



**Victory in the Spirit Part 2
God's Plans and Security for us, all from His Grace
Romans 8:28-31**

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Romans 8:28–31

“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. 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 brothers and sisters; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (NASB 2020)



Before we dig deeper, I want to make sure everyone understands what our view here at Calvary Chapel is. We are hitting, today, on what is, for many, a debatable issue. It is one that I have had folks yell right in my face about it. We are not five-point Calvinists, neither are we Arminian.

If you are looking for me to stand up and defend those five points today, I am not going to. My intent is to teach what the Bible says rather than some slant on what the Bible says.

And because I always get asked this, here are the five points based on the acronym, TULIP.

- Total depravity and based on what we have seen thus far in Romans, we agree. Paul made it pretty clear in Romans 1:28 and 3:10-18.
- Unconditional election.
- Limited atonement.
- Irresistible grace.
- Perseverance of the saints.

Terms, yes we will use a few today.

The Elect – another way of saying a believer in Jesus Christ. And Paul uses this term intentionally. Capes, Reeves and Richards tell us “Paul underscores God’s initiative in salvation over against human claims to superior status. In Mediterranean society patrons saw themselves as superior to their clients, who had to earn or court their way into a special position with a patron. Paul did not want that model taken into the church. The “elect” are not chosen because they are special; they are chosen because God is gracious. Paul always uses the term elect to refer to those who are already members of God’s people. He never uses it to prescribe who is going to be saved. Instead he employs it to remind those who have answered God’s call that they are members of God’s covenant people. (Capes, Reeves and Richards 2017, 161-162)

We will be talking about predestination, called, as well as atonement, both limited and unlimited.

Let’s get started.

We will be talking about what it is to be called here in Romans. And yes, predestination is part of that as well. But we will not arrive at limited atonement. Limited atonement is the teaching that Jesus Christ died on the cross only for the elect. I have real trouble with that when we read about names being blotted out of the book of life when a person dies without Jesus (Psalm 69:28, Revelation 3:5). There is this.

Isaiah 53:6

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and **the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**” (ESV)

All here means all.

I think Norman Geisler makes a very clear statement on this. “Jesus said, “Many are called but few are chosen” (KJV). While God foreknew that only the elect would believe (Acts 13:48), He desired all people to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4). Thus, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16 NKJV) to provide an atoning sacrifice for the sins of “the whole world” (1 John 2:2). God provided salvation for all and requires that all repent (Acts 17:30) and believe (Acts 16:31). It would be both deceptive and absurd for God to command everyone to be saved if He had not provided salvation for all.” (Geisler 2004, 348)



Here in Romans 8, Paul has taken us from the glorious realization that in Christ, there is no condemnation, we have indeed been set free. We have learned that the expectation of life in this new regime of the Spirit means no longer living and exhibiting the works of the flesh, but instead, we see the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in our lives.

We also have learned that to fully enable that changed lifestyle requires a type of power we are not able to produce on our own. And we learned that upon salvation, not only does the Holy Spirit come into us to help us now live as citizens of heaven, but if we ask Him, He will also come upon us in power to do extraordinary service for Him, allowing our flesh to move further and further into the background and allowing His Spirit to rule and reign in our life. As we move into this new citizenship of heaven, we experience the fruit of the Spirit and step out in faith and power to be Spirit led in all that we do. We have also discovered that we have a future that is incredible, mind-blowing in fact. We are all, as followers of Jesus Christ, destined to be glorified and given bodies just like His.

Then we discovered that as citizens of heaven, yet still in these mortal bodies, our Lord anticipated the issues of life we would have as we pray and do so as we should. So, for our day to day walk, we have the Holy Spirit's enabling of our prayer life with the Lord.

As we pray, the Holy Spirit is involved with everything we are saying to the Father and He "intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Romans 8:26b)" And that is a really big deal because "He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:27b)"

In other words, as we realize what the Holy Spirit is doing for us, maybe we should talk less and groan more as Pastor Chuck Smith would say.

When we wrapped up last time, we were discovering that for those of us who love Him and are His, called according to His purpose, as we do life, He is working together all things taking place in our life for good.

Romans 8:28

"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." (NASB 2020)

Here is something that is tough for us to understand, Jesus died on the cross for all of mankind, all have been called to acknowledge Him as their savior and as their lord.

Acts 17:30–31

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." (ESV)

The problem though, very few acknowledge that call to repent and accept it much less realize that Jesus is indeed the judge.

Matthew 7:13–14

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (ESV)

The real glory that we see here is the grace of God at work in each of us who have accepted the call from Him, through the Holy Spirit, to follow Jesus. We have moved from someone who has simply received the invitation, to now we have accepted that invitation and are referred to here in Romans 8, as the called.



We have new citizenship and now have the Spirit. We forget that at the time that Paul wrote this, and I would say that this has continued on today as well in agreement with Dr. McGee, there are three groups who each deal with the invitation differently. And we will also see Paul use the same term he has used here in Romans, “the called.”

1 Corinthians 1:21–25

“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed **Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** For the foolishness of God is wiser than mankind, and the weakness of God is stronger than mankind.” (NASB 2020)

Here is the problem, God has provided a solution to the sin problem, but it is not obtainable through what the world would consider wisdom.

As we get into this discussion, we are also talking about man, with our itty bitty finite brains, trying to understand even just a bit, what it is that God is telling us here in Romans and in 1 Corinthians.

Paul has told us how worthless the wisdom of man is to discover the real way to God and how God, in His wisdom, intentionally attacks the wisdom of the intellectuals and religious with the simple teaching and preaching of the word of God.

Group 1 would be the Jews. Earlier here in Romans we learned that they are incredibly religious to the point of being arrogant and unable to really see what God has been saying to them in the Law and the Prophets.

They are no different than the ultra-religious folks we see around us today who would reject the simple teaching of the word in favor of ritual, ceremonies, canon law, and their religion. To rely on the cross and only the cross is still today, for the Jew, foolishness as it would mean accepting Jesus as their Messiah. But the cross is also foolishness to the ultra-religious as well. They would tell you they are saved through the wisdom of the rituals they do and the close following of the various aspects of church law they follow. These are all folks who have a problem with understanding that to be saved, all we have to do is ask Him to forgive our sin and believe He died on the cross and then rose from the dead. That is too easy.

This merges us into the second group who would be not into religion at all, just good pagans doing their pagan thing everyday who have also developed their own unique pagan worldview and standards of what they consider to be wisdom. When you talk to them about Jesus, they look at you as if you have worms crawling out of your ears. It is foolishness, so much so that they, in some cases, will do anything and everything to prevent you and me from telling them what Jesus has done for them. Satan has blinded both of these groups, one thinks they have it together, the other doesn't care. Both are blinded. The invitation is there, it has been made, just as Paul stated in Romans 1 and there is no excuse. But there is no acceptance either.

Romans 1:21–25

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (NASB 2020)



Two groups who both received an invitation, and both rejected it. But out of those two groups, there are a few of those who heard and said yes to the invitation that was made. Those few, also invitees, are referred to by Paul as the called since they have responded to the call to follow Jesus. They would also be referred to as the elect because they and we have responded to the call and are now part of the new covenant, the church.

Now we have the background of what it is Paul means when he calls those who are followers of Jesus Christ, “the called.”

Romans 8:28–29

“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. 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 brothers and sisters;” (NASB 2020)

Let me begin with asking a question, do you remember tomorrow? Now, I do understand that there would be some in our culture today who, thanks to the use of different substances, would try and answer that question, but for God, that would be a logical question to ask. Of course, He remembers tomorrow. He has known about tomorrow since yesterday long long ago.

So, we first of all must understand that God the Father (Jeremiah 17:10), God the Son (John 16:30), and God the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), are omniscient. That means God is all knowing. John Feinberg tells us that “Divine omniscience is ability to know everything that a being with God’s attributes can know. Since his attributes are all perfections, they do not likely preclude his knowing something he should know as the maximally-great being.” (Feinberg 2001, 315)

Because God does indeed know everything, and because not only did he create time, He is omnitemporal, He can indeed remember tomorrow.

Now, if you spend too much time thinking about that, your head may explode. God created the universe and as such created the temporal world and because of His complete knowledge of it, that means He is temporal, because God exists now. But God has never begun to exist or ceased to exist so literally, He exists at every time that ever exists.

When the universe was created, time began, but when we enter the eternal state in Revelation 21, does time end? Enough of that, but because God does indeed know everything and exists at once in time, meaning all of time at the same time, I think He knows who will and will not respond to the invitation to become a follower of Jesus.

“For those whom He foreknew.” Since God is omniscient, He knew ahead of time who would say yes. Geisler adds this to our thought, “Since His foreknowledge is infallible (He is omniscient), whatever God foreknows will indeed come to pass. Hence, His foreknowledge of who would be saved assures that they will be.” (Geisler 2004, 221)

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, tried to explain this.

Acts 2:22–23

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, **being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God**, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;” (NKJV)



God predetermined from eternity that Jesus Christ would die on the cross for our sins. He foreknew this. You could say He predestined this. He also foreknew who it was who would accept the invitation to come to Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit and meaning, we were predestined to be saved since He knew we would say yes.

But I thought we have free will? We do, as exhibited by our predilection to run back to the pig trough every now and then and sin. We are not machines, we heard the invitation and said yes, as a result our name is in the book of life. You and I made that decision, but He knew we would before He created time.

The Greek word for foreknew is προέγνων (proegno) and It does indeed speak of God's foreknowledge. When we come to predestined, that is the word προώρισεν (proorisen).

Let's back up a second. We were invited, then we accepted and became called, elected. We are saved, called, elected, all of those terms, because of God's grace.

Predestination is not based on God's foreknowledge or His prescience; it is based on His grace and that alone.

Ephesians 2:8

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" (NASB 2020)

The basis of our salvation is solely on the one who has provided it. "The basis is not found in the blessed but in the Blessor. It is entirely of God's grace that we were elected, foreknown, and predestinated." (Gingrich 2000, 9)

And contrary to what some would say, we are so corrupted that unless the Holy Sprit is involved, we would not come to Christ on our own. Jesus tells us this.

John 6:44

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (NASB 2020)

In His grace, He comes alongside us and shows us Jesus and our need for Him. If we say yes, then He comes into us never to leave. If we say no, then it may be something that comes up again another day, if we have another day.

Ephesians 1:3–6

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved." (NKJV)

There is nothing that we have earned or done to receive this grace, it is God's gift to us. Some folks take this and then add to it what is not stated in the scriptures, especially on the topic of predestination. Chuck Smith speaks to this issue.

"The difficulty usually arises from pressing a truth of God to a seemingly logical conclusion. The problem about predestination can be stated like this: "If God has already predestined those who are saved, then He must have also predestined those who are lost. In that case, why should we do anything to save the lost? Those predestined to be saved surely will be saved. And there's nothing we can do about those who



are predestined to be lost. So, why worry about it? Why witness? Why support missionaries? Why pray?" See how far astray human reasoning can go on a simple truth of God.

You must have all the facts about a case in order to make a reasoned judgment, but you don't and can't know all the facts about predestination. "For whom he did foreknow...." Do you have foreknowledge?

God knew in advance who would respond to His love and grace, and these He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Smith 1981, 58-59)

When we lived in Texas, I learned that there are some Dallas Cowboy fans who are serious about their football team.

They were followers of Jesus, but they were also followers of the Cowboys. So, they would set up their VCR to record the game and then they would go to church and enjoy the service and the time there. Then, with the radio off, they would drive home trying to remain in the vacuum of not knowing who won the game.

I made the mistake once of going over to their home with the pre-recorded game playing and blurted out how the Cowboys lost in the last seconds of the game. I foreknew the outcome of the game, but my friends, they did not. I knew in advance, well in advance of my friends, who won, who the goofball was that caused the loss, and that not everyone likes someone who knows they are predestined to lose.

You see, I listened to the radio on the way over and heard the end of the game. I knew. God knows who will be saved, we don't, and it is our job to continue to tell others because we do not know. But for those who are accepting the invitation, who become the elect as followers of Jesus Christ, He already has a development plan for us. You see, we have this sin nature problem, and to deal with that, first of all, the Holy Spirit comes into us to stay, and then He begins His job of conforming us to be like Jesus.

What will it take to be conformed to Christ? A new birth, literally. Transformation, discipline, trials. All of that will indeed be required.

2 Corinthians 3:18

"But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." (NASB 2020)

Paul will tell us later here in Romans, part of the transformation process we must go through and as we look at this, we discover, it is a process that requires our full attention everyday. Welcome to sanctification.

Romans 12:2

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (NASB 2020)

God has predestined us to become more like Jesus and He has predestined us to be fully and completely transformed when Jesus Christ returns to remove the church to be with Him.

Romans 8:29

"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 brothers and sisters;" (NASB 2020)

The Spirit is working to transform because He is fully aware of the development plan that God has predestined, determined, scheduled for all of those who will accept the invitation and become citizens of heaven, the called, the elect.



Remember what it is we learned just a few verses back. One of the groans we talked about.

Romans 8:23

“And not only that, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our body.**” (NASB 2020)

Our future involves an adoption which is fully completed when our body becomes just like the one Jesus has. We are already but not yet adopted and glorified dwelling in the heavenlies. We see that being referenced again here in verse 29.

“He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” (NASB2020)

You and I as followers of Jesus, are right now, being conformed to Jesus. That is called sanctification, we are **being saved**, we are being made more like Him. This is the present tense of salvation. The goal is simple, only those who have a family resemblance will be part of the family. We are looking forward to our bodies being made to conform with that of Jesus, but He is also interested in transforming us Spiritually and morally right now as well.

Christ as the first born is the model, the one we are conforming to, the one, thanks to saying yes, we are also predestined to conform to.

I don't know about you, but one of the things we tend to do in our family is whenever there is a new addition, we try to figure out who he or she looks like. Where is the family resemblance.

My mother was blonde and blue eyed but my father was a native American, we think. Black hair, dark skin, brown eyes, high cheek bones, and the incredibly growing ears and nose connected with aging. When I was born, I had blonde hair, lots of it, I had really fair skin brown eyes and high cheek bones. Contrasted with my sister and little brother who have darker skin, and much darker hair. But all in the family.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we may not look a whole lot like Jesus when we first come to Him saying yes, but over time, the process of sanctification is intended to conform us more and more to Christ.

Jesus was a perfect reflection of the Father.

John 14:9

“Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (NASB 2020)

We were made to image Him, and that is what begins to happen once we come to Him.

Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead and His status is preeminent. As we are transformed through sanctification to be His imagers, that means we are beginning to have a family resemblance.

There are expectations of how family members act and live even while here on earth. Once we are fully transformed with glorified bodies, then it is completed. But right now, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us everyday.



Romans 8:30

“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” (NASB 2020)

We have responded to the invitation and are now called and yes, transformation is tough, but God works all things for good for we love Him and are called and following Him. He knew we would say yes, millions of years ago He knew, and His development plan for all of us who said yes is the same, to be conformed to Jesus. To be transformed by allowing the Holy Spirit to do all we have covered leading into this.

He is doing this to complete us as His imagers, to make us more like Jesus as He is indeed the firstborn, the one who we are following but literally and figuratively.

Paul then works takes what he has just said and moves into reverse. All of us who fall into this category, that would be all believers since we are all predestined, that is because we are called. We are followers of Jesus Christ, we said yes and He justified us because of that. We have been made right with God and have become citizens of heaven. He knew it all the time, we didn't, but the name plate was already made and sitting with your name on it at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Here is the thing, God will not stop with us being justified, He wants us to be fully part of the family and to be like and look like Jesus when we have our glorified bodies.

Being like Jesus, becoming like Him is tied up in the term theosis. Saying yes to the invitation and joining God's family means we are going to become more and more like Jesus. Michael Heiser says this about what Paul is explaining to us.

“The concept of “theosis” has strong biblical roots, and extends from the divine council worldview, specifically the aspect of the original Edenic goal of having humans join the divine family. In the beginning, God made humans to image him, to be like him, to dwell with him. He made us like his heavenly imagers and came to earth to unite his families, elevating humanity to share in divine life in a new world.

The message of “theosis” is that, in Christ, we are being transformed into his likeness—the perfect imager of God. The Spirit—who, as we saw earlier in our study, “is but isn't” Jesus—conforms us to Jesus' own image. Scripture is clear that immortality as a divinized human is the destiny of the believer, and that our present lives in Christ are a process of becoming what we are.” (Heiser 2015, 319-320) All followers of Jesus Christ have been predestined for this.

2 Corinthians 3:17–18

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But **we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” (NASB 2020)

1 John 3:2

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. **We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.**” (NASB 2020)

This is God's purpose for each of us, this is why all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called, it is God working His purpose in each of us.

Let's summarize. God foreknew us. This means that He knew us before we were ever even here on this planet in the first place. Paul is not saying that God knows of us, He knew us. We are also, because we have said yes, are called predestined to be conformed to Jesus, called, elect, and we were indeed



justified when we first came to Christ. At present we are being sanctified and are indeed looking forward to the day very soon when we will be glorified, receiving our new bodies and are out of here.

What we are given here in verse 30 is a history, from the past to the future.

This verse shows, as Pastor Chuck puts it, "God's complete work of predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Although my glorification is yet to come, God speaks of it as past history. What glorious assurance is mine in Christ Jesus! God—who speaks of things before they are as though they were, because He knows all things and knows they shall be, and as far as He is concerned they are already—has spoken of my glorification. It's as certain as His Word." (Smith 1981, 59)

Romans 8:31

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" (NASB 2020)

As you and I look at all of the things that God has done for us, all of the things He has provided for us through the Holy Spirit and how He has made provisions for us because of His love for us, we are indeed rather speechless.

For those who have placed their trust in the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross, what we are seeing and looking at seems almost too good to be true. I, for one, am totally blown away by the simple fact that God knew me. What He said to Jeremiah still applies today.

Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (NASB 2020)

Psalms 139:13

"For You created my innermost parts; You wove me in my mother's womb." (NASB 2020)

And now we realize, once we say yes to the invitation and shift our allegiance from the world to the Lord, that God has been in this from our very beginning. God is for us. Think about that for a minute.

He is not against you or me, He is not angry at us, He loves us and is for us.

If God is for us, who is against us? Satan is, obviously. But who is Satan when compared to God. Satan was created by God; God has always existed and always shall.

Satan can only be in one place at a time, God is omnipresent. Satan is finite, God is infinite. What Paul is saying is amazing. Leon Morris points out that Paul "means that with God "for us" it makes not the slightest particle of difference who is against us. No foe can prevail against people who are supported by a God like that. The Christian's confidence is in God, not in anything he himself does, and for all eternity he can rely on God's gift." (Morris 1988, 335)

Do you know Him? Have you said yes to His invitation? He came to this planet to redeem us, to buy us out of the slave market of sin. He died for our sin taking our penalty and guilt onto Himself, then He rose from the dead and is at the right hand of the Father right now and very soon, is coming back for us.

Romans 3:21–24

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For



everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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