



# DO YOU HAVE ANY HOPE?

## INTRODUCTION

We live in a very discouraged world today. Maladies like depression and sorrow and melancholy are everywhere. The chances are high that you suffer from one of these things but it would be good to know if there is anything you can do about it. It would be good to know if there is any hope.

The Bible says that there is, and it is found in Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

To help you understand this verse, let's walk through some of the key phrases in it.

## "AND WE KNOW THAT GOD CAUSES..."

If you think about it, there are not a lot of things that we know today with confidence. We do not know how the economy is going to turn out or how our favourite sports team will do in the playoffs. We do not know if our children will grow up healthy and strong or if we ourselves will live a long life but this passage says that there is something we can know. There is something we can be certain of. What is it?

Before I answer that, experts say that one of the number one causes of depression is a fear of the unknown. People are terrified of what might happen to them in the future. They fret and worry and fuss over what is to come, and yet the Bible says here that there is no reason to do that. We should not worry about the future because God is in control of it. He causes the future to happen.

God is not like us because, if He decides to do something, He does it. If He ordains an event, it will occur. The future is certain with Him. In the words of one author, "There are many things that can defeat human planning...But what can possibly come into our lives that can defeat God's plan?"

The answer is "nothing" and that gives us hope. God confirms that truth: "Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it. Surely I will do it" (Isaiah 46:11b). This gives us something to look forward to because we know who holds the future. We know who is in control, which brings us to the next phrase in this verse.

## "...ALL THINGS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD..."

Romans 8:28 goes on to tell us what God causes: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good". There are several important aspects to that statement.

For one thing, it says that "God causes all things," not a few things, but all things; not the good things in life only, but the bad things as well. Isaiah confirms this too, "I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these" (Isaiah 45:6b-7).

God will cause everything we face to bless us if we are in Christ because He is sovereign.

Romans 8 also uses the word "good." "...God causes all things to work together for good". This means that "good" is the end result of all of these things. "Good" is the conclusion of our lives. Christians are often depressed because they think their lives will end up bad. They unwittingly think that God is out to get them, but that is not the case. He is causing all things to work together for our good.

What is the "good" that is being referred to here? In Romans 8:29, it says, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." which means that God is conforming us to the image of His Son. The good that He is causing is to make us more like Jesus. If we are saved, that is the end result of our lives. It is the conclusion of everything, and this fills us with hope because no matter what happens to us, God will make us more like our Saviour. Which leads us to the final part of this verse.

## "...TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE."

Romans 8:28 ends on a profound note. It says that, from our perspective, we "love God". It is our duty to do so but, from God's perspective, we are "...called according to His purpose". This means that the initiative for salvation is God's.

The plan to work all things for our good started with Him. It was His "call".

When we call someone on the phone, we start the conversation. Before we call them, there is no conversation. In many cases, they do not even know that we exist until the phone rings, and it is the same way with God. This passage says that He calls us. He starts the conversation and He keeps it going from now until eternity because it was "according to His purpose".

All of this is to say that, if you are a Christian, no matter what you are facing, you can be encouraged because God loves you. If you are a believer, you can be hopeful because God cares for you like this. He causes all things to bless you, He is bringing your life to a good end, and He is making you into the image of His Son. So what do you have to be discouraged about? What do you have to fear?

This is not to say that you will not face difficult days. As long as you live in a fallen world, you will experience fallen things. Life will be hard at times, but you can face the future with confidence. You can have joy knowing that God has it all under control. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Our prayer is that you would know that today and find hope

The greatest hope of all is that God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to live among us and die on the cross for our sins so that we would be saved if we just believe in Him.