

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - August 26, 2021

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Title: "When Bad Things Happen"

Subtitle: "The Rest of the Story"

Scripture Reference: Romans 8:28

"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."

I. Introduction

A. Paul Harvey became famous for his books and radio Broadcasts in which he would tell interesting stories about people going from rags to riches, tragedy to triumph, and failure to success.

B. He would keep the character's identity a secret until the end, then reveal the well-known person's name and then he would say, "And now you know - the rest of the story!"

C. Romans 8:28 is the Christian's "rest of the story" because it tells us how the story of the believer's life is going to end. This verse is a mystery because we don't know why certain things happen to us or how God makes those things work together for good.

D. Some may mistakenly believe that we must understand this promise before we can trust that God really is in control. But his promise doesn't depend upon our understanding it.

E. As a matter of fact, many need to unlearn some things they believe about this verse. I'll explain what I mean. Let's look at what Romans 8:28 doesn't say before we can understand what it does say. Follow along with me as I lay out five facts about this Scripture.

II. Fact #1 - We don't hope God is in control, we know it.

A. Most people quote this verse as - "God works all things together for good." But they leave off three very important words, "And we know." The problem is this; most Christians don't know it; they only hope it's true.

B. The Apostle Paul, in spite of his trials, said he knew it was true. He didn't write to the Romans, "I've been persecuted, beaten, and stoned, and to tell you the truth, I don't see how any of this can possibly turn out for good."

C. Nor did he say, "I know I am writing this letter to many different people, and I can't say for sure how your situations will turn out. I hope things work out for you. Good luck!"

D. Even though Paul didn't know what the readers in Rome were going through or what we would be going through today, he made a universal statement of truth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, informing us, that we can know God works all things together for good to them that Love God.

E. Life is like a jigsaw puzzle. God sees the completed picture, but we see only one piece at a time. Some pieces have us puzzled while we wait for them to fit together. But after the pieces come together, we can look at the completed picture and say, "Now I see. Now I understand."

F. The key is trusting that God will fit the pieces together before we see it. We don't have to understand before we can believe what God says is true. Consider the following as I make my point.

1. When Jesus gave a man his sight in the ninth chapter of John (John 9:1-7), the blind man didn't understand how the eyeball functioned to make sight possible.
2. When Jesus healed the paralyzed man (Mark 2:1-12), he didn't first require the man to understand how his paralysis

would be corrected.

3. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus wasn't capable of understanding how he was going to be resurrected. He was dead!

G. Neither do we need to understand in order to trust God. A college student once commented to the great theologian Charles Spurgeon, "I'm having a hard time understanding why bad things happen to people. It doesn't seem fair."

H. Spurgeon replied, "Young man, give God credit for knowing some things that you don't!"

III. Fact #2 - God doesn't cause all things to happen, but He Causes things to work together.

A. Some people wrongly believe that God causes everything to happen, even evil and tragedy. While He does not cause all things, He is in control of all things. "Cause" means "to initiate." "Control" means "to have a hand upon."

B. For example, God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13). He does, however, allow temptation to take place. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you (i.e., allow you) to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

C. Satan may tempt someone to sin against God. Even though the devil causes the temptation, the Lord controls the parameters by allowing it to only go so far. Then He intervenes to make a way out of the temptation.

D. This shows that God does not cause temptation, but He is definitely in control of it. He also doesn't cause all things to happen to us, but He is able to take those things and work them

together for our good.

IV. Fact #3 - Not all things are good, but God works all things together for good.

Consider the following: Not everything that happens to us is good. But God will work all things into His will.

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." [**Ephesians 1:11**]

A. Many people have no problem believing Satan can take something good and turn it to evil. But those same people have a hard time believing that God can take evil and turn it to good. Consider the following:

1. Satan in the Garden of Eden took something good and turned it evil. Did it ever occur to you that the forbidden fruit was good? It certainly wasn't evil. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and said, behold, it was very good. ..." [**Genesis 1:31**]
2. Our neighbor's refrigerator may be filled with good food, but we do not have the right to walk into their home and help ourselves to their food. The food is good, but unless you have permission to eat it, it is forbidden.

Point: In the Garden of Eden, the forbidden fruit was good. Satan deceived Eve into believing that because the fruit was good, it wasn't forbidden.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (**Genesis 3:7**)

B. Satan tempted her to take something good (even though it was forbidden) and her actions, and especially Adam's act of disobedience, brought about evil. If Satan can turn good to evil,

can't God, who is much more powerful, turn evil to good? **Of course, He can!** We have many more examples throughout Scripture.

1. Let's look at Joseph. Because of his brothers' great hatred for him, they threw him into a pit in the wilderness. That wasn't good. Then some Midianite traders sold him into slavery. He was taken to Egypt where he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and was thrown in prison for doing the right thing.

While there, he helped a man get out of prison by interpreting a dream, but the man forgot to help Joseph get released. He spent more years in prison. Those were not good things. But don't miss - the rest of the story. As it turned out, Joseph was released from prison, became second in command over Egypt, and was reunited with his brothers. He saved them and an entire nation during a time of famine. And now you know - the rest of the story!

2. Look at the story of Esther as another example of God working something that was evil into something good.

Comment: Don't make a mistake of thinking evil will triumph because it appears to be winning. Just continue to put your trust in the Lord and you'll soon see - the rest of the story.

V. Fact #4 - God doesn't do this for everyone, but for those who love Him.

A. The Bible tells us that God works all things together for good because He knows ahead of time who will choose to love him.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and

whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30)

B. This verse is a picture from eternity past to eternity future. We are currently sitting in the present, looking at our situation. But God sees things from a different perspective. Because He sees all of time, He can intervene and make things turn out for His glory.

Eternity Past Future	Present	Eternity
<i>Foreknow Predestined</i>	<i>Called Justified</i>	<i>Glorified</i>

C. God knows everything before it happens, which is foreknowledge. That means He knows ahead of time who will call on Him to be saved and who won't.

D. Because of God's foreknowledge and His Omniscience, He knows our mistakes and shortcomings ahead of time. Through His predestination, regardless of how the odds may seem, God can intervene and turn things around in our life for good. He did it for Joseph's life, He did in Esther's life, and He will do it in your life.

VI. Fact #5 - God's purpose is not just to make us happy; but to make us like Jesus.

A. The promise is for those who are "called according to His purpose." Some may tend to think that the Bible was written only to this generation of people in order to make us happy. The moment we experience one ounce of pain, we are thrown into a tailspin of doubts and questions. "God, where are you! Why is this happening to me?"

B. However, have you considered what we are predestined to? Not heaven, nor hell. According to Romans 8:29 - we are "predestinate to be confirmed to the image of his Son."

C. Although God works all things together for good, He is also using our trials and difficulties to chisel off our rough places. He is in the process of making us like Jesus. So, He is more interested

in developing our character than in making us comfortable.

VII. Summary

A. I have one last short story that I would like to share with you as you continue to consider that God truly does work all things together for good for those who love Him. Here is the story.

A Christian named Bernard Gilpin was falsely accused of heresy by Bishop Bonner and was on his way to London for trial. His favorite saying was, "All things work out for the best." On his way, Gilpin broke his leg, which delayed his arrival.

Someone mocked him saying, "Is your broken leg for the best now?" Gilpin replied, "I believe so." Although he couldn't understand how a broken leg could possibly be in God's plan, he continued to trust God. It was for the best, as it turned out.

During the time he was delayed, Queen Mary died, the charges were dropped, and rather than being burned at the stake, he returned home in triumph.

B. Yes, Romans 8:28 really is true. And now you know - the rest of the story!

It's been a while but it's now interactive time once again. Please complete the Scripture passages below by filling in the blank spaces. All passages have been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine _____, and _____ not unto thine own _____."

[Proverbs 3:5-6]

"The _____ of a good man are _____ by the _____: and he _____ in his way."

[Psalm 37:23]

"For I know the _____ that I _____ toward you, saith the Lord, _____ of _____, and not evil, to give you an _____ end."

[Jeremiah 29:11]

"_____ is he that hath the God of _____ for his _____, whose _____ is in the Lord his _____: which made heaven, and _____, the sea, and all that therein is: which _____ truth for ever."

[Psalm 146:5-6]

"There hath no _____ taken you but such as is _____ to man: but God is _____, who will not _____ you to be _____ above that you are able; but will with the _____ make a way of _____, that ye may be able to _____ it."

[1 Corinthians 10:13]