

FBC Service Sunday October 2025 Romans 8:28 Do We Still Believe Romans 8:28 Today?

Intro Image Slide: Life can have bad days, even bad months, or bad years. Have you ever said, “Boy, this is going to be a bad day?”

But there’s a truth in the Bible for God’s children that we need to remember, and it’s one of the most well known and most quoted verses in the Bible, which is the text for our message.

Slide 1: Do We Still Believe Romans 8:28 Today?

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”

There are few verses in Scripture that offer such sweeping comfort and quiet confidence as Romans 8:28. **It begins not with uncertainty, but with assurance:**

There are three words here that are extremely important in understanding and appreciating what this verse really says.

“And we know...” Not we hope, not we speculate, but we know. This is the language of faith that has been tested in the fires of suffering and found unshaken.

This verse is short on words but long on wisdom.

Slide 2: But this promise is not universal—it is deeply personal. It’s not a blanket statement for all humanity, but a covenantal assurance for those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

Slide 3: The Condition of the Promise — “For Those Who Love God”

In other words, this is a truth that belongs to the believer.

It’s a knowing that grows not from circumstance, but from relationship.

From walking with God through the valleys and the victories. From trusting Him when the pieces of life feel scattered, and still believing that He is weaving them together for good.

“The Weaver.” My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me. It uses the metaphor of a tapestry to explain that God is the one choosing the threads and colours, and while humans may not understand the dark threads of sorrow, they serve a purpose in the divine pattern, which will only be revealed when the work is complete.

You and I see life like the underside of a tapestry — knots, loose threads, and tangled colours. **God sees the front — the completed picture.**

Romans 8:28 invites us to trust the Weaver even when all we see is the mess, and not our lives being shaped by a divine purpose far greater than we can see.

Slide 4: Romans 8:28 The Most Misunderstood and Misquoted Verse in the Bible

Romans 8:28 may be one of the most quoted, cherished, and yet misunderstood verses in the entire Bible. How often have we heard someone say:

“Don’t worry — everything happens for a reason,” or,

“It’ll all work out in the end — that’s what the Bible says!”

But the reality is: that’s not what Romans 8:28 actually promises. People often lift it out of context, strip it of its conditions, and turn it into a blanket guarantee of a happy ending in earthly terms.

Slide 5: The Familiarity of Romans 8:28

Verse 28 is doubtless familiar to most, if not all of us. It’s among the most beloved texts in the Bible. Certainly, it’s the most famous verse in the book of Romans. Many of us know it, or a version of it by heart. We repeat it to one another often.

Of course, the very familiarity of Romans 8:28 can sometimes mean that we’ve really stopped thinking about what Paul is teaching us here.

Slide 6: God’s Definition Of “Good” Is Not the Same as Ours

We’ve reduced Romans 8:28 to a greeting card slogan, a cliché trotted out for when times get tough and we don’t know what else to say.

Verse 28 begins with Paul declaring **“and we know.”** With that first person plural, he is associating himself with his readers in Rome, with us here in Petrolia, and with every Christian everywhere.

Slide 7: The Confidence of the Christian — “We Know”

Some things are hard to know, aren’t they? Some things escape our grasp. *“We don’t know what God wants us to pray for,”* Paul confessed in the verses prior to this.

Some things we don’t know, but this Paul says – Romans 8:28 – this we know. This we can be sure of.

He doesn’t want us to take for granted the comfort offered. He wants us to know it, to really know it, to grasp it, to rest on it, to rejoice in it.

So when you read here, **“and we know,”** you should be asking yourself, **“Well, do I? Do I really?** Have I stopped to reckon with Romans 8:28 and to let it sink in and do its work?

Do I really know it as a haven in the storm, as a pillow for my weary head, as a fortress into which I may run to take refuge amidst all the assaults of the enemy?

Can I join Paul in affirming that I really know this for myself?”

Our task this morning is to try to see Romans 8:28 afresh so that it stops being a peppy little bromide we can recite on a **“Get Well Soon”** card, and starts being the anchor that holds us fast no matter when or what stormy waves break over us.

Our task is to make sure we really can say with the apostle Paul, **“We know, we know this.”**

Slide 8: What Do We Know?

Our first question then is, “**What do we know?**” Verse 28 begins, “*And we know.*” **So what do we know, Paul?**

We know, he says, “*that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God.*”

All things. Every single thing.

Slide 9: The Unshakable Comfort of God’s Sovereignty

Paul is asserting the absolute sovereignty, the Lordship of God over every single thing. Sovereign over gray hairs and bald heads. That’s what Jesus said, remember? “*Not a hair can fall from your head without the will of your Father in heaven.*”

Sovereign over every beat in your heart that continues in your chest right now, and sovereign over the moment when it beats its last.

He reigns over the birds and the grass and the wind and the sunshine.

He reigns over nations and empires.

He is Lord of the ballot box, Lord over every infection, every sneeze and every cough.

He is sovereign over stars and atoms and asteroids. There is nothing outside of the view of His governance.

He is Lord, and His lordship is exhaustive and comprehensive and pervasive and absolute. All things. There’s nothing not governed by the decree and purpose and irresistible will and power of Almighty God.

And notice, Paul says, “*all things work together.*”

He is not teaching us that God has wound up the universe like a Swiss clock and now it just works away mechanically all on its own while He sits back, indifferent to its progress.

All things work together, to be sure, but not in some impersonal, automatic manner.

That’s life apart from the personal, sovereign governance of God who orders all things in His perfect will. The Biblical doctrine of providence is not fatalism. **It’s personal.** God Himself is at work.

It’s not really politically correct anymore, so they’ve done away with it, but when I was a child in Northern Ireland, labourers working on the potholes in the street, would put up signs further down the road to warn the traffic and the signs would say, “**Men at Work.**”

Paul is posting a sign here in Romans 8:28, that over every seemingly random circumstance, over every trial, over every tear, over every laugh and every song, the banner flies, “**God at Work.**”

We can’t see it always, can we? But Paul is saying, nevertheless, “**we know.**” Because we know Him, we know that He is indeed at work in all things.

You may not always like what God is doing in your life, and you may not always understand what God is doing in your life. **But you can know that the Lord is involved in your life 24-7.**

That leads to the word "**everything**." *"God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God."* This is the one word that many Christians have trouble with.

If Paul had used the word "**few**" or the word "**some**" or the word "**most**" we would not have batted an eye. But he said, "that **in everything** God works together with those who love him to bring about what is good..." **Astounding!**

It states you can know it whether you can see it or not. **Just because we can't see it doesn't mean He can't see it.**

Never doubt in the dark what God has told you in the light. **But the question remains "How can this really be true?"**

All of it falls into place, all of it intersects in such a way that each cause leads to its appointed effect in a vast interconnected chain.

If we somehow had the capacity to comprehend it, we would be able to trace out a plan, a trajectory, each piece moving according to the eternal decree of God in obedience to His glorious design.

Slide:10 The Providence of God The providence of God is comprehensive, and it causes all things to cohere.

And that means your burdens are not pointless empty afflictions. They never are. **It means there is a purpose and a destiny.**

The storyline of human history will reach its conclusion. The narrative of your story will reach its intended resolution.

What does Paul say about the character of His sovereign providence? *"He causes everything to work together for good."* **For good.**

Providence simply means to see beforehand and to provide for what is seen.

Do you hear that word "**provide**" in the word **providence**? The providence of God simply means that He sees every event before it occurs and provides for that event.

It begs the question, are there any accidents in the life of a Christian, or are there divine appointments?

How often have we heard believers testify that their obstacles and disappointments were really "**God's appointments**," that their rocks of disappointment turned out to be boulders of blessing, when what seemed like hopeless situations turned into something good.

Joseph probably thought his life was over when he was sold into slavery, yet later he stated, *"God meant it unto good."*

When the early church was being persecuted, it seemed like a bad thing, but the good out of it was the fact it made Christians leave Jerusalem and take the gospel to other parts of the world.

God meant it for good. You can write those words over every wound and over every sorrow and every loss, every victory and every joy. **God means it for good.**

Now understand, Paul is not saying that all things are good. He isn't saying that suffering is good in itself or sin is good or death is good.

Human cruelty is not good. Disease is not good.

But what is good? Unfortunately, Romans 8:28 is sometimes misused by us. **How come you might ask?**

Slide 11: Not a Blank Cheque We sometimes trot out Romans 8:28, especially in crisis, as if it were a guarantee, a sort of blank cheque from God that everything is going to turn out just fine, just the way **we hoped** that it really will eventually.

We have construed the good for which all things work together subjectively according to our own limited desires and dreams, haven't we?

That's not what the Scriptures mean here when they say, *"God works in all things for the good."*

Slide 12: What Is the Good Then?

The good in view is verse 18, "the glory to be revealed in us."

The good in view is verse 21, "the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

The good in view is verse 23, is "the adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

The good in view is 29, "making us more like Jesus."

The good in view is our moral renovation and our eventual glorification.

It's the eradication of sin from our lives and it is final likeness to Christ one day. It is deliverance from death and hell and the assurance of life in all its fullness in the age to come.

Sometimes "good" means removing an idol from our life — even if it's painful.

Sometimes **"good"** means stripping away our self-sufficiency so we lean on Him.

It's not an easier life tomorrow or next Tuesday or ten years from now. But it is glory, unfading, brilliant and beautiful, as it shines from our own remade natures with likeness to Jesus Christ.

That is God's agenda in everything that He is doing in my life and in yours.

That is the good toward which He is constantly working, polishing, eroding the sins that still aggravate our hearts, till we shine with growing likeness to His Son.

Paul is telling us that it's possible to look at the sufferings of this present time, to look them squarely in the face, and be filled with hope rather than despair.

That is God's project in our lives – ultimate good, everlasting good, the good of being like Jesus at last.

Slide 13: Who May Know It?

But if that's "What we know" the next question is, "Who may know it?" Who may have this assurance that all things work together for good? Who may face present suffering with this kind of confidence? Look at the text again. What does it say? "

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God."

What is that telling us? Clearly this is not a universal promise, is it? There's no assurance offered to all people without exception here that all things work together for their good.

Slide 14: Love for God Is the Mark of His Children

This is a promise only for those who love God.

They've come into an intimate, personal fellowship with Him. they've been adopted into His family through saving faith in Jesus. They have more than just a religious commitment in their lives.

They're more than vaguely spiritual people. They're not in love with an idea or a concept or an experience. **They love the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They love Him.**

Deuteronomy 6:5 says we are to love the Lord our God *"with all our mind and heart and soul and strength."*

Jesus says this is *"the first and greatest commandment."*

So those for whom all things work together for everlasting good are those who have been brought to love God for themselves from the heart. **They love Him. They live for Him. They want to please Him.**

Can you say that this morning? Do you love Him?

That's the great mark of a Christian, and that alone places a person in the crosshairs of benevolent providence.

Only love to the God who has revealed Himself to sinners in Jesus Christ will align you with the purpose of God to bring all things into subservience to your eternal good.

All things, everything shall serve God's eternal purpose and design. Nothing is aimless.

The only thing that distinguishes those for whom the same sorrows and the same sufferings work good rather than woe, is that love for God beats in their hearts and it makes them say like David, "Your lovingkindness, Lord, is better than life.

A day in Your courts, Lord, is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in tents of wickedness. Whom have I in heaven but you, and on earth, there is nothing that I desire beside You.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Do you love God? **Only for those who love God do all things work together for good.**

We're almost done. Paul further clarifies who it is that loves God, how it is we come to love Him in the first place.

Those who love God, he tells us, are those *“who have been called according to His purpose.”* **God called them.** He doesn't mean that they heard an audible voice. It doesn't even mean that God called them in the broad, general invitations of the Gospel that is preached every Lord's Day.

It certainly is true that He's calling to us in the Gospel. In the good news about Jesus, God has called again and again and again. **He's spoken of His love for us in the gift of His Son.**

If you would but believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved. Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish! **That's the message.** It's an invitation. **Come trust in Jesus.**

Slide 15: Many Cannot Hear This Invitation. **But so many cannot hear that invitation.** They hear it with their ears, but it produces no effect in their hearts. They are deaf, spiritually deaf, their hearts unresponsive, cold like stone, dead in their trespasses and sins.

And then one day, a day just like every other day, maybe someone invites you to church, and you sit there sleepy and distracted as the preacher gets going. At first, it's just white noise as you fight to keep your eyes open. **And then slowly you begin to hear a phrase or two.**

On this day, it's as though as you hear him, the preacher is talking really just to you as if there was nobody else in the room, **just you.** It seems like he'd been reading your diary.

Then when he starts to talk about Jesus and tells you again of His love for you – even though you've heard it a thousand times before now – of His obedience, His death for you, **it's like it's the very first time you're hearing it.**

And in that instant, you realize that Christ is not just your only hope, but that right here in this moment He is personally calling to you, inviting you, drawing you to Himself.

In that moment as the realization dawns, your heart leaps and your eyes fill and you begin to cry out “O Jesus, save me! I didn't see how lost I was before, but now I see it!

My dear friends, the call of the Gospel was exactly the same in the lips of the preacher as it had been every Sunday prior.

What was the great difference? It was the ministry of the Holy Spirit taking that outward call and making it effectual, making it mighty.

Just like at the dawn of creation when God said, *“Let there be light,”* and there was light, when He said, *“Let there be life in that dead sinner's heart,”* you came to life and ran to Jesus.

That's what it means to be *“called according to God's purpose.”*

We love Him, because He first loved us.

Last Slide: Romans 8:28 Image