

We Know

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 8.! Romans 8.

We'll be reading verses 18-28. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we are saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?

[1 : 38] But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

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.

What is a life preserver worth? Maybe if you're standing in the Walmart and you're looking at life preservers, you say, well, that's not something I really want to buy.

[2 : 44] Not worth much to you. Life preservers really aren't worth very much unless your boat is sinking. But when your boat has tipped over and you're in the winds and the waves, then a life preserver is worth everything.

Everything. Brothers and sisters, we, in many respects, are in the winds and the waves this day and in these days.

And so we put our amen on Psalm 119, verse 50, which says, My comfort in my suffering is this, Your promise preserves my life.

It's a life preserver. It preserves my life. So times of trouble are times to remember and to believe and to hold on to God's promises.

Like you're holding on to a life preserver. You hold on. We've seen times of trouble are times to say, I believe. I believe this about you, God.

[3 : 55] I believe this about my God. Times of trouble are times to say, I remember. It's time to turn on the memory and say, I remember your works of old. And we looked at Psalm 46.

Our God is an ever-present help. He's a proven. He's a tried help. These things are not things that we have only heard about or read about, but they are things that we ourselves have tried.

God has come through for us in the past. We've been thrown into the waters before. And when we have, he's always been there to help us.

And we need to remember that now. I believe. I remember. Today, it is I know.

I know. Or we know. We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

[4 : 55] It's a promise. We know. We say it to ourselves. I know. I know this about this situation. I know this about the circumstances that I am, that I'm in.

We say it to ourselves. And we say, I know. And we say it to others. We know. The wind is high. The waves are crashing on us. But I'm holding on to the promises.

Your promise preserves my life. When everything else seems to be slipping away and I seem to be slipping away, oh, your promise keeps me above the waters.

So what do we know this September 16th? The year of our Lord, 2018. What do we know? Well, we know that every promise is yes and amen in Christ.

We know that. Every promise that God has ever given to men that is for us is yes and amen in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 1.18. But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not yes and no.

[6 : 07] What Paul is saying there is, there is a gospel. We have this message from God. It is about Jesus Christ. And it is a sure gospel. The gospel is not iffy.

If you're wondering, can I trust this gospel? It is not iffy. It's not yes or no. Maybe yes, maybe no. Paul goes on, for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not yes and no.

But in him, it has always been yes. So not only is the gospel yes and amen, sure, Jesus Christ himself is not iffy.

All who come to him will be saved. It is not. He is not iffy. He's a rock beneath our feet. For no matter how many promises, Paul goes on, for no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ.

This morning, the promises of God are not iffy toward us. They are yes. Charles Spurgeon wrote in his introduction in his book, Faith's Checkbook, it's a devotional book about the promises of God.

[7 : 29] In this introduction, he says, God has given no pledge, no promise, no pledge, which he will not redeem, and encouraged no hope, which he will not fulfill.

No promise, no hope. He's invited all of them, and he's going to fulfill every single one of them. Every promise is a check that you can sign.

The money is in the bank. But that's easy enough to say when the sun is out and it's beautiful. It's a totally different thing when you're in the winds and the waves.

And I know that. Charles Spurgeon knew that. And so he continues in that introduction. He says, I began these daily portions when I was waiting in the surf of controversy.

So he's just waiting in the surf. Ankle deep. Maybe knee deep. Since then, I have been cast into waters to swim in, which but for God's upholding hand would have proved waters to drown in.

[8 : 39] Sharp bodily pain succeeded mental depression, and this was accompanied both by bereavement, by loss, death, and affliction in the person of one who is one as dear as life.

He's talking about his wife. The waters rolled in continually. People in North Carolina know something about this. The waters rolling in continually, wave upon wave.

I do not mention this to exact sympathy, but simply to let the reader see that I am no dry land sailor. I know the role of the billows and the rush of the winds, and never were the promises of Jehovah so precious to me as in this hour.

Spurgeon was no dry land sailor, and we aren't either. It's important for you to know that.

[9 : 48] That what Spurgeon went through is something that you've gone through. We aren't dry land sailors. We haven't stayed on land. We're not going to heaven on beds of ease. So how good it is that every promise is yes and amen, Jesus Christ.

A sure thing. Yours to hold. Bought by the blood. Bought by the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ is yours, and in him all those promises are yours.

Peter wrote in his epistle, he has given us, he, God himself, has given us these great and precious promises. They were in his hand, in his mouth, and now he has given them to us to hold on to.

This is important for us to get to own deep in our hearts that these promises are not ours because we're good people or we've done something to deserve them or this is how strong our faith is.

It has nothing to do with us. They're yes and amen because of Jesus. So now we're going to start looking at some promises, but this is the foundational one.

[10 : 57] We have to own that these are ours not because of something that we've done, not because my faith is so strong and so I've wrenched them out of God's hands. No, they're ours because of Jesus.

And so whatever promise you read in the scripture has God's so be it on it. That's what amen means. So be it. And it's an amen sealed in Christ's blood because every promise is as sure as the cross.

So Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, he says, this is my blood, which is the blood of the new covenant, which is given to you. This is the new covenant in my blood.

And so every promise is ours and is sealed, not with wax, but with blood. And if God is going to break that promise, he has to break Jesus' sacrifice and undo it.

He's never going to do that. And so that's what we know. Let's get to Romans 8. We know. We know. He says that several times in this passage.

[12:08] We know this and we know this and we know this. There is one part where he says, we don't know what to pray. We don't know this, but even in that, the Spirit is helping us to pray.

But then he gets to Romans 8.28. We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him. So everything, this is one of those promises that how can it ever get old?

So everything that we are going through, sickness and loss, some of you are going through other deeper things.

I know that sickness and loss, pain and grieving, sorrow and suffering, we know that God has good purposes for them. We know it.

In the furnace, God may prove thee, thence to bring thee forth more bright. He has a picture of what he wants. He has a picture in his own mind of what he wants you to be and you to become.

[13:14] And he's working towards that. And so he puts you in the furnace to bring you out more bright. And so the furnace hurts, but we need to realize that the blacksmith is not blind.

He's not drunk. He's not confused. He hasn't left the forge. He is there. And he is at work. He has a purpose, a plan, and he's working it for good.

And it's not just good sort of in a generic general sense, but it's for my good. For my good. Your good.

Every path you take, every path I take, has mercy on it and it has a good at the end of it. He is taking us to a destination and it is a good destination.

And so we sing, it was a well-spent journey those seven deaths lay between. It was good at the end. Now there's a lot of talk these days about conspiracies and collusion and deep states.

[14:24] and it's not my place to, here to get into any of that. Say whether it's true or not, what I think, it hardly matters. But I will tell you about a conspiracy and collusion and a deep state that is true.

God is conspiring your good. and he is colluding with all things to bring that about. And there is a state and it is a state as deep as God's heart, as deep as God's love, as deep as God's wisdom and God's mind and it's right at the center of all things and it is working for your good, for our good.

Thomas Watson, wonderful Puritan pastor, he wrote a whole book on just Romans 8.28 and it is so good and I'm going to just steal from him for a minute or two and he says, he talks about what are all the things that are working for our good?

So what right now, dear saint, what right now, dear brother, dear sister, is working for your good? Well, we automatically almost always go to bad things because that's when we really lean on this promise but it's not just bad things, it's all things.

So all the best things are presently working for your good. I want you to put all of these things in your grocery cart and take them home with you. All of these things are now working presently for your good.

[16:01] God's attributes are all for your good. That's what we've been talking about on Sunday evening, God's attributes and man's problems. All of God's attributes, his power, his love, his wisdom, his gentleness, his justice, his kindness, his goodness, his faithfulness, anything else are working for your good.

Not a single one of God's attributes is against you. It is every part for you. All of God's attributes are for your good. All of God's promises, that's what we're talking about now, are for your good.

The mercies of God are for your good. The Holy Spirit is for your good. God's love, the angels are for your good. The saints are for your good.

Christ is working for your good presently. The prayers of the saints are working for your good. People are praying for you.

They're praying for you. And God is taking all those broken down, confused prayers and he's taking them and he's working them for your good.

[17:18] Like he knows how to pick all those pieces up and put them right and work them for your good. So every prayer meeting is for your good. All these streams of mercy, streams of mercy

never ceasing, all of these streams are coming together and they are going into this one big river and that one big river is towards your good.

There is more for you than is ever going to be against you. It's not just the best things. We know that all the worst things are working for your good.

All the worst things are working for your good. These are the things that we really have to hold on to and scratch our heads about and really think about. But all of even the worst things are for our good.

They don't feel good. They're not good in and of themselves. But God knows how to take them and use them for our good. So afflictions are for your good. Well, how?

How? Well, that could be a whole sermon series, but let me just say, C.S. Lewis said, God whispers to us in our pleasures. He talks to us. He teaches us.

[18 : 30] He helps us in our pleasures, but he shouts to us in our pain. Affliction is the best preacher God has ever put onto the earth.

God has ever used in the world. Affliction has saved more souls than George Whitefield, has sanctified more saints than John Wesley. Affliction uncovers us.

We don't know what's in here. We don't know what we're like. We don't know our problems. We don't know our strengths. We don't know, but affliction uncovers us and what is inside comes out. Affliction raises us up to God. I know well enough that some sermons leave the people right where they found them on their seats, but affliction is a sermon God uses to raise us right up to God himself where we go into the throne room and we find a throne of grace and we find help in our time of need.

How do we get to that throne of grace where God abundantly pours out mercy? How do we get there? Well, affliction chases us right into that throne of grace. Affliction unites your heart.

[19 : 43] What scattered half-hearted creatures we are so much of the time and we pray, we pray, give me an undivided heart that I might fear your name.

What needle and what thread does God use to give you an undivided heart? Well, affliction is that needle. Affliction presses us into the image of Jesus Christ.

We share in his sufferings and in sharing in his sufferings we become like him. There's no other way. Paul says, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

That's the good. I want to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death so that somehow and some way I can attain to eternal life.

It is our afflictions that make us useful. This is where we get it completely backwards and so wrong so often. We sometimes think that it is our afflictions that disqualifies us.

[21 : 10] It is our difficulties and our pain and our trial that puts us on the shelf and then maybe for a little time it does. I just want you to think about what use I say this reverently but what use would Jesus be to you if he didn't have scars?

What use would he be to you if he had no scars? Because it is by his wounds we are healed.

and it is his scars and his suffering that pleads with God the Father before the throne. And it is his wounds that make him a sympathetic high priest.

It is his afflictions that makes Jesus useful to us. And saints aren't generally much good to each other without scars.

scars. But with scars God makes us useful. He makes us useful. And have you seen that in your life?

[22 : 28] It's your scars and your trials that have made you useful to other people that have opened doors that were never opened before. There were doors of separation between you and the saints and you couldn't reach them, you couldn't be of any use to them, but it's the scars that opens those doors.

Affliction loosens your heart from this world. I have seen that in some of you. More ready for glory than you ever were. So we know that in all things God works for our good.

Bad things like affliction but also just everything else bad. Temptation. We don't have time to go through all of this. Temptation God uses for your good. Your sin God uses for your good.

Not good in and of itself but God knows how to use it. All the devils, Satan himself, the plots and plans of evil men, God knows how to turn them toward your good.

All of it God wrangles and manages and bends and torques and puts it into the place where now it sweetly serves your good.

[23 : 34] And so all of your enemies, God now puts them at your feet and makes them your servants. not a single one of the bad things that we are going through God is not going to use to serve us.

That will not serve us. So we know that in all things God works for good. I could go on. I just encourage you to pick up that book by Thomas Watson.

It's a little book. It's easy to read and it's worth ten times its weight in gold. If you can buy it for seven dollars on Amazon or something like that. What else do we know?

Well, we know that he is with us in it. He is with us right now. He is with us in the pain. He is with us in the sorrow and the grief. So Peter was in the water.

Remember, he's going down, but you know what? Someone else was already on the lake waiting for him with an open hand and it was Jesus. So how precious are all these promises?

[24 : 34] They're so dear to us. He is with us in this. Isaiah 41.10 Do not fear for I am with you. I am with you.

Psalms 23 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. There is darkness in the valley and there are shadows.

You are with me. God won't. Deuteronomy 31.

Moses summons Joshua. And Moses is about to die. He's going to go up that mountain and he's not coming back. back. But Moses says the Lord himself goes before you.

You don't need me in front. The Lord goes before you and he will be with you and he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid.

[25 : 44] Do not be discouraged. finished. Sometimes our Moseses leave us. God never does.

So what do we know? Well, God is in the front and he is in the back and he is above and he is below. He is all around us. He's a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

And so we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper. My helper. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

And we know that in all of our affliction, there is someone beside us. This is part of the I'm not going to leave you and I'm going to be with you. There's someone beside us carrying the heavier part of the load.

And how that is, it's hard to say because some of those loads are really heavy on us. But Psalm 69, praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.

[26 : 48] There's no weight that falls on you that doesn't fall on him. So close to you that nothing can come upon your back, your heart that doesn't also come along and come on his heart.

so God knows. Maybe no one else seems to know. There's a burden on your heart and the pain is so real and palpable that it's hard to tell other people that pain separates you from them.

But Psalm 69 says it doesn't separate you from God. The burden is on his heart. as deeply as you feel it, he feels it. I was young and now I am old, yet I've never seen the righteous forsaken.

We sing, I have often left you, but you've never left me. Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

And that's what we know. fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters might not be able to be where we are. And our hurt might be so deep that no one can know it.

[28 : 14] And no one can feel it. But I know he won't leave me. He holds me fast. Won't leave me. And then we know that in due time he will lift you up.

That's a promise. For every going down, there is a promised lifting up. For every affliction, there is a promised compassion and mercy.

Compassion is coming. Sorrows last night. Sun comes out in the morning. Psalm 135, 14, the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants.

It was not a compassion that they were presently feeling in that way, but Psalm 135 says the Lord is going to do this. It is in front of us. We are now marching to compassion where compassion and mercy will meet us.

There is compassion in God's heart. He is the father of mercies. He is the God of compassion. And that's what kept Jeremiah's head above the water when his city, Jerusalem, was just now in burnout shambles.

[29 : 28] And devastation and death were everywhere, but he says his compassions never fail. They're new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness. God, you are faithful. You keep your promises. And so morning by morning, new mercies I see.

That's the promise. Overflowing out of the heart of God is compassion, is a stream of mercy. He's like old faithful and continually spouting out new mercies.

So how do you get up every day? Some of you know what I'm what I mean, but when I say how do you face the trial of today that was the trial of yesterday and the day before and the day before? How do you face the loneliness and pain of today, the fear of today that was the loneliness and the pain and the fear and the isolation of yesterday? And then how do you face tomorrow?

[30 : 48] Well, there is promised mercy, compassion, and in this moment there is compassion in God's heart, but it is going to erupt in a mercy that comes out.

And so we know, we know, how can I give you up Ephraim? How can I hand you over Israel? How can I treat you like Adma?

How can I make you like Zebuim? Those were cities on the plain with Sodom and Gomorrah who were destroyed. How can I make you like those? My heart is changed within me.

That's the NIV's way of saying my heart, God is saying my heart is all churned up and turned over inside me. So I'm all twisted up.

All my compassion is aroused. God's compassion aroused. And so I know I don't meet a day without his promised compassion.

[31 : 59] He will show mercy. There's mercies in his eyes, mercies in his hands, mercy in his heart. And because he is so full of mercy, we know that he won't give us more than what we can bear.

He knows what we can bear. We don't always, but we know he won't give us more than what we can bear. And he remembers that we are dust. We're just dust.

And so he won't let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. And so there's a hand of mercy cutting away everything that is too much. So kids, maybe sometime around Christmas you make gingerbread cookies or star cookies and you take out the dough and you punch out the shapes. And then what do you do? You pull away everything that is too much, that doesn't fit, that's too big, that's sticking out. That's what God is doing all the time. There's afflictions, there's pain, there's sorrow that is just too much and he pulls it away and he doesn't allow it to come to us.

Not a single trial or temptation is too much. Everyone is cut down to size before it's ever given over and put into our hands. Carefully weighed before he hands it to us.

[33 : 15] And that's his promise. What we are going through is not beyond what we can bear with his help. Man may trouble and distress me, twill but drive me to thy breast.

Life with trials hard may press me, heaven will bring me sweeter rest. Oh, tis not in grief to harm me while thy love is left to me.

God's love takes all of the harm out of all of our grief. The sting is there, but there's no poison in it. So all the grief in the world can't harm me. It's all carefully measured and mixed with compassion before I ever see it, and that's what we know. It's all carefully measured and filled with compassion before it ever arrives on my doorstep before it ever falls on my heart, and that's what we hold on to. Well, we know more than that. We know that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. I've been sympathetic, and now I want to turn and be a little more defiant.

[34 : 35] Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. All of these troubles, the devil's work. He was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, and he's the one that enslaves men to death and darkness.

But this we know, Jesus came to destroy his work. Jesus has come to destroy his kingdom, and that's what we know, and that's what we hold on to with some defiance.

So Satan, I defy thee. All of this, all of your business, all of your doings, all of your working, all of the sorrow and sadness, all this handiwork, Jesus has broken into his workshop and now is systematically destroying every little bit of his work.

You have to see that. You have to believe that. Sin, he took it to the cross. Pain, he says, it will be remembered no more. I'm going to obliterate it so completely, you will not be able to put your finger on what was that?

Fear. His love will swallow it up in victory. Confusion and ignorance. Jesus comes as the light of the world. He brings in sunshine wherever he comes.

[35 : 56] Death, he rose from the dead. Every little bit of Satan's work, Jesus is now in the process of destroying.

Of undoing it, of ruining it, of reversing it. And so I see Satan's work in my life, in my life, in my family, in my church, in myself, and there's hurt, and there's pain, and there's fear, and there's death, and there's disease, and Jesus has said, I am come to destroy that.

He's going to destroy all of it. until I look and I see it no more. And we know he's coming again. It's a promise.

Behold, I am coming quickly. My reward is with me. Yes, I am coming soon. well, now we are in the third and the fourth watches of the night.

And day spring is at hand, and glory, glory dwells in Emmanuel's land. and when he comes, he's going to bring all of his people with him, and with a shout, the righteous dead in Christ will rise, and all together we will meet him in the sky, and we will be with the Lord forever.

[37 : 32] So now is the darkness, but dawn is at hand. The devil's time is short. He's down to his last few minutes.

The sands of time are sinking, almost gone. And when Jesus comes, we will be with him forever.

That's the promise. And so we don't just have hope for this life, but for the life to come. We don't just get a home and hope for here.

We have mansions in the skies waiting for us, prepared places, remember? Prepared places. And when the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there. Right there.

He's coming soon, and so we say amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Come. Come with power. Come with might.

[38 : 28] Come with a sword in your fist. Come with fire in your eyes. Come with love. Come with salvation. Come with a loud shout. Come. Well, we know he's coming soon.

He's promised it. Are you ready? Are you ready? Are you ready? ready? Is that the greatest thing that you could ever hope for?

Or is that your worst nightmare? Are you ready? Let's pray. Let's pray. thank you for these great and precious promises that are ours.

Pray that we would encourage one another with these things. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, help us to hold on to what we know is true.

Help us to know to hold on to what you have promised. That it may preserve us in these days. Holy Spirit, take your word, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us after your likeness, that we might bear all the fruit of the Spirit, all the fruit of the Spirit toward one another, love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and faithfulness, gentleness, all, every grace, make it to come out of our hearts and direct it and tie it all together in love, that we might love you and love one another.

[40 : 13] prayer. We all have an appointment on our calendar, a day to see you, a day to be judged, a day for damnation or salvation.

Pray that you would prepare every heart for that day. And while we wait, help us to hold on to those promises. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. Amen. Man.