

# ***“Our Glorious Salvation”***

## **Penetrating a Dark World**

Romans 8:26-39

Don Maurer

May 19, 2017

**Sig:** You’re now being recorded.

**Don:** All right.

**Sig:** It’s all yours.

**Don:** Ted, are there a lot of golfers at your church?

**Ted:** No, we don’t have any golfers. We gave that up for Lent.

**Don:** Oh, okay. Well, Lent’s over. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** Well, we’re preparing for next Lent.

**Don:** Well the reason I asked is because it’s on Mickelson Road. *(Laughter)*

**Transcriber’s Note:** Phil Mickelson, a professional golfer.

**Sig:** Nickelson Road.

**Don:** Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

**Ted:** I’ve got one that’s funnier than that for you, Don. My wife and I were looking at garage sales in the paper this morning. And one of them was going to be at the Unitarian Universalist Church of North Hills. And I said, “What do you think about that?”

She said, “I’m undecided.” *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Okay.

**Participant:** We better not be burning for this. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Yeah, that’s right. The Lord be with you.

**Men:** And also with you.

**Don:** Let us pray. Father, we come to you this morning, and Father, we’re joyful. We thank You for the joy that is ours in Jesus Christ. We thank You for the gift of laughter. And we of all people should be the most joyous of all, even though many of us are in dire circumstances, because we have the joy of the Holy Spirit. We have the promise, Lord Jesus, that You’ve come that our joy may be full. And so, Father, for the next forty-five minutes or longer, we pray, Father, that You would indeed fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that we would pay attention to Your word. I pray, Father, that You would ensure that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart would be acceptable to You, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer, for we pray it in Christ’s name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Don:** Well at the risk of not letting my yes be yes and my no be no, last week I told you that I was going to speak today on the ultimate priority of worship. Well, the excuse that it’s a man’s prerogative to change his mind won’t fly here. *(Laughter)* But I’ve decided to change the topic today.

I got a lot of encouragement from last week’s message on losing our first love. There were a few who suggested that perhaps I could say a little more about the love of God, and so I decided to do that this morning. Not only that, but every week Sig fills us with lots of prayer needs and prayer requests. And so I know that a lot of us are going through hard times. A lot we know, a lot we don’t know. And so I decided this morning that we’ll

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bask in the sunshine of God’s love by taking into consideration one of my favorite passages of Scripture which is Romans 8:26-39, a wonderful passage of Scripture indeed. So let me read that for you from the English Standard Version of the Scripture. Romans 8, verses 26-39.

*“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

*“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.*

*“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?*

*“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the One who died, more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’*

*“No! In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Don:** Amen and Amen. Okay. Paul starts this passage in Romans 8. And of course Romans is considered to be Paul’s great systematic theological masterpiece. He speaks of our need for the gospel in chapters 1-3. He speaks of the gospel itself in chapters 3-5—justification by faith apart from the works of the law,, using Abraham as his supreme example. And then in chapters 5-8 he speaks about the benefits and the results of the gospel. And it’s in this latter part of chapter 8 that we’re going to concentrate today. Now Paul talks in the earlier part of chapter 8 about the glorious truth that there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. He talks about the fact that we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies, and that the sufferings of this present life cannot be compared with the glories that are to be revealed in us. And so he says that we wait for the hope that we have with patience.

And then he begins in verse 26 by saying this. He talks first of all about *the Spirit’s intercession* in verses 26-27. *“The Spirit helps us in our weakness.”* Now if there’s anything that we guys, us members of the male gender, do not like to admit, it’s

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weakness, right? We don't want to admit that we need help in any way. We like to think that we have it altogether put together.

I remember in 2001 when some friends came over to see my computer and how JAWS, the software that I use that speaks so I can do everything and do the transcripts and so forth. I was putting permanent software in from Microsoft. I had temporary software. And for some reason it didn't kick in yet. It wasn't going to kick in for a couple more days, though I didn't know it at the time. It didn't kick in, and so the old software kept working.

And they said, “Wow! How is this?” And they kept doing whatever they needed to do, and two or three hours passed. “Well, we just don't want to admit that we need help. We'll get this figured out.” (*Laughter*) Man, it was frustrating!

But anyway, we are weak. We are absolutely dependent upon God for everything. And Paul says that “*we do not know what to pray for as we ought.*” Prayer of course is a vital part of our union with and walk with Christ. But I have to admit that I'm not very good at it. Maybe some of you are, but I'm not.

And do you know what? Paul includes himself here, doesn't he? That's very interesting to me. Paul doesn't say, “You don't know what to pray for.” He says that *we* don't know what to pray for as we ought.

Oh, I'm very good at praying, “Lord, please give me this or give me that.” (*Laughter*) Or, “Lord, I'm in such pain! Please heal me of this,” or “Take this unpleasant circumstance away from me,” whatever it may be. But I'm not particularly good at thoroughly and from the heart confessing all of my sins, or uttering heartfelt praise. I need the help of the Psalms to do that.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** Or interceding for someone else. I'll give you the example of my mom, when she was going through her dementia and COPD. Lord, what do I pray for? Do I pray for a healing of those things? I'd love that. Or do I pray that You would just take her home? And we've all gone through times like that where we just don't know what to pray for as we ought.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** This is Jay. How are you?

**Don:** Yes, Jay?

**Jay:** I just wanted to mention to you that when you said that you're not good with prayer, and I understand what you're saying in our unredeemed humanness. So thinking about the last three or four times that we talked, I have left the conversations so encouraged by the way that you prayed. And I just wanted to say that. It was a blessing.

**Don:** Well thank you.

**Jay:** And so the last three or four times that we talked.

**Don:** Well thank you, brother, thank you. I appreciate that.

**Jay:** Your asking for prayer just really encouraged me, so I just wanted to say that.

**Don:** Well praise God. And if God can use that, all glory to His name. Perhaps I should specify that in private prayer I'm not as good as I should be.

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**Jay:** Okay, thank you.

**Don:** But do you know what? The great promise of God is that the Spirit intercedes for us!

**Participant:** Amen!

**Don:** No matter how weak our prayers may be, no matter how we think we are in our prayers, we know that no one less than God the Holy spirit—in fact Paul said that *“the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words,”* or *“that words cannot express.”*

You know, this is something the Spirit does. It’s not something that we do. I had some Pentecostal friends a number of years ago. And I was involved in the charismatic movement early on in my Christian life. And they said, “Now in order for that promise to be realized, you’ve got to develop your own prayer language.”

**Participant:** Wow!

**Don:** “You’ve got to speak in tongues. Otherwise, the Spirit can’t intercede with those groans.” Well it’s not we who make the groans. It’s the Spirit who intercedes with these groans that words cannot express.

And He does this for and in us. Jay, would you read John 14, verses 26-27 on your handout, the words of our Lord concerning the Holy Spirit?

**Jay:** All right, thank you. *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”*

**Don:** Thank you. He is our Helper, our Counselor. Some translations say *Comforter*. And His intercession is perfect. You know, when we intercede for someone, because we don’t know the will of God in these particular circumstances, our intercession is not perfect. But the Holy Spirit, because He is God, His intercession is absolutely perfect, because it’s according to the will of God. The Spirit knows the mind of God. He is God. He’s the third Person of the Trinity. And so He knows the will of God. And sometimes that will is yes, sometimes it’s no, and sometimes it’s wait.

And it’s always wonderful to know that when we pray, as pastor Tony Evans likes to point out, that we are never truly alone. For we have the intercession of the Holy Spirit and we also have the intercession of Jesus Christ. We’ll talk about that a little bit later. And we’re *“surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses”* also.

Now because of this we have the great promise of verse 28. The world’s favorite Scripture seems to be *“Judge not, lest you be judged.”* The favorite Scripture of a lot of Christians is *“God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.”* And verse 28 of Romans 8 is also a great favorite of Christians. It’s well-known and well loved, and it’s easy to see why. *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.”*

Now notice. First of all, Paul says here that *we know this*. It’s not as if Paul is standing up and saying, “Well, you know, life can be difficult, and we all need our crutches. For some people it’s booze. For some people it’s Santa Claus. And so whatever turns you on, if this gets you through the day, that’s good.” No, Paul doesn’t say that.

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And he doesn't say, "I hope this is true," or "I think this is true. It's something in my profound wisdom that I learned from Gamaliel that I came up with." No, he says, "*We know that for those who love God all things work together for good.*"

How do we know? Why do we know? Well because it's based on God's sure promises. It's based on God, who, as Bruce said in the book of Titus, cannot lie. It's based upon His sure decrees.

This promise that all things work together for good is only for those who love God. It's not for everybody. You know, you hear people, even unbelievers on TV or something, say, "Well, everything happens for a reason." Well yes, everything does happen for a reason, because God has willed it to happen and He brings about everything that comes to pass. However, this promise is not just for everybody. It's only for those who love God. And the only people who love God are those who experience the love of God, those who are believers, those who have been regenerated, those who are Christians.

He also says this. "*All things work together for good to those who love God.*" Not just some things, not just the pleasant things in life, or the things that we can understand, but all things.

Now I have to freely admit that sometimes when Scripture uses the word all it does not mean every single individual or every single thing. When it says that all Jerusalem was afraid when Herod found out that his kingship was going to be usurped, I don't think that means that every infant lying in the crib was afraid of the kingship of Jesus, and that kind of thing. But I can confidently say here that when Paul says that all things work together for good, it means all things, every single circumstance in your life, as a believer in Jesus Christ, is working for good.

I don't know if Mike Davis is here today. But his son's father-in-law is a member of my church. And he has been going through health problems for decades. He has leukemia. He had kidney failure the other day. He has C-Diff, all kinds of things. He can't have visitors at the hospital because of it. And you know, I wonder, "Lord, how is it that this is working for his good, and the good of his wife and family?" I don't know. We may never know in our lives all the things that are working together for good until glory. But we trust God and believe His promise that they do. And that makes all the difference in what you're going through, doesn't it?

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** Yes, amen. All right.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes, Ted?

**Ted:** I really was taken early by what you were talking about, the Spirit interceding for us. "*We do not know what we ought to pray. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us.*"

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:** I'm just going to hot dog it for a minute. And that is that I looked this up in the Greek. And it's even heavier in the Greek than it is in the English.

**Don:** Oh wow!

**Ted:** Because you're saying that I don't know how to pray as I ought to. But the Spirit Himself. He uses two words. He could just as easily have said, The Spirit intercedes."

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But he says, “The Spirit Himself.” So it’s really emphasizing that it’s not me who intercedes. It’s the Spirit Himself who is doing it. And he kind of double emphasizes the word *Spirit*.

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:** He uses the very next words *with groanings*. And that’s even more interesting because it can be translated “with pleadings or groanings.” But it says in the Greek *over pleadings*, and *over groanings*. And right after that Paul throws in another word *over*. So it says, “*over groanings over*.” So it’s like *Spirit Spirit*, and it’s like *pleading pleading*. So it’s just like hammering that point home.

**Don:** Oh, how interesting!

**Ted:** That’s interesting, given the fact that you, like myself, have trouble praying.

**Don:** Right. Wow! And we hear something like this. Lord, how hard my heart is! I need to remember this and think about it the next time I pray, and realize that the Holy Spirit is constantly interceding for us! Praise God! Thanks, Ted.

**Participant:** Hey, Don?

**Don:** Yes, Bill?

**Bill:** Going back to verse 28, “*all things work together for good*.” Does that include our sin?

**Don:** I would say yes, in the sense that God uses it to bring about good. What did Joseph say? “*You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good*.”

**Participant:** Good point. Great verse.

**Don:** Yes. Amen. It’s for “*those who are called according to His purpose*.” And what is His purpose for the elect? What is His purpose for us? It’s that we would be saved and conformed to the image of His Son, which we’re going to talk about in the next verse. It’s effectual calling to salvation. It’s a calling from death to life, as Lazarus was called from the tomb.

Okay. #2. *The order of salvation* in verses 29-30. You know, as I said before, Christians love verse 28. But a lot of times, a lot of them stop there. Well, what is the basis of this verse? It’s interesting to me that everyone loves verse 28. But when you start getting into verse 29, that’s when the hammers fly. That’s when the fists start moving, because some people don’t like what verses 29 and 30 say, particularly verse 29. But this is called the *ordo salutis*.

Eight months ago Sig called me on the phone. Whenever I was with Gerry Burford on September 16 of 2016, we went to see my mom. And right in the middle of when we were there Sig called me, and he was sobbing uncontrollably. And I said, “Sig, what’s wrong?”

“Oh, Don, these bedbugs are crawling all over me.”

And I said, “Sig, calm down. Bedbugs only come out at night.” And I think Gerry was looking at me like I’d flipped, like I’d been on another planet. Well, if you want people to look at you like you’ve flipped, say at some work gathering or something, “Hey, I’ve learned about the *ordo salutis*.” And they’ll look at you like “What?” (*Laughter*)

Anyway, it means the order of salvation in Latin. And it starts with God’s foreknowledge. Now we’ve gone over this a number of times. “*He whom He foreknew*.”

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This isn't God just looking down the corridors of time and knowing who and who will not come to Christ. This is intimacy, affection. *“Adam knew his wife and she conceived.”* God said to the prophet Jeremiah, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”* Jesus said, *“I know My sheep and My sheep know me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father.”* It's intimacy; it's affection.

And *“those whom He foreknew He also predestined.”* Rich, would you read Ephesians 1, verses 5-6, please?

**Rich:** Sure. *“In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.”*

**Don:** Wow! Thank you, Rich. What a wonderful verse! Now notice. People get all uptight about predestination. A lot of people don't like it. But the important thing to remember here is that the predestination is done in love! He predestined us in love! So many times people think, “Well, God is so arbitrary if you believe that. I choose you, you, you, you, and you over here, nope. Sorry.” No, it's done in love, all right? I don't know why God would love me. But He does. He predestined us in love.

And to what end? *“To be conformed to the image of His Son.”* It says in 1 John 3:3 that someday we will be like Him. But God has started that process even in this life. And more often than not it involves pruning, doesn't it. It involves suffering, the battle between the Spirit and the flesh, the sinful nature. But we know already that those things are working together for good for all of us. It will be accomplished.

And what is the purpose? *“That He might be the firstborn among many brothers.”* Imagine! Christ, as the book of Hebrews says, is not ashamed to call us His brothers. I've given Him plenty of reasons to be ashamed over the years.

**Participant:** That's right.

**Don:** But no. He is not ashamed to call us His brothers. You know, the term *brother* among believers is a precious term. I saw Rich this morning. We embraced and we both said, “My brother!” What a tremendous thing it is when brothers dwell together in unity, as it says in Psalm 133. We are brothers in every sense of the word in Jesus Christ.

And notice that he doesn't say “just a few brothers,” but *“many brothers.”* Sig, would you read Isaiah 53 verse 11, and Matthew 20:28?

**Sig:** Yes. *“By His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My Servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities.”*

And from Matthew 20:28, *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

**Don:** Many is a lot of people, folks. I think that we forget that sometimes. That *many* according to Revelation chapter 7 is *“a great multitude that no man can number.”* It's very easy, isn't it, to be discouraged at what you see all around you, whether it's the sexual revolution, or what you hear on the secular media, or polls now that are saying that the number of secularists is increasing, and Islam gaining such a foothold in the Middle East. No, there are going to be many in the kingdom of God. And as Bruce has pointed out,—and Ted, you have too—the church is growing by leaps and bounds in Africa, in China, in places where there is a lot of persecution. Christ's parable of the wedding

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banquet says that His kingdom, His banquet hall, will be full. And that should spur us on to live for Him and proclaim the gospel to people we meet.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** Bob Busted. I’ve got a question that I guess might be a dangerous question, but I’m going to ask it because I’m interested in your opinion.

**Don:** Uh-oh!

**Bob:** But when we talk about the remnant, when we talk about predestination, when we talk about all those who know Him, why do you think God created all of those who don’t know Him and who won’t know Him?

**Don:** To demonstrate His justice.

**Participant:** Good answer.

**Don:** Romans 9. There are vessels of wrath and vessels of glory. And if you want to read a good book that I think explains it very well, read Jay Addams’ *The Grand Demonstration*. I think that’s a really good book that tackles that subject. You might want to look at that. In a nutshell that’s what I would say.

**Participant:** What was that title again, Don?

**Don:** *The Grand Demonstration* by Jay Addams.

**Participant:** Thank you.

**Don:** Okay, you’re welcome. Those who are predestined are effectually called from death to life, as I’ve said before, as Lazarus was. Those called are justified, declared righteous. And those who are justified are glorified.

Now there is no one who is foreknown who has not also been predestined, called and justified who will not also be glorified. Everyone in this golden chain with its five golden links is going to be glorified. As Bruce has said so many times, what the Father ordained the Son accomplished, and the Spirit applies. And that should be a great comfort to us. Does someone have a question?

**Participant:** Yes, Don. I was reading through the Old Testament. I was really surprised to see that even in the Old Testament it talks about the book of life. And so in Daniel 12:1 it talks about “everyone found written in the book.” So it talks about it in a couple different places. That wasn’t the reference I was looking for. But it talks even in the Old Testament about the book of life. And in Revelation there are a couple of verses that really point it out. So if there’s a book of life written in the Old Testament and New Testament, one might really discover that this golden chain is a reality.

**Don:** Oh yes, absolutely. I know what you mean. Daniel 12:1 and 2 talks about those who will be raised, “*some to eternal life and some to shame and everlasting contempt,*” and “*everyone who is written in the book.*” Yes. Okay, very good.

**Participant:** So Don, can you elaborate more on Bob Busted’s question? Why are some chosen for vessels of wrath? For what purpose? You said to show God’s justice?

**Don:** Yes.

**Participant:** Well why would God have to demonstrate His justice for the sake of people that He created?



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**Don:** Well I would say because that’s what He has chosen to do. He has chosen in His unsearchable wisdom to demonstrate His mercy and love upon the vessels of glory. He has chosen in His unsearchable wisdom to demonstrate His justice and wrath in the damnation of the wicked.

**Participant:** Do you think that is in this lifetime, or in eternity?

**Don:** I think it can be both. I think Paul is talking about eternity in Romans 9. I think there are certainly people, and Romans 1 talks about it. We hear in Exodus about Pharaoh’s hard heart and that kind of thing, where the judgment can come. I don’t think we know who they are, but there are people who conceivably have committed the unpardonable sin for whom there is no forgiveness. So yes, I think it can be both, Sig.

**Sig:** But the point I think you’re making is that Pharaoh’s hardened heart was in this lifetime as he dealt with the Israelites.

**Don:** Yes.

**Sig:** I guess the part I have trouble with,--and I don’t have a Scripture to back it up, which puts me at risk of making me a potential heretic,--

**Participant:** I second that. *(Laughter)* Very close to the edge.

**Sig:** But the concern I have, Don, is that I can’t imagine anyone at the Day of Judgment coming before a holy God and being flippant or saying, “No thanks. I don’t really care to do that or be with You.” I just can’t imagine that when you come before the holiness of God, and you’ve been resurrected to life after your death, and that it’s like you’d say no to that, or turn your back on that, or that you’d be hard of heart then.

**Participant:** It’s too late.

**Don:** It’s too late then, yes.

**Sig:** How do we know it’s too late then?

**Participant:** But here’s the thing. The person who says no is unable to say yes.

**Sig:** That’s only in this life, Ted.

**Ted:** No, that’s in eternity.

**Participant:** Right.

**Sig:** How do you know that?

**Ted:** Because our state has been predestined from foreknowledge from before the very beginning of time. I mean, either you are able to say yes to God, or you’re not able. And there is a part of the Protestant and also the Catholic faith which would say that every man has the ability to say yes. And it’s really up to that person in terms of what is within them to say yes or no. I mean this is the constant message you hear in most of our churches. We’re saying, “No, that’s not true.” People are created from the beginning with inability. They are not able. Bishop Rodgers can do the fine point on this. *(Laughter)* Whether it’s the ability or inclination, or whatever it is. Okay, go ahead.

**Bishop Rodgers:** I think most of us are what is classically called *infralapsarian*.

**Transcriber’s Note:** *Infralapsarian*, a term referring to the order of God’s eternal decrees and the place of the fall of man in the plan of redemption.

That is to say that God’s creation has its own positive end. And then there’s the Fall, which He permits and foresees. And then He deals with fallen people, as you’ve been talking about. I don’t think it’s right to say that He created “in order to.” He created them

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because He created them. It’s positive. At least the Scriptures are pretty careful at that point, and I think we need to be. I’m not trying to make it complicated. He did foresee the Fall and He did permit the fall. But He didn’t cause the Fall.

**Don:** Right.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Cause, creation; there’s a difference.

**Don:** Yes. Thank you, Bishop. And I don’t believe the Scripture teaches anywhere that anyone is given a second chance after death for the opportunity—

**Bishop Rodgers:** Oh no, absolutely not. No, that’s a whole different question.

**Don:** Right.

**Bishop Rodgers:** Once you’re fallen, you’re fallen. All you can do is express your desire, which is to run your own show and the heck with God.

**Don:** Exactly. Right.

**Bishop Rodgers:** It doesn’t stop at death. That just goes on, unless God—

**Don:** Sure.

**Sig:** But we’ve also been taught by Bruce and others like yourself, Don, that a dead man can’t make a decision.

**Don:** Exactly.

**Sig:** So if God doesn’t resurrect us to new life, whether it be here on earth or at the judgment day, we don’t have any hope.

**Don:** Oh, exactly.

**Bishop Rodgers:** That’s right. That’s why this election thing is rather important. That’s what gives us hope, that God has chosen us.

**Participant:** Don, Jim Fitzgerald. With what John was just saying about election, if God foresees in the future that the Fall will take place, that all human beings because of the Fall are unable to respond to God, then without election everybody would be lost.

**Don:** Sure.

**Jim:** Now God could have chosen, instead of leaving everybody to be lost in his wretchedness, so that all there would be was justice, He could have saved everybody. But if He saved everybody, then there would be no justice on one hand to reflect His justice, and we would tend to think that He owed it to us, that He really couldn’t punish anybody, that it wouldn’t be nice, I mean all that kind of thinking. So you either have those two options, or there’s a third option, where He could choose to save some, so that He reflects both His love to those He saves, and He reflects His justice to those He leaves in their sin.

**Don:** And not only that. Let me point out that the justice of the elect is poured out on Christ. That’s important, too. It’s not that the elect don’t receive justice. But that justice has been poured out on their Substitute, our Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. I think that’s important. But your point is well taken, Jim; very good.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** One more thing. When you understand the nature of man and subscribe to the Scripture, the mystery of predestination would be why God would save anybody.

**Don:** Well, that’s right. If we truly understand who we are, that we are totally depraved, that we are hopeless, helpless, dead in our trespasses and sins, a lot of people

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say, “Why is this happening to me?” Why do bad things happen to “good people?” Well, why not me? There are no good people. And why would God save anybody? That’s right. It’s that which causes us to love Him, because He has first loved us.

**Participant:** Don?

**Don:** Yes?

**Participant:** I think the biggest problem a lot of us have is that we don’t have any say in this.

**Don:** Right, yes. We want to be in control, don’t we?

**Participant:** That’s right. And God said to Moses, “I will be gracious to those I want to be gracious to, and I’ll have mercy on those I want to have mercy on. It’s My deal, not Your deal.”

**Don:** Right. It’s all about Him, right?

**Participant:** That’s right.

**Don:** It’s not about us.

**Participant:** Hard to get.

**Don:** Okay. Let’s go on to #3, *Christ’s promises and His intercession*—verses 31-39.

*“What then shall we say to these things?”* Well, what do some people say? “That’s not fair! God should save everybody!” No, that’s not what Paul says. Paul says, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

It’s not a good thing, especially as a country, to say, “God’s on our side,” whatever position we take. But for believers, for those of us in Jesus Christ, God is truly for us. He is truly on our side, even and maybe especially in the hard times that we go through.

You know, at first glance there are all kinds of people, all kinds of things, all kinds of circumstances that we think are against us. But they’re all working for God’s glory and our good, and we have to remember that.

*“He who did not spare His own Son.”* I think of the words of king David. *“Will I sacrifice to the LORD that which costs me nothing?”* Our sacrifices are very meager, whether what we give in the collection plate on Sundays or a missionary’s sacrifice to go into foreign countries to spread the gospel. But not God. God spared not His Son. He gave Him *“for us all.”* For us all. That’s my little limited atonement verse there, right? He gave Him for us all, for all of those who throughout the ages would be saved. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applies.

*“He graciously gives us all things.”* Now again, I don’t want to get crass here. All things. He doesn’t promise to graciously give us a new Cadillac, like the name it and claim it and blab it and grab it people talk about. He doesn’t always promise to give us relief from a certain disease, or deliverance from a certain circumstance that is really keeping us up at night. But what He does promise is that He gives us all things—eternal life. And He gives us *“everything we need for life and godliness”* according to 2 Peter 1 verse 3. And that is a wonderful promise.

*“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?”* *“Who is he who condemns?”* You know, the word *devil* or *diabolos* means *the accuser*. Satan in the book of Revelation is called *“the accuser of the brethren.”* He’s our adversary.

## ***“Our Glorious Salvation”***

You know, if I were to look to myself and my sin, I would despair. Oh, you can't possibly a Christian! Look what you just thought! Look what you've just said to that person! Look what you did ten, fifteen, twenty years ago! Look at the sin you still struggle with!

But *“it is God who justifies.”* And if God justified us, if God says, “My son, you are declared righteous in My sight”, then you are righteous, and there is no more arguing, right? John Wesley wrote that hymn, “Jesus, Thy blood and Righteousness.”

“Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?”

That means who will bring anything against me? Or,  
“I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea.  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me.”

And He rose again, and He's seated at God's right hand, and He has accomplished salvation. And most wonderful of all, He's interceding for us. Tom, would you read John 10:28-30?

**Tom:** *“My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”*

**Don:** Is that a great promise, or what?

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** And not only that, but even more wonderful, Christ is right now interceding for us, as well as the Holy Spirit. Bill, would you read John 17 verse 9?

**Bill:** *“I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.”*

**Don:** He also says, “My prayer is not just for those standing there with Me”—for the disciples, for the apostles alone—“but for all those whom You have given Me who will hear the message.” Oh, what a tremendous thing!

And He intercedes for us even in our sin! Jesus said, *“Simon, Simon, ... “I have prayed for you.”* He knew Peter was going to deny Him. *“But I have prayed for you.”*

1 John chapter 2 verse 1 says, *“But if we do sin, we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but the sins of the whole world.”* Robert Murray McCheyne says this. *“For every look at your sin, take ten looks at Christ.”* That is a great thing to remember.

And then very quickly, verses 35-39. The great promises, a list of possible things which could conceivably separate us from the love of Christ, but we know they don't. *“Tribulation or distress”*—any kind of suffering or great discomfort. *“Persecution”*—something that we don't experience, but those in many other parts of the world do. And the results of persecution—*“imprisonment, famine, nakedness, danger or sword.”* It's a rhetorical question which only has one answer—no! None of those things can separate you from the love of God.

## ***“Our Glorious Salvation”***

And he goes on in verse 37 to say this. And the ESV says, *“I am sure.”* I like the way the King James says it. *“I am persuaded.”* Other translations say, *“I am convinced.”* And we are *“more than conquerors.”* The Greek word means *super conquerors.* We’re not just conquerors. We’re *“more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”*

And there’s another list in verses 38-39, and it encompasses everything. *“Neither death nor life,”* and everything contained therein. Those are my words. *“Neither angels nor rulers,”*—and I think it’s not just earthly rulers but those infernal rulers, demons. *“Nor powers”* of any kind, earthly or infernal powers.

*“Nor height, nor depth, nor anything,”* all right? If I may interject, nor Isis, nor North Korea, nor the policies of corrupt politicians, nor the state of the economy, nor unemployment, nor cancer, nor sickness, nor bereavement, nor people who you think are out to get you, no, not even yourself, and most incredibly of all, not even your sin, *“will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

**Participant:** Amen.

**Don:** Amen?

**Men:** Amen!

**Don:** Let us pray. Father, these promises are just absolutely overwhelming. And truly, Lord, knowing who we are—and we know, as John Calvin said, that we don’t even know the one-hundredth part of our sin. And yet You love us! And You not only love us, but You’ve given us these tremendous promises, and You intercede for us. And You have promised us a home in glory and an inheritance that can never spoil or fade or perish. O Lord, help us to constantly express our gratitude to You in our prayers, in our lives. We thank You. We praise You through Christ. And all the Brave Men said, *“Amen!” (Applause)*