

SERMON

Justification: Before Time Began**GOOD Morning OIC,**

As I said last week I am attempting to bring out the meaning of the following sections of Paul's comments in this Letter as flowing from previous verses, especially **(Romans 8.28)**. Re-quoting my comment last week on Sunday, Feb4th:

“Calling!” What a powerful word in the Bible ... in God's heart for His Children.

I will attempt to bring out how the proper understanding of these verses in Romans must be done in the light of a Christian’s “high or heavenly calling” and their personal “calling” in light of Eternity. Thus “calling” is an action or proactive word that connects us to God both *before time began, during our time on earth, and after time is no more.*

Last week's message was titled **Justification: Apocalypse is Redemption**, this week's title, **Justification: Before Time Began**. Last week, the Book of Romans showed us how our final redemption will be in the center of **Apocalyptic Events**. **As resurrected, redeemed, and glorified saints we will no longer groan awaiting our new bodies without our old sinful nature.** Our return to Earth with Jesus in our Glorified Bodies, sharing Jesus' Glory as “Sons of God,” will set Creation free from its groaning as well. In **(Romans 8.21-22)** *in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole Creation groans and suffers the pain of childbirth together until now.* This waiting by Nature and by Christians is finally satisfied at our coming as the revealed **“Sons of God” with the “Son of God” at the End of Time.**

TAKEAWAY #1

Paul's and God's purpose in the Book of Romans does not require details of the various events leading up to The End of Time. More details would be given later, after this letter in 57AD, most of which would be revealed to the Apostles Paul and John. These details would clarify many prophecies that had been received by many of the Older Testament Prophets about 1,000 years earlier. These revelations in the Bible tell of many supernatural events. The “End Time Events” or Eschatology in the Bible is primarily the future on Earth caused by the unrestrained unleashing of God's wrath upon Mankind and Man's dwelling place, the Earth. He has withheld His Wrath for thousands of years for unrepentant sinners and the rejection

of His Son. The message from God in “Romans” is for Christians to look forward to a glorious Life on Earth with Jesus, God's Son, which leads to even a more Glorious Eternity in Heaven. God's deep desire is for Christians to Trust Him, Who is above time; and to know His Unchanging Love for them, beyond all they can understand.

This next section of Romans declares the other side of the Timeline, **before Time began**, as part of God's magnificent Plan for Christians Justified by Faith! Paul has clearly defined in this letter, rich with **the Knowledge and Love of God**, that Justification is God's Solution to man's sin problem through the Sacrifice of His Son.

God's being above time is revealed in the first verse in the first Book of the Bible. In (Genesis 1.1) *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Thus, God existed “before the Beginning” of Time. Time is measured by known events on Earth or in the Heavens or the Universe including the Stars and Galaxies that God created “after the Beginning.” It is written in (Genesis 1.14-19) *Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. 16 God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. 17 God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 19 There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.*

(Romans 8.28) is a pivotal verse to bring out what God is saying in the “**Light of Eternity**” through His servant Paul. As it says:

*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.* My last message emphasized that the sovereign rule of God, combined with His relationship with Christians through Jesus, controls what He chooses to cause to happen, that is, **for good to those who love Him {and} are called according to His purpose.**

Now, I will try to paint the picture of Eternity – Past and Future – in the following verses in Chapter 8. As I have shared before, small words in the Greek language are sometimes big turning points or red flags to notice new information, or “cause and effect” events. **(Romans 8.29/NASB1995)** says: *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.* It is obvious that the word “for” is trying to explain what comes next **(v.29)** in regards to what was previous, **(v.28)**. The original Greek New Testament (Mounce) as it was first written by Paul says in **(v.29) because those he foreknew he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

Note that small introduction word in (v.29) is best translated as “*because*” not “*for*.” In the Greek (*hoti*) or in English (*because*) is often used as a **causal particle**. The English word “to be” with the word “cause” is a cause-and-effect connector, or particle of speech. All this lengthy language detail is to bring out that the **reason that God works things out for good in Christians is directly caused by His not only having foreknowledge regarding Christians but also choosing them before He created them. Therefore, God has ALREADY worked out their becoming Christians, starting before time began! Foreknowing....and Predestinating! ... So, it is only logical, and reasonable to expect Him to continue to work all things out for their good NOW.**

Let us remember what Jesus said to His Apostles in (John 15.16) *You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.* We might first think back to Jesus' picking the Twelve Apostles there in Galilee after praying all night in (Luke 6.12-13) *It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.* But Jesus was before the beginning with God and was God, for it is written in (John 1.1-2) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.* So, there is no conflict that God chose an Apostle, or any Christian, a disciple of Jesus, twice, so to speak. The *First Call* was before time began, the *Second Call*, on planet earth, during his or her lifetime. **Actually, with our proneness to wander like sheep, it seems He must choose and recall us over and over again until we see Him in Glory.**

Many Christians seem to *feel alright* about God's *foreknowing them*. But they get uncomfortable with the word *predestined*, that God predestined them. I have a few helpful and Biblical ways to see and think about this.

- 1) Providence is simply God's predestined path in our walk with Jesus **that we can see or know happened** recently or maybe years ago as we look back. A loving Father does not stand idly by when His Children walk towards danger, especially Eternal Danger.

But, you may ask: “Pastor Bruce, what about the Serpent Devil in the Garden of Eden? Were not Adam and Eve alone?” Please hold this question for (Romans 8.37) in next week's message, Lord willing.

- 2) Predestined Love is simply Providence beyond our understanding or senses. It is Providence planned before Time began. I am so glad that God providentially, according to His plan of Predestination for me, led me while I was yet a sinner to get to the place, physically and mentally, to know I deserved Hell from my life of Rebellion against a Holy

God. And, also, at the right time, I knew Jesus died to buy my Forgiveness, my personal Justification. OIC Saints: Aren't you glad He providentially did that for you too?

- 3) There is no honest grammatical way to alter the simple reading of these verses, **(Romans 8.29-30)**. In the Greek-English Dictionary (Mounce) the verb “to predestine” is *proorizo* - to limit or mark out beforehand; to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand, predestine. Such was used in the Disciples' prayer in Jerusalem after Peter and John had been released from arrest.

The chief priests and elders in Jerusalem had placed them under arrest. When the pressure from the crowd forced their release, Peter and John went to one of the disciple's home for group prayer. Now, we note how the Holy Spirit led them all in one voice in this mighty prayer; and notice also, the word *proorizo, to predestine*, in (Acts 4.27-28) *For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.* Here we clearly see in the word *predestined*, the application of God's Providence according to His will, **(Romans 8.28)** *for the good of His Son's Calling, His Life and Death.* God affected, or, “*Your hand,*” the working together of Satan's control of sinners to crucify Jesus to **complete His Calling** as *The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.* Thus fulfilling God's Perfect and Predestined Plan for Jesus before Time Began. This example clarifies for us this message today: **(Romans 8.28-29)** tells us God's actions *for good* are to complete the *calling* of His Chosen ones, Jesus and we Believers, as well. We get the same care and providence that Jesus got, and the same Resurrection (v.29) “*so that He would be the firstborn {from the Grave} among many brethren.*”

(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.*

He also “called” ... Now let us consider this part of our “*calling*” as the section of God's providence that occurs in Time, in our Lifetime on planet earth. This earthly Providence is to His chosen Children who will become His Sons. It is common in life to refer to a person's “calling” as meaning their career path or profession. That is not the sense of “calling” here! It is true, that walking in accord with the Spirit and not in accord with the sinful Flesh, allows God to direct your life in every detail, including a career path. But that is a secondary effect. The primary calling is to be removed from Satan's lordship to that of His Son, to be Born-Again. Reading in (1 Peter 2.9) *But you are a chosen people, a holy Nation, a royal Priesthood, a People for God's own possession,*

*so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who **has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***

(Romans 8.30) ... *these whom He called, He also justified;* We now see a continuum or series of connected **acts of God** to those He foreknew and predestined before time began: *foreknew, predestined, called, justified.*

TAKEAWAY#2

Justification, the solution of Man's Sin Problem, required God to be proactive on planet Earth shortly after Adam and Eve had submitted to Satan's Temptations and sinned. God plans His decisive Action which required His Son's absolute obedience! As we are told in (Galatians 4.4) *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.* Jesus travelled to Earth to save us was more than moving from Heaven to Earth. It was from being above time to Earth in order to rescue us. *Jesus, the first real time traveler.*

A note from Pastor Bruce: The more I read the Holy Bible with promises of past and future supernatural occurrences, the more I realize that Man hungers for this part of being a *Son of God* as apparent in our science fiction books and movies. What the world often imagines, we Christians will inherit! Don't forget, God is supernatural! Yet He is not hesitant to also accomplish His good to us through His Natural Creation!

Now, in my simplified "Elapsed Time Movie:" - Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross fulfills God's righteous justice to be that which *appeases* His anger at Sin. This "Good News" then spreads throughout the Earth as obedient "Soldiers of the Cross" obey Jesus's Great Commission. By God's **Almighty Providence**...what was Predestined happens, for the Gospel has reached me...it has reached YOU! Praise God for His Indescribable GIFT!!! **OIC Brothers and Sisters, We can rejoice because we Believe!**

(Romans 8.30) ...*these whom He justified, He also glorified.* Now, we know that all Christians, as I spoke about last week, have had some taste of the Glory ahead for them.

Please be patient with me as I try to show that God intends some Glory to all His Children "already." I chose two "excursions" from the flow of the Book of Romans in order to illustrate that I am not taking a few verses in the Bible to create a theology or create by my own thinking a Message from God through His Word.

EXCURSION#1- is the first part of a famous American hymn from the 1800's written by Fanny Crosby, a blind Christian woman.

The title is the first verse of the song:

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine (Romans 8.16) *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*

O What a foretaste of Glory Divine (Romans 8.30) *He also glorified.*

Now, a great Question that one may ask is: How much of being glorified is “already,” and how much of this being glorified is “not yet”?

Now, OIC Saints: **“Are you with me in my EXCURSION?” or planned TANGENT of presenting this Message? My purpose is to exegete the Bible with the Bible, Scripture by Scripture. Please be patient with me as I try to answer the Question of Already and Not Yet experiences of God's Glory.**

We have seen here in the Book of Romans that God's Promise for Christians at the End of Time is to have the same Glory as God's Only Son, the Second Person of the Godhead. But, experiential Christianity in the Bible, including in the Apostles, reveals some *glory* “already.” We all have known Christians with both “visions and dreams” that were to God's Glory to communicate to a Christian, and usually the Church.

EXCURSION#2 - (1 Corinthians 2.9-10) is the answer to the Question of more Glory on this side of Eternity, as “the already” implied in (v.9). (Romans 8.30) is at least a partial revelation of Glory in Heaven. This is God's Promise to all those Christians whom He already calls “Sons of God!” (1 Corinthians 2.10) is the Biblical record of the Apostle Paul, and other Christian's experiences of God's Glory kept in Heaven here on Earth.

What the Apostle Paul wrote in (1 Corinthians 2.9-10) was inspired by the Holy Spirit and answers this Already/Not Yet Question. Paul starts with a quote from (Isaiah 64.4) in (1 Corinthians 2.9):

*“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,
AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.”*

and we see in the source of Paul's quotation (Isaiah 64.4):

4 *For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear,
Nor has the eye seen a God besides You,
Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.*

Enlightening **NOTE:** How Paul quoted Isaiah to equate *those who wait on the LORD* (Isaiah 64.4) with *those who LOVE HIM!* (1 Corinthians 2.9).

10 For to us God revealed *them* {*ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.*”) through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

The Spirit's **revealing** “*ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.*” does not mean **experiencing** “*ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.*” As the Apostle John saw and realized with some comprehension Heaven with Jesus at the Center, he would not be capable to totally experience Heaven until he got there with his perfect sinless new Resurrected body. Tastes, large or small, of Heaven are to help weary soldiers to both press on and bear more fruit to the Goal, Seeing Jesus!

Should Jesus tarry or wait in Heaven longer, I look forward to exegeting the Books of Corinthians for my beloved OIC brothers and sisters. For now, it is clear that Paul has seminal or seeds of later *theology of Romans* to the Church at Corinth. He uses less lofty terminology, but the same message focuses on ***Justification: Jesus Christ and his death on the cross.***

Background comparing the Church of Corinth with The Church in Rome (really five house churches). Rome was the center of the civilized world in 57AD when Paul wrote this Letter. Thus, Rome had many sophisticated and learned attendees. Paul knew that Jews, in Rome as elsewhere, made a point that all their children had the highest and most Universal education possible. Paul, was “the best of the best,” having been mentored by Gamaliel the famous Pharisaic Jewish Teacher. So, note how he addresses the Corinthians in (1 Corinthians 2.1-2/TLB) *Dear brothers, even when I first came to you I didn't use lofty words and brilliant ideas to tell you God's message. 2 For I decided that I would speak only of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross*

Now, let us ask the question of who is this “us” in (1 Corinthians 2.9) to whom the Holy Spirit has revealed Glory of Heaven here on earth. We answer this question in light or logic of the context of these verses, and the attitude of the writer to his audience.

The first assumption would be “revealed future glory” to only Paul, or maybe just Paul and the Original Apostles of Jesus. But he did not say “we Apostles,” as he often did. We see next in (v.5) that Paul is refraining from using his status as an Apostle of Christ to teach Christians to depend on God's WORD, and not men. In (1 Corinthians 2.5/TLB) *I did this because I wanted your faith to stand firmly upon God, not on man's great ideas.*

Now, Paul speaks to the Corinthians in the practical truth or teaching which he would later write in the theology of Romans. He applies that Christians who are maturing are learning to *walk according to the Spirit, not according to the sinful Flesh.* He introduces the word “wisdom” but his teaching is parallel to Romans. For in his heart and mind are both *foreknowledge* and *predestination* by God in (1 Corinthians 2.7/TLB): as he writes both “***God's wise plan ...before***

the world began.” in (v. 7) Our words are wise because they are from God, telling of God’s wise plan to bring us into the glories of heaven. This plan was hidden in former times, though it was made for our benefit before the world began. And Paul sums up this knowledge with (1 Corinthians 2.12/TLB) And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world’s spirit) to tell us about the wonderful free gifts of grace and blessing that God has given us.

Finally, the context with a humble approach by Paul to the Corinthians, and the most simple reading of these Bible verses, makes the meaning of “us” to be the Christians in the Church at Corinth. Of course, “us” included Paul, himself, and other Apostles and Disciples of Jesus. Paul's love for Jesus' Sheep at Corinth meant he wanted them to have all the Glory God was willing to give them on earth. If they were not yet “us,” he knew that they could soon be “us” to be strengthened by God's supernatural revelation of the “Glory Ahead.” The “already” of more glory on Earth creates stronger Soldiers of the Cross. It also encourages solid “hope” for the “not yet,” for it is another taste of the Total Glory we will receive when we see Jesus. “Glory” revealed by Holy Spirit to “us” NOW never diminishes the Faith in the WORD or need for that Faith in a Christian's walk to Glory.

I will close today's message with my Closing Takeaway#3, after I review the first two.

TAKEAWAY #1 (shortened for review)

Paul's and God's purpose in the Book of Romans does not require details of the various events leading up to The End of Time. More details would be given later, after this letter in 57AD, most of which would be revealed to the Apostles Paul and John. The message from God in “Romans” is for Christians to look forward to a glorious Life on Earth with Jesus, God's Son, which leads to even a more Glorious Eternity in Heaven. God's deep desire is for Christians to Trust Him, Who is above time; and know His Unchanging Love for them, beyond all they can understand.

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TAKEAWAY #3

As we walk in the Spirit in our daily lives, we are in line with God's desire to pray to Him for more tastes of Glory here on Earth. Jesus is LORD. He can answer our prayers with: NO!..YES!..or WAIT. But He also said: in His Bible in (James 4.3) *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.* If you ask with wrong motives, don't expect God to give you a positive answer.

The Book of Romans clearly offers Christians who try to choose to walk in Accord with the Spirit a close walk with Jesus and more glorious tastes of God's Presence on Earth according to God's Will for their life. If we have motives molded or motivated by trusting God's choosing what is really "good for us," we can boldly ask for more tastes of Glory. **The walk to Glory is walking according to the WORD AND THE SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD.** The Scriptures I exegeted mostly from (Romans 8) and (1 Corinthians 2) encourage Christians to ask and expect more tastes of the Glory to Come while still on Earth. These tastes of Glory are to confirm the WORD: JUSTIFICATION – Before Time Began- In Time- After Time is No More. Dear saints, God wants to continue to pour His love by His Spirit upon us as we walk to Glory.

Let Us Pray,

REFERENCES

{ } - Pastor Bruce's added notes for clarity

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