

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

APRIL 10, 2016

All things work together for.....

Jim Stauffer

Rom. 8:28 says, *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

This passage has provided, as intended by the Holy Spirit uttered by Paul, much solace and encouragement for the one who loves God and has been called according to His purpose.

It is therefore, appropriate to analyze its meaning by viewing its context and general setting in the overall message delivered.

Paul first draws a comparison of a Christian's suffering versus his anticipated eternal glory in **verses 18 and 19** of this chapter. The glory that God grants the redeemed at the second coming of Christ is so glorious the entire creation that remains unopposed to God eagerly anticipates that day. Paul makes similar reference to this glory in **2 Cor. 4:16-18** where he states, *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.* It is in this context the following nine verses of **Rom. 8:20-28** are spoken.

A very brief reminder of the transition from the perfect conditions for creation that originally existed prior to the sin of man in the garden to the current state that God subjected creation to because of sin is brought out in **verse 20**. **Verse 21** makes it clear God never intended for that to eliminate hope from the heart of man. He immediately promised there would be One to come forward to release man from the bondage brought on by the sin. That One would be Christ (**Gen. 3:15**).

Now comes the clarification process in this text. **Verse 22** acknowledges the groaning of the whole creation as if in the pains of childbirth followed by the explanation in **verse 23** of the separation from the whole creation of those who possess the hope of glory referred to in **verse 19**. Those have the first fruits of the Spirit and groan inwardly for the adoption as sons, the redemption of their bodies. These are those who

love God and are called according to His purpose. This is not implying they have not yet been adopted as sons of God by faith in Christ (**Gal. 3:26; 4:5-7**). Rather it refers to the ultimate realization of that adoption as their mortal bodies take on immortality in the final day (**1 Cor. 15:53-55**). This portion of the text is to help us recognize the role patience, that is persevering patience, plays in the faithfulness to death saints are called upon in life on earth (**verses 24,25; Rev. 2:10**).

There is no minimizing the intensity of the emotional and spiritual trial and suffering a child of God may be called on to endure. For this very reason there may be times when our hearts cannot express this feeling in prayer for relief, in rational thought. Christ is our example in this as in all things as He considered His ultimate earthly death and sacrifice for our sins (**John 12:27,28**). Paul struggled in this regard as he prayed three times for removal of his thorn in the flesh. He was told, *my grace is sufficient for thee.* (**2 Cor. 12:9**) Because of our inability to express our feelings the Spirit of God *intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* He is able to intercede for us with groanings that are *too deep for words.* (**verse 26**) A very vital consideration here is He does this according to the will of God. Jesus remains our mediator between man and God (**1 Tim. 2:5**). He continues to make intercession for us (**Heb. 7:25**). We know from this, the Holy Spirit takes our groanings and is able to communicate them properly to Christ, who as God Himself, can *seek out the hearts* and therefore know what is the mind of the Spirit.

Yes, we can now understand what **verse 28** is teaching us. The knowledge applies to those who love God. They are the same people who are called according to his purpose. **Rom. 10:13ff** tells us *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*. The text then goes on to explain calling on the name of the Lord as we develop faith in God by

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hearing his word preached. According to **2 Thess. 2:13,14**, this is being called through the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of Christ. That is precisely what the apostle Paul did (**Acts 22:16**). These promises then are to the select ones who have loved God and obeyed the call to glory in His blessed gospel message (**Rom. 1:16**). These are the ones who can confidently trust in and rely on their relationship with Him (**Heb. 4:14-16**). They are the ones who have the hope of this eternal weight of glory. To fully define loving God we need go no further than the words of Jesus (**Mat. 22:37-39**). Then consider the teaching of **John 14:15** and **1 John 2:4-6**. The Hebrew writer attaches the concept of obedience to the reception of this eternal reward (**Heb. 5:8,9**). We see therefore, a great promise of a wonderful reward that is closely attached to qualifications. They are to love God and be called according to His purpose.

Now that we have established the foundation of both the promise and those to whom it is given we can learn about the *all things that work together for good*. This is often where the reader tends toward the grandiose of immediate reward. Remember, the initial comparison was between the suffering of the present and the reward of the future. Make no mistake, the ultimate good is the eternal glory of heaven. But we do not get there without proper preparation. James tells us to *count it all joy when you meet trials of various kind, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness* (**Jas. 1:2,3**). He goes on to say this makes us complete, implying we are incomplete without it. This agrees with Paul's assessment that the trials of life wear on our physical bodies but renew and strengthen our spirit (**2 Cor. 4:16**). Jesus said, *the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*. (**Mat. 26:41**). These things happen **because** we love God and are called according to his purpose. We patiently stand for the truth He revealed and will sometimes suffer to varying degrees for this faith. It perfects us as James says.

Let us then consider the big picture of this text and understand our hope is real as the promises of God will not fail (**Heb. 6:18-20; 13:5,6**). The value of that for which we patiently wait far exceeds the price we shall pay for its achievement. And most of all let us not gloss over the qualification of being among those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

Worship "In Spirit"

A conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman focused on the elements of true worship (**John 4:19-26**). In it Jesus made clear that the geographical "place" of worship, whether in Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim, was unimportant. He did stress, however, that *"true worshippers"* will worship "God," and they will worship him in "spirit" and "truth." "God," he notes, is the object of worship and *"him only shalt thou serve"* (**Matt 4:10**); "truth" denotes the content of worship—for *"in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men"* (**Matt 15:9**); and "spirit" describes the character of the worshipper. But what exactly does

"in spirit" mean?

It refers, first of all, to the nature of man. God, Jesus says, is a Spirit and man, Moses says, is made in image of God (**John 4:24; Gen 1:26**). Spirits do not have flesh and bones, so the likeness of man to God is not the body (**see Luke 24:39**). But man in addition to a body has a spirit or soul and that explains his likeness to God (**see Matt 10:32; James 2:26**).

Man's worship of God "in spirit", thus, emanates as an expression of the inward man (**see 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16**). It is this "spirit" of worship that is described by the biblical words translated "worship" in the New Testament: *sebomai, proskuneo, and latreuo*. *Sebo* or *sebomai* means "to revere" and denotes piety, godliness, and devoutness. These terms describe the awe and adoration that must fill a man's soul when he genuinely addresses God in worship. *Proskuneto* or *proskunetes* actually means "to kiss the hand (toward) one, in token of reverence" as a spirit-filled expression of honor and devotion and obeisance. *Latreuo*, which means "to serve" or "to render religious service," is to be a "spiritual" or "reasonable" service—one that comes from "reason," the "mind," or "heart" of man (**see Rom 12:1**).

Trees, animals, stars, the sun, the earth—all creation serves God's will and displays his handiwork and design. But only man, of all earthly creation, can offer "heart-felt," "spiritual" worship and service to God. Man's unique likeness to God enables him and God requires him: (1) to love God with all his *heart, soul, and mind*; (2) to obey from the *heart* the form of doctrine to which he is delivered; (3) to sing and make melody in his *heart*; (4) to give as he purposes in his *heart*; (5) to discern in the *heart* the body and blood of the Lord; (6) to exercise the *mind* and *senses* to discern good and evil; etc. (**see Matt 22:37; Rom 6:17; Eph 5:19; 2 Cor. 9:7; Rom 10:1; 1 Cor 11:26; Heb 5:13-14**).

Jesus emphasized this in his strong indictments of Pharisaic hypocrisy. Pharisees prayed, gave alms, and fasted with great fanfare—but merely to be seen of men (**see Matt 6:1-18**). Jesus rebuked their heartless, formalistic worship and service in unmistakable words: *This people honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me* (**Matt 15:8**).

Man is the crowning glory of God's earthly creation and with it comes responsibility. Man must not act robotically or heartlessly. He is crafted distinctly by God as a rational, spiritual being who is to respond to God's will out of a reverent heart toward God's very person and being. Man is expected to know God, extol his worthiness, and worship Him. Man is required to know the truth, respect God's teaching, and worship heartily.

But where must this worship be offered? In Mt. Gerizim as practiced by the Samaritans? At Jerusalem according to the ancient practice of the Jews? In a temple or cathedral? No! None of these. It must be "in spirit," as Jesus told the Samaritan woman. Man must

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worship God in his heart, from the depth of his soul, out of the sanctuary of a holy spirit. Geographical location is immaterial when true worshippers from the depth of their being *"offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe"* (Heb 12:28).

by L.A. Stauffer, preachertrainingclasses.com

Perverting Jesus and Scripture

"Of making books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh" (Eccl. 12:12). The wise preacher was not condemning the writing and publishing of books or the value of study, but he was admonishing us not to lose our perspective of what is most important. *"Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man"* (12:13).

A couple of months ago an Associated Press article ran in several newspapers advertising another book that has been made. This book takes the position that Jesus of Nazareth both approved of and participated in homosexual activity. This is not an original idea, but it is one that is being heard with greater frequency now that our culture is becoming more tolerant of the practice of homosexuality.

People are always looking for ways to validate the choices they or their friends or family members have made. It should come as no surprise that the mindset that enables people to be more tolerant of behaviors, which the Scriptures bluntly describe as vile and shameful (Rom. 1:26,27), also enables them to revise history. Such twisting of the Scriptures by the advocates of homosexual practices reveals that their goal is not mere tolerance of their lifestyle. They are seeking acceptance and affirmation. They want their choice of sexual expression embraced as equal to the union of marriage.

In seeking to justify their choices, practicing homosexuals have typically ignored the scriptural references that condemn their behavior. Another author wrote, "The point is not really whether or not some passage in the Bible condemns homosexual acts; the point is that you cannot allow your moral and ethical decisions to be determined by the literature of a people whose culture and history are so far removed from your own. You must dare to be iconoclastic enough to say, 'So what if the Bible does say it? Who cares?'" (Robert Williams, Just As I Am, Crown, 1992, p.42).

The cafeteria-style approach to the Scriptures, which allows people to pick and choose what they want and then ignore the rest, is convenient but not very consistent. The Episcopalians' recent efforts to appoint a homosexual bishop makes one wonder if they ever bother to read what Paul had to say about that important position (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

It is one thing to ignore the Scriptures. It is quite another to "spin" them and turn Jesus into a practicing homosexual. To do this takes a perverse imagination.

Positive references to strong, loving relationships between people of the same sex (Naomi and Ruth, David and Jonathan, Jesus and His apostles, etc.) are interpreted by a few as homosexual innuendoes. We have raised a shallow generation of people who equate love with sex, and now some of those people are trying their hand at biblical interpretation.

From a purely biological perspective it may seem irrelevant who copulates with whom. Indeed, since many learn from their youth that they are just highly-evolved animals, animal-like behavior should be expected. Still, people have "hang-ups" over things like "consent" and "love" that make it clear that there is more than a biological perspective to consider when it comes to human sexuality.

Just because one has an urge doesn't mean that it is valid to act on it. Just because there is passion and strong desire doesn't mean it is right. There are still laws against prostitution, pedophilia, bestiality, incest, and rape-for good reasons-and none of those reasons are biological. There are spiritual and moral perspectives that must take precedence over the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16).

The Scriptures plainly warn, *"Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Cor. 6:9,10). Paul writes, *"Such were some of you."* Notice the past tense! What happened? They were washed, sanctified and justified *"in the name of the Lord Jesus"* (vs. 11). It is ludicrous and blasphemous to suggest that Jesus ever approved or practiced anything in that list. Don't be deceived!

By Andy Diestelkamp -- Via Think on These Things, July-August-September 2003

THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT

Isa. 59:2 says, *"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."*

Perhaps the most universal need people have is to be supported no matter what. Unconditional support is a potent drug.

The Bible says salvation is conditional. This bothers many people. It stings the conscience. It afflicts the comforted. Some will say, "God is love! God is love! God is love!"

This is true, and the most caring thing you can do for another person is to call them to repentance and obedience (Lk. 13:3; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Also, what kind of God do you worship who will not punish evil? The devil says evil must never be punished. If you do not believe in the certainty of judgement, then who exactly do you bow the knee to? Matt. 25:41 says, *"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

Mark Dillon, Rays Of Truth, Vol. 20, No. 4, 7/23/06

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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