

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, September 17, 2023

“Life in the Spirit: The Golden Chain”

Romans 8:29-30

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. **And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.**”

(Romans 8:29-30)

Last week we looked at verse 29 where Paul picks up on the idea of the divine _____, and draws back the veil a little further, inviting us into the mysterious realm of God’s eternal, _____ decree.

Before the dawn of time, God’s people were _____ and predestined, and the destiny for which they were chosen, Paul says, is final, complete _____ to Christ, which must ultimately wait for the age yet to come when history is concluded and the new creation arrives at last.

The reason we can know and be comforted in the certainty that all things work together for the good of God’s people, is because, as Paul tells us in verse 29, God is _____ over all and His perfect _____ for us cannot be thwarted even by the present sufferings that we experience in this life

The golden _____ begins with divine election—foreknowledge, forelove, predestination. And then Paul says the predestined are _____ and the called are _____ and the justified are _____.

Clearly this is a _____ because it doesn’t include everything that Paul could have said, and does say in other places about God’s ways in our salvation. However, this is a summary designed, as we’re going to see, to leave us with no doubt about one vital truth, one central fact: that salvation belongs to _____. It’s His work from beginning to end.

Paul’s agenda in these verses and indeed, throughout the whole chapter, is to _____ and _____ his readers.

He’s trying to help us understand that the _____ that hold the tree of our salvation in place, when the hurricane winds of suffering begin to blow, go far deeper than just the topsoil of our own _____ and _____.

Instead, Paul is saying in these verses that the roots of our eternal security descend down past our choice to _____ in Jesus, all the way down into the immovable bedrock of God’s _____ to make us His children from before the foundation of the world.

3 ELEMENTS OF GOD’S SAVING LOVE

#1. The saving love of God is: _____.

The great object of God’s foreknowledge and forelove in verse 28 isn’t foreseen faith or foreseen _____ that we might make. God didn’t look into the future and anticipate what we’d do, but rather _____.

Paul is telling us it’s the _____ people at every stage of his discussion that he has in mind. The same people whom God _____ and predestined are the same ones in turn that He called, justified, and glorified.

The people upon whom God has fixed His _____ love in eternity is precisely and exactly the same as the group He finally _____ in the new heavens and the new earth when Jesus comes again in glory on the last day.

There is also a _____ love of God for _____ people everywhere.

“For God so loved the world...” (John 3:1)

We see it in God’s _____ grace, making the sun to shine and the rain to fall on the righteous and on the wicked alike. And we also see it in His call to the church to _____ the good news about Jesus to every tribe under heaven.

However, it’s not the same as the _____, saving love of God reserved for those who come to Him through His Son, Jesus.

Sadly, many people do not _____ the Gospel. However, even more tragic are those who hear the outward call of the Gospel and who don’t _____. The Gospel has no _____ because they’re spiritually _____ and spiritually dead, unable to hear the voice of Jesus calling them forth from their graves into life. In other words there’s no _____ calling.

Similarly, not all people are _____. There are many people who believe that all you need to do in order to be saved or have eternal life is be a _____ person or do good deeds. However, this makes salvation all about _____ us—which it is not.

The NT is clear: God counts us _____, justifies us in His sight, only by the righteousness of Christ _____ to us and received by _____ alone. Only those who rest the whole weight of their lives and faith on Jesus are justified. It's not a result of anything we do or don't do. We can't _____ our way into heaven.

This means that you—believer in Jesus—are _____. This means that He loves you with a special, particular, familial, _____ love. He always has and He'll never _____.

God doesn't have new _____; His mind is _____ and perfect and He knows all and purposes all _____. And so, God will never stop loving us because He never _____ loving us. He has always loved us from before time; we've always been His in His sovereign purpose, and we always will.

#2. The saving love of God is: _____.

Look at the sequence again in verses 29 and 30, which, as I said earlier, is Paul's _____ of the whole Christian life, reduced to four _____.

Paul's great concern in this part of Romans 8 is to highlight the _____ of God's grace. What I mean by that is, God's role in our _____. And so, there's no room for human _____ in verses 29 and 30 and no mention in these four steps about our role.

Of course, we have a _____ to play. We must _____ if we're to be saved.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31)

The call of the Gospel must be answered by our _____ and our _____.

When God justifies us, it's through _____ in Christ alone. And having given us new life, and counted us _____ in Christ, God begins to change us and sanctify us. We're not _____ in this process either, but active, submitting to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work within us, _____ with grace by the enabling of the Holy Spirit to put sin to death, and to live in a growing, conscious, determined _____ to the law of God

Paul mentions none of it here because he wants to remind us that behind any _____ we might make, behind any faith we express, before there's any repentance in our hearts or active combat with sin in our lives, back, behind, and before all of it, animating and enabling all of it, stands the prior, _____, mighty grace of God who has loved us from eternity.

"Salvation belongs to the Lord." (Psalm 3:8)

God is the _____ of our Christian life, not us, and He will be the Preserver and Sustainer of it and in the end, the _____ too.

"...run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

God loves from eternity to eternity and every grace and every gift that we exercise in between, are the product and the fruit of His prior love for us. Remember 1 John 4:19; "We love God because he first loved us."

#3. The saving love of God is: _____.

aorist tense = indicates a simple, discrete action completed entirely in the _____. It's a snapshot of something that happened once and is completed; and is over, done, _____.

Paul speaks to us here as if we've already been _____—in the past or aorist tense—to make the point that every link in the golden chain of salvation that he's talking about—from eternity, through history, into heavenly glory—was as certain as if it had already been _____ entirely in that instant.

And so, the real force of verses 29 and 30 doesn't so much teach us a series of _____ or stages in the Christian life, as it tells us that being foreloved in the mind of God, the whole work that He purposed to accomplish in us was as _____ as if it had happened altogether and _____ right then.

There's no _____ between plan and execution, between vision and realization of that vision. All whom He foreknew, He _____—every single one.

God's artistry and ability is _____ to His plan so that having purposed to save us from before the dawn of the ages, the fullness of our salvation was as _____ then as it will be when we sit in glory, face to face with Jesus.

"This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.'" (John 18:9)

"I am confident of this, that God who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

Romans 8:29- 30 is the _____ of that promise. It's the groundwork upon which it's _____.