

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 8: 29-30
PREACHED ON JUNE 14, 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. 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.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- Last week, the apostle Paul described God's purpose for the Christian as a 5-unbreakable chain. It starts with the first one and ends with the fifth. It begins with God's foreknowledge, God's electing love for the Christian before He laid the foundation of the world, and it ends with glorification. All 5 of these purposes apply to the same person, the Christian, and none applies to the non-Christian.
- We can also say that for those God has not poured out His electing love upon from eternity, He has not predestined them to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, and those He has not predestined, He will not make them Christians or true Christians, and all those who are not Christians or are false Christians are already condemned to hell. Just as God's purpose for the Christian has been determined from eternity, His purpose for the non-Christian and false converts has also been determined.
- We will look at verse 29 in particular this morning, where the apostle wrote: "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." The apostle is making a case here that Christians will ultimately become like Christ. Our end goal, God's purpose for us, culminates when we become like Christ. How will you describe a Christian in simple terms? A Christian is a man, woman, or child who worships God. The apostle is therefore saying that Christians ultimately become who they worship. This is not true for only the Christians, but also for non-Christians; they ultimately become what they worship.
- Everyone worships, and everyone ultimately becomes who or what they worship. The term worship in this context doesn't mean just singing hymns on Sunday morning. Rather, we worship whatever we love most, the magnet that has the greatest pull on our hearts. Humans may worship the true God or something inferior to God. God warns us about what or who we must worship in His Commandments. The first of the Ten Commandments says: "You shall have no other gods before Me." The second continues: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."

- Christian philosopher James K.A. Smith notes, “At the heart of our being is a kind of ‘love pump’ that can never be turned off,” so that we are always worshiping something. The Christian worships God, and the non-Christian and false converts worship something else. For the Christian, the purpose of divine worship is not to give something to God; it is to worship Him. It is part of our nature, and something is missing when we omit the worship of our Lord and worship something inferior to God.
- Every human being is ultimately transformed into the image of what or who they worship. The fruit we bear shows who or what we worship. Whatever has captured our deepest affection, whatever becomes the focus of our attention, whatever consumes our energies and our passions, is what we become like. Thus, when other people or the rest of creation encounter us, they encounter a reflection of whatever god we are worshiping, for we actually bear the likeness of that god.

➤ **NON-CHRISTIANS BECOME LIKE THEIR IDOLS**

- When we considered chapter 1 of this letter to the Romans, the apostle echoed this point that every human being becomes what or who we worship. Every human being is a worshiper. You will hear about people who describe themselves as atheist and even if they believe that there is no God, these people still worship something. They may be worshiping money, sex, power, fame, or something else. You therefore cannot divide human beings into those who worship and those who don't. Everybody worships; it's just a matter of what, or whom, we worship.
- Speaking about the non-Christian, Paul wrote in verses 21-31. “21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being, birds, animals, and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.
- 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- 28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice.

They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.”

- The apostle describes the non-Christian as someone who suppresses the truth about God revealed in creation and providence due to pride, wickedness, and spiritual darkness. Non-Christians and false Christians do not glorify God as God or give thanks to Him. They reject God and do not retain knowledge of Him, and what they do instead is to make false gods and idols against God's Commandment, and they worship these creatures rather than the Creator.
- The non-Christian and the person who is a false convert ignore God's judgment on sin and take pleasure in sin. Satan deceives them into thinking that sin is not a big deal, everybody does it. People worship politicians, and in several communities in the world, inanimate creatures are worshiped. Paul says the non-Christian has made gods in the form of corruptible man, birds, animals, and reptiles, and they bow down to these idols. What comes out of these practices of worshiping people, animals, possessions, etc.? Do the worshipers of idols become like Jesus Christ? No, they become like what and who they worship. Does worshiping idols that cannot speak, talk, think, love, etc., make the non-Christian a better person? No, they basically become dumb like the idols.
- This is how Paul described what these non-Christians and false converts become: They become fools. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, dumb like the people and objects they worship. They become foul and unclean because God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts. We now have churches ordaining homosexuals as leaders. How can this be in the church of God? How can professing Christians degrade their bodies with one another? Well, the only explanation we have from Scripture is that these false converts engage in these vile and perverse behaviors because God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts, because you become what or who you worship.
- The apostle also tells us that non-Christians and false converts develop reprobate minds and are unable to think clearly. The Book of Proverbs tells us that “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding,” and because these people do not worship the true God, they can't think clearly. True Christianity is wisdom.
- Paul describes for us what the non-Christian becomes as proof that you ultimately become who and what you worship: “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.”
- Peter also describes for us who the false converts, false teachers, false professors of Christianity, etc., become in 2 Peter 2:12: “They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed,

and like animals they too will perish.” The unbeliever and the false converts have no life. Now we will look at the opposite, the Christians and their worship.

➤ **CHRISTIANS BECOME LIKE JESUS CHRIST**

- Just as non-Christians and false converts who worship money, sex, power, fame, or something else take on the characteristics of those idols, similarly, those who worship God become more and more like Him: “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” according to 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- Although idols like money, sex, power, fame, or something else cannot speak, love, see, hear, smell, or feel, they are incredibly powerful at transforming those who worship them into their likeness. In the same way, the true Christian is transformed into the image of Christ.
- The apostle says: “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” To whom God loved, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” God had predetermined in eternity past that a certain group of people would be conformed to the likeness of Christ, His son. In eternity, He selected a certain group of people out of love, and His plan for them is to make them like His Son, Jesus Christ.
- All the worship we offer God, all the services we offer for God, and all the good and bad things that God brings our way have one and only purpose, and it is to make us like Christ. The desire of the true Christian is to be more and more like Christ, so we groan when we stumble in sin. We grieve when we are not able to keep God’s Moral Law and live by the Sermon on the Mount.
- We groan when we say things we shouldn’t have said, when we hear things we shouldn’t have heard, when we wear things we shouldn’t have worn, and act in unbiblical ways. True Christians battle sins daily, confess when they stumble, repent of those sins, and immediately try to live according to God’s way.
- Why does God want to make us like Christ? Paul tells us in verse 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.” He wants us to be like Christ so that He, Christ, might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. All the apostle is saying is that God wants to make us like Christ to honor Christ. Jesus is honored when His adopted brothers and sisters reflect His holiness and glory.
- God’s purpose for the Christian ends in glorification, in which the Christian will be changed to be like Jesus Christ in His glory, completing God’s plan. The sinful part of us will be gone, all corruption and decay will be removed. All the wicked and evil tendencies and thoughts we have will be removed. We shall be delivered finally and completely from every single conceivable effect of sin and evil. There will not be a trace left. We will have a resurrected body like Christ.

➤ CONCLUSION

- Our worship is either aimed at our ruin or at our restoration. We are becoming what we worship. “For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Ultimately, we will become like who or what we worship. For the Christian, God from eternity has predestined us to become like Christ and spend eternity with Him. Becoming more like Christ is the desire of every true believer, and it is encouraging to know that God had the same desire for us before He laid the foundation of the world. Should we therefore not examine ourselves daily to confirm how Christlike we are becoming? Should we not be concerned about how we are living daily by the Sermon on the Mount? Should we not pay attention to how we keep the Ten Commandments daily?
- Are you poor in spirit? Do you wholeheartedly believe that no matter your status in life, you must recognize your spiritual poverty before you can come to God in faith to receive the salvation He offers? Do you mourn over your sins, are you honest about your own sin before God and humble enough to ask for forgiveness and healing, and do you radically wage war against your personal sins? Becoming more Christlike is the result of freedom from sin, so as we offer ourselves to God, sin is no longer our master, and we are more clearly identified with Christ.
- Do you endeavor to be meek and humble towards God and others, or have you allowed pride to take a better part of your life? Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness? Are you actively seeking the right relationship with God? Are you merciful? Do you show forgiveness and compassion to those in need? Are you pure in heart, are you having a singleness of heart toward God, no hypocrisy, no guile, no hidden motives, and an uncompromising desire to please God in all things? Are you a peacemaker who shares the gospel with others? Like Christ, do you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you?
- If you are a false convert and playing a church, you should be concerned about what you are ultimately becoming because of what you worship. If you are a non-Christian, you should be concerned about what you are ultimately becoming because of what you worship. It doesn't matter how sincere you have lived your life, how many times you have been in the church, or how many theological words you know, if you are outside of Christ and therefore not like Him on the Day of Judgment, you will hear these words from Christ: “On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’”
- Hell is your destination if you are not a Christian or a false convert. What is hell? Hell is a condition in which life is lived outside God, and all the restraints of God's holiness are removed. Hell is people living to all eternity, the kind of life they are living now, only that it's much worse. Can you imagine anything worse? It's people without any control of God at all, finally abandoned by God for eternity.