



Summer 2018

Romans 8:28

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.

Reflection

Out of one of the most loved chapters in the Bible comes one of the most well known verses in all of Scripture, Romans 8:28,

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.

There is a confidence and peace that is only available to the Christian in times of suffering and death. That confidence comes from verses like Romans 8:28 which may be the verse most tightly held on to by Christians in times of trouble down throughout the ages. Here it is again, Romans 8:28,

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.

It's a treasured verse. John Stott describes

it as ‘a pillow on which to rest our weary heads’, others as a verse that Christians ‘can wrap their souls in.’ It teaches us five things, it affirms that *we know* five things, Roman 8:28,

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.

We know five things. We have five unshakeable convictions as Christians from Rom 8:28, it contains five eternal truths. Firstly, we know that *God works*, that he’s at work in our lives. Secondly, that God works *for our good*. He is always at work for our good. Thirdly, he works for our good *in all things*. In everything. He causes everything, good and bad, to work out eter-

nally for our good. Fourthly, by ‘our’ I mean *for the good of those who love him* – this promise is for Christians only. And fifthly, those who love him are those *who have been called by him*. We love because he first loved us, chose us and called us. He has loved us since before the beginning of time and he will continue to love us into all eternity.

This verse doesn’t mean that everything will turn out OK in this life. But it does mean that everything will work out for our ultimate good. No matter what happens to you, no matter what evil is inflicted upon you, no matter how the ravages of sin cause you to suffer in this broken world here is the iron-clad promise of Romans 8:28 to you: God will cause everything that happens to us to work out for our eternal

good.

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.

Do you want to see Romans 8:28 in action? Do you want to see the peace and confidence in the face of suffering that is available to us because of Romans 8:28? Let me tell you the story of Margaret Magdalen Althens.

You wouldn't have heard her name before. She wasn't famous in her day and she's not famous in ours. There's no Wikipedia page dedicated to her. She was just an ordinary person who lived an ordinary life, the kind that history forgets. Hers was

a short life with a tragic end. She died at 37 leaving behind her a husband of six years, and three sons, her third son still a baby. Her story survives because of her diary that made its way into the hands of John Newton, the hymn-writer. He was so impressed by it that he had it published.

Here's her final diary entry from the day she died, I'll read it to you:

I am still under the care of a physician, but he gives me no hope. Indeed, it would be both cruel, and in vain, to flatter me now, for my own weakness informs me, that I am going quickly. I bless my God, I can now say, Thy will be done! I can give up my dear husband and children, with every earthly connection, into his hands. He will take

care of them.

My husband's trial is great. I feel more for him than for myself. But Heaven will make amends for all! Oh, how I pant and thirst for the happy hour, when my Father will send his Angels to convey my spirit to rest!

There remains a rest for the people of God. I know that my Redeemer lives. O Death, where is thy sting! Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness! When I walk through the valley, I will fear no evil; thy rod, and thy staff comfort me. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!

I bless God, I have not one fear concerning dying. That Almighty Lord, who

has so wonderfully preserved me to the present moment, will not forsake me in my last extremity. No, when flesh and heart fail, He will be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever!

How could she write like this? She could write like this because Margaret knew,

that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Think & Pray

Meditate over this verse this morning. Commit it to memory, commit it to heart. Pray it over with God. It will never fail you because he who promises it is faithful and

so we can know with certainty, just as Margaret did,

that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.