



**“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).**

## **Sanctification Experienced**

**Central Truth:** God purposes that every believer in Christ will enter into His glory.

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**Topic:** Sanctification; Security: Of Believers.

I am as sure I am going to heaven as if I had already been there!

There is no boasting in that statement. One can be saved and know it. One can be secure and know it. Salvation involves sanctification. Sanctification guarantees security. One is sanctified at conversion and that sanctification is experienced in living a Christian life.

Romans 8:28-39 bases man's sanctification in Christ on three pillars: God's providence (verse 28), God's purpose (verses 29, 30), and God's preservation (verses 31-39). Let us sing, “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,/Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!/What more can He say than to you He hath said,/To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?” (John F. Wade). What assurance there is for the believer in the teachings of the Holy Scripture concerning the sanctifying grace of God that is given us in Jesus Christ!

This study will deal with principles beyond our natural understanding. Who can fathom God's foreknowledge and predestination? Those are not terms for us to wrestle with or debate over. They are assurances that God is working all things according to an eternal plan He purposed before the creation of the world. His plan will prevail. We are secure!

### **I. GOD'S PROVIDENCE**

*“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,*

*to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).*

**A. The assurance of God's promise is that “*we know*.”** Paul used the Greek term for “know,” which means full knowledge as contrasted with growing understanding. It is knowledge which has ample evidence to prove it to be true. It is knowledge where there is no question that it might not be fact. To “know” is to be absolutely convinced and rest in assurance.

**B. The scope of God's providence is “*all things*.”** He who controls all persons and things, who exercises total sovereignty over the universe, can direct the act and outcome. Even the apparently bad things which happen (like Joseph being sold into slavery in Egypt) are guided by God to work out for good (by his saving his family from starvation, Genesis 45:5, 7; 50:20).

Paul's being put in prison in Rome resulted in his writing the prison epistles of our New Testament and the gospel being spread by the courageous witness of those who knew him (Philippians 1:12-20). Whatever your circumstances are today, God will work through them to make them produce good, if you love God and are His called one.

**C. The limitation of God's providence is to those who love Him and are called by Him.** Your love to God is based on your salvation (Romans 5:1-5). The call to which Romans 8:28 refers is your call to Christ, the effectual call which brought you to salvation, not a call to some special service in the gospel ministry. So the promise is to you as well as to pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and other servants of God. If you are saved and are following the leading of the Holy Spirit, you can claim Romans 8:28 as your own personal promise. But if you do not love Him, or have not responded to His call in Christ, the text has no consolation at all for you.

Divine providence tells us that the world and our lives are not ruled by fate or chance but by a loving God who is our Father in Jesus Christ. God exercises minute care and supervision over His dear children in all things, great and small, so as to secure their increasing holiness and usefulness. That is why “*all things work together for good*” to them. He who knows how many hairs are on your head (Matthew 10:30) and is aware of every bird that falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29, 31) is aware of you. He sees in advance and provides in advance, so good works out in all things. Believe it and rejoice in it.

## **II. GOD'S PURPOSE**

Romans 8:29, 30 reveals the chain of divine sovereignty reaching from eternity before time to eternity after time. It has five links: foreknowing, predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying. The

foreknowing was before the beginning of Creation, and the glorifying is after the end of created things. It is because of this *“eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:11) that we have assurance. God has *“saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”* (II Timothy 1:9). Do not debate over it. Accept the Bible testimony, whether you understand it or not, and rest in the eternal purpose of God.

**A. God foreknew us** (verse 29). All Bible teaching on election and predestination rests on that fact. We are *“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 1:2).

To *foreknow* means to know in advance the whole course of human events, even those things which are future to us. That is a part of God's omniscience, His perfect knowledge of all persons and things. That is the basis of all predictive prophecy in the Bible.

Foreknowledge is also related to foreordination. God has a plan that He is working out in human history. He knows what He will do, how man will respond, and how He will work it all out according to His divine will. All things happen in agreement with *“the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”* (Acts 2:23), even those acts which are the free choice of men. We are a part of God's foreknowledge and foreordained plan.

**B. God predestinated us** (verses 29, 30). To predestinate means “to determine before, to foreordain by divine decree or intent.” We see it in God's purpose to use Jeremiah as a prophet, the purpose being made before Jeremiah was born (Jeremiah 1:4, 5). It is evident in God's having *“chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. . . : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace”* (Ephesians 1:4-6). God's hand and counsel determine what is to be done (Acts 4:28), and it is done. He is working *“according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:11). Do not worry if you do not understand it. Accept the Bible testimony and rest in it.

**C. God called us** (verse 30). There is a general call extended to all people, as Jesus promised (John 12:32). But an effectual call was given to those who believe so that they responded in repentance and faith. Those who *“love God . . . are the called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28). If you are trusting Jesus, you are one of the called.

**D. God justified us** (verse 30). To be justified means to be declared acquitted from guilt and to be made right in relation with God. It is the

sentence of acquittal by which God moves in grace when a person accepts the atoning deed of Jesus Christ by faith. Justification was the twofold aspect of being made right and being declared right. It is always by faith (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:23-25). *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:24). As you trust Jesus, God declares you to be righteous because of His atonement, and you are justified.

**E. God glorifies us** (verse 30). Suddenly we are in the future purpose of God. Foreknowledge, destination, calling, and justification are passed for us; glory is yet ahead. Yet, God used the same verb form (a completed action in time past) to refer to our glorification that He used to refer to our salvation. That is how certain it is that we will be glorified. One day Jesus *“shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body”* (Philippians 3:21), and we will *“shine forth as the sun”* in God's kingdom (Matthew 13:43). God's divine purpose guarantees our salvation all the way to glory. Rejoice in such blessed assurance.

### III. GOD'S PRESERVATION

Romans 8:31-39 gives five great proofs that God will preserve His own. This is the “no separation” section of this assurance chapter of the Bible. The passage reveals why we know He will preserve us to His heavenly kingdom (II Timothy 4:18).

**A. God is our Substitute.** *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (verse 31). What does it mean for God to be *“for us”*? It means more than that He is kindly disposed toward us, that He is on our side. It means that He is substituted in our stead, as when Jesus died *“for”* sinners. Who can stand against God? No one!

A little lad missed the words of this verse but caught its spirit exactly when he said, *“If God is for us it doesn't make any difference who is against us!”* He who took our place in bearing the penalty for our sin (Isaiah 53:5, 6) will take our place in standing against the enemy of our souls when he comes to war against us (Isaiah 59:19). *“The battle is not your's, but God's. . . . Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you . . . : for the LORD will be with you”* (II Chronicles 20:15,17).

**B. God is our Provider.** He who gave His own Son for us will give us all we need because we are in His Son (verse 32). We will see *“the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:7). *“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19). Trust Him for all you

need.

**C. God is our Justifier.** Who is qualified to bring a condemning accusation against us when Christ himself has justified us (verse 33)? No one! Having been justified by faith (Romans 5:1) we are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 6:11). One cannot get any more saved or secure than that.

**D. God is our Intercessor.** Jesus' ministry did not end when He returned to heaven. No one can condemn us when Christ has died for us on earth and is making intercession for us in heaven (verse 34). His prayer for us on earth (John 17:9) gives us some idea of His prayers for us in heaven. Take heart that Jesus is representing you before God this very day and hour.

**E. God is our Beloved.** Romans 8:35-39 is one of the most beautiful sections in the Bible concerning God's love to us. It teaches that no problem in the material world can take us away from God's love. It teaches further that no power in the unseen world of the spirit can take us away from God's love. It concludes, "*We are more than conquerors through him that loved us*" (Romans 8:37). This is not some potential good which the Christian may attain someday. It is his spiritual birthright today. It is guaranteed in Christ to every believer. Claim it by faith and rejoice in the blessings of God's providence, God's purpose, and God's preservation.

## Questions

1. Why is Romans 8 called the assurance chapter of the Bible?
2. What three pillars are found in Romans 8:28-39?
3. What is God's providence in your life?
4. How can you see His providence in your life?
5. What is God's purpose, according to Romans 8:29?
6. What are His foreknowledge and predestination?
7. What are His calling and justification?
8. How can we be sure of future glory?
9. What five assurances of God's preservation are found in verses 31-39?
10. How can this study help you to have assurance in Christ?