

**March 22, 2020**

**Speaker:** Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

**Passage:** Romans 8:28-30

Community Group Questions: “Destined for Glory”

Read Romans 8:28-30 aloud as a group. And then work through the following questions:

1. Romans 8:28 is an incredible promise, well known and cherished by countless believers through the centuries. Somehow, God is working “all things together for good.” Notice that the promise is specifically aimed at Christians: “those who love God” and “those who have been called according to his purpose.” Why is it important to realize that this promise only belongs to God’s people? What does this imply for those who refuse to embrace the gospel?
2. “All things” is comprehensive. Somehow God himself is superintending and sovereignly orchestrating all things so that they work together for the good of his people. This includes suffering, pain, trials, ups and downs, sunshine and rain, tragedies and opportunities, and even things like sin and evil and death. Though God is never responsible for sin or evil, he can use such things to accomplish his good purposes. Our greatest example is the cross where the greatest evil was used by God to accomplish our redemption (see Acts 2:23 and Acts 4:27-28). Knowing all of this, how should the promise of Romans 8:28 encourage us in the darkest hours of our lives? How have you been personally encouraged by this promises when going through your own struggles? Share your story with the group.
3. Based on the context, what is the “good” toward which God is working things? (notice that “good” is later defined as “his purpose,” which is even further defined in vs. 29 as “being conformed to the image of his Son”). Some have defined the “good” as health, wealth, security, or success. But, assuming the “good” is defined as being conformed to the image of Jesus, how does this transform the sense of this promise and help us understand what’s going on in the midst of life’s deepest challenges?
4. Verses 29-30 speak of God’s unstoppable plan to bring his people all the way to glory, conforming them fully and finally to the image of Jesus. Five key words are used to describe God’s plan: foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. Theologians often describe this plan as the “golden chain of our salvation” because each of these ideas are linked together (note the word “he also” between each term). How does this golden chain of theological terms give us great assurance and security about our salvation?
5. The word “foreknew” means “to know beforehand.” It refers to God’s deep, relational knowledge of his people before the foundation of the world (see 1 Peter 1:20 and Ephes. 1:4 for the timeframe “before the foundation of the world”; see Amos 3:2 and John 10:14 for the idea of relational “knowing”). The word “predestined” means “to decide upon beforehand, or pre-determine.” Again, the time reference is before the foundation of the world, where God determined to conform his people, those he foreknew, into the image of Jesus. Next, the word “called” is a strong word meaning to “summons.” It is used of the

effective call of God in drawing his people to salvation (see 1 Cor. 1:2 where Paul says we are “called to be saints,” and John 6:44 for the idea that God “draws” people to himself). The next word, “justified,” refers to God’s declaration that his people are righteous in his sight because of their trust in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Justification happens at the start of the Christian life; when they first believe in Jesus. Finally, the word “glorified,” refers to the ultimate goal of the Christian journey, when we are made glorious like Jesus, with resurrection bodies, free from sin, and fully conformed to the image of Christ (see Romans 8:21 and 23, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2). Putting all of these wonderful terms together, we are left with a plan of God for his people that began in the depths of eternity past, and extends to eternity future. When you look at these ideas all together, what overall impression does it leave on your heart? Why do you think God revealed this plan to us? What response is God inviting us to have in light of these wonderful theological realities? In other words, how would we live, think, and worship differently if we truly believed every word of these verses?

Prayer suggestion: Spend time praising God for his marvelous plan for our lives. Thank him for the security we have in Christ. Pray for strength each day for the journey, and for eyes to see that he is “working all things together” for our good in Christ.