

Romans Session 121
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Romans 8:28 (NASB)

²⁸ 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.

We have been talking about the call of God in a person's life. And that based on that call comes the promises of security and the recognition that all things work together for good, in that person's life.

We also found out that these promises and this working is given to those who love God. And we have talked about the different aspects of love in the Believers life. What it brings, how it affects our everyday actions, and how it deepens our relationship with the Lord.

And these workings operate strictly according to God's will and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We said, that while it is imperative for human faith to be involved in Salvation, God's gracious initiation of salvation is even more imperative.

Jesus declared categorically,

John 6:65b (NASB)

⁶⁵ "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

God's choice not only precedes man's choice but makes man's choice possible and effective.

This time we want to talk a little more about this calling, this initiative by God to bring man to Himself.

Paul not only was called by Christ to salvation;

Acts 9:1-19 (NASB)

¹ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

³ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;

⁴ and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

⁶ but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

⁷ The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus.

⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹ And the Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying,

¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight."

¹³ *But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem;*

¹⁴ *and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."*

¹⁵ *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;*

¹⁶ *for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."*

¹⁷ *So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

¹⁸ *And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;*

¹⁹ *and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,*

But this was not all, he also was chosen as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1a (NASB)

¹ *Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,*

He described himself as being;

Philippians 3:12 (NASB)

¹² *Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.*

Paul addressed believers at Corinth as;

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NASB)

² *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:*

And then later he refers to all Christians as;

1 Corinthians 1:24 (NASB)

²⁴ *those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

All believers without exception, are called by God,

Ephesians 1:11 (NASB)

¹¹ *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

In its primary sense, God's call is once and for all, but in a secondary sense it continues until the believer is finally glorified.

And although Paul could and did acknowledge his permanent call both as a believer and as an apostle, he was still able to say;

Philippians 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

So, as we have already stated, although salvation is by God's initiative and power, it is never accomplished apart from faith.

It is therefore impossible, as some teach, that a person can be saved and never know it.

No person is saved apart from conscious and willful acceptance of Christ.

Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ *that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;*

¹⁰ *for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

It is possible, of course, for a weak unlearned, or sinful Christian to have later doubts about his salvation. But a person cannot come to Christ without knowing it.

As Paul explains a few verses later, God also uses human agents in making effective His call to salvation.

Romans 10:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ *How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?*

¹⁵ *How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"*

It is through the content of His Word, specifically the truth of the gospel message, and through the power of His Holy Spirit that God brings men to Himself.

Peter succinctly states the first of those two principles:

1 Peter 1:23 (NASB)

²³ *for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.*

And Paul states the second principle in these words;

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB)

¹³ *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

And how does that happen?

John 16:8 (NASB)

⁸ *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;*

So, the call comes through the work of the Holy Spirit using the Word of God.

So that brings us to the need to understand the Source of our Security.

THE SOURCE OF SECURITY

Romans 8:28B (NASB)

²⁸ *according to His purpose.*

We see at the end of verse 28, Paul states the source of the believer's security in Christ.

God causes all things to work together for the good for His children because that is **according to His divine purpose**.

Although the Greek text does not contain the term for **His**, that meaning is clearly implied in the context and is reflected in most translations.

Paul expands on and clarifies the meaning of God's **purpose** in verses 29-30, which will be discussed in the near future as we continue this study.

Briefly explained however, God's broader **purpose** is to offer salvation to all mankind. As the Lord declared at the beginning of His earthly ministry,

John 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*

¹⁷ *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*

In his second letter, Peter states that the Lord does not desire the condemnation of any person:

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB)

⁹ *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

In Romans 8:28, however, Paul is speaking of the narrower, restricted meaning of God's **purpose**, namely, His divine plan to save those whom He called and;

Romans 8:29a (NASB)

²⁹ *For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son*

The focus is on God's sovereign plan of redemption, which He ordained before the foundation of the earth.

While Israel was still wandering in the desert of Sinai, Moses told them,

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ *"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,*

⁸ *but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

The Jews were not chosen because of who they were but because of who God is.

The same is true of God's choosing believers. He chooses solely on the basis of His divine will and **purpose**.

Isaiah wrote:

Isaiah 46:9b-11 (NASB)

⁹ *For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,*

¹⁰ *Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*

¹¹ *Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.*

John wrote of Jesus,

John 1:12-13 (NASB)

¹² *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

¹³ *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The calling is initiated by God and brought to pass by the working of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, and it is all according to the will of God and not by man's doing.

Next time we will look at the purpose and progress of salvation.