

The Golden Chain

(Rom 8:28-30)

- The context is still the assurance of justification by faith

I. Mechanics

A) “And”

1. Here begins a new sub-section, but not a new subject entirely
2. It is directly linked to what has gone before

B) Rom 8:28- The general statement

1. Rom 8:29-30- The amplification of the statement
 - i. Especially the last clause in the statement, “Called according to His purpose”

II. Rom 8:28- The general statement

A) “We know”- Paul assumes all Christians know this

1. Consider this in light of v.26- “we know not”

B) “All things”- This term is not to be limited to just trials or tribulations

1. This means those things, but also sickness, failures, setbacks, suffering, etc.
2. This also includes our sins
 - i. This doesn’t mean that sin is good, or that God causes sin
 - ii. James 1:13- God doesn’t tempt anyone to sin
 - iii. It means that God is able to use work things so that even our sins are used to sanctify us and prepare us for final glory
 - a) Gen 50:20 & 45:5-7- The example of Joseph and his brothers

3. “Work together”- In synergism

- i. The Greek text actually has “God” twice in v.28
- ii. “We know God works all things for our good”
 - a) God is omnipotent, He rules over all and overrules as He please, bringing about whatever outcome He desires
 - b) God makes use of our sins to show us our weakness and to shake our self confidence
 - c) He reveals certain things to us about ourselves, thus driving us to Him
 - 1) Luke 15:11-32- The Prodigal Son
 - (a) Through his sin, this son was made to see his own unworthiness, and also the greater extent of his father’s mercy and love
 - (b) All the Prodigal Son did in the far country was wrong, but God worked it out for his eternal benefit

4. “For good”- For the eternal good, and not the temporary
 - i. Trials and sufferings and failures are never good in and of themselves
5. “To them that love God”- This is the qualifying statement
 - i. But this is not the cause of God’s working, all is of grace
 - a) Rom 8:5-7- The natural man doesn’t love God, he hates Him
 - b) 1 John 4:19- “We love God because He first loved us”
6. “Called according to His purpose”
 - i. He is the explanation of the qualifying statement
 - ii. We love God because He first “called us”
 - a) Rom 5:6-10- God called while we were “dead in sin”

III. How does God do this?

A) His permissive will

1. He permits things to be done, allows them to happen
 - i. As with Job
 - ii. As with Peter
 - iii. As with Adam

B) He sometimes causes certain reactions to our sins

1. Heb 12:6-11- The chastening of the Lord
2. 1 Cor 11:29- Some Corinthians suffering, some even “asleep”
3. Amos 3:2- God punishes and corrects His Own

C) God sometimes withdraws His blessings in part, or “hides Himself”

1. Isa 59:9-16- Looking for light but groping in darkness
2. Psa 27:9, 35:22, 38:21- “Be not far from me, forsake me not”
 - i. Compare this form of correction to the way in which a parent sometimes make their disappointment known to a child by not looking at them, or telling them to remove from their presence
 - a) This is done to cause remorse and to seek forgiveness and restoration
 - ii. Drought can make a tree much stronger by forces its roots deeper

D) God grants us discernment in order to see His operating through these things

1. Without His revealing this to us, we would only complain and murmur
2. Seeing this enables us to endure
 - i. Thus it is very important to know this, especially when dealing with a fellow-believer who is enduring suffering, trials, etc.
 - a) Never tell them to be stoic, or to “shake it off”
 - b) Instead, we can tell them that God often operates this way, and as a child of God we may not know what exactly is happening, but we can trust the One Who is in control of all, knowing that He works through it for our eternal good
 - ii. V.26 -vs- v.28
 - a) This is where the “not knowing” and the “knowing” is so important

- 1) “According to His purpose”- While we are not sure of the means, we are certain of the end
 - (a) This is the thing Paul will work out in v.29-30
 - (b) There is probably no greater form of assurance than this!!!
 - (1) As in It Is Well With My Soul
 - (c) In spite of my ignorance and of all that is happening round me, I know God is working it for my eternal good
 - (1) The lost can never say this, because it is never true
 - (2) In fact, just the opposite is true: no matter how well things are going now, all things are working toward their eternal torment (“storing up wrath”)
3. How God reveals this to us:
 - i. Scripture teaches this:
 - a) Psa 91, Deut 32:10, Heb 12:6-11, Matt 10:28-30, James 1:2
 - ii. Scripture gives explicit examples:
 - a) 2 Cor 12:1-10- Paul “knew not” in prayer, but “knew” in doctrine
 - b) Psa 119:67-75- “It was good that I was afflicted”
 - iii. Scripture gives implicit examples:
 - a) Consider Job, Jacob, David, Peter, Sosthenes, etc.
 - iv. Church history records much about this:
 - a) Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Spurgeon, Tim and Brittany