

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 8: 28
PREACHED ON MAY 31, 2026, BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- We will consider this verse under 5 points. This is one of the verses in the Bible that brings significant comfort to the Christian, and it is my pleasure to spend the rest of our time this morning understanding what God is telling us in this verse.

➤ **FIRSTLY. GOD WORKS**

- The apostle tells us that, in all things, God works. God governs all things. Paul had experienced opposition to his ministry; he had been tortured, faced rejection, been beaten, imprisoned, and he tells us that God was working in all of these sufferings he went through. Christians throughout the generations have been killed for their faith, terminated from their employment, isolated from their family and friends, and the apostle said God governs all of these experiences. God governs all these forms of suffering, which have brought great discomfort to Paul and Christians throughout the centuries.
- God is active in world affairs as well as in the lives of every individual. He is a hands-on God in both your life and mine. He is not detached from His creation, but works in His creation. God is intimately and continuously involved in this world and in our lives. At the core of our faith as Christians is this truth: God is working in all things.

➤ **SECONDLY. GOD IS WORKING FOR GOOD**

- God is not only working in all things; He is working for good in all things. He is not an evil God, not an immoral or neutral God, but a good God. He is a loving, compassionate, holy, and merciful God. He is kind and generous, and all of His workings reflect who He is, His character. If God is working and God is good, it follows logically that God works for good.
- This truth is not always obvious to us because when we look at the world and see things God has allowed or is allowing to happen, we have many questions. We question why God would allow certain things to happen because they do not appear good to us in any shape or form. How can a Christian suffering from cancer view his suffering as a good thing? How is the damaging of your reputation because of your love for Christ a good thing? Paul encourages us to come to this truth, regardless of what we are experiencing or what a loved one is experiencing: that God works for good in all He does for the Christian.

- God the Father, through His beloved Christ, is sustaining creation, and He is working all things for good. Do you believe that the God of Heaven is constantly and everywhere working for good? Paul tells us first of all that God works in all things and secondly that God works for good.

➤ **THIRDLY. GOD WORKS FOR GOOD IN ALL THINGS**

- When we have enough food to feed our family and meet our basic needs, we know that God works for good. When we get promoted at work, have a raise, or get a job that aligns with our faith, we know that God works for good. We know that God works for good in these things I have described because they are good. Promotion is good, having a raise is good. The farmers living in Pella know that God works for good when He allows rain to water their crops; they know that God works for good when they have a bountiful harvest, but Paul says that God works in all things for good.
- “All things.” The context from which Paul made this expression is suffering. Paul is talking about our present sufferings, frustrations, bondage to decay, groanings, weaknesses, hardships, famine, nakedness, danger, etc. These are things that contradict anything good; these are very, very negative experiences, painful and devastating experiences, yet the apostle says God works for good in all of these things. He works for the good in all things.
- Paul is not saying that suffering in itself is good. Suffering was not part of the original creation; it is an intruder as a result of sin. He is not saying that nakedness, not having clothing to wear, is good in itself; he is not saying that being isolated and denied certain privileges for being a Christian are good things in themselves. Not everything that happens to the Christian is good in themselves.
- When Jesus stood at the grave of His beloved Lazarus, He wept; He was heartbroken because death is not good in itself. Jesus didn’t say that I thank God that Lazarus has died; rather, He saw death as an intruder into the world, and He wept. Death and all forms of suffering are not good in themselves. Paul, however, says that God works in all these wicked, cruel, evil things for the good of Christians. God does good things to us through even the cruel experiences we have. He uses all things for good.
- Paul wrote these words out of experience. He had a difficult, troubled life. He shared tears, faced rejection, imprisonment, opposition, lost his family, reputation, and promising career. He was stoned and beaten several times. Here is a man who knows what suffering is, a man forsaken by his own converts, a man whose converts turned against him, and some had fallen away from the faith, yet he said in all things God works for the good of His people. God uses and overrules these negative experiences for the good of believers. Even trials, tribulations, illnesses, disappointments, failures, and sins are transformed by God's providence to ultimately benefit His people.

- Sometimes God uses these experiences to awaken us. We may have been wandering away from God, and God sends something painful into our lives. We realize we need God, and we begin to pray because we haven't prayed for months, and then we cast ourselves on God. Maybe someone has treated you painfully, and in your pains, you go to God and cast yourself on Him. Sometimes we go through humiliating and embarrassing experiences, such as things we have spent so much time and effort on falling apart. God uses all of these disappointments and failures to humble us, to remove pride, and to remind us of how weak and limited we are.
- God sometimes uses our failures and the mistreatment of others to take us out of worldly pleasures, to make Himself real to us, to work holiness in us, or to make us heavenly-minded. Some of you have gone through losses – loss of a loved one, career, savings, etc., and you have been devastated by these troubling things, but you can be assured that God works through these negative things for your good. Paul says in all things that can possibly happen to the Christian, God works in them and through them for our good. God works, God works for good, and God works for good in all things.

➤ **FOURTHLY. GOD WORKS FOR GOOD IN ALL THINGS TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM AND WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE**

- Paul gives an important limitation or qualification in this verse. He said, “to those who love Him.” He also mentioned another qualification: “who have been called according to His purpose.” Both limitations or qualifications mean the same thing and refer to the same people. Paul is saying that God is not working for good in all things for everyone. There are so many people in this world, but you cannot say that God is working for good in all things for them. There is no comfort in this verse, no hope for so many people. So many people face the judgment of God in hell, but for those who love Him, their position is entirely different. For them, God works for their good in all things. Who are these people?

❖ **THOSE WHO LOVE GOD**

- They are those who love God. The word translated as 'love' in this verse is used universally in the Bible to refer to commitment. The illustration or picture of this love in the Bible is in the realm of marriage. God pictures His relationship with men and women as in marriage, where there is absolute commitment, the giving of oneself utterly to another. Jesus describes Himself as the bridegroom and His church, the Christians, as the bride. God is described as the lover of our souls.
- There is a love that is short of commitment. An old friend of mine recently connected with me on Facebook and told me about her marriage, which broke down in 2024. When she asked for marriage after being with this man for some time, he called her and said he wasn't ready for that commitment. He loves her

but only wants them to be good friends, nothing serious. She rejected his offer, but after 5 years, he came back, and they got married. After 2 children, the marriage has collapsed. Clearly, her ex-husband didn't want the commitment that comes with marriage. He didn't want to give himself utterly to her.

- There are many professing Christians whose relationship with Jesus Christ is precisely like that. They just want to be good friends with Christ, nothing serious, no commitment, just good friends. They want a Jesus they could say they belong to with their lips, sing of Him at church, profess Him publicly as demanded by their denomination, etc., and that is enough for their relationship, but not the Jesus who tells them how to live their lives. Loving God includes obedience to God's commandments, but they don't want anything more serious than that.
- But the Jesus of the Bible says, "No, I don't want to be just good friends with you, I want to be your husband, I want to be not only your savior but Lord of your life. I want to come and dwell in you, giving you a new nature, new interest, and new motivation. I want you to be absolutely committed to me all the days of your life on earth." That is what Paul meant by "those who love Him." I want to pause now and kindly ask you to examine yourself to see if this is the kind of relationship you have with God. Are you absolutely committed to Him? Do you consider Him as the Lord of your life and not only a Jesus you add on to your life? Are you living the way you want and have just joined a denomination, made a profession of faith, just to be identified with the Christians?
- Paul could have used the expression, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who believe him." Believe Him and not love Him as used. Paul instead said "those who love Him," and even used the word "love" in the sense of commitment. I speculate that the apostle, inspired by the Spirit, used "love" because true love is tested in adversity. Fake love that only wants what it would get from its lover shuns away when there is adversity.
- Satan thought that Job's love for God was fake. Satan thought that Job was only committed to God because of his interest. Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Does Job fear God for nothing, said Satan to God arrogantly. In other words, Satan is saying to God, "You take away his wealth, health, family, and everything he has and see whether Job serves you or not." God permitted the Devil to test Job, and after the first test, Job cried to the Lord, saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21. He bowed his head to the ground and worshiped God. Later on, he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." When his wife urged him to "curse God and die," Job refused. That is the man who loves God.
- I recently read this devotional attributed to Charles Spurgeon. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:37. We learn that Christ is not loved at all if not loved above all things and all people. The measure of your love for Christ reveals the depth of your spirituality more than your words, gifts, or outward activities ever can. Many speak of Him, few treasure Him above all. What you truly love most will rule your decisions, command your

devotion, shape your sacrifices, and determine the direction of your life. A man will part with anything for what he values supremely. So the question is not merely, "Do you love Christ?" but "Do you love Him more than these?" More than comfort. More than applause. More than ambition. More than possessions. More than sin. Christ will not take second place in the heart He purchased with His blood. He calls for chief affection. Supreme devotion. Wholehearted surrender. Love for Him becomes the fire that fuels obedience, holiness, sacrifice, and perseverance. Do not be content with a cold profession of Christianity. Seek to excel in love for Christ above all else.

❖ **THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE**

- Paul also described the Christian not only as the man and woman who love God, but also as those who have been called according to His purpose. The word "called" is frequently used in the Bible, basically in two ways. To the Corinthians, Paul said they are called to holiness. He speaks of himself as someone called by God. Generally, the word called is used for anybody and everybody who hears the voice of God in the gospel. So the call of God is heard when someone hears the gospel preached. God calls anyone who hears the gospel of Christ preached, and that is the general use of the word called.
- The other sense in which the word called is used in the Bible is what Paul meant here in verses 28 and also in verse 30 of this chapter 8. "28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." "30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." So, what is the meaning of the word 'called' as used here?
- It is not true to say that God works all things good for everyone who ever hears the gospel preached. That is not true because so many people have heard the gospel preached and have rejected it. If a man, woman, or a child hears the gospel but refuses to take God's call seriously, the verdict the Bible has placed on that person is eternal damnation and eternal destruction in hell. The call here is God making those who heard the gospel respond positively to it; it is God making them Christians; it is God adopting them as His sons and daughters. That is what Paul meant by the expression: "who have been called according to his purpose." Being called, as it applies to Christians, is more than just hearing the gospel preached; it is the power of God actually drawing people to Christ.
- Every true Christian has had this experience of the calling of God, where the gospel draws you to Christ even if you didn't want to. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day." John 6:44. Every Christian has been drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know from my own experience how God dragged me to Himself when I was not even aware of what was going on. How He changed all of my priorities, interests, motivations, and life direction.

- This call, also called the effectual calling of the Spirit, is illustrated in the Bible at the grave of Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead for 4 days and had been in the grave for this number of days, confirming that he was indeed dead. His sister Martha even said to Jesus, “By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” It looked ridiculous to call a dead body, but that was what Christ did. Lazarus heard the voice of God, and his bones began to move, and life came into him, and he arose and came forth. This is exactly what happens to every Christian at conversion.
- The Bible describes all unbelievers as spiritually dead people, just as Lazarus was dead physically. Before our conversion, we were all spiritually dead people. We were dead in our sins and trespasses. Like Lazarus, we also heard the voice of God, the call of God through the gospel, and what happens? Life came into us, and we were born again.
- Some of you have heard the voice of God for a long time and have resisted that voice. You are unwilling to face your sin and repent, you are unwilling to face your desperate need, and you are unwilling to commit yourself to such a loving Jesus. Just as Jesus brought Lazarus from the grave, He is willing to draw you to Himself for an everlasting commitment. He is not calling you to a mere relationship but to a commitment to Him. This is what distinguishes true Christians from false ones. How did Paul describe the true Christian in verse 28?
- The Christian is the man, woman, or child who has lovingly committed themselves to God, has responded positively to the gospel, and has been born again. The Christian believes in God, trusts Him, longs for Him, and delights in Him. Did you notice that Paul used a present continuous participle: “those who love him.” This means these people are God lovers, and it is always true of them in every circumstance – whether in pain or in times of peace. They love God whether in suffering or not. They love God not occasionally or momentarily, but all the time. Is that true of you? Are you one of those people being described here? Can you truly say to yourself, “I love you God, even when trials and difficulties come my way?” Can you say to God: “This suffering is breaking my heart but I am not angry with you, I am not bitter, and I still love you, trust you?” If this is true of you, then you can be assured that God is working in all things for your good.

➤ **FIFTHLY. AND WE KNOW**

- The apostle writes that “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Christians are people who know the truth. The Holy Spirit that dwells in us makes it clear to us what we should believe, what we should know, and what we should reject. Paul seemed to have drawn the conclusion that Christians must know the Scripture when he wrote: “And we know.”

- So many professing Christians and congregations cannot identify false teachers because they do not know their Scripture. They don't want to study the Scripture because they don't want a committed relationship with Christ. What then happens in these congregations? False teachers are raised up, false teachers join them, and take up leadership positions. You might say to these professing Christians that they are victims of the false teachers, but they are not. False teachers are God's judgment on these professing Christians because they don't want God, but in the name of religion, the name of denomination, plan on getting everything their carnal heart desires. False teachers are the judgment of God upon them because they don't want the God who wants to be the Lord of their life, and the God who calls them to radically battle their personal sins daily.
- Even in so many Reformed and Evangelical churches, the congregations are lifeless simply because dead men preach to them and lead them. These congregations have too many men who are ministers, preachers, elders, and deacons before they know how to be Christians. It is my prayer that we do not succeed in this church plant if we are going to do it without God, because it is better to have a little church that is Biblical, God-centered, and real than a booming church that lacks God's presence.
- Paul says the true Christian knows the truth and understands that God works in all things for the good of His children. There are many things we don't know in this life. Even in our own lives, we don't know what is going to happen in the next moment. But there is one thing we are certain of: our secure eternity with God. The Christian knows that God is working in all things for his or her good and to bring him or her to heaven. We know that when God promises, He carries it out. He is a loving, good, caring, merciful, and all-powerful God. The believer may not understand why specific trials are happening or even know what to pray for in those moments, but can still be confident that God is working everything toward their ultimate good. The devil tries to make us focus on confusing particulars, but we must keep our eyes on God's guaranteed ultimate purpose.
- The Bible gives an example of how God works in all things for our good. When all the evil people plotted the death of Christ, they thought that they were bringing an end to His work of salvation. The Roman soldiers and Jewish leaders were all plotting against Christ, and they succeeded in killing Him. This looks like a very negative experience, but what did God do in it? God worked through these wicked leaders; He worked through their crucifixion of Christ for something marvelous, the salvation of sinners. Some of us know from personal experience how God worked in our negative circumstances to bring something good out of us.
- Even when a Christian falls into sin, God eventually uses it to show the believer their weakness, frailty, and fallibility. Sin shakes a believer's self-confidence, which is always a good thing. When Christians truly repent, they experience God's forgiveness more deeply. Like the prodigal son who came to know his father much more after returning home, a Christian can gain a deeper

understanding of God's grace through repentance. The experience brings Christians to see their constant need for grace, watchfulness, and care.

- Paul says things that appear to work against us, such as trials, difficulties, and things that work for us, which we call blessings, are all being directed by God according to His purpose. All things, everything, every part and portion of it, everything that's happening to you is working together. God made it like that. All is working together for our good, our immediate good, but still more our ultimate, our final good.

➤ **CONCLUSION**

- If you are a believer, you can laugh at all the uncertainties of the present and the future because they do not matter. The isolation, the rejections, the humiliation, the slandering, and the hatred are all tools God uses to bring good things to us. God is so powerful that He worked through the hatred and betrayal of Joseph's brothers, who sold him into slavery to promote him in Egypt. Joseph's position allowed him to provide for his family during the famine, bringing them to Egypt, and this migration preserved the lineage of Israel, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham. Not only Joseph's experiences but also those of saints recorded in Scripture, like Job, Jacob, David, and Paul, all testify that God's difficult dealings with them ultimately produced good.
- God is also working in all things, all the sufferings in your life, for your good if you are committed to Him and have responded positively to the call of the gospel. This is our security, and this is why we should rest on this truth and be hopeful simply because: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- If you are not yet a Christian, this verse does not bring you any comfort. God does not work in all things for your good, but rather for your destruction in hell. If you are not yet a child of God, hear this good news: anyone can become a child of God. This good news is: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12. True Christianity brings many blessings, both now and in eternity, and even God works in our present sufferings for our good.