**WITHOUT EXCUSE**

**A landscape with a sunset and mountains

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***Romans 8 -* Called According to His Purpose**

In chapter 8 of Romans Paul moves from the subject of sin and death, to the topic of life in the Spirit. He makes it clear that there are two different ways to live;

1.) according to the flesh – (having your priorities and focus on the temporal things of the world and your own interests)>

2.) according to the Spirit – prioritizing God’s word and His will over everything else and being willing to be led by His spirit, rather than your own mind and emotions.

Review:

**Romans 8:5 “**Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”

**Romans 8:9** “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, *if* indeed the Spirit of God *dwells in you*.”

Paul has already admitted that we are all at times weak in the area of the flesh (sinful nature). He told us in Romans 7, that he himself struggles,

**Romans 7:19** “For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

*He resolved this in the beginning of the chapter telling us*

**Romans 8:1-2** *“*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, **2**because through Christ Jesus the law of *the Spirit* who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

In this last part of chapter 8, he admits weakness in spiritual matters as well, like not knowing what to pray.

But tells us that the Spirit helps with that as well…

**Romans 8**

**26**In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through *wordless groans*. **27**And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

This is a very interesting passage. Paul is telling us that when we find that we “just can’t seem to pray” or “don’t know what to pray for”, the Spirit prays for us, and through us through “wordless groans”. There are several interpretations of this phrase. Some believe it is just spiritual, inaudible groaning from the Spirit of God within us. Others believe it is a form of speaking in tongues that does not have any distinct linguistic interpretation. It could be both. I believe that it is what is referred to as “praying in the Spirit’.

*Praying in the Spirit* is mentioned at least three times in Scripture.

Paul writes to the Corinthians;

**1st Cor. 14:15** “I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.”

Jude, (who many believe was a son of Mary, just like Jesus and James) writes:

**Jude 20** “But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.”

Paul tells the Ephesians to “Put on the full armor of God”, then when you’re all suited up, pray in the spirit… *(belt, breastplate, shoes, shield…)*

**Eph. 6:17-18** “**17**…Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18**And *pray in the Spirit* on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

(Pastor Friend: “Sometimes when I’m confused or upset or don’t know the right words to articulate what’s going on inside me, I just pray in tongues, knowing that God hears and understands exactly what I’m trying to express.”)

As controversial as *Praying in tongues* is in some circles, it is very biblical. But Paul tells us that it is always directed *to* God.

**1st Cor. 14:2** “For anyone who speaks in a tonguedoes not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they *utter mysteries by the Spirit*.”

**Romans 8:28 “**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, whohave been called according to his purpose.”

**“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who:**

**(1)love him, AND (2) whohave been called according to his purpose.”**

This verse is often only quoted partially, which does not reveal its full intent.

**Romans 8:28 (KJV)**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Example:

“all things work together for good…” (not necessarily)

“all things work together for good for those who love God…” (not always)

It should be: “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.”

***Love God, respond to His calling, and commit to His purposes (not just your own), and watch what happens…it will all work together for good.***

**FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PREDESTINATION**

### The following verses in this chapter bring about the some of the most divisive doctrinal differences in all of the New Testament. They are the *cornerstone of Calvinism* and central to the *Calvinism vs. Arminianism* debate.

**29 “**For those God *foreknew* he also *predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30**And those he *predestined*, he also *called*; those he called, he also *justified*; those he justified, he also *glorified*.”

**Calvinism** emphasizes God's sovereignty, believing that God predestines certain individuals for salvation, and others for eternal damnation.

**Arminianism**, emphasizes human free will, believing that individuals have the choice to accept or reject God's grace, and decide to believe unto salvation on their own volition.

### Explanation: God is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent

### “All-knowing, All-present, and All-powerful” – Meaning he knows *everything* (future and past), He is everywhere, and can do anything.

### God is all-knowing, meaning He knows the future, otherwise he could not give message to prophets that foretell the future. This is very hard for human beings to conceptualize because we are limited in knowledge, presence, and power.

### Mark 10:27 “With man this is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

### He knew every person that was ever created even before they were conceived.

### That means He also knew every choice they would ever make, including whether or not “to believe”. This does not mean however that He made those choices for them.

### My position is that each person is given the choice on whether or not to believe in or reject God. He knows beforehand who will and who won’t believe, but that does not mean He takes away their free will. From our perspective, we need to believe to be saved.

### John 1:12 “those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

### John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

### Acts 16:31 “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

### Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

### Romans 10:9 “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

### 2nd Peter 3:9 “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

### Romans 8:29-30 (NKJV)“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

### *Example: “*whom he *called”* (“called” – gr. klétos *“invited”)*

### Jesus chose the 12 apostles, and called (invited) them to follow Him. They needed to respond on their own free will and follow Him. God knew who would and who wouldn’t follow, but the invitation was still genuine and legitimate.

### There was someone whom He called to follow that chose *not* to – “The Rich Young Ruler” (Matt 19). It’s possible to be chosen for a purpose, but not be obedient to follow.

### He invited all people to become his “followers” but not all were invited to be among the twelve apostles.

### *(Lazarus - his “best” friend, Joseph of Arimathea – a godly religious leader who believed, The former demoniac from the Gerasene’s who begged to come along, etc.)*

### *\*[we will continue on this topic in chapter 9]*

**31**What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32**He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? **33**Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. **34**Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—*is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

When Jesus ascended into heaven He did not forsake His followers. He did not just go into His heavenly reward and enjoy paradise forever with no thought of care for us on earth. Instead he remains actively interceding for us. Looking out for our welfare and watching over us. He *is at the right hand of God* which means He is of equal position, honor, power, and authority with God.

**Heb. 7:25** “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

Jesus never left us; He remains with us even in His heavenly place.

**Matt 28:20** “surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Heb 13:5**  “For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

There will be times of adversity, suffering, and tribulation. But He promises to be with us through it all.

**35**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **36**As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” **37**No, in all these things we are *more than conquerors through him who loved us.”*

Remember, the Roman church was subjected to some of the harshest persecution ever known (including torture and martyrdom). They knew however that Jesus stood in eternity watching over them, eager to welcome them into the place where He was.

Even when their lives were taken from them, Jesus was there celebrating their entrance into eternal glory. In fact in those moments, Jesus was probably not seated at the right Hand of the Father, He was standing next to it, welcoming them in.

That’s how it was for Stephen who was being executed for His faith in Jesus;

**Acts 7:55“**But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56**“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Jesus loves us. He loves us with an everlasting love. Just because we face trials, persecution, trouble and adversity, does not mean His love for us ever fails. As much as the Devil tries to make you doubt it, don’t let him…Jesus loves you and is interceding for you. He can carry you through any trial.

*[20 years ago, an 18-year-old girl who I knew, was overcome with grief, doubt, fear and depression. She took her own life. It was one of the saddest funerals ever. But the Preacher said these words. “In that moment, she did not know how much Jesus loved her and how much God is for her, not against her, … but she knows it now. And if she was here she would say to each of us. “Never doubt the love that God has for you, and his power to bring you through anything that comes your way…”]*

Regardless of what you are facing in this life, remember God’s love is greater and if He is for you, who can be against you? We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

Final verses: “Benediction”

**38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. <>**