise God!

5. Verse 30A: The Holy Spirit's Irresistible Grace: And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified,

a. The first two rungs of the Golden Chain of Redemption, foreknowledge, and predestination, are

now followed by the Holy Spirit's work: **calling and Justification**.

i. The **Call** comes in two forms: **the general** and **effectual (particular) calls**.

1. **The general call** is when the gospel is preached to everyone, yet not everyone will believe. It is a preacher presenting the Gospel to a congregation.

a. **Matthew 22:14** For many are called, but few are chosen.”

2. **The Effectual (particular) call** is God the Holy Spirit's inward, spiritual call to the chosen. This call happens at the same time as regeneration. He calls God's chosen ones through the work of the Holy Spirit, and this call is powerful and undeniable. A sinner's heart is changed through this call, and their will is freed. Everyone called in this way will be justified and ultimately glorified because the Holy Spirit will bring them.

ii. **Justification** is a legal declaration in which God pardons the sinner of all his sins and accepts and accounts the sinner as righteous in His sight. God declares the sinner righteous at the very moment that the sinner puts his trust in Jesus Christ through the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. This only happens because of the enabling of the Holy Spirit!

b. These links in the Golden Chain of Redemption, the effectual call and justification, are the basis for the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace (the Spirit's work). The

Holy Spirit never fails to call, regenerate, and save those whom the Father has elected and Christ has redeemed.

- i. **John 6:37** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
- ii. *The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith - Chapter 10 – Effectual Calling - Paragraph 1* - In God's appointed and acceptable time, he is pleased to call effectually, by his Word and Holy Spirit, those he has predestined to life. He calls them out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ...
- c. Beloved, we are indebted to God the Holy Spirit, who draws the Father's elect irresistibly to Christ's limited atonement for salvation.

6. Verse 30B: Perseverance of the Saints: and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- a. The last rung of the Golden Chain of Redemption is **glorification**. This is the work of the triune God, as each person of the trinity will ensure our final salvation. The glorification of believers will include being renewed to perfection by God, without sin, in glorified bodies.
  - i. Perseverance of the saints is a Christian teaching that asserts that once a person is truly "born of God" or "regenerated" by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they will continue believing in God until the end of their life. At this time, they will be glorified.

1. Ephesians reminds us that in him (**Christ**) you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who (**the Spirit**) is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his (**the Father's**) glory.
  2. *Chapter 17 – The Perseverance of the Saints - Paragraph 1* - Those God has accepted in the Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect can neither totally nor finally fall from a state of grace. They will certainly persevere in grace to the end and be eternally saved because the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable...
- b. Paul talks about our future glorification with the same certainty as he speaks about other fulfilled doctrines. He discusses glorification as if it has already happened (*in the past tense*), indicating that it's a sure thing for the chosen ones to reach their ultimate destination.
- i. **Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;
  - ii. Praise God! Beloved, nothing in this world will stop us from one day standing in the presence of Jesus Christ for all eternity. We will be glorified alongside Christ. What incredible certainty awaits the saints.
  - iii. **Gospel**

7. Benediction:

- a. **Matthew 19:25-26** When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" (26) But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

**Public Reading of Scripture:  
Philippians 1:1-7**