

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 image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. For those he predestined, he also called. And those he called, he also justified. And those he justified, he also called glorified.

It's the word of the Lord. Let me pray.

God, we thank you for your word and for the way that it is still speaking to us today. We thank you that you have gone before us. We plan these sermons out weeks and months in advance. And God, you knew where we would be as a church family today.

We thank you that your word is going to speak to this heaviness in this situation. Please be with Matt as he speaks to us today. God, may his words be your words. May we hear them as you intended us to hear them.

God, we are so grateful for you and for your word. Amen.

Good morning.

I'm gonna say a special good morning to those of you sitting in the balcony. I sat there a couple weeks ago. That's a whole other world up there, isn't it? Just a whole different place. It was way too dark for me.

I almost fell down. So I'm not sitting up there anymore. So anyway, welcome to you balcony people. It's like a different breed of people, right? I don't know.

Maybe not. Maybe you just like being anonymous up there. So, hey, I'm gonna highlight when Beth said about this service tonight. You may think I didn't know Matt Limbrick. I don't know any of the high school kids.

I'm going to encourage you to still consider. Scripture says it's better to be in a house of mourning than a house of feasting. It's kind of a weird thing the Bible says, but it's like sometimes being a place of grief. It's good for you. Cause maybe God wants to unpack some stuff that you've been grieving about that he wants to bring healing to.

So just another encouragement to come tonight. So if you listen to what Beth was reading when she read scripture. This is Big Bible Word Sunday. All right. Put that picture on the screen.

There's a curriculum you can buy called big Bible words. 80 bucks. It's meant so you can teach your kids to use big Bible words, right?

Words like election, faith, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification. And they want you to teach your kids I'm not making fun of it, but they want you to teach your kids to use this in everyday language.

Most of us don't even like to use those words in everyday language. Right. There's a lot of big words in the Bible. And actually we're going to look at some words today in Romans. Romans has a lot of big words.

Condemnation, redemption, sanctification, intercession. In these three verses that we're looking at this morning, three verses, foreknowledge, predestination, conformed, called justified, glorified. And you're thinking, okay, it's time for me to leave. I don't wanna be a part of this. Right?

But there's big words in the Bible. And actually, just for the sake of fun, I looked this up on the screen. The longest name in the Bible, from Isaiah 8. Isaiah had to name one of his sons that. What if God told you to name your kid that?

Right? And the longest word is in Acts 10. I won't even try to pronounce it. All right, but that's just how sometimes. But then we end up in the English language.

You know, we translate these words, and sometimes we translate them to use big words. But my wife asked me the other day, she says, why did Paul use big words? And I said, I think Paul just used normal words. But we've translated in English. And the best way we try to capture it is by using big words.

But Paul was writing to people no different than you and me.

He didn't need. He wasn't writing to academics. He wasn't writing to seminary professors. He was writing to Christians in Rome. There'll be a map on the screen here in a second.

So Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this letter to Christians in Rome. Rome had about a million people at the time. The guess is the number of Christians in Rome was maybe about the size of this group in this service. So it wasn't a bunch of people. And he wasn't writing to the Roman Bible College.

He wasn't writing to. He was writing to people like you and like me who were trying to figure out, what does it mean that I follow Jesus. So these words he's using is not to be, like, impressively, you know, confusing words. He was trying to help average people like you and me, ordinary people, follow Jesus better. But we're gonna look at those words.

And that's why I put up there on the map, it also said God, Paul wrote this to the church in Rome, but it's been read by churches around the world. Throughout the centuries, and now it's to us in Bloomington. So what he said to them, we wanna understand, so we gotta understand what God's saying to us. All right, so I'm gonna. There's three things I wanna talk about today, but let me talk about this first.

Last week, if you were here and if you weren't here, try to listen to Sean's sermon from last week. From the earlier chapters in Roman, early verses. In Romans 8, he talked about we are living between groaning and glory. All right? So somebody told me, I'm the sign guy, so I had some signs made.

But we are living between groaning and glory. All right, so glory is kind of our future and not just heaven after we die. Make sure the sign didn't get flipped upside down. But then last week, Sean talked about groaning that we don't know sometimes how to pray because life's hard. Talked about Matt Limbrick dying.

Many of you have your own groanings and grief, and you don't know what to make of what's going on in life. But we live as followers of Jesus between groaning and glory. And glory is not simply heaven after I die. But we do have to live where there's groaning, human suffering and pain. And Paul talks about that.

You know, all creation groans, we groan. We don't even know how to pray, but we know it's not the way it's supposed to be. But this is where we live. We live in what I call the in between, or in the meantime. CS Lewis calls it the shadowlands.

So we're living in this reality where groaning's part of our reality, glory is our part of emerging reality. But how do we live in this? There's a couple options, but let me say this. First, this is the God is working with us in that situation to bring about good. God is working with you to bring about good.

So read the verse with me out loud. All right, here we go, the bottom part. 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. So he's talking about in this space, in the meantime space, God works with us for good. Now, there's a couple different ways to look at this space, right?

One way is to look at it as an airport terminal. I got my ticket to heaven after I die. I'm just waiting for the plane to take off. And I get a little frustrated when I see that it gets delayed. And I get a little frustrated when the people sitting next to me have a crying baby.

They won't you know, Or I get a little frustrated when they don't have

what I want to eat at the Blah, blah, blah. But we think it's a waiting game, just gonna wait. I've got my ticket. That's not the gospel, all right? This living in between is not like living in an airport terminal waiting room.

Living in between is rather more like living. If I can use this analogy, which I'm not about D Day anyway. It's about, like the D Day invasion. We're part of something that's setting people free, including our own hearts. So it's not this waiting space, but it's a space where we are with God seeing our own lives changed, and he's using us to change the lives of others.

So it's not this. Like I said, it's not this waiting space. I've got my heaven ticket. I'm gonna wait. But it's a whole nother space where God is very active, doing things for good.

Now you might say, well, it's good. All things work together for good. Sometimes that almost sounds like we're saying it's all gonna work out in the end. That's not really that encouraging when you're going through suffering. If anybody ever says that to you, when you're in a deep part of pain, it's all gonna work out in the end.

You know, and I know that does nothing to bring satisfaction to your soul. Cause it sounds like fatalism. Whatever. God will do what God will do. But this passage is saying that God's working with us.

We're not passive recipients of life. God's working with us to bring about something good in us and even through us, into the lives of others. The word actually is synergy. God is synergizing with us. He works with us.

And you might say, well, no, God will do what God will do. Yes, he will. But what God has willed to do is to work with us. He's a partner with us. He's God.

He's the initiator, but he's with us.

And God will bring about good. And we cooperate with his plan. Like the rescue setting people free at Normandy. Right? So I've used the term before.

I haven't used it here. But my term is passively active. That's our posture to God. Cause sometimes we think, okay, I'll just be passive and I'll wait for God to do what he wants to do. Or I'll be active and I'll take matters in my own hands.

But I want to encourage us to be passively. Active. And here's my analogy. I went to the dentist like a month ago or maybe three weeks ago. I can't remember when.

All right. Active. I had to call the dentist to make an appointment. Active. I had to drive to the dentist's office.

Active. I had to get in the chair. Active. When the dentist says, open your mouth, I had to open my mouth. At that point, I am 100% passive.

But I actively have to put myself in a situation where the dentist can do his work and I don't grab his hands or her hands and try to move him around. Maybe some of you do that. I'm sorry. If you do. Right, you don't like the dentist.

I actually don't mind the dentist. All right, but it's a. I'm active to put myself in a situation where I'm then passive. So the exercise expert, the doctor, God can do what he wants to do in my life. So when you're going through challenges or struggles, which we all do, or pain or suffering, you're not just a passive. Oh, well, you put yourself in the place where God open the Bible and read, you pray, you go to church because you're putting yourself actively in a place where God can do something with you.

So when it says God works for the good, it's not this random. Well, whatever happens, happens. No, he works with us for the good in us. And the good is not necessarily more money or more better health. The good is a deeper faith, a deeper joy, deeper confidence in the goodness of God.

So that's the first thing. God's working for our good with us in this kind of in between time. Second thing is this. You're destined to become like Jesus. All right, read this passage with me again.

All right. For those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. That's easy to understand. All these big words foreknew is simply. It's a relational term.

He knows you. God said to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1, I knew you before you were in your mother's womb. Psalm 139. The Psalmist says, you knit me together in my mother's womb. God knows you.

He doesn't just know the color of your skin and hair and eyes or how tall you are. He knows you. He knows your heart, your passions, your dreams, your desires, how he's wired you, your personality. He knows you. So it's not this simply, it's not like a scientific term.

He knows you, and he knows you. And he predestined you, which simply means he's already set your destination. And your destination, according to this passage, is that you are to become like Jesus. Your destination is not simply heaven. That's part of it.

You come like Jesus, you'll be with Jesus, but your destination is to be conformed, to become like. The word conform has the word morph in

it. Like, to be changed into the image of Jesus. You're predestined for that. So, like, for example, yesterday or Friday, my wife and I drove to Chicago.

She uses Waze as her app. Anybody uses Waze as a map app. It doesn't work anyway. I use Apple Maps, right? So sometimes, same destination.

We wanted to get to our daughter's apartment in Chicago. But sometimes this will say this way, this will say that way. And then when you hit traffic, you're like, neither app is getting you out of traffic, so we gotta figure it out for ourselves. But we want the same destination. But we also know that sometimes there's different ways we get there.

And we hit traffic, we hit construction, we hit grief, we hit disappointment, we hit struggles. And on our way to become like Jesus, it just seems like this is hard.

But don't let that deter you, because your destination, God said, is already set. He's not going to let you go. Some of you here, I'm confident without knowing necessarily who. Some of you here are thinking. You don't know my struggles, Matt.

You don't know my doubts, my disappointments. You don't know my struggle with sin. I don't know if I'm on the right road to become like Jesus. Some of you may be on the verge of. I'm about ready to pitch Christianity.

I don't know if it's doing what I thought was gonna do. I'm stuck in the groaning world. But there's a sense of, is God really gonna finish? Is he gonna get me to the destination to become like Jesus? Becoming like Jesus means you become somebody who loves your enemies and you pray for those who persecute you.

And you're generous and you're kind and you're good and you're holy, all like Jesus that's becoming like Jesus. But you might think, like, I've thought of my life. Like, I don't.

I've had people say. And I've said, you don't know what I've done. I can't see how Jesus can work around that. So again, you might have doubts, you might have distress or anxiety or disappointment, and you may have just struggled with sin. I'm absolutely positive.

There are people in this room that are struggling with that. You think God must hate me. And I would say, you know, he doesn't. He loves you.

There was a time in my life I've shared the whole story. I won't share the whole story now where I was kind of deep in some struggle with sin. And I just thought, I did think God must hate me. And this destination of becoming like Jesus, I just don't see it. My GPS is broken.

I can't. I don't even know where I'm supposed to go. Cause I'm stuck in traffic. The traffic was my own struggle with sin. I'm stuck.

And anonymously somebody gave me a note one day. I mean, they put it in a mailbox and it was for me. And their note simply said this. I don't know what you're going through, but I think God wants me to tell you this. And they quoted Philippians 1:6.

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. He will get you to the destination of becoming like Jesus. He will. And I remember when I read that I started crying. Cause I thought I needed to be reminded that if God sets your destination to become like Jesus, he does not ever quit.

He will finish what he started in you. And you might think, Matt, you have no idea what I've been doing or my struggle with, or the degree of my doubts. No, I don't. But. But I've had those to some degree.

But I also know the promise of God, which is unfailing. Philippians 1:6. He will complete what he started. Your story isn't over with Jesus. No matter what you think the sin struggle is in front of you that you think I can never get past.

Your story isn't over. You might have friends, maybe kids that have walked away from following Jesus. Their story with Jesus isn't over. Cause God has set them a destiny to become like Jesus. Don't ever doubt God's pre destiny for you.

And your destiny is to become like Jesus.

Last thing as we live in this in between world, between groaning and glory. And this statement kind of jarred me at first when I wrote it, but I think, but it's true. And that's this. You are meant to be filled with the glory of God in this in between time. And you're like, wait, what?

You are meant to be filled with the glory of God. Now we're like, wait, what does that even mean? What does glory mean? Right. I remember telling my wife One time I was practicing a sermon, this was years ago, and I said, well, our objective is to glorify God.

And she's like, what does that mean? And I was like, well, we're supposed to glorify God. I know, but what does it mean? I don't know. Right.

The word glory. Well, for the glory of old. IU. No, but we understand that word. Okay.

The flag used to be called Old Glory.

So if this passage says we're going to be glorified, what does that mean? Well, let's look at. Even in the Old Testament, there's a time where Moses, they built a tabernacle place where God would dwell. And in Exodus, chapter 40, we're told the glory of God filled the tabernacle to the point where Moses couldn't even go inside. So something seen and felt, it's like, wow, right?

Solomon, when he built the temple, Second Chronicles, it says, in the temple, they prayed and they dedicated the temple, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple to the point where the priest couldn't even go inside it. Not because the doors were locked, because there was something they saw and felt that was powerful. And the people put their faces to the ground, not on command, but by the only reaction they could react to when the glory of God showed up on the earth that we all live on.

So you see from even. And then Psalm 24, the Bible says, who's the king of glory? Oh, it's the Lord, strong and mighty in battle. So glory has this sense of strong and mighty.

And then in Psalm 29, it says, the glory of God thunders. So again, this is something that is seen and felt. And I'll just put it in three words. Glory means impressive, radiant, and awesome. So if we're gonna be glorifying God, we're helping people see how impressive, how radiant, and how awesome is the goodness of God.

That's what it means to do that. But then we think, hey, wait, what about me? What does it mean that I'm going to be filled with glory? That sounds kind of strange, right? When Jesus in the New Testament, then when Jesus turned the water into wine, this first miracle turned barrels of water, not barrels, but stone jars, into wine.

It says, after it happened, he thus revealed his glory. And the disciples believed. So it wasn't like when he did the water and the wine. He had this. Well, he didn't do on a.

Something. When they saw that happen, something of Jesus. Impressive, radiant, awesome.

But then. Now you're still thinking, but what glory in me. Second Corinthians 3 says that we are all being changed into his glorious image. Being changed, that's a present reality. It's not simply, oh, when you go to heaven after you die, you'll get your glory choir robe and you'll be radiant.

It's not what that means. It means we're being changed now. And even in this passage in Romans 8:30, we're gonna be glorified, we're justified, which basically means we're put in right relationship with God. There's no more condemnation, no more shame. So then we can be



who we're all meant to be.

We be glorified. So what does it mean? That the glory of God is in me? In you? Cause that still sounds kind of like religious, right?

What does that mean? One of the things I read that was interesting when I was reading on this is if glory has an impressive impact on people. And they talked about God kind of having the work of Jesus. When Jesus changed the water and the wine, it had an impressive impact on the disciples. When Jesus was baptized, God says, my beloved son, whom I am well pleased.

So it's this sense of when something happens where it has an impressive impact on somebody else. And here's how I'm gonna explain this. Cause I want you to know that every one of you are meant to be filled with the glory of God. And you have seeds of it already in you. All right?

I have four kids, they're all young adults. And I was thinking about this when I was reading. I thought and I was thinking about the times in my kids lives where something happened. And I saw what I believe was a glimpse of their true glory. Right?

A glimpse of their true glory. My kids are smart, they're all athletic, but I'm not talking about achievements or performance. I'm talking about situations where I have freeze frame moments in my head where I think, I think I saw a glimpse of the glory of God in my son or in my daughter. And I'm saying that. Cause God sees that in you, right?

So one situation, it was a hard conversation. One of my kids was having. I'm just gonna call em my kids. I'm not even gonna reveal which gender they were. One of my kids was having and there was something about how they were communicating that as I watched them, I thought, I'm feeling impressive humility.

I'm getting a glimpse of the radiance and the glory of God in their life. I'm getting a glimpse of who this child of mine really is, how God sees them. Another one of my kids in A situation was like unhindered, joyful in a way that I had not seen them before. And there was a freeze frame moment where I thought, that's giving me a glimpse of the glory of God in them.

Another one of my kids had to face a difficult situation and they faced it with what I called beautiful courage. And it was a moment where. And if you're a parent, you might know what I'm talking about. They do something, you're like, that's who they really are. That's in them.

Yes. This side of the world, the groaning and struggle with sin,

there's things that hide that, but it's growing in them. And, and for this particular child was beautiful courage. And these were all like freeze frame moments in my head. My last one is one of my kids in a situation.

I had a chance to watch them. I actually was watching them through a window. They didn't even know I was watching them. But I saw a situation where there was powerful kindness. And I thought, I'm seeing a glimpse of the glory of God in them.

And I'm only saying that because that's how God sees you. There may be times where you have this sense of, I think I was made for this. Maybe it's a certain thing you do or. But God sees in you his glory and that's what he sees in you. Yes, you might say, well, doesn't he see my sin?

Am I so? Yes, he does. But he sees the trophy of his glory in you. And his whole objective is how to make that grow and grow and grow. So you are filled with.

Filled with the glory of God, Filled with the spirit of God. Yeah, it won't be complete till we get to heaven after we die. I'm not just diminishing that, but part of a large part of our journey here is how do we work with God synergistically, so to speak, as he sanctifies us, I'll use a big word, as he cleans us up as. And allows the glory inside of us to shine. Cause that's who you are.

That's who you are. You might say, well, I'm a sinner. Yes, you're a sinner. Saved by grace. Yes, you are.

We know that. I'm not diminishing that. That's not your identity anymore. If you're a follower of Jesus, your identity. If you're a follower of Jesus, you are meant for the glory of God to be increasingly poured into your heart and into your spirit.

You're increasingly to be the person that God saw When he made you full of joy, full of life, full of peace, full of kindness, full of all the fruit of the Spirit. And you actually become this impressive, radiant, awesome creation of God that when he created you, that's what he saw. And so many times in our spiritual lives. I'm guilty of this. All I see is where I'm messing up.

I see my flaws. And I assume that's all God sees. And he must be upset with me. He. He must be frustrated with me.

He must be even mad at me. But when God looks at you, he looks at you in the same way that Paul was telling these Christians in Rome. He looks at you. He puts you in a right standing, a good relationship. He removes condemnation because of the blood of Jesus.

And when he does that, then it allows space and opportunity for his glory inside of you to grow and you become the person you've always knew you were supposed to be, but you haven't. Cause of struggles, but it's a whole journey. It's a journey. Nobody all of a sudden becomes glorified in this life all at once. If you think you have been, then you're wrong.

Sorry. But it's a journey. It's a journey of growth. There's always more. This series is called More Than Right.

There's always more than what you've experienced of the Holy Spirit. There's always more of the Holy Spirit. There's always more of the glory of God that He wants to pour into your life. There's always more. So don't ever.

Cause I've done this. I'm telling you, don't ever say, God can't do that in me. Cause here's what I. I'm doing this. Bad, bad, bad. Don't ever say that.

That's not what God sees. He doesn't ignore it. He's not oblivious to your sin. He knows there's. But he sees the creation of what he made you to be.

That's what he sees. So if you have this image of God as the head coach who's always trying to tell you all your flaws, it's a bad image of God. It's wrong. It's not who God is like. But if you have the image of God, of somebody who sees what you can be.

Cause he knows that's how he made you and he's drawing you in relationship. All these big words that Paul uses are relational words. He's drawing you in relationship with him so you can become all that he meant for you to be. That's what he wants for You. And that's my encouragement to you, it's my challenge to you.

Because God sees you as impressive and radiant and awesome. And he will do whatever he has to, starting with. And ending with Jesus death on the cross and his resurrection to help you be set free so you can become that person.

So we, every Sunday we have a response time. So we, starting with communion, so we have the cups and the bread. And that's Jesus when he was. The night he was betrayed, he said, this is my body and my blood shed for you. Every time you, Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, remember me.

What are we supposed to remember? I'm gonna suggest something for today. Today. Remember how he sees you. He sees you as someone who he wants to be in right relationship with, justified.

He sees you as someone he knows foreknown, but he sees you as somebody

who has the glory of God in you because of what he's done. He's unlocked. He's broken the. He's broken the hold of the enemy. He's made that possible.

So when you drink this cup and eat this bread, remember the promises of Jesus that he who began a good work in you will not stop. He'll complete it. He will. He will.

He will. He won't stop. He won't stop. When you're lives of your kids who don't follow Jesus anymore, he won't stop. He won't.

But he will complete it. He will. So that's one. We start saying, well, that, that's the response time. Do that.

Some of you, if you just want somebody to pray for you, maybe you just need to be reminded in prayer that God loves you. When Paul wrote this, the start of Romans, he said, I'm writing this book to those, this letter to those who are loved by God. That's us. But you don't feel that now, for whatever reason, maybe just go to one of the people who have people in the corners with orange lanyards on. There's someone in the back just to pray for you.

And maybe you just ask. So I just, I just need to be reminded that I'm loved by God because I don't think God is in a good mood toward me right now or whatever your reason. So. And if maybe there's someone here who you're like, I don't, I don't totally get this God thing. I don't get the Jesus thing, but I'm feeling kind of a tug right now that I'm supposed to do something.

And maybe that tug is what I'LL tell you. It's the Holy Spirit. And maybe the Holy Spirit is calling you to give your life to Jesus. You can talk to the prayer counselors about that as well. This is the time to respond to Jesus with the cup, with prayer, or with giving your life to Jesus.

Let me pray. God, we, every single person in this room, God, you meant to be filled with your glory. You meant them to be impressive and radiant. Cause that's how you created them, in your image. But so many of us, we feel the brokenness of our image.

We feel the dirt on our image.

But that's not what you see.

You see what you made us to be, what we can become. And you're for us and you're not against us. So we're grateful for that. We're grateful that you are for us. And you in this world between groaning and glory, you're with us.

You don't abandon us. You don't stick us in the airport terminal. So

we just wait. You're with us and you're setting us free. And we love you because of that.

We love you, Jesus, for your goodness in our lives. And we ask this all in Christ's name, Amen.