

**Prayer of the Week:**

*Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Proper Twelve)*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*

**God At Work****Romans 8:28-30 (NTE)**

July 26th, 2020

**Introduction**

When suffering hits, it is natural to start asking questions about God.

-Where is God?

-What is God doing?

These are important questions. One of the scriptures that people often turn to for answers is Romans 8:28 which says, "We know, in fact, that God works all things together for good to those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." (NTE)

Over the next few weeks, we're going to explore Romans 8. We'll start with the crescendo in 8:28 and then work our way back to the beginning of the chapter.

Our goal is that this series will connect us to important truths as we navigate these days together.

## **God At Work**

The life of Jesus shows us that God weeps with us.

The cross of Jesus shows us that God suffers with us.

Romans reveals that God is also at work in our suffering.

*“God **works** all things together for good....”*

There is a temptation to hear this verse and take it to mean that God causes all things.

The point of Romans 8:28 is NOT that God causes all things, but that God is able to work in the midst of all things!

Listen to how the NIV puts it, "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."

This morning, I want us to rest in the confidence that God is working in the midst of this pandemic.

## **Image-Bearers**

*Romans 8:29, "Those he foreknew, you see, he also marked out in advance to be shaped according to the model of the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn of a large family." (NTE)*

Paul goes directly into the purpose of God's work, which he describes as being shaped into the model of the image of his son.

Sonship language is significant in Romans and points us to this truth: to be called a "son of God" was to be God's representative and co-ruler on the earth. (Don't get hung up on the gendered language; this calling is for everyone!)

God is at work in the midst of all things to bring about his new creation AND clarify God's image in us so that we can operate as representatives of new creation in the world.

## **Glorified**

Our passage ends with God's activity in our lives to call, justify, and glorify. What does it mean to be glorified anyway?

Glory, when it refers to humanity, refers to an elevation in status or authority as God's co-rulers over the earth.

The narrative arch of our story is that we have rejected that glory. This is tragic, but in all things God works for the good of those who love him...and so God is faithful to call and then justify (or set right), and then glorify; or re-instate our status and authority as God's co-rulers.

Romans 8:28 (RSV), *"We know that **in** everything God works for good **with** those who love him, who are called according to his purpose."*

*"God has promised throughout scripture to put the world right. In the present time he puts people right by the gospel and the Spirit so that they can then be part of his 'putting-right purpose for the world, both as models ('This is what it's going to be like!') and as agents ('You've got a job to do!'). So justification and justice belong together." — N. T. Wright*

*"Where is God? He is in the midst of all things...working with you...for good." -Glenn Packiam*