***Sanctification  
RO115-02***

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This morning, please open your Bibles to Romans 8. We begin a new section, verses 28-30. Our subject is The Destiny of Good. This is segment number 1.

The world in which we live, we have learned from Romans 8, is under God's curse because of man's rebellion against God's authority in the Garden of Eden. We know that truth from the Word of God. We also know it from our personal experience. This divine judgment on nature results in human suffering and ultimately in death. Born again Christians in this scene are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit who is actually the divine token from God the Father of the believer's ultimate freedom from all the suffering and death that surrounds him in nature.

Thus, the Christian in the midst of a fallen world has hope of a much better future. The unbeliever in the midst of this same fallen world has no hope whatsoever. The Holy Spirit helps the believer, we have found, to pray effectively in order to help him to execute the basic practice which is necessary for the Christian to survive successfully in the devil's world.

Paul now, at verse 28, makes a summary statement about what God is doing with all of this suffering that members of the royal family of God, the church, experience, and this summary is an enormous point of comfort. Romans 8:28 is where we begin. A very famous verse. The first part of this verse says, "And we know."

The word "and" in the Greek Bible looks like this. It's a conjunction, "de." It is a word which comes in here at this point to indicate the transition is taking place to something new in this discussion about human suffering and the curse of God upon the world of nature. This word here, furthermore, carries an intensive sense to connote a very definite assurance about something so that we could almost translate it by saying, "and in fact," or, "and further." It is an emphatic declaration of something now that, in spite of all the dark picture that he has drawn in the immediate context concerning the suffering, the pain the struggles, the death, the frustrations, the disappointments, the treachery, and everything else that's in the devil's world, that we all experience here is a beacon of light. And it is a very emphatic beacon that we must not forget. It is what carries us through the time when the roof caves in on our heads. What we had emphatically is something that we know.

The word in the Greek Bible is "oida." This is the word in the Greek for knowledge which you secure through information. It is not knowledge you get through your experience. It is knowledge that comes from a source of reliable information, and the source of this information is the Bible. So, there is no debating or questioning what the Apostle Paul is about to say, and that's why he uses this word, "oida," instead of the other Greek word, "ginosko." He wants to make it clear that he is speaking on the basis of divine authority. This after all was the man who was directly, personally taught by Jesus Christ all the basic doctrines of the church age for a period of three years following his conversion when God took him out into the Arabian desert. So, we're not listening to some clown, some radio television personality preacher who has a lot of opinions about something that he thinks or feels, but we are talking about a man who has communicated with God. "Oida." Significant word. Knowing on the basis of information.

There is, of course, as you well know, an enormous ignorance in society today about religious matters because people are ignorant about what the Bible says. Now, you're not going to learn what's in the Bible simply by reading it. God has made it very clear that it was necessary for Him to provide a channel of communication of Biblical truth through the local church ministry and through the ability of a spiritual gift on the part of a pastor-teacher who can take the things of the Word of God and (through no credit to himself) God the Holy Spirit is able to communicate His words to the minds of people in an intelligible, understandable way.

People today make decisions about spiritual matters mostly on the basis of what they happen to be born into religiously. Whatever religious system they were born into that they view as absolutely, must be the truth. They never take it back and to say, "Now, where is the authority relative to God in this matter?" But when you ask that question, you could only go to one source, and that is the inerrant Bible. Not the Bible. The inerrant Bible - the one without any mistakes in it, because that's what the Bible is.

It is the arrogance from the sin nature in man that leads him to the stupid assumption that his human reason can discern spiritual truths. It is just that basic arrogance of the sinful nature that man thinks he can reason himself to what God thinks. He can make conclusions on his own ability as to what is the truth in the eyes of God. Now, God pities and laughs at that type of ignorant intellectual. Yes, he may be a high-IQ person, but because he is devoid of the divine viewpoint of doctrine, he is an ignorant intellectual.

There is another type of person who is not in-the-know but who thinks he is in-the-know who assumes that he can arrive at what God thinks on the basis of how he feels about things or on the basis of his experiences. The whole charismatic movement is one ball of Satanic delusion because these people have been convinced that how they feel is what is the means by which God teaches or what experiences they have is the evidence of what is true, never realizing that if there's any realm in which Satan is a pro, it is manipulating human feelings and it is giving you the experiences that you wish so that you will be deluded.

You would think that anybody in the charismatic movement with an ounce of sense that ever read the scriptural statement that at the end times Satan will be so powerful and so influential on human society that his experiences that he gives people will be of such miraculous dimensions that it will almost deceive even the elect people in the family of God. Those who are headed for heaven are going to swallow the hook. The charismatic movement as a whole has swallowed that hook, and in time, the price they will pay will be one that will cause them tears in heaven but from which they will never be able to recoup once they are there.

So, those who goeth apart from the Bible always come up only in one place: with what the Bible calls the doctrine of demons. Pure, human-viewpoint delusion. So, don't be trapped by the arrogance of your sin nature that makes you think that your reasoning capacity is fully equipped to find out what God thinks. That reason is fallen, and it will deviate from the truth because of that. And don't fall for the idea that what you have in experience demonstrates what God thinks or how you feel about things. Satan will manipulate you into deceit, into a deception there.

Now, knowing true doctrine has serious eternal consequences from the failure to be born again. If you don't know the Gospel, if you don't know how God saves, you will never be born again. That will cost you the lake of fire for all eternity. Or, for you as a Christian, it will cost you the loss of rewards in heaven. Your sincerity isn't going to cut it with God. Your love, as you call love, is not going to make it.

"Oida." This word, while perfect in form for you Greek students, is present in its meaning. That means that it's a constant pool of Christian understanding that we possess. It is in the active voice which means that an instructive Christian personally possesses this knowledge as the result of what he received from the scripture. It's an indicative statement of fact.

Then, the Greek text has the word "hoti." This is the word "that," and it's a conjunction, and it introduces what the Christian knows as a fact from the revelation of God in scripture. He knows something about what Paul calls here, "all things." This is one word in the Greek language. It's the Greek word "pas," which is an adjective, and the "all things" that he is referring to has to do with what's in the context. What has he been talking about? Well, all kinds of problems of personal suffering and death that are within nature that Christians are faced with. Look up at verse 18 in Romans 8. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." What he is referring to by "all things" is the sufferings of this present time -all the sufferings caused by the sin of man being interjected into what was originally God's perfect world in a perfect environment.

Christians suffer the tragedy of pain and death, of course, just like unbelievers do. Because we also have a sin nature, we also bear the consequences of living in a world which is under God's curse. So, all these things that come into the life of the Christian in the form of tragedies and pain are working together. They're mutually working with each other.

The word "working together" is the Greek word "sunergeo." "Sunergeo" means "to cooperate." A mutuality is indicated here. The pieces of the tragedies of a Christian's life are strangely enough mutually serving to achieve a certain goal. This word is, again, present in its tense, meaning this is always the case in the Christian's experience. It is active, which means that these bad things in life are actually interchanging a relationship with one another. It's indicative; it's a statement of fact.

Now, in some of the better manuscripts from which we get the Greek New Testament, there is a word interjected which is not interjected in our King James translation, and that is the word "God." There is good reason to believe that this word should have been in there, which then makes sentence read that, "God causes all things to work together for good." We usually have learned this verse as it is written here, "And we know that all things work together for good." Those things by themselves would not work for anything. It is God who causes them to work together for good, and significantly, in some of the better manuscripts, this word is actually there. It is, furthermore, better grammar.

We don't want to get too technical this morning, but you know that a singular verb does not take a plural noun as its subject. You know, you have in language, you have a noun, and then you have a verb that tells you what the noun is doing, and then you have an object that receives that action of the verb. So, you have that simple relationship in English. You have that basic relationship in Greek. But, there has to be a compatibility between singulars and plurals. That is, you don't say, "They is Christians." Now, some of you do, I know, [laughter] but you shouldn't. Some of you might say, "They is Christians." Right away, flags fly up and say, "That's bad grammar." That's bad Greek, too. And the reason for it is that you're trying to put a plural here, "they," with a singular verb, "is." That doesn't work.

Now, what you have actually in the Greek Bible is the same thing. The word "God" is singular; the verb, "sunergeo," is singular. "Sunergeo" is saying, "HE works together." Who works together? God works all things together. "Things" is plural; therefore, you have to say, "God works all things together." Now, that's good grammar - English and Greek - because it has the proper combination of plural and singular ending. God works together all things. "God works all things together" is the better translation, and in the better manuscripts, that word "God" is added. Whether the word is in there or not, we know that that's how if anything is going to work together out of all the sufferings and tragedies of our lives, it is God who has to put it together to make the pieces come out in a way that is a blessing.

So, God works all things together "for." This is the Greek word "eis." It's a preposition indicating purpose. So, we may say, "God works all things together for the purpose of." And then the dramatic word: "good." The Greek word is "agathos." This is the Greek word (there are different Greek words for God), this is the particular Greek word which refers to good in the sense of being beneficial to its recipient. This is a good that is not just something that is beautiful, like a beautiful picture. This is something that is a benefit to the person who receives it. Very important point to observe concerning the word. So that, all the things of suffering we experience somehow are working together for our benefit because of what God is doing. God puts all these pieces together for a benefit to us.

The tragedies, the pain, the pressures that we Christians experience are in themselves not good. So, don't go around like a dummy when people are hurting, in some crisis, in some tragedy, in some pain, and go quoting Romans 8:28 to them as if the thing that they are suffering at the moment is good, because it's not. It's bad. When death comes into our experience, it's bad. It's not good. When sickness comes into our experience, it's bad; it's not good. When people are treacherous to you, it's bad. When you lose your freedom, it's bad. When you suffer from poverty, that's bad. When you suffer privation, not even having the basic things that you need to survive, that's bad. That's not good. When war comes along, when we suffer crime and people steal things from us, that's bad; it's not good.

So that, all of these bad things come into our lives are not to be described as something good. They are to be recognized for what they are: the consequent tragedies of living in a world that is under God's curse and under Satan's domination. So, the verse is not saying that no matter how negative you are to the Word of God and how that causes you to mess up your life, that God is going to sort it all out to relieve you of the consequences of your actions. If you are negative to the Word of God, if you are bucking the tiger of God's way of doing things in His order, you will bring tragedy into your life, you will bring consequences, and you are completely out-of-line. And you are imagining something if you think that what this verse telling you is that God's going to sort out all that mess that you create for yourself, and He's going to make it all good. You make bad things into your life, and you're going to experience those bad things.

What this verse is telling us is that after all the suffering and tragedy has passed, wherever it comes from, and in the process of which they are not good, and they are not pleasant, and they are not desirable, God has an ultimate good which we end up with that puts in perspective the undeserved suffering as well as the deserved suffering.

But particularly the undeserved suffering, the suffering that is yours because you are a Christian. The suffering that comes to those of us who think that the Bible is a book that speaks for God without mistake and we insist that there is no compromise on that point. The suffering that comes to those of us who say that without Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, that you are going to spend eternity in hell no matter how prestigious or large a religious group that you may a part of that denies and rejects the person of Christ. You're doomed.

And for that, there is retaliation, and there is oppression, and there is suffering. And after all that is passed, there is a good that God is bringing that puts all that into perspective and enables us to realize that all the suffering and all the pain and all the death is going to be put into the memory hole of eternity in time and forgotten.

**Positional Sanctification**

This word "agathos," beneficial good, actually refers to three phases of divine good. Phase number 1. This is the provision of grace salvation through the person of Jesus Christ based upon such a simple little verse as, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. Or John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Believeth in Him. Trusting in Him as personal Savior. For the person who does that, God has provided the good of absolute righteousness which fully qualifies a person, then, for entrance into heaven.

In Romans 3:21-22, we have this pointed out to us, "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law [apart from human doing] is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets [being recorded in scripture]. Even the righteousness of God which is through faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." Here is an absolute righteousness that God provides which man cannot earn, which cannot be secured except as a gift from God but which, once received, upon receiving and trusting in Christ as personal Savior, gives you the absolute righteousness of God, which you need to enter heaven. Qualifies you for eternal life. Without that absolute righteousness to your credit, you will never enter the realm of eternal glory in heaven.

Now, the lost sinner has potential hope of potential salvation because God has satisfied His own justice against sin apart from human merit. We have come into human life under the condemnation of Adam's guilt upon us, and we are condemned to eternity in hell. We are candidates to the lake of fire, and we need to be born again. But God has not placed that impossibility on our shoulders. He has removed that completely from us by satisfying His own justice. He had to condemn. He had to punish our sin. He did it in the person of His son. So, everyone born into the human race under Adam's guilt with the sin nature doomed to hell, God does something good in the form of salvation. Personal adjustment to the justice of God upon trusting in Jesus Christ is a good from God in spite of all the evil and the suffering we may suffer in this realm.

Phase one of God's plan of good is actually what we call "positional sanctification." The word "sanctification" means "to be set apart to something." Positional sanctification is in our position in God's eyes, we are set apart to heaven through our salvation in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:10 says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." We have been set apart through the sacrifice of Christ, set apart to eternal life. That is the first good that Romans 8:28 speaks of. Our position in Christ gives us His absolute righteousness.

1 Corinthians 12:13 tell us how we get into Christ. It says, "For by one Spirit [one God the Holy Spirit] were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is speaking about something that happens automatically at the point of your salvation. You are placed into Christ by the dry, non-water baptism of the Holy Spirit. That dry, non-water baptism which we do reflect indeed in the baptism of immersion with water, but this is a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has it.

If there is one doctrine that you must not be mistaken about in the church age, it is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Is it any wonder that it is on this doctrine that Satan has deluded the whole charismatic movement which speaks about receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation as if it were the mean to some kind of special power? It is a complete delusion. The most elementary study of the scriptures demonstrate this is not true. You could not even be a Christian if you were not in Christ, and you could not get into Christ without the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's one of the provisions at the point of salvation. It is one of the good things that God brings in spite of everything else.

Now, your positional sanctification is not affected, therefore, by your carnality as a Christian. Your carnality as a Christian will bring discipline into your life, but it will never take you out of Christ. Because you have been placed in Him by this baptism, you are secure in that position. Positional sanctification then is the judicial decision of God the Father based upon your union with Jesus Christ. Believers are, therefore, declared justified.

**Experiential Sanctification**

So, the first good of Romans 8:28, after all is said and done, is the good of grace salvation. Now, there is a second good that steps up from that, and that is the good of the Christian life on earth, the place where all of us who are believers are now. The Christian's life on earth has a great potential for blessing. Our God is sitting up in heaven waiting to bless, waiting to pour out blessing, but He cannot pour out into the cup when the cup isn't there. He cannot fill your cup to the brim with blessing unless you have developed a capacity, a cup in your soul to receive it. So, the second good thing that God provides is this grace system of perception that we've talked about many times by which the believer is able, no matter what his natural IQ may be, to learn Bible doctrine truth and to store that in his human spirit so that he develops a divine viewpoint mentality.

Growth in the knowledge of God's Word, the Bible, builds capacity in the soul for serving God and providing hope for rewards in eternity. You cannot live a godly, Christian life if you do not know the doctrines of scripture, because that's the guidelines. You cannot serve God and produce divine good in contrast to human good until you know the doctrines of scripture.

Is it any wonder that we who emphasize the doctrines of scripture and who spend church services in explaining those doctrines constantly take such flack? [They] constantly are being pressured from being dissuaded from that kind of a ministry to instead get the place opened up to a lot of sharing of mutual ignorance as people talk to each other instead of listening in an academic situation to what God has to say so that they have a basis and a springboard for living their lives unto godliness, unto prosperity, unto blessing, and thereby to be preparing for the next good in heaven? It is not wonder that Satan zeroes-in when he catches a church doing what it's supposed to be doing in teaching the Word of God. Instead of a pompous preacher standing up there spewing out platitudes and inspirations and tickling the fancies and being cute and telling jokes, rolling them in laughter, and people walk out with the same zero capacity for spiritual things as they had when they walked in.

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that enables the believer to apply what he learns from the Word of God to his life situation so that God can prosper and bless him in the devil's world. The reason that many Christians are not blessed is that they do not have the capacity to see that blessing. They could never clean up their lives. They could never orient their character to the character of Jesus Christ; they just don't know it. They have to mull around as helpless, pitiful, pathetic animals through their whole Christian life. Going to heaven? Yes, but that's all, as the Bible says, "by the skin of their teeth." The whole point of being alive now is to invest one's life in God's service so as to store great treasures in heaven. That's the point of being alive now in this second phase of God's plan, this good that He provides relative to the present.

Matthew 6:19-20, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Verse 33 says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Familiar verses, but I can testify to the fact that I see young people and adults constantly violating these scriptures. If they have a chance to abandon a place of Christian service ministry, to abandon a place of spiritual growth and go charging across the country to some job that pays more or some corporation that tells them to go, they'll go. They don't know how to apply these verses and say, "Wait a minute. First, I seek the kingdom of God and my personal spiritual development - not treasures."

Exactly what do you think in means when verse 19 says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"? Yes, you lay up for what you need. You lay up for reasonable care. You lay up for the things that you are responsible for. But there is a point beyond which the treasure should not be laid up. But the treasure should be sent on ahead into heaven via the investment of God's work here on earth.

The God who has done the hardest thing for us of providing eternal life in heaven without complicating his own holiness. And that was a hard thing to do: to take a sinner deserving of hell, totally incapable of rectifying the situation, and yet God came up with the solution by which that sinner could be taken into heaven, and God does not compromise His justice and righteousness. Now, that took some doing, but the God who can do that can certainly do the much easier thing of blessing us here on this earth in time when we are related to Him through the Word of God and functioning on His principles and quit playing cutesie-poo compromise with the things that we know are the truth of the Word of God.

Maximum blessings, in time, are attained when you reach the super grace maturity level. Christians are at various degrees of maturity level: babyhood, adolescence, but some of them hit the high ground of super grace maturity. They do that because they have a knowledge of doctrine and a positive volition to that. Super grace Christian is a great beneficiary then of great spiritual and material blessings. The super grace Christian not only receives logistical grace, which means that God not only provides you what you need to survive in His world, He gives you the excessive luxuries in addition to that basic logistical provision, and this is given to you because His divine righteousness is in you. God totally blesses His own righteousness.

He does not bless your good intentions. He does not bless your promises. He does not bless all your works and all you do for Him. He blesses one thing: that He sees divine righteousness functioning, glowing, developing within you as the result of the Word of God and through the grace pipeline, He pours His blessing to you. His justice at one end can give blessing to His righteousness in you at the other end of the line. This good, obviously, is not possessed by the unbeliever in his suffering on this earth. In our suffering, this is a good we possess. Blessings in time. This phase two of God's plan is what we call experiential sanctification. Experiential sanctification has to do with our daily experience. It is the Word of God which is the means to our being set apart in our experience to godly living.

John 17:17, Jesus says, "Sanctify them [that is, believers] through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." 2 Corinthians 3:18 says this, "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The more you learn of the glory of God, the clearer that picture becomes. As you learn the Word of God, the more you yourself are transformed in that image, because you are responding in accepting it.

Ephesians 5:25-26, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." God is cleansing we who are members of the body of Christ to make us perfect without wrinkles and stain. The Christian's daily life, while it is not always above sin is a life which is not enslaved to the sin nature by necessity.

Romans 6:6, therefore, says, "Knowing this, that our old man [our man in Adam, the place of death] is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve [the] sin [nature]." Romans 6:12-13, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Experiential sanctification.

Verse 17-18, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin [the sin nature], ye became the servants of righteousness." It is the Word of God that has enabled us in time to be free of that enslavement. And then verse 22 of Romans 6, "But now being made free from [the] sin [nature], and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." What you're doing now is going to have a future impact.

So, a mature Christian turns his body over to God for service in the angelic warfare. Romans 12:1-2 tell us that is the thing that is proper to do. Through the intake of doctrine, the believer builds the spiritual maturity structure in his soul for moment-by-moment victory over the sin nature, the world, and Satan.

Experiential sanctification, you should remember, is progressive. Positional sanctification is not progressive. You don't get more saved. Once you're born again, you're in the family of God. But, in terms of your experience of sanctification, you do become more godly. You do become more set apart. 2 Peter 3:18 says this, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is something that you grow into. You grow in the grace of God of His blessing of godliness, and you grow into that through the knowledge of the Word. God the Holy Spirit moves us from one state to the other.

**Ultimate Sanctification**

There is a third good, and in fact, this is the ultimate good, and this is what really Romans 8:28 is talking about. And as we shall see, in due course, here is where we separate the winners from the losers, because Romans 8:28 only applies to a very specific, limited group of Christians. And this has to do with phase 3 of the good that God had, which is blessing in eternity.

What kind of blessings? The blessings of rewards and of crowns, the crowns which are the medals of honor to be given to certain believers for those who log maximum time in temporal fellowship because they kept their sins confessed and they walked with the Lord. For those who produced maximum divine, good production. For the pastor-teacher who does his job, a special crown. These medals of honor and the rewards for service. The believer in heaven with the royal family of God, the church, will have a resurrection body minus the old sin nature. He has hope now for an enriched eternity based on the divine good production which flows from doctrine in the soul and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

What this refers to is a potential, special place in heaven after all the undeserved sufferings on earth. This ultimate good becomes a reality for the Christian at the judgment seat of Christ after the rapture of the church. We go from suffering for Christ, as Philippians 3:10 describes, as a Christian who has the mind of Christ, Philippians 2:5-8 describe, and we go on to the image of Christ in eternity as the final good. We who have the mind of Christ experience suffering for Him because of that mind, and the result is going on into His image to the final good.

What does the final good have? Well, the final good has a resurrected body with no more sin nature to cope with. Philippians 3:21 tells us that, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His [Christ's] glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." This is the culmination of spiritual growth through an era of great, personal suffering. No matter how grim the pieces of our life are now or how they may be at any point in time. No matter how many tears we are shedding, no matter how many disappointments, how many tragedies we are experiencing, God is fitting all those pieces together to come out in the form of the image of His Son.

Phase 3 is God's plan of good, and we call that good ultimate sanctification. We have the resurrection body with the total eradication of the sin nature. Therefore, we are finally capable of living a sinless life. Somebody recently told me that a prominent religious teacher has now concluded that it is possible for people to become sinless. So, be prepared to hear a lot of that on television. Some of you may find it very attractive, but before you are sure you have arrived at that sinlessness, I would suggest that you talk with your wife or husband to verify that particular fact, or with your close friends who know you very well and see whether they would confirm your conclusion.

Ephesians 5:27, as we have pointed out before as God's objective for the church to so cleanse us that we have no spots or wrinkles. We have no blemishes whatsoever. And then that verse in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 that says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, there will be a time when you will be absolutely blameless, absolutely perfect, absolutely sinless. That will be the ultimate point of good that God has provided for you which will be out there in eternity.

Jude 24 tells us that every believer is going to be absolutely certain to be preserved for this goal. Jude 24, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling [that is, from being lost again], and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." The ultimate potential that we enjoy is to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. 1 John 3:2 puts it this way, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

This is the point when we enter into that perfect, personal restoration into the image of Jesus Christ. The ultimate good that's going to come at the hand of God out of all of our griefs and all of our sufferings, this is the point when we will enter eternal enjoyment of treasures that we have set aside in heaven and for which God is prepared to magnificently reward and indeed to recognize us. And we know, as a matter of fact with absolute certainty because of the revelation from the Word of God, that God works all things together for good."

But to whom does He do that? The next phrase is a bombshell when you begin exploring what the scriptures have to say about those who qualify under the category of those who love God. Only those Christians are going to ultimately have the maximum good that is potential here through ultimate sanctification in heaven, and that is the ultimate thing that makes all of the troubles now enroute pale into insignificance.

As Paul says, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not to be compared in any way with the glory that shall be revealed in us." What's he talking about? He's talking about the ultimate blessing in eternity of a Christian who because he has truly loved God has been able to invest his life in such a way that he now enjoys enormous eternal rewards and has a piece in heaven in a way that others will not possess. So, we have not yet begun to fight in dealing with this verse, and we will pick up this next, crucial point at our next session.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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