

Romans 8:26-39

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[0 : 00] You've got here a title of God's Good News and Romans 8 26 to 39. Now this is part of a bit longer passage if you actually have your ESV Bible with you and for the sake of time I didn't read the whole passage which is Romans 8 18 to 39 which is 32 verses and in those 32 verses in the ESV translation we use one word occurs 19 times. We've got the whole 19 here but you would have heard it quite a number of times in what we have. It is the word for. One little three letter word. Now I expect some of you may have heard sermons on another short word in the Bible.

But. But God who is rich in mercy. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. But and for both conjunctions. Joining words. Linking words.

And link is one of our words that we are going to hear about. My talk today you could say is about links. Links in God's loving chain.

Now if I say the word links to you. Now if I say the word links to you. What do you think about? Just think for a minute. If I say the word link. If you're a Scotsman it would be golf. But no no this is England.

And link is to do with these things. Chains. This is a rather insignificant chain. If you think if I say the word chain to you. What would spring to mind?

[2 : 03] Is it the pig prisoner in the dungeon? And he brought along a bicycle chain. And then you may say well what do you mean a bicycle chain? Because there's two.

There's the one that links the crank to the wheel. And then there's the chain that you may use to lock it up. But my old bicycle chain for locking up was a bit heavy to bring. So this I think came from a tap. Now disconnected.

But three things to say about a chain. A chain is made up of links. I think that applies to all chains. Links. Also that a chain should indeed be strong and secure.

Not a certain other phrase that we've heard recently. I think that was to do with strong and sure.

And it proved not to be. Put not your trust in princes or princesses.

But God's chain is something else. My chain here is about God's loving chain. And it is a chain with five links.

[3 : 31] A five link chain. And you will find those links here in our passage. The five links are foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified.

And these are the links in God's love chain from Romans 8, 28. A verse that is very much beloved and a great comfort to Christians.

We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose.

Now, how can things all work together for good? In this sinful world, this cruel world, this world in rebellion against God?

And the answer is quite simple. And profound. God is in control. And his love chain links it all together for those who love him.

[4 : 39] God is in control. God is in control. The technical theological term for that is God's providence. I'm actually going to speak more about God's providence and explain the meaning of the word Sunday evening in a couple of weeks at IPC.

And do that from, I think, Psalm 69. But there's one quote about God's providence. It's from the American theologian Bible teacher of 100 years ago, V.B. Warfield, who said that the knowledge of God's providence is the solution to all earthly ills.

And he added to most theological problems as well. In other words, if you are facing an uncertain future, and most of us are facing an uncertain future one way or another, if we can rest in God's providence, his love, him being in control, that is a great comfort to us.

And we will see some of the comfort as we go through this passage. Now, as I said, the chain, rather a feeble one, I should have brought that big bicycle chain for you.

And chain, the links make it strong and secure. And that's what it is with our God.

[6 : 12] His chain of providence, strong and secure. And so we are held by it. Now, I did say, you know, think for a moment, what chains come to mind when you think of that word?

What's your association? You might say, what do you link with it? To have a little pun there. Well, some years ago, one Wednesday night, we came into contact with a chain that was strong and secure where we didn't expect it.

I put the key in the lock of the front door. I opened it and the door budged a little. It didn't budge anymore.

Why? Someone had put the chain on. We were all out. How had the chain been put on the door? How had it been made strong and secure and delayed our entry? Well, the answer, of course, was it was the person who climbed in through the kitchen window, fastened the chain for his own security and then robbed me of my most precious chain which was the silver chain on my grandfather's watch.

[7 : 42] Yeah, I got the insurance on it. It was worth several hundred pounds. Hallmarked on every link. That chain kept the watch secure when it was fastened to my waistcoat.

It was a strong chain. Of course, we've never seen it since. Chains. Strong and secure.

And here is God's chain. God's chain of love. Strong and secure. And those links in it our text tells us those who love God are called according to his purpose.

Called is the first link in the chain in our text but it's not logically so. It's mentioned first but actually it's the middle of the five links.

What's the first link? The first link is four new. Now, it's very interesting that each of these links is something that people misconstrued and get wrong.

[8 : 54] The common misunderstanding of four new is to think it just means that God knows beforehand something and God knows things before they happen.

Well, it's true. But that's not the whole meaning of the link here. if it says God foreknows his people it means more than knowing beforehand what they're going to do what's going to happen it means that God has an intimate loving relationship with them.

Genesis chapter 4 and verse 1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife and of course he knew he could recognize her she'd come from his side but this is more than just knowing in terms of cognizance it says Adam knew Eve his wife and she conceived and Borg Cain saying I've gotten a man with the help of the Lord and several times in Genesis it uses the word new in this intimate sexual sense so when it says God foreknows his people it means that he has an intimate relationship with them it's not sexual but it is that close another example of it Amos chapter 3 and verse 2 God says to his eminent people Israel you only have I known of all the families of the earth therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities

I've had this strong intimate relationship with you so our first chain link is foreknowledge God knows us intimately there's an intimate relationship if we love God through our Lord Jesus Christ and then the second link to that chain it says that we are predestined now if ever there was a word that was misunderstood it would be this one it's anathema to certain people they react very badly we once had a Sunday morning at IPC when someone got up stormed out slammed the door why the preacher had been talking about predestination and election and this man did not like it but predestined here does not mean an uncaring fatalism that's what Islam has in Islam Allah says to heaven and I care not to hell and I care not fatalism uncaring no intimate relationship but here this predestination this purpose of God has a very definite purpose which he states for us here what does our text tell us he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will our predestination is to do with being made like Jesus Christ it's being predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ to be made like him for us to be adopted sons just as Jesus is the son of God well we want his son in exactly the same way obviously because we are not eternal sons of God and by the way whether you're male or female you're called a son here because sons are the ones who inherit and that is the important thing and sons here is what we are destined to be through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of God's will we are to be made like Christ that is God's purpose for us that is the link in his loving chain third link the one that was mentioned at the beginning but I said that logically it comes third and it's put in the middle here called again a word that's misunderstood if I say to someone

[13 : 23] God's calling they'll think well perhaps God's speaking to them through the preacher it's just their hearing and they may ignore most people do when God speaks but there's a second kind of calling an internal calling an effective we call it effectual calling with this call God's power comes God's spirit comes and God draws a man or a woman to himself with bonds of love you're not forced but you are made willing according to the work of God within you God regenerating you God making you to be born again God giving you new life new birth in Christ how does this come it comes through the preaching of the word but not just to the ear working there which you can refuse and refuse to hear and be dead through it but working in the heart and when

God calls in the heart and God changes the heart this is the third link in his chain I know I'm attempting something rather ambitious here there's all these theological terms in just an evening lunchtime talk and we haven't finished because there's two more there's justified fourth thing justified what does that mean well that one's from the court of law justified means God declares the sinner righteous though we rebelled against him when we come before God our judge he can say to us not guilty how can he do it how can he be just and justified a sinner it's because our sins are taken from us by his son the Lord Jesus Christ there is the great exchange the great transaction Jesus takes our sins he bears them in his body on the tree he dies in our place on the cross and what does he give us he gives us his righteousness he gives us his perfect righteousness his goodness which means we can be accepted in

God's sight and when we appear before God on the last day we can look forward to that verdict of not guilty because we have been justified not through anything we've done no good works on our part not even our faith justified Christ justifies and this is what God has done he's made us right with himself he's justified us he's pronounced the great not guilty verdict fourth link in the chain and it's all come about through our saviour the lord jesus christ and the last one glorified some people might be a bit surprised you perhaps he put sanctified in there made holy but no all jumps to the end because the final end is glorification it's that we are made glorious and share in the glory of God share in the glory of his son our saviour the lord jesus christ and this is wonderful because what is sin sin is missing the mark all have sinned and fallen short of what the glory of God and we are going to be made glorious on that last day not only will we be granted not guilty we will share in the glory of our saviour the lord jesus christ the glory of the saints around his throne the glory of the adopted sons of

God this is the wonderful chain that is here God's chain of love it's five links foreknown predestined called justified glorified so what does it mean well as I said it's the explanation for our text for Romans 8 28 our very much beloved text we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose all things will work together for good in this fallen world even the things that appear bad things that people mean for evil God can turn them to good classic example Joseph's brothers wanted rid of him he was a bit of a boast intrigued they would think they sold him into slavery when some years later they come begging for food from Egypt they don't recognize

Joseph they think he's dead Joseph recognizes them and he knows when they find out who he is they're going to be dead scared and so he says to them don't be afraid you meant it for evil God meant it for good this was all things working together for good they meant to get rid of Joseph God meant it to save lives of many many people both in Egypt and in other lands as Joseph was given the wisdom to conserve the grain for the years of famine so in our last five minutes we have very briefly the application and the application comes in terms here of a succession of questions the application is to get the answers to these questions first of all there's five questions and sorry yeah five questions about seven things and then there's ten things as well in terms of the way of application having seen this chain what will we say to these things first thing is if God's for us who can be against us if God is for us what are you worried about no matter what the opposition is if God didn't spare his own son but gave him up for us all will he not also with him graciously give us all things look he's given you

[20 : 04] Jesus won't he give you the little things that you need the things that you worry about in everyday life and then there's Satan the accuser of the brethren he brings charges against us he tries to accuse us brought out magnificently in Lewis's screw tape letters well can he bring any charge against us God's elect who have been chosen by God no the answer is God has justified God has pronounced us not guilty who condemn us where is there a judge to condemn Satan would want us to condemn ourselves and say that we've fallen short and we're not worthy of this

salvation but no it doesn't depend on us and our feelings Christ Jesus is the one who died he's the one raised he's now at the right hand of God interceding for us nothing is going to separate us from the love of Christ we had love of God verse 28 now we have love of Christ in verse 35 and he mentions seven things and he says we're not going to be separated from Christ's love

God's love by any of these seven tribulation distress persecution famine nakedness danger or sword these may not be particularly relevant to us in our situation here in healing but they are to Christians many places in the world today and here is comfort from what God has done for us in Christ for your sake we are being killed all the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered but we don't just escape we are more than conquerors more than conquerors and here's love again through him who loved us and Paul now tells us of ten things that cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord death life angels rulers things present things to come that's pretty comprehensive powers that talks about angelic demonic powers no height no depth completely comprehensive anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord why because we are held by our God we are held by his chains by the five links that are in it here is comfort here is encouragement for you as a Christian but if you are not one who loves God if you do not know this intimate relationship with God through his son the Lord Jesus Christ then you can't know this comfort do you want to know this comfort turn from yourself and your way and your sins turn to God trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will find in him new life in him you will find salvation in him you will find his comfort and security we are in a very insecure world it is not a world that is safe and secure and there is a lady down in street who knows that above anybody because that was her slogan and it hasn't turned out that way but for us there is security and there is strength if we are held by the chains of God's love his loving links that Paul tells us about here in Romans 8 let us pray thanks
Thank you.