

Life Group Notes

Sunday 18 November 2018

Speaker: Andy McCullough

Title: From Dust to Glory

Passage: Romans 8:26-30

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In your Lifegroups this week, please pray for the following;

- The three people on your list that you would like to see God save. (From Glen Scrivener training evening)
- For many guests to come to our meetings over the Christmas period and to respond to the gospel.

If you became a Christian through hearing the gospel in an outreach meeting **or** you are seeking to love the community/share the gospel with friends/neighbours over Christmas, could you contact liz@readingfamilychurch.org.uk. We really want to hear your testimonies.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness (v. 26). We are dust – vulnerable and mortal (Gen. 2:7), but God is our help (Psalm 70:5). “Help” is a common prayer in the Old Testament as well as a Name for God. In these verses, we journey from dust to glory. The Roman Christians were a small, despised minority, and Paul is seeking to encourage them in their weakness.

1. Prayer (v. 26-27)

We struggle with prayer. The Holy Spirit, who indwells us, prays for us. Christ, who is in heaven, prays for us (v. 34). Even if you can't pray for yourself, you are being prayed for!

The Spirit helps in prayer with “groanings too deep for words”. Many (not all) commentators see this as a reference to the gift of tongues. The language is similar to I Cor 14:14-15.

The Spirit prays for us according to God's purpose. Prayer is often a re-alignment with the will of God.

2. Purpose (v. 28)

This is a really famous verse. If you are weak, it is of great comfort. If we are careless, it is open to misunderstanding. Who is this verse for? “For those who love God,” for Christian believers. Don't use this verse as a platitude for people who don't believe.

How do all things work together for good? The subject is unclear – it does not say “God works all things...” We often separate natural laws/ circumstances and God's activity, but this verse presumes the sovereign guidance of God undergirding and directing everything. Where is God in your circumstances? He is everywhere!

When/ What is the “good” referred to here? The good is not necessarily instant, not necessarily material, and not necessarily personal. It may be speaking of the greater good for God's kingdom or his purpose.

Why would God work good? Because we are “called according to his purpose.” He has a great purpose throughout history in which we play a part!

3. Predestination (v. 29-30)

Foreknew – predestined – called – justified – glorified: the “golden chain”, the “doctrines of grace.”

Foreknew: God knows everything anyway. But this is talking about an intimate knowledge – God knew you.

Predestined: God chose. Literally “God arranged your destination/destiny even before you set out on your journey.”

Called: the effectual call. When God calls us, who are we to resist his will?

Justified: God declares sinners righteous. Not just an exchange of verdict, an exchange of life. Not just a change of label, a change of character.

Glorified: What is glory? Not just shiny-ness. Glory is an honour or reputation word. The harassed, despised Roman believers have been made glorious in God's sight (Phil 2:15). Also, it is a guaranteed future in our resurrection (Heb 2:10), past tense because it is an assured future.

In the hands of the proud these verses are dangerous, they can make you lazy, can make you arrogant, can make you presumptuous. But to weak, harassed, earnest Christians, this is enormous comfort!

Questions for Application:

How does the Holy Spirit help you to pray? Do you experience the gift of tongues?

How do you understand verse 28? Do you have a story to share of good coming from seeming bad?

Who are the unbelieving friends that you are praying for? Who do you plan to invite to the Glen Scrivener meetings on the 9th December? Pray that God would "call" them!

How does predestination help us to feel assurance in our Christian walk? How might it make us lazy or presumptuous?

In what ways do you feel weak today? Pray for the help of the Spirit of God for one another.