

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Romans 8: 28

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Romans Chapter 8. We will read verse 28 today.

The experience of glory is the threefold groaning. We must be able to hear the groaning of all creation; they eagerly await that the sons of God may be revealed in glory soon, so that they may be delivered from the bondage of corruption. We must learn to groan from the depths of our spirit, longing to receive the adoption, the redemption of this body of death. When the Holy Spirit hears our groaning, He intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The God who created the heavens and the earth knows the mind of the Holy Spirit, and He arranges all things for us, working in us according to the intercession of the Holy Spirit. This brings us to Romans 8:28, which is the passage we will read today. This verse may be the most well-known verse in the book of Romans, and I hope the saints can all memorize it, for it will become our best help in times of tribulation.

Verse 28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.”

It begins by saying, “And we know.” The word “know” in Greek is *eido*, which means subjective knowledge. For a saint walking on the path of sanctification, he longs to receive the adoption as sons, the redemption of the body. He has had certain experiences with the Lord and has also learned to listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit in various circumstances. From his past experiences, he can subjectively know—this is not someone else's exhortation, nor knowledge gained from books, nor objective doctrines heard in sermons, but rather a deep realization within him—that “all things work together for good to those who love God.”

“All things”—in English translations it is rendered as *all things*, in the plural form. Today we are still living on the earth, surrounded by various things on which we depend for our livelihood, before us are things we desire to pursue, behind us are the paths we have walked and the things we have already experienced—these have shaped who we are today. Added to this are our family and friends around us, as well as some who hide in the shadows, scheming to harm us—all these are included in “all things.”

“All things work together” is quite special. In Greek, “all things” is in the plural form, yet “work together” appears in the singular verb form, which seems grammatically inconsistent. Therefore, English translations render it as *work together*. But if you look at the Greek-English Interlinear, which translates the Greek text word for word into English, it should be rendered as *works together*.

It seems that Paul is telling us that from our perception, “all things” are many matters, coming to us one by one, each appearing to be an individual event arriving in succession. From a human perspective, one might say, “How unlucky,” if what comes are all bad things; or one might say, “How fortunate,” if what comes are all good things. But to God, these are not isolated events; they are specially arranged by Him, connected with one another, forming together the one whole of “all things.” Therefore Paul uses a singular verb, showing that the purpose is to work together for us, to accomplish God’s work in us.

For Christians, there is no such thing as bad luck or good luck; these are all specially arranged by God for us. Perhaps you may ask, “Why do I have such a terrible husband?” The answer is, this is exactly what you need; his flaws are meant to work together for you, shaping you into one who loves God. Or perhaps you may ask, “Why do I have such a difficult wife?” The answer is the same, because this is exactly what you need; her difficulty is meant to work together for you, shaping you into one who loves God.

The same principle can be applied to your children, your work, your colleagues, your relatives and friends, and even your enemies. And it is not limited to people—why did you get a promotion or lose your job? Why did you buy a good house or

end up with a lemon car? If you have Paul's perspective, you must say, "All things work together for good to those who love God."

Nothing that comes upon us—people, events, or things—is accidental. All are prepared by God, tailored for us after He has heard the intercession of the Holy Spirit. What Jesus said in Matthew 10:30 is even more striking, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." According to the original text, our hairs are actually numbered; for example, today when washing your hair, strand number 101 and strand number 125 may fall out. Even such tiny matters are predetermined by God—how much more, then, the great matters that come upon us and can alter the course of our lives?

Whether we can gain benefit when things come upon us depends on what kind of person we are. This verse tells us that only those who love God can receive benefit. If our hearts are set only on ourselves and we are indifferent toward God, then we cannot understand the things that come upon us. We may start to complain, or think that our own schemes have succeeded. With such a mindset, whether what comes is good or bad, we will not gain any benefit. If it is something bad, we will suffer in vain; our spiritual life will not grow, and our hearts will instead become harder. Over time, we will become bitter and harsh. If it is something good, we will not give thanks, our spiritual life will not grow, and we will become even more conceited, turning into a proud and arrogant person.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must recognize that we are complex people; within us are two persons—one is the new man, and the other is the old man. Our new man is one who loves God, but our old man is one full of self, far away from God. When things happen and come upon us, which one of these persons comes out to respond will determine the effect those things have on us—whether positive or negative. If the one who loves God comes forth, we will gain benefit. The word "benefit" in Greek is *agathos*, which in English is "good," meaning good and wholesome.

Luke 18:18–19 says, "Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good?"

No one is good but One, that is, God.” Jesus directly told this young ruler that only God is good. The word “good” in Luke is the same Greek word as “benefit” in this verse; in other words, to gain benefit is to gain goodness, which is to gain God Himself.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the perspective we must have in looking at all things: after going through these experiences, have we gained God? If not, then these things have passed in vain, and we have not received true value. Everything that comes upon us is carefully designed by God, so that through these experiences we may gain Christ.

Paul had this perspective; therefore, when he was in the prison at Rome, he was able to write the book of Philippians, such a letter of joy. In Philippians 1:20–21 he says, “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

We see how bold Paul was—nothing that came upon him could put him to shame. Not only did Paul gain Christ in everything, but he also went further: through his response to these things, others could see Christ manifested in him, and even magnified. It made people marvel: how could a man under so many restrictions, even in prison, be so free, so joyful, and so released? It was because Paul was a man who loved God; in everything he gained God, manifested God, and magnified God. Those who love God are the ones called according to His purpose. Every saint who has received grace and salvation has been called, and called according to God’s purpose.

Today the church faces a crisis. In the pursuit of numerical growth, there is often a heavy emphasis on meeting people’s needs while God’s eternal purpose is downplayed. As a result, the saints who come to the church do so for the sake of their own needs, without knowing the purpose and intention for which God created them. We must understand that man lives within time, and man’s needs are temporary and earthly. When people immerse themselves in satisfying their own needs, they are easily drawn by the desires of the flesh and follow the trends of the

world—whether cultural, political, or economic. Yet all these things have nothing to do with God’s eternal purpose.

When the church is filled with earthly pursuits, it will follow the trends of the world—turning either east or west—or even bringing in political interests, causing people to lose their purity toward God. Such a church becomes one full of man’s will, and the inevitable result is strife and division. The Holy Spirit has no sovereignty, Christ cannot be the Head—can this still be called the church of God?

When problems arise in the church, if we examine them, the root cause is always the same—it is the loss of the first love for God. In Revelation 2:4–5, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke very weighty words to the church in Ephesus: “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.” A church that has lost its first love for the Lord Jesus Christ will have its lampstand removed by Christ, meaning it no longer has the necessity or value to exist.

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that we will cherish and steadfastly hold on to our first love. God calls us according to His purpose, that we may become people who love Him. When we focus all our attention on God, allowing His sovereignty to operate freely in us, we will be able to obey His will. In this way, all things that come upon us will work together so that we may gain benefit.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for giving us this precious verse, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Help us to always maintain this perspective, so that no matter what difficulties we face today, these difficulties may work for our benefit. Let us know You and Your guidance in the midst of trials, and gain You—that is the greatest benefit in our lives. We ask You to especially bless the saints in the church, in every circumstance and affliction, granting them spiritual wisdom to truly understand that “all things work together for good to those who love God.” Lord, continue to lead the church on its journey ahead, so that it does not lose its first love, that Your will may operate freely within the church, and that the church

may become a beautiful testimony on earth today. We pray this in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.