

More Than Conquerors

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹

What a beautiful set of verses. I believe we all know Romans 8:28 well. I believe it is our pastor's favorite verse. But this whole chapter is full of hope. It starts out screaming there is no condemnation in Christ. Then it moves on to talking about sonship and future glory then the promise that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

So let's look at how that promise plays out. I imagine everyone can think of a time when they had to wonder how in the world this could work out for good. Let's start with Jacob. He lost his favorite son, the wife he loved died in childbirth and as he is trying to find away to get his family through a famine, the ruler in Egypt takes away another son and demands he sends his youngest son back. As Jacob is feeling hopeless he cries out, "*You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!*"²

Jacob did not feel that all things work to the good of those who love the Lord. But how did it end? Jacob received all his children back including the one he thought was dead. All things did work for the good.

What about Joseph? Do you think that as a teenager being left in a hole to slowly die of starvation he was thinking, Wow all things work to the good of those who love the lord? How about when he was drug out and sold into slavery or as he sits in a jail cell for an attempted rape he didn't commit. Half of Joseph's life was spent in bondage. Yet we can see that he never gave up on God and in the end he became ruler of Egypt.

² *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed., Ge 42:36. Grand Rapids:

How about David? He got off to a good start anointed king at a young age. He was a hero for defeating Goliath, but then look at what happened. He was sent to play music for the king and as he played the king would suddenly throw a spear at him. Saul spent most of his life trying to kill David. Just imagine David in a cold cave knowing that he could easily go kill Saul and take over the kingdom. But David didn't because he was waiting on God as he lay on the cold hard ground in a cave, asking God, "when are you going to do something". As he played insane just to stay alive. Do you not think he said, "God I will be insane if you don't stop this madness!"

But in the end it turned out good. He became King and one of the richest and most well known. So again in the end it did work for the good.

But if we stop there and don't look any further we are missing a lot. This verse isn't saying life will be good and easy if we love God. It isn't saying we will get that promotion if we love God. It isn't saying God wants us to be wealthy. No let's look at a couple New Testament guys that loved the lord.

Remember Peter. The one who told *Jesus* "*Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.*"³ Peter did have some good days. He will always be known as the preacher that had 3000 people respond during the altar call. But he wound up in jail several times; he was embarrassed by the apostle Paul in front of the Christian Jews and Gentiles over his racism. He died hanging upside down on a cross. Yet he believed this promise.

What about Paul, the very one that was inspired by God to pen this letter. His introduction to Jesus involved him becoming blind. Many believe poor eyesight affected him for the rest of his days. He spent a lot of time getting to view the inside of the city jail. Listen to his

The Holy Bible : New International Version, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Jn 21:17.

own description of his life from 2 Corinthians *I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.*⁴ Paul even had his life cut short by an executioners axe. Yet Paul believed all things work to the good of those who love the Lord.

Peter and Paul died because they trusted Christ. They suffered because they believed in Christ. So when read that if we try to interpret it as a Joel Osteen prosperity Gospel and decide to believe that God wants us to be wealthy we will be sorely disappointed. But these things do work for our good and the greater purpose of God.

Peter being in prison and his miraculous escape as recorded in Acts 12 had to have some amazing results. First the Christians there got to truly see that God was for them. Second in vs. 18 it says there was no small commotion among the soldiers. Just imagine what was being said among the soldiers about how Peter had miraculously escaped. The bible does not tell us if any soldiers sought out a Christian to find out about this Jesus that helped Peter escape, but there had to be some seeds planted.

The Holy Bible : New International Version, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 2 Co 11:23–27.

Imagine Peter as he hung on a cross upside down breathing his last breathe. I can just picture some wise guy saying, “Look at that idiot dying for this man called Jesus” I bet his friend looked at him thought you know if he is willing to die like that, then there has to be something to this. Just imagine how many people came to Christ because Peter was willing to die upside down on a cross.

Or how about Paul? Imagine what ran through the minds of the people in Lystra when Paul after being left dead from a stoning stood up and walked into the city. In Acts 16 Paul and Silas are in stockades. These would make you stand in an awkward and painful position. Yet Paul sang hymns. When an earthquake released Paul from his painful chains he stayed. This led to an entire family being saved.

I can just picture Paul sitting in a Roman prison. A new guard walks in looks him up and down, spits in his face and asks, “What are you in for?” Paul looks into the young man’s face smiles and says, “Because I preach Christ, and Him crucified!” The bible does record in Philippians that some of the Roman soldiers did get saved.

So we must remember to look at this promise in light of the fact it’s working for our good in God’s purpose and that we know that our final place is eternal life with Jesus.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Those verse are beautiful. Many people like to get bogged down in the theological meaning and implications of these words. I couldn’t care less what Jacob Arminius or John Calvin thought

about these words. The only thing I care about is that God chose these words to let us know His plans for us.

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Those that God knew before they came to Christ He decided to confirm them to the likeness of His son. Do you fully get what that says? Before In the beginning God said I need to make sure and start conforming Scott to the likeness of my Son.

When I was two years old and my four year old brother came out to the garden and whipped me all the way to the house for being in the garden I learned to obey those who are older than me. When my dad punished me for calling him Randy when I was four I learned to always hold the father in reverence. God was preparing me to be in the likeness of his Son long before I had ever heard about Jesus.

Before in the beginning God decided I'm going to cause Scott to move to Jack's Creek so he will got to Unity Baptist Church and place me first in his life so that I can put him up on this altar proclaiming that same obedience to everyone listening just as my son would do, because Scott is also my son adopted through faith in Jesus Christ. That is the God we serve.

*And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*⁵ Wow. God decided beforehand to conform me to the likeness of His Son. Then he called or that could also be translated He invited me. Isn't that beautiful God invited you to be a member of His family. It gets better though. There are objections though; I can't even stand in the presence of the Holy God. So what does God do about it? He justifies me!

⁵ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Ro 8:30.

Think about that! The same God that I am in rebellion against gives me a right standing in His presence by sending His Son to pay the price for me. I am made right with God by God. Not for anything I can do or will do but because God sent His Son.

Then as if this wasn't great enough already, God Glorifies me. He honors me as a Son. Remember the story of the prodigal son. The father celebrates and honors the son when he came home.

So what can we say in response to this? *If God is for us, who can be against us?* The promise keeps getting better and I've still got 7 more verses to go. Keep in mind we are throwing in some legal language now. God justified us so who can bring anything against us? God Justifies! Who can condemn us? Jesus is there at the right hand of God pleading our case and saying the sentence for that sinner has been paid by me. Who can separate us from that love? That kind of love, the kind that would step down from heaven and take everything we threw at Him just so He could pay the price for our sin. Can trouble, hardship, persecution, hunger, nakedness; think about that that means having everything taken from you and by implication being shamed or danger of death stop us from loving Jesus for what he did.

That last one danger of death. Remember that one in a minute. Now we are going to quote Psalm 44 verse 22 *"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*⁶ That verse is stated in a Psalm pleading with God that even in their persecution when they are shamed and trampled on by their enemies they remember the promise God made that he would never forsake them. It states we have not forgot you God and because it is your will that we be slaughtered as sheep we will take it because of your unfailing love for us.

⁶ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Ro 8:36.

Now we get to my favorite part verse 37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*⁷ Think about that for I second . *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

No in all these things: trouble, hardship, persecution, hunger, nakedness and even death we are more than conquerors. More than Conquerors. I hate to lose the power behind that statement with a simple illustration but I feel I need to make sure we understand it in its simplest terms.

Amy loves playing board games with me. As soon as I say yes I'll play she knows she will win, because she is merciless and God chooses to favor her more often than me. This past summer the girls were gone and it was just Amy, Dustin and me. Dustin wanted to play monopoly so we all sat down to play. Amy knows all she has to do is beat Dustin all I'm there for is for cheap property. They both know that sooner rather than later I'm going to be bankrupt, have all my properties mortgaged and on their property owing a gazillion dollars. They will purchase property from me by allowing me to stay in the game so that they can watch me be shamed as I try to make it to go again.

Well during this particular game God looked down and said, "Hey Scott needs an illustration." The next thing I know I have 3 properties on every side of the board plus the necessary properties to prevent anyone else from getting a monopoly. What this means is that each time I go around the board I might have to pay a few dollars when I land on a square, but Amy and Dustin have to pay hundreds of dollars when they land on mine. So here is the point the rest of the game I was more than a conqueror. Every move I made I knew I was going to win.

⁷ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Ro 8:37.

The game got to be real fun because even if I landed on someone else's property and had to pay it didn't matter because I already knew I had one the game. Go to jail. That's great it means everyone else's turn rolls around quicker so they have to pay me money.

Well that is what it means to be more than conquerors. We already know how the game ends. Jesus conquered death so our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. Paul defiantly understood this. *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.*⁸ We have victory awaiting us.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*⁹

Nothing not death, not life, not angels not demons, not even Satan himself can separate us from the love of God. There is nothing in creation that can separate us from God. Remember this is in context to the promise. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* There is nothing that can stop God's love for us as displayed through Jesus Christ. Are you leaving your life as if you believe that all things are working good for you? Are you living life in a way that shows that your life is for God's purpose and plan? Are you being thankful for that adoption God gave you?

⁸ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed., Php 1:21–26. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

⁹ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Ro 8:38–39.f

Are you living your life as more than a conqueror? Are you living life as if you have already won? Are you living life as if death doesn't exist as if death is actually better because you gain life in Christ's presence? We are more than Conquerors we have already beaten death. We have already beaten Satan! Are you living your life as if there is a hell and people are going there. Are you living life trying to go and tell a dying world about life in Christ. You have won the game who are you going to share the winning ticket with.

Nothing can separate us from God's love. Let us go this week and live as if we are winners and bring more people to Christ. Let's go and not be afraid to live as if all things work to the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose.