

ROMANS From Wretchedness to Righteousness

Study 14
 Romans 8:28-39
 Facing Life With Confidence

The Paradox of Joy and Suffering

1) Fill in the blanks. Christians will paradoxically face both relentless joy and suffering in this life. According to the video lecture, fill in the verses that point to this fact.

Fact	Verse	Content
Jesus Promised Joy	John 16:22-24	So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.
Jesus Prayed for Joy in disciples		
The secret to relentless Joy		
Gain perspective that suffering will not continue in the future		
The reality of the Spirit's intercession		

The Reality of God's Plan (Romans 8:28)

Verse 28

Romans 8:28

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.

2) a) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer(s), which can be more than one. According to the video lecture, what does “all things” in verse 28 refer to?

- A. The good
- B. The bad
- C. The ugly
- D. The beautiful

b) Fill in the blanks. What’s the common misunderstanding about the “all things” in verse 28? Fill in the blanks according to the video lecture

The common misunderstanding is that all things are only	
and are controlled by	

c) Fill in the blanks. Fill in the supporting verses for “the good, the bad, and the ugly”.

(i) The Good	(ii) The Bad	(iii) The Ugly

Verse 28-29

Romans 8:28-29

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.

3) a) Fill in the blanks. What is the objective of “the good”?

The meaning of “good”	
Promise in verse 28	The objective of the promise in verse 29

b) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer. What is the greatest good in life?

- A. Happy wife, happy life
- B. conformed to the image of his Son

c) Reflection question. Take time to reflect on which circumstances in life will hinder you from the “good” God has promised you. Which of the circumstances below will tempt you to stop conforming to the image of his Son? Search, meditate, repent or make a commitment to surrender these things to God.

Demotion		Stagnant job		Promotion	
Lost gamble		Uncertainty		Lottery	
Failed exams		Repeat exam		Pass exams	
Tax penalty		Silence from IRS		Tax breaks	
Poor health		Some health issues		Good health	
Bad spouse		Troublesome spouse		Beautiful spouse	
Child disability		Painful joint		Injustice at work	

Background Information
 “Jesus did not suffer so that we will not have to suffer but so that when we suffer you will become like Him”- Timothy Keller.

d) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, our basis of security is in the word “foreknew” in verse 29, which means:

	and	
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e) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, the word “foreknew” of “knew” can also be found in verses such as:

f) Fill in the blanks. According to verse 29, we will be “firstborn among many brothers”. Fill in the blanks according to the video lecture on what it means

firstborn among	➡	adopted	➡	
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many brothers				

g) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, what are the good things that will never be lost?

h) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture slide of Timothy Keller’s quote, fill in the rest of the saying:

Your bad things will...	Your good things will...	Your best things are...

The Best is Yet to Come (Romans 8:30)

Verse 30

Romans 8:30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

4) Fill in the blanks. Fill in the cascade of events that will happen to a Christian.

1 →	→ 2	→ 3	→ 4
SO certain is the future that it is cast as the past in God’s eyes. It is...			

5 Truths to Hang on to in the Darkness (Romans 8:31-39)

Verse 31-39

Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, there are 5 truths in Romans 8:31-39, fill in the blanks of what these truths are.

No.	Verse		What is the Truth the verse is telling
Truth #1	Romans 8:31	What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?	
Truth #2	Romans 8:32	He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?	
Truth #3	Romans 8:35-36	Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”	
Truth #4	Romans 8:33-34	Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—	

		more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.	
Truth #5	Romans 8:37-39	No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.	

Case Studies

Case 1
Clarise Gim had a favorite verse that had guided her all her life. It was Romans 8:28.
And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

She was with a nice Christian boy dating for several years and then they broke up and Clarise was devastated and sought solace with her friends in church who brought up this verse in Romans. She clung to the fact that God has in mind for her something much better in the future which helped her cope with her emotional pain.

Months later on she fell in love with a handsome athletic man who was 5 years her junior. He attended church sporadically, said he was a Christian (although there was little evidence to suggest it). She drew comfort from Romans 8:28 and believed with all her heart that this was the “good” that God had worked out for her. She was pushing 37 years of age and desperately wanted children and was so in love. She did not want to wind up miserably single for the rest of her life and so when he proposed she accepted.

Her new husband was great, very kind, and loving. They had 3 children, one of which was born autistic. But later, her husband refused to let her kids go to church, turned to alcohol, and started to beat her regularly at the slightest provocation. The beatings were not severe and no police report was made but she was miserable. She turned to her group leader at Gamma for advice.

- 7) Discussion questions.
a) Did Clarice properly interpret Romans 8:28?

b) How did that affect her life?

c) If she had consulted you before she decided to get married to her current husband what would you have advised?

Case 1.2

Clarice decided that she had indeed misinterpreted Romans 8:28 to devastating effect. Hence she reasoned that her current problems were due to the fact she made an error in judgment so the best way out of her misery was to divorce her husband as he was not the “good” that God had planned for her in the first place. He turned out to be “bad” as her children could not even worship God.

8) Discussion questions. What do you think about her idea to divorce?

Case 1.3

Clarice had increasing difficulties praying to God because she had felt that she had messed up. Her life was a mess and she did not glorify God. She had fear and anxiety every day. She felt so guilty as her real motives for marrying her husband was that she just did not trust God enough to wait for the right one or remain single. The spiritual lives of her three young ones were now hanging in the balance.

8) Discussion questions. How can you comfort her based on Romans 8:28-39?

Background information

When the leper says, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean,” Jesus immediately stretches out his hand and touches him, with the words, “I will; be clean” (Matt. 8:2–3). The word “will” in both the leper’s request and in Jesus’s answer is the Greek word for wish or desire. The leper was asking about Jesus’s deepest desire. And Jesus revealed his **deepest desire** by healing him.

-Dane Ortland, Gentle and Lowly, pg28

A compassionate doctor has traveled deep into the jungle to provide medical care to a primitive tribe afflicted with a contagious disease. He has had his medical equipment flown in. He has correctly diagnosed the problem, and the antibiotics are prepared and available. He is independently wealthy and has no need of any kind of financial compensation. But as he seeks to provide care, the afflicted refuse. They want to take care of themselves. They want to heal on their own terms. Finally, a few brave young men step forward to receive the care

being freely provided. What does the doctor feel?

Joy.

His joy increases to the degree that the sick come to him for help and healing. It's the whole reason he came.

How much more if the diseased are not strangers but his own family? So with us, and so with Christ. He does not get flustered and frustrated when we come to him for fresh forgiveness, for renewed pardon, with distress and need and emptiness. That's the whole point.

It's what he came to heal.

He went down into the horror of death and plunged out through the other side in order to provide a limitless supply of mercy and grace to his people.

-Dane Ortland, Gentle and Lowly, pg 37-39

Meditation

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers

(Romans 8:28-29 ESV)

What wrong attitudes do I need to repent of?

What is it in these verses that bring comfort?

What is it in these verses that build me up?

Meditate on these for the next week and come back to share with each other how God has spoken to you through the Holy Spirit.