

Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 5:36 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Romans 8:19-39

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren, and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified!

And so--in the middle of last nite's text--we come (as Shepherd's Notes notes) to one of the favorite verses in Romans (and the Bible), a verse that believers so often turn to for "reassuring words that God has not deserted us, but is at work in every circumstance of our life"--with the goal of conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ! And not only this, but in verse 30 which follows, Paul "bridges eternity past and future with his majestic summary of God's redemptive purpose!" With glorification being the third and final step in God's "salvation plan"! But we're not there yet!

Dr. Constable put it this way: God foreknew and predestined His elect before the foundations of the Earth (Ephesians 1:3-4), to be conformed to the image of God. He accomplished that goal only partially through the believer's justification! He is presently accomplishing it through the believer's progressive sanctification! And He will accomplish it completely (someday!) through our glorification!

Romans 8:18 begins our text with the idea that the believer's "sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed!" And so, as Moo notes, there's an ongoing tension between the "already and the not yet"! Paul writes, in fact, that because of the marring effects of the Fall (Genesis 3:17-19), the whole creation "groans" as it "waits eagerly for the revelation of the sons of God...in hope that it will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"! And not only that, but we ourselves (as believers, in this present life) are characterized by Paul as "groaning within ourselves as we eagerly wait for our adoption as sons and the redemption of our body...in hope and with perseverance for what we do not yet see"!

Paul echoes this sense of longing in Philippians 3:20-21 where he writes: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself!"

And (back to Romans 8:26-27) we're reminded again that we have the indwelling Holy Spirit, who "helps our weakness in knowing how to pray...and searches and knows our hearts...and intercedes for us according to the will of the Father!" Romans 8:28 then follows!

This is also consistent with what Paul writes in Philippians 1:6--"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ!"

"What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us"? He who did not spare His Own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things!" And then: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:31-32, 35)

The Willmington's Guide to the Bible includes this story: When the staunch believer John Chrysostom was brought before the Roman Emperor in the fifth century and threatened with banishment for his faith, he replied, "Thou canst not banish me, for this world is my Father's house. "But I will slay thee," said the Emperor! "Nay, thou canst not," said the noble champion of the faith, "for my life is hid with Christ in God." "I will take away thy treasures!" "Nay, but thou canst not, for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there!" "But I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friends left!" "Nay, thou canst not, for I have a friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me! I defy thee; for there is nothing that thou canst do to hurt me!"

And so, Paul sums up (in verses 37-39) the essence of all that he has expounded on in the first eight chapters of Romans with a "hymn of praise" and one of the greatest affirmations of faith in God in the Bible--including a great reminder of the believer's "eternal security"--"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

What more could He say!

What about Israel? Check out Romans 9!

Meanwhile, walk with the King this week and be a blessing! (Words adapted from Dr. Robert Cook's way of closing his daily radio broadcast--"The King's Hour" which I used to listen to a long time ago!)

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