

Theme: “Everything’s Going to Be Alright!”

Romans 8:28-32

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

“Everything’s going to be alright!” Have you had these words of comfort spoken to you at some point in your life? Maybe it was your mother or father wiping away your tears after a bad dream as they tucked you back into bed. Perhaps it was a grandparent picking you up and brushing you off after a bad fall on the playground equipment. What about as you’ve gotten older? There have probably been more times in your life as you’ve grown into adulthood that you’ve longed to hear these words than there were when you were a child. The pressures of life get greater, the stresses become more oppressive, and the problems become all too real and at times very frightening. We are dealing with more than just a “bad dream” or a scraped knee on the playground. Oftentimes because of the magnitude and sheer number of our problems these words, **“Everything’s going to be alright,”** don’t bring as much comfort to our hearts as they used to when a loved one speaks them to us. Think, for example, of people who have endured tragedies, or the loss of a loved one or family member. Somehow simply telling them, **“Everything’s going to be alright,”** doesn’t seem to “cut it,” does it? Those words don’t erase the sorrow, the loneliness, and the pain that comes with such a loss.

But what if God spoke these words to us? What if God Himself, our loving, all-powerful Father, wrapped us up in His arms and said to us, **“Everything’s going to be alright!”** Wouldn’t those words bring the comfort that our adult hearts with our adult-sized problems need? Well, good news, fellow Christians of all ages: God has spoken these words to you and me and every believer in Christ! He has spoken these words to us very clearly *many* times in the Scriptures, but perhaps none more clearly than the words of the first verse of our sermon text, **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God” (v. 28)**. Those words right there should end all the doubts and fears; all the anxieties and apprehensions we’ve ever had. God has essentially promised us in this verse, **“Everything’s going to be alright!”**

So why don’t we always have comfort and peace in our heart? Why do we still hold on to our doubts, fears, and anxieties, often to the detriment of our physical health—and worse, to the detriment of our spiritual health? Well, the answer for anyone who’s ever taken a breath of life as a human being should be obvious: we are not perfect. We still have that self-destructive, sinful flesh inside of us that will find every reason to question, to doubt, and to distrust God and His promises.

Maybe we don’t always have the peace and comfort we desire in our heart and soul because our flesh causes us to doubt whether God really is working **“all things”** together for good. When we look at our lives and the world around us we can probably see very quickly why doubt could pop up in our hearts. Diseases, sicknesses, injuries, and death; addictions, broken lives, broken homes, and broken hearts; financial troubles and economic crises; crime, tragedies, terrorism and wars—the racism, violence, and bloodshed in Virginia this weekend; nuclear threats from North Korea—these are all around us daily, and they can lead us to wonder at times whether God is really able to make **“all things work together for good,” (v. 28)**—or if He is in fact able, maybe He just really doesn’t want to.

Well, we know by faith that God is able to make **“all things work together for good” (v. 28)** and He is doing it for each one of us individually and for all of us collectively as His church on earth even now as we speak. What we have to realize when we look at the horrors around us, and inside of us, is first of all that we live in a fallen world; a world full of sin because mankind gave in to the deception of the devil in the garden of Eden.

Secondly we have to realize that even in its sinful, fallen state our God is so great that He is able to work **true good** from every evil that Satan has worked in this world. I say **true good** because oftentimes the things that God allows and uses are not the things that we would always call **“good”** in and of themselves. We are not always interested or most concerned about our spiritual or eternal good, but God is! That is why one of the key phrases in this verse is the last phrase: He works this **good “to those who are the called** [those who have been called to faith; believers] **according to His purpose” (v. 28b).**

What we must realize and accept is that we don't have all the information or all the wisdom to determine what is truly **“good”** or not good for us or for Christ's church in general, or even for the entire world for that matter. But God does! He is all-knowing. He has all the information; He has all the wisdom to determine what is best for us and all believers in Christ. He reminded us in our Old Testament reading from Isaiah, **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV).** God is also all-powerful so He can put His **“good”** plans for us into action despite what the world around us, our own sinful flesh inside of us, or even the devil himself might try and do to the contrary.

Let's take an extreme example of something “bad.” Think about death. Death is, no doubt, a “bad” thing. In fact, we think of it as the worst thing that can happen to us. And yes, death is a terrible, unnatural thing that was not a part of God's original perfect creation. Death came into this world because of sin. And yet God is so gracious, so powerful, and so good that He can take something as horrible as our death and turn it into the greatest **good** for a believer! Through Christ's death and resurrection, God has turned death into the door to everlasting life! I've often said that for a believer in Christ, the day of your death will be the best day of your life! Think of it this way: Some of you have recently experienced the loss of a loved one. If we were somehow able to ask your loved one who believed in Jesus, right now whether they'd want to switch places with any one of us, what do you think she'd answer? They'd say, “NO WAY!!!”

One other reason our flesh may cause us to doubt this promise of God to make **“all things work together for good to those who love God” (v. 28)** is because in our moments of weakness we may question whether those last few words actually apply to us. When we take a quick, honest inventory of our thoughts and actions we probably would have good reason to question whether we really are among **“those who love God.”** And if we really don't love God, how do we know that He is going to make **“all things work together for our good”**? When these doubts fill our hearts and minds that's when we need to stop looking inside our hearts and minds and start looking to what God says to us. God assures you in these verses of our text that these words do apply to you. He reminds us that we came to **“love God”** and believe in His Son Jesus not because we wanted it badly enough or made such an incredible effort on our part. No! Rather God **“called”** us to love Him and believe in His Son Jesus for our salvation. He **“called”** us to this before the world was even formed by His words. Listen to what He says of us in **v. 29-30** of our text, **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (v. 29-30).**

From eternity God **“foreknew”** us. The Greek word used there indicates that God didn't just know of us from eternity, He knew us *intimately*; He knew everything about us! And He **“predestined”** us to be His own from eternity as well. In time He used His Spirit and His Word to **“call”** us to faith in His Son Jesus, so that the **“justification”** He won for us on the cross—that “Not guilty!” verdict that God proclaimed to all mankind at Jesus' death—would be made our own. Did you notice something strange about the last word

at the end of this list? Paul says, **“and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (v. 30b)**. As fully forgiven, fully saved believers in Jesus we are already sharing in the glory of God and eternal life right now in this life, but we won’t fully experience being **“glorified”** until our bodies and souls reach heaven in the resurrection on the Last Day. However, Paul still uses a past tense verb, **“glorified,”** to describe a future event for us and all believers. That’s how certain our salvation is! What God Himself has done for us and has promised for our eternal future is as good as done! Believe it! That is God’s eternal way of saying **“Everything’s Going to Be Alright!”** He has done absolutely everything necessary to earn, secure, and keep that salvation for us forever!

How should we respond to all this? The Apostle Paul actually asked that very question in the last verses of our sermon text, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32)**. How are we to respond to all that our Savior God has done for us? Respond with confident trust that has no fear!

What are you facing right now? What are you fearing? God has promised to make **“all things work together for good” (v. 28)**. That promise is for you! Believe it! God proved it by sending His Son Jesus to take your punishment for your sin—all of your sins, each and every one of them—to take your guilt; your shame and nail it to His cross (**cf. Colossians 2:14**). If He loves you enough to sacrifice His only Son, Jesus, on that horrible cross so that you would receive heaven, how is He not going to take care of all the other things? If He loves us enough to take care of our greatest problem, our sin, which earned us death and hell, how will He not take care of all our “lesser” problems—the everyday problems, cares, and concerns we have in this life? He will!

Take some time today, either during this worship service or sometime later on, to write down some of the difficulties you are facing in your life right now. Then meditate on these words from our sermon text. Those are the very words that Jesus has spoken to you through His Holy Word. All those things you’ve written down, and more, He will work out for your **good**! Hear His words and believe them! **“Everything’s Going to Be Alright!”** In fact, everything’s going to be more than just “alright”—Jesus promises us it will be **good**! In this life and the next! Amen.