

Chain of Five

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Romans 8:29 and 30. Chain of Five.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.¹

In our last study we saw one of the most comforting verses in Scriptures in verse 28. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”² We saw that God has a great and good purpose for all Christians and he is working all circumstances, all circumstances to achieve that end.

Paul defines the purpose in order to show and to guarantee its absolute certainty. When you know what God’s purpose is with respect you, then you will see he—God—must carry it out. The very nature of the end means that it must certainly and surely and inevitably be brought to completion.

What is this purpose? What is God’s purpose? Forgiveness? Yes. But that is only the first step. Is it the righteousness of Christ imputed to us? Is that is purpose? Yes. But there is something even beyond that. And it is this something further which gives us our fundamental and our final assurance with regard to the certainty of all of salvation’s blessings. The final blessing for every one of us who is a Christian is that we are to be conformed to the image of God’s Son “that he might be the first born among many brethren.”³ That is the final blessing of every one of us. We would be conformed into the image of his Son.

What a noble, what an exalted statement. The ultimate purpose... Like I said. When we talk about all things working together for good it is always kind of focused on us, our good. The ultimate purpose, though, of God is the glory of the Son, of Jesus Christ. This is the ultimate end and the object of our salvation, the glory of Jesus Christ. Not that we

¹ Romans 8:29-30

² Romans 8:28

³ Romans 8:29

are saved from hell or that we are forgiven from our sins, that his righteousness has been imputed to us.

The all things is that we are going to be conformed into the image of God and the purpose is that Jesus Christ in the end would be glorified.

In verses 29 and 30 we will see how God accomplishes this purpose and reminds us that it is God himself who accomplishes your salvation. He accomplishes it. We will see that salvation does not depend upon our faith—however necessary faith may be. But it depends on the purpose of God. It is the same regarding love. Paul has just told us that in all things God works for the good of those who love him lest you somehow imagine that the strength of your love is the determining factor in salvation. God reminds us that our place in this flow of events is not grounded in our love for God, but on the fact that he has fixed his love upon us. It is not our love to him, but his love for us.

How has God loved us? We will see his love in the five great doctrines that's brought out in verses 29 and 30. How has he loved you? First option, foreknowledge. He foreknew you.

How has God loved us? Number two, he predestinated you. He has loved you in predestination.

Third. How has he loved you? By effectually calling you, foreknew you, predestined you, effectually called you.

Number four. He justified you. How has God loved you? He justified you.

And, fifthly, he glorified you. He has glorified. How has he loved me?

These five passages are so connected that they have been called by theologians a golden chain of five links. When you hear these five doctrines think of a nice five link chain. They all go together. Each link describes something God has done, that God has done. The first two are concerned with God's eternal counsel of past determinations. The first two links, foreknowledge, predestination. The last two links are concerned with what God has done, is doing or will do with us being justification and glorification. The middle term, the one in the middle, calling, connects the first pair—foreknowledge, predestination—it connects with justification and glorification. These doctrines flow from eternity to eternity, eternity past, eternity future. There is no greater scope given to the activity of God in salvation in the Bible than in these verses right here.

The most important of these terms is the first. Look at verse 29. "For whom he foreknew..."⁴ The first, foreknowledge, and it is the most important.

Foreknowledge. It is composed of two separate words. Fore, which means beforehand and knowledge. So it has been taken to mean that since God knows all things, God

⁴ Romans 8:29

knows beforehand who will believe on him and who will not. That is the general way that foreknowledge is understood. He looked down the corridors of time. That's the way most of you have heard foreknowledge described. As a result of which he has predestined to salvation those whom he foresees will believe on him. That is the way most of you have known foreknowledge.

In other words, what he foreknows or foresees is your faith. He looked down and seen your faith, that you were going to believe.

Foreknowledge is so important that we are going to come back to it again in the next study. All right? We are going to get into more detail with foreknowledge and predestination next time and carefully examine the way it is actually used in the Bible. But even here we can see that such an explanation can never do justice to this passage. There is no comfort in that. There is no glory of God in foreknowledge that he saw you. Look how subjective, how self centered that is, how me that is. He looked down the corridors of time and seen my faith.

That right there tells you that is a work. If he has seen your faith, then that is why you are saved and your brother is damned or your sister is damned. He saw your faith so the difference between you and her is he has seen your faith. So you are back to works righteousness.

It can't be that. For one thing, the verse does not say that God foreknew what his creatures would do. It doesn't say he looked down the corridors of time and saw what his creatures would do. On the contrary, it is speaking entirely of God and of what God does. Each of these five terms is like that. Look with me at 29 and 30. Look who is the subject. Notice you are not the subject. He, God foreknew. He, God predestinated. He, God called. He, God justified. He, God glorified.

These verses are about God. These verses are not about you. The object of the divine foreknowledge is not the actions, not the works of certain people, but the people themselves. That is the object of the divine foreknowledge. He foreknew you, not the action of you, but that he foreknew you. He set his love upon you.

God has fixed a special attention upon them or loved them savingly. That is what foreknew means. This is the way the word is frequently used in the Old Testament.

Look at Amos 3:2. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."⁵ You only have I known. That was when the Gentiles were excluded from the promises, from the covenants, when they were outside.

The Lord didn't say in the Old Testament, "I knew the Philistines. I knew the Amorites. I knew the Hittites."

"I knew the Jewish people. I set my love upon them."

⁵ Amos 3:2

For example, King James translates God's words here literally using the verb "know." In Hebrew it is the word יָדָע (yaw-dah').

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth."⁶ If all the word means is that God knows beforehand what people will do in response to him... Now imagine this.

He has seen. He looked down the corridors of time and saw what the Jew was going to do. What did they do? They rebelled all of their days. They were stiffnecked. He sent them off to Babylon, disbursed them in 70 AD. So what did he look down the corridors of time and see that he foreknew them, that he set his special love on them? He sent his special love on them for a purpose, for his purpose because he chose to send...

It says it wasn't that they were great or mighty, because God sent his special love upon them. He chose to send his love upon them.

"You only have I know..."⁷

What, pray tell, could God possibly see or foreknow except a fixed opposition to him, a fixed opposition to him on the part of the people. Did you forget Romans three verses 10 and 11? Look at Romans three verses 10 and 11. Here is the condition of mankind.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.⁸

That's it. Jews, Gentiles, Hittites, Jebusites, Amalekites, New Yorkites, Jerseites. There is [?]. There is none seeking after God.

So what could God foresee in anybody? Jeremiah says, "Even if it were granted that foreknew means the foresight of faith, even if it means that he foresaw faith, the biblical doctrine of sovereign election is not thereby eliminated or disproven for it is certainly true that God does foresee faith. He certainly does. He foresees all that comes to pass."

The question then simply would be. Once he perceives this thing, which God foresees, where did the faith come from that God foresees? The only biblical answer is that the faith which God foresees is the faith which he himself creates. That is what he foresaw. He foresees the faith that he has granted unto you.

Turn to Philippians 1:29. Go ahead. God looked down the corridors of time and this is what he foresaw, Philippians 1:29. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."⁹ It has been granted on behalf of

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Romans 3:10-11

⁹ Philippians 1:29

Christ, see? Not because I on behalf of I looked down the corridors of time and saw your faith. On behalf of Christ, your beloved.

I looked at the beloved and said, "Yeah, I'm going to bless you," see? It has been granted unto you to believe. See? That's the faith he saw.

We will look at Ephesians 2:8. This is what he foresaw.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,¹⁰

"For by grace are you saved through faith, and that is not of yourselves."¹¹ What is not of yourself? That, the antecedent is what? Faith. That is not of yourself.

Turn to John three. This is what he foresaw. John three. These days everybody runs around, "You have got to be born again. You have got to be born again."

All right, well how does that happen? John 3:3-8.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."¹²

You are born again because the Spirit blew through that old stony heart. It blows wherever it wills, not where you will, where it wills.

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."¹³ That is what the Father foresaw. He foresaw the faith that he was going to put there. He foresaw that he was going to draw you, you who was dead in your sins and your trespasses. That is what he foresaw.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:8-10

¹¹ Ephesians 2:8

¹² John 3:3-8

¹³ John 6:44

While you are in chapter six look at verse 65. “And He said, ‘Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.’”¹⁴ No one.

The same one that I started off with Philippians. “It has been granted to you because of Christ to believe,”¹⁵ hence his eternal foresight of faith is preconditioned by his decree to generate this faith in those whom he foresees as believing. That is what he saw. He saw the faith he was going to give you. Foreknowledge means that salvation has its origins in the mind or eternal counsel of God, not man.

Left to yourself you would be perishing and damned like everybody else. It was because of God’s foreknowledge. He set his love upon you and he could have chosen to pass you by. Foreknowledge is he foresaw the faith that he was going to grant to you in order to believe. If you believe it is because he granted you the faith to believe.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says this. “God, before the foundation of the world was laid according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory...” See, notice. It is about his glory. “Out of his mere free grace and love without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto and all to the praise of this glorious grace.”

It says in Ephesians that in the ages to come that his grace would be exalted, magnified.¹⁶ It is all about his grace that in the ages to come it brings him glory.

These verses show you it is nothing of man. And people twist the verses to put it to the man. Foreknowledge focuses our attention on the distinguishing love of God according to which some persons are elected to be conformed to the image of Christ. The chief objection to this understanding of foreknowledge is that if it is correct then foreknowledge and predestination means the same thing.

They don’t mean the same thing. Predestination and foreknowledge do not mean the same thing. Paul would therefore be redundant. But the terms are not synonymous. Predestination carries us a step further. Foreknowledge is he knew you. He set his special love upon you. Predestination goes further. Like foreknowledge, predestination is also composed of two separate words. Pre, meaning beforehand and destiny or destination. It means to determine a person’s destiny beforehand. It is not God has got a plan B. God has got a plan. That’s it. There is no plan Bs. He determines a person’s destiny beforehand. And this is the sense in which it differs from foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge, he set his special love upon you. Predestination, he determined a person’s destiny beforehand. As we have seen, foreknowledge means to fix one’s love upon or elect. It does not inform us of the destination, though. He said he set his love

¹⁴ John 6:65

¹⁵ See Philippians 1:29

¹⁶ See Ephesians 2:7

upon you in foreknowledge. But it doesn't tell you the destination. You need to know where you are going. This is what predestination supplies. It tells us that God having fixed his distinguishing love upon us that God has next appointed us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. That is why lordship salvation is so important. You have been predestined to be conformed into the image of his Son.

He does this, as the next term shows, by calling. You have foreknowledge. You have predestination. This is accomplished by the next term in our golden chain, by his calling.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones points out that the Greek word that is translated "predestined" has within it the word for horizon. In Greek it is the word $\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\rho\iota\zeta\omega$ (pro-or-id'-zo). It has the word horizon in it. The horizon is what? A dividing line. It marks off and separates what we can see from what we cannot see. That is what horizon does. Everything beyond the horizon is in one category and then when you look at the horizon everything is in one category, everything within that horizon is in another category.

Lloyd-Jones suggests, therefore, that what the word signifies is that God having foreknown certain people we talked about this back in Romans six, he takes them out of the far off category and puts them within the circle of his saving purposes. He was in this far off category of imaginary horizon. He was upon the top. Then he took it from up on the top and put you in the bottom.

Does that sound familiar to you guys who were back in chapter six?

Turn to Colossians one just to remind you, show you a biblical illustration of what I am talking about. This is what predestined is. Colossians 1:13-14. This is what is taking place. Colossians 1:13-14.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."¹⁷ He transferred, he delivered, he translated. You see, he took you from this place and he put you into this place. You were damned, doomed and going to hell and he set his love upon you and elected you unto salvation.

He translated you. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness."¹⁸ Notice. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness."¹⁹ The power of darkness, sin, should not have dominion over you because he has translated you out of the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, verse 14, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."²⁰

Before you did not have redemption of sins. You did not have forgiveness. You were outside of the blood. And he took you and he baptized you into his Son. That is what predestined is. He predestined you to be taken out of this kingdom of this world with no

¹⁷ Colossians 1:13

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Colossians 1:14

hope and he put you in the Son, in his glorious kingdom. That is what predestination is teaching you. Before he knew you he set his special love upon you and predestinated you to spend eternity with him just like his Son.

In other words, he says he has marked out a particular destiny for you and that destiny, in the end, is to be made like Christ. That is your destiny, ok?

You are at the Greyhound bus station waiting to go home. Well, when you get home that is what you are going to look like, just like Christ. And in the meantime he is stripping off those old grave clothes that you have got on, that you had on when you came out of the tomb, all the sin that is still left with this body of death he is stripping off, he is stripping off, he is stripping off. That is why all things are working together for good. It is not only that, you know, I am feeling good. I am healthy. I am wealthy. I have got a nice car, a house, nice friends, nice kids, all of that. All things are working together for good because he is stripping off the grave clothes to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ. That is why right after he says all things work together he doesn't say, "No be happy and clappy."

That is why he gives you all these doctrines right after that so that you understand it is not just about all things are working together for good.

Let us now look at the next one, what theologians call effectual calling. It is important to use the adjective effectual, very important to use that adjective. At this point, because there are two different kinds of calling referred to in the Bible, this is where people get messed up. There's two different kinds of calling in the Bible and it is easy to get confused about them.

One kind of call is an eternal, general and universal call. It is an open invitation to all persons to repent of sin. When you go out on the street that is what you are doing, a universal, general, external call. Turn to Jesus and be saved.

Turn to Matthew 11:28. The general call that goes out to the world. Matthew 11:28 when Christ says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."²¹ That is a general call.

Turn to John 7:37. General calls. "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.'"²² See? Come. General call.

The problem with this type of call is that left to themselves every one of you all that are witnessing to people that are witnessing to your family, witnessing on the streets, witnessing on the job, wherever you are witnessing, witnessing in your home. People left to themselves no one ever responds positively because no one is righteous, no one seeks after God, no one understands. They have all gone out of the way.

²¹ Matthew 11:28

²² John 7:37

The general call goes out. They hear the call, but they turn away preferring their own ways to God even with extreme judgment. When you read in the book of Revelation all the judgment is being poured out on the earth and it says and they still blasphemed God. So death and destruction and pain and heartache and stuff doesn't bring people to Christ. Love doesn't bring them to Christ unless it is the Father's effectual, his foreknowledge, that love, that's it. But you can love a person to death or you can warn him about the judgments of hell till you are blue in the face, but in the book of Revelation the people are still not coming. All hell is breaking loose. They are still not coming.

This is why Christ said in John 6:44—go back over there again so that you remember this verse, so this burns in your mind, 6:44. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”²³

The general call goes out. If a person is not drawn they are not coming. You have a general call.

The other kind of call is the internal, specific and effectual call. Anyone here that is regenerated, that regenerated because of the effectual call in your life. That is, it not only issues the invitation, you were not only invited, but it also provides the ability or the willingness to respond positively. The Lord regenerated you and then he began to turn your will. That is why you responded when you heard, not because you found this mustard seed of faith somewhere hidden away, tucked in some little cleft of the rock in your nice little heart.

[?] the Lord to look out and say, “There it is. There is that little faith in the toe I see there.”

He regenerated you first, turned your desires. You responded. You heard the call. And some of you in spite of your foolishness walked down an aisle somewhere and you think that that is where you got saved. You were saved way before you ever got to any church.

Raising a hand, saying a prayer, responding to something does not save anyone. It is the regenerating of work in a person life. That is why so many souls are damned. They rely on...

Just last night I am listening to a guy 15 years ago told me, “I professed Christ.” And every other word out of his mouth is the F word.

I'm like, “Dude, something is not lining up here. You are telling me you are a Christian and you are calling me brother, but what is coming out of your mouth is a sewer.”

Now is this person saved that 15 years ago raised his hand or something? Why is the tongue not changed? Why is [?] hasn't been changed? He is relying on something 15 years ago. “I did this or somebody said that.” He is depending on there was a general call

²³ John 6:44

and somebody told him, "Repeat this prayer after me. Walk this aisle. Raise that hand." Something.

That is not effectual call. That is a general call that went out. It is God's drawing to himself or bringing to spiritual life the one who without that call would remain spiritually dead and far from him.

Most of you heard the gospel before you came. Why did you come? You might have heard it when you were 10 years old and you didn't come until you were 25 years old. Why did you come 15 years later? Did the faith develop over that 15 years or was it that God granted it? He granted unto you to believe.

There is no better illustration of this than Jesus' calling of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. Lazarus is in his grave. In his grave is a picture of every human being in his natural state. Dead in body and soul, bound with grave clothes, lying in the tomb sealed with a stone. That was your condition.

Let's call him, "Lazarus, come forth. We want you back. We miss you."

See, that is the general call. Standing at the door, "We want you back, please. Please, Lazarus, we miss you. If you will just get up out of that tomb and return to us you will find we are anxious to have you back."

See, when you hear the preachers begging and pleading, "Please, please, don't you know?"

See, you can yell at Lazarus' tomb. Go down to the cemetery, stand there and yell all you want until you are blue in the face. There isn't anybody coming up out of there. That is the general call. No one here is going to put any obstructions in your way. Just come. Just walk the aisle, Lazarus, please.

[?] plead and lights down low, lights up high and music is on, music is sweet. "Come, come, Lazarus. Do you not see we have a nice Italian dinner and wine and music and... Come. Lazarus, come."

Doesn't he want to be with us? Doesn't he love us? Why will he not come? Does he not know? I was in love with him.

The problem is that Lazarus does not have the ability to come back. The call is given, but he cannot come. He doesn't have the ability. He is dead. Like it says in Ephesians, "And you being dead..." Not drowning. You are dead.

But now let Jesus take his place before the tomb. Let the creator stand before the tomb. Let Jesus all out. "Lazarus, see, Lazarus."

Not everybody come out of their tombs. See, why [?] he didn't have the power to get him? He just had enough of that supernatural power to get one to come out. Why didn't he empty out the cemetery? If he loved... God so loved the world. Why did he just be specific and call Lazarus out? Why didn't he call my uncle Bob out of there?

Christ stands before the tomb and says, "Come forth," and the case is quite different. The words are the same from Christ as from us. The words are the same, but now the call is no mere invitation. It is an effectual calling.

For the same God who originally called creation out of nothing is now calling life out of death and his call is heard. Just like in Genesis when the Lord said, "Let there be..." That is what he said to you. You were dead in your sins and your trespasses and he said, "Come forth, Anita. Come forth, Bob. Come forth, Bill, Come forth." And you came forth not because you mustered up the ability. That was the effectual call of God in your life.

Lazarus, though dead for four days, he hears Jesus and he obeys his mater's voice. No one else came out of that grave. Just Lazarus. That is the effectual calling. That is the particular calling. That is the election. That is how God calls those whom he has foreknown and predestined to salvation. Those he foreknew, that he set his love upon, those he predestinated to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, he called forth.

The next link is justification. Justification is the judicial act by which God declares, judicial act where God declares sinful men and women to be in a right standing before him. It is a legal act, a judicial act. And it is not on the basis of their own merit.

Why? For they have none. You have no merit in and of yourself. But it is on the basis of what Christ has done for them. By dying in their place on the cross Jesus bore their punishment taking the penalty of their sins upon himself.

Turn back over to Colossians.

And, dear heavenly Father, I pray to God that you would burn this into people's minds thereof, that you would grant them the faith to believe this.

Colossians two verses 13 and 14. "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him [who? Christ] having forgiven you all trespasses."²⁴ Not up to this point, up to tomorrow, up to next week, next month, next year. He has forgiven you all trespasses.

Verse 14. "...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way."²⁵ Why do you keep

²⁴ Colossians 2:13

²⁵ Colossians 2:14

bringing up these sins? “And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”²⁶

All of your sins, written down, taken to the cross, paid there. That is justification. All sins paid there, once and for all, all eternity. They handwriting that was against you forgiven you for all of your sins because God said.

Those sins having been punished. God then imputes the perfect righteousness of Christ to their account. That is justification. That is why it says that that is the doctrine that the Church stands or falls on. That is the hinge, justification by faith, by grace, because of Christ.

You [?] to this salvation. What does need to be discussed here is the relationship of the effectual call to justification. Or to put it another word, in the form of a question: Why does Paul place calling where he does in this chain? Foreknowledge, predestination, first in the list. Calling in the middle. Justification and glorification after it. Why does Paul place calling where he does in this chain?

Why does calling come between foreknowledge and predestination on the one hand, foreknowledge and predestination on the one hand and justification and glorification on the other?

There is two reasons. First, calling is the point at which the things determined beforehand in the mind and counsel of God pass over into time. Foreknowledge, predestination. Time over here. We speak of foreknowledge and predestination, but these two time references only have meaning for us. Notice, for, before, pre. See? Before. Back in time.

Time only matters to us. It only has reference to us, time. God is outside of time. Strictly speaking there is no time frame in God because the end is as the beginning and the beginning is as the end. God is eternal. His eternity is one of his attributes.

We are time creatures. Fore and pre are meaningless in regard to him. There is no fore to God. He was before eternity past. So when he foreknew you that was before. There is no fore here to God. There is no fores and pres to God. That is why it says fore, foreknow, predestined. They are meaningless in regard to him. God simply knows and determines and that eternally. God knows it and he determines it.

See, we are all wrapped up in ourselves and time and we are looking at... And basically do you know what you are doing? You are looking at your walk. That is why you get all whacked out. You are always looking at your walk. You are so subjective. You are locked in this time frame where God says, “I foreknew you. I predestinated you. I called you. I justified you and I glorified you.” And we are going to see that is a done deal, too.

²⁶ Ibid.

But what God decrees in eternity becomes actual in time. Foreknowledge, predestination, then calling.

At your calling it became actual in time. And calling is the point where his eternal foreknowledge of some and there is predestination of those to salvation finds what we would call concrete manifestation because we are creatures in time.

You see most of us can say, "Well, you know, I was saved on that date or at that time or about that time."

But God says in actuality you were saved before the foundations of the world. Before he knew you he set his love on you before you were ever created, before your family was ever created, before Adam and Eve were created. He predestinated you before the earth was created. So it is by God's...

See, everybody thinks it is this decision, you know, eternity is waiting for, you know, God is just waiting, please, everything is on the, you know, it is on... it's... It is on the table. We don't know if you are going to make it. You know, you could slip off. Don't know how that choice is going to go, that decision is going to go.

God says, "I know the way the decision is going because I predestinated you. I foreknew you. I know all about the decision."

See, that is why that is such a heresy, decisional regeneration it is called. God is waiting. Today choose who you will serve today. [?]

What they do is take verses that are applied to believers and give it to unbelievers. That is why people get messed up.

So it is by God specific calling of us to faith in time that we are saved, that we actually know it. God is saying beforehand, predestined.

Second, justification which comes after calling in this list of divine actions, remember. I pray that you memorize this over the next week. Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification. Get that in the right order.

Second, justification which comes after calling in this list of divine actions that is always connected with faith or belief. Foreknowledge and predestination is not connected with faith or belief. Ok? Justification is always connected with faith or belief. Just the term I just said, what did I say? Justification by faith. In actuality it is justification by grace to faith because of Christ and it is through God's call of the individual that faith is brought into being. God's call creates or quickens faith.

Whereas we could perhaps more accurately say it is the call of God that brings forth spiritual life.

Turn to 1 Peter one. It is God's call that brings forth spiritual life in time that you understand it.

1 Peter 1:23. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."²⁷

See? The Word of God comes and you are born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible. And he has regenerated you, turned you will, granted you faith and when the Word comes you say, "Yes, [?]."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."²⁸

The person that has been regenerated says, "Amen," to that. The person that has not been regenerated passes it by. It is foolishness to him because they are dead in their sins and in their trespasses. Faith is the first true evidence or proof of regeneration. Regeneration or born again is first.

People think it is my acceptance that makes me born again. That is not what makes you born again. Regeneration, God regenerated you at first. Then he granted you faith and then the Word came to you and you accepted it. That's why you accepted it. He has granted you the faith.

Faith is the first true evidence of proof. Then you start seeing your faith in action. All of the sudden you start repenting of sins. All of the sudden you start praying. All of the sudden you want to go to church. All of the sudden Bible studies, reading the Bible, fellowship and... They are all fruits of regeneration. Regeneration is first.

And faith, see, is the calling. Notice in the middle the calling and then justification by faith. And faith is the first, the first true evidence or proof that that is a regenerated person.

Romans 8:29 and 30 does not contain the full list of the steps in a person's experience of salvation. All the steps are not listed there. Only five of the most important steps undertaken by God on behalf of Christians. If the text were to include all the steps it would have to list these, ok? Here is all the steps. If you want to know them, write it down.

Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance and glorification. You have to have all of them there.

The [?] makes the point if you have them all. That is just condensed to five.

²⁷ 1 Peter 1:23

²⁸ Acts 16:31

After predestination the very next thing is our calling out of which comes faith which leads to justification. The Bible never says that we are saved because of our faith. That would make faith something good in us as I mentioned before that we somehow contribute to the process. But it does say that we are saved by or through faith, see.

Notice the key. It is by faith or through faith meaning that God must create it in us before we can be justified.

Notice what I said. It is either by faith or through faith. It is not because of faith. People have it it is because of faith. It is by faith, justification by faith or justification through faith, not justification because of faith. That is where the problem is. It is not because. It is justification by faith and glorification.

Now this is beautiful right here. Go back to Romans 8:29 and 30 and look near the end of 30. “And whom He justified, these He also glorified.”²⁹

These he also glorified. In glorification we will be made like Christ which is what Paul said earlier.

Notice when Paul mentions glorification. He refers to it in the past tense, right? Glorified. In Greek that word glorified is an aorist active indicative, aorist, in the past. The active voice. God is the subject producing the action of the verb, indicative. It is a statement of fact.

What that is saying, he glorified, is it is a past action by God. God is the subject that produces the action of the verb. God produces the action. He glorifies. He. You notice the text. He glorified. Aorist, active, indicative. Indicative is a declaration. It declares a statement of fact.

Do you realize that that says it is done already?

But we don't believe that, like I said, because we are looking at tomorrow. “I didn't pray enough. I didn't witness enough. I didn't laugh enough. I didn't smile enough. I wasn't good enough. I wasn't bad enough. I didn't eat enough. I didn't...whatever enough.”

But we are not saying when we wake up, “I have been glorified.”

Now, if you believe that you have been glorified in your head, guess what? You are going to start acting that way. That is why God puts these statements in there because it is so foreign to us. We are so wrapped up in the subjective thing of ours.

God is saying objectively, “You are glorified already. When I look at you, I see Christ. I don't see Victor, Loraine, and Bob and Harry and Sue. I don't see that. I see Christ and I see you as glorified.”

²⁹ Romans 8:30

But tomorrow we get up and we look in the mirror.

And the Father says, “Glorified,” aorist, active, indicative, in the past. God the Father, the subject, produces the action of the verb and he indicates that that is a declarative statement of fact. It’s true.

But first of all this body of death is going to get you [?] on yourself. And then [?] the time the devil is going to come along and finish it up. You naturally with your body of death is going to start looking in on yourself because we are all Pharisees and legalists at heart. And start looking at me and my walk and saying to people, “Yeah, you are right. You are right. You are a pretty wicked individual.”

Now, come on. Are you a Christian and you are doing that? You certainly can’t be no Christian. And then everything the Bible says about you, you go right out the window. Kick it right out the door. You’re right saying, “If I was a Christian I wouldn’t do that.”

So then you are back to square one once again. “I am not a Christian. I need to get saved. I need to rededicate myself, walk an aisle, re walk the street, re walk the highway, do something.”

And God is just continually saying, “Would you believe what I am telling you that I see you as glorified already? I foreknew you in the past and I see you glorified in the future.”

But you are in time. You are in space. You are locked into your little world and your little man circle, your sphere.

The verse doesn’t say that he will glorify us or it is not a future passive tense that we will be glorified which is what we might have expected him to say. You naturally are going to think we will be glorified. That is a natural thing to think. But, no, that is a supernatural thing to think that you have been glorified.

But why do you think the Scripture says that you are seated in heavenly places? If the Bible says you are seated in heavenly places, how do you get from those heavenly places back to hell? When people think that you can be dead, that you can lose your salvation. You are seated in heavenly places.

Basically, that glorified new creature that you are going to become is seated there already. That real you, that is what is seated in the heavenly places that God almighty is seeing as glorified. And yet we don’t. We get right back on the works righteousness, loose pinwheel, spinwheel like at the square.

What’s those things they go around on? Treadmill. That’s the word. That’s the word I’m looking for. Not pinwheel, treadmill.

We might have expected the Scripture to say we will be glorified. Why is this? The only possible reason is that he is thinking of this final step in our salvation as being so certain.

We are thinking of it as being uncertain, right. God sees it as so certain that it is possible to refer to it as already having happened because it is God.

God... This is God's program. This is God's plan. This is God's purpose. This whole thing is about God. We think it is about us.

“Oh, I'm going... I am not going to hell.”

It is about his purpose and his purpose is to glorify his Son who, in return, glorifies him. It is not about us. Us and you making it and... what making it? We are as bad and as wicked as everybody else except for the grace of God. That's it. There's no movie stars in heaven, no celebrities.

Do you remember what the Lord said in Philippians one? Turn to Philippians 1:4-6.

Always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident...³⁰

See, Paul was confident. Would you please be confident of this very thing? “That He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”³¹

That is shorthand for what we discovered in Romans. God began the good work, ok? He foreknew. He predestinated you. He called you. He justified, he glorified you by foreknowledge, predestination, calling and justification. He is going to finish the good work he started because it is for his purpose.

You see, we keep thinking it is for our purpose. It is not. The text says it is for his purpose. And his purpose is that we would be conformed to the image of Christ. And he is going to do it come hell or high or water, if he has got to throw you in prison for the rest of your life. Whatever it is, his purpose will be accomplished.

And because he never goes back on anything he has said or changes his mind, God is immutable. He changeth not. There is no shadow of turning with God. He changeth not. The good work he has begun he said he will bring it to completion.

We can know that he will carry it out until the day we will be like Christ, being glorified.

These are all things that God has done. They are the important things, the things that matter. Without them not one of us would be saved. If God did not foreknow, predestinate, call, justify and glorify you, not a one of us would be saved. Without them not one of us would be saved, or if we were saved, not one of us would continue in that salvation. If you are saved today it is because of God, not because of you.

³⁰ Philippians 1:4-6

³¹ Philippians 1:6

Do we have to believe? Of course. Of course we do. Of course we have to believe. Paul has already spoken of the nature and necessity of faith in chapters three and four. We see the necessity and the nature of faith in three and faith.

But even our faith is of God. Or, as we should probably better say, the result of his working in us as I showed you in Ephesians two. We are his workmanship. When we are first saved we think naturally. You see, when you are first saved, when you are a babe, we naturally that we have had a great deal to do with it. Perhaps you think that way because of wrong teaching. But most likely only because we know more about our own thoughts and feelings than we do about God, see? At first you are thinking it is you because all of the sudden you were pursuing the world and the things of the world. Then all of the sudden you started seeking God.

So naturally you are going to think it is because of your feelings and thoughts that it was you. But the longer that one is a Christian, you that here is saved 20 years, the longer one is a Christian, the further on he moves from any feeling that we are responsible for our salvation or even any part of it and the closer we come to the conviction that it is all of God. We realize that it is a good thing that it is all of God because if it were accomplished by us [?] child of God. If our salvation is accomplished by us we could just as easily unaccomplish it. If it was done by us, we could undo it just as quickly. And no doubt we would unless you are really puffed up about yourself. No doubt, whatever sin you were into, you are one temptation away from it. And no doubt we would fall back.

If God is the author of salvation is something that is done wisely well and forever.

This is what Robert Haldane had to say. "In looking back on this passage we should observe that in all that is stated man acts no part, but is passive and all is done by God. He is elected and predestinated and called and justified and glorified by God. The apostle here is concluding all that he has said before in enumerating topics of consolation to believers."

This is supposed to console you. This is supposed to receive consolation to believers. And is now going on to show that God is for us or on the part of his people. Could anything, then, be more conciliatory to those who love God than to be in this manner assured that the great concern of their salvation is not left to your own keeping?

What better news could you hear that your salvation is not left to your own keeping? God, even the covenant God hath taken the whole upon himself. He has undertaken for them. There is no room, then, for chance or change. He will perfect that which concerns them.

In wrapping it up let me tell you this story by Harry Ironside. He once told a story about an older Christian who was asked to give his testimony. The older Christian told how God had sought him out and found him, how God had loved him, called him, saved him,

delivered him, cleansed him and healed him. Oh, Hallelujah. And a great witness to the grace, power and glory of God.

But after the meeting a rather legalistic brother took him aside and criticized his testimony. He said, "I appreciate all that you said, brother. You said about God, about what God did for you. But you didn't mention anything about your part in it."

The legalistic brother said, "But you didn't mention your part in it. Salvation is really part us and part God. You should have mentioned something about your part."

"Oh, yes, oh, yes," the older Christian said. "I apologize for that. I am sorry. I really should have said something about my part. My part was running away and his part was running after me until he caught me."

We have all run away. But God has set his love upon us, predestinated us to become like Christ, called us to faith and repentance, justifying us, yes, and has even glorified us. So certain of completion is his plan that he alone receives the glory. No glory for you. He alone receives the honor. No honor for you. And he alone receives the praise. No praise for you.

John Calvin has said, "The Son of God became the Son of Man that the sinful sons of men might become the sons of God. He came down so low and was born as a helpless babe in order that you and I might ultimately be glorified, might be conformed to his image in spirit and in body, might be like unto the Son of God himself."

The second, the last Adam came to the conflict and the fight in order to deliver us and to make us ultimately like himself.

Keep this in the forefront of your mind. Amen.

And, dear heavenly Father, we thank you that you have us a part of your great plan of salvation. We thank you, Father, that you foreknew us, that you have predestinated us, that you preordained our destiny for us. We thank you, dear Lord, that you came to the tomb of our soul where we were dead in our sins and in our trespasses, Lord, and you called us forth. You called us forth as Christ called forth Lazarus from the tomb. And, Father, and that you justified us, that you put all of our sins upon Christ, that you found us guilty as charged, but yet you provided a substitute for us, that you made a propitiation for our sins, that your wrath has been sent away from us because of the work of Christ and that you justified us, Father. And then, Father, almost unbelievable to comprehend that it says that you have glorified us, thoughts that are beyond man, supernatural thoughts.

Father, we pray that you would grant us the faith to believe these truths. They are too glorious to believe. They are outside of us, Lord. We ask, dear heavenly Father, that you would renew our minds, that we would count these things as true in Jesus Christ's precious name. Amen.

