

## The Difficult Path

Romans 8:28-30

### INTRODUCTION

Today, I am thinking about the journey that each of us is making in this present life. Sometimes people reach a place in their lives where they must make a decision as they enter into a new phase of life. But whether we are at that point, or even if we look back to an earlier time of life, let us say that someone came to us and presented us with a choice of two different life paths that we could take from that day forward. They tell us that one of the paths has a particular difficulty, a trial that will befall us at some point in our journey along that path. We are not told what it would entail, nor when it would occur. Then we are told that the second path we could choose would have no difficulty or trial on it, but it would be a relatively pleasant journey.

Which path would you choose?

The truth of the matter is that we are not privy to this kind of information about our lives, but as believers, we know that God will lead us, and we must trust Him with our life's path and with what lies ahead.

David was very sure of this fact- that God was overseeing his life. He wrote in Psalm 139, *"And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me. When as yet there were none of them."* (v. 16b)

David also wrote in Psalm 23, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."* (v.4)

David knew that his path in the Lord that he walked every day of his life, could pass into trouble and shadow and danger and it certainly did. But what is clear as one reads the psalms of David, that through every difficult circumstance he always believed and trusted that God would see him through to the next day. Let us keep David's attitude in mind as we consider in this message,

The Difficult Path. Our passage is found in Romans chapter 28.

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There have been various circumstances and troubles that this body of believers has experienced or been closely aware of over the years that have caused me to

say in more than one message, “You never know what a day may bring forth.” Troubles sometimes come out of nowhere. God’s servant Job commented before his three friends, “*Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*’

– Job 14:1

Parents desire for their children to be safe, and children desire for their parents to live on and on. We all understand this, but we do come to learn that life itself is not in our control, though at times we may think we have somehow taken control of it. But here is the assurance of faith for the believer.

GOD IS IN CONTROL. These of course are comforting words, but the fact is that we really believe these words, and that is what really matters in the end.

SO IT IS POSSIBLE ON ANY GIVEN DAY THAT SOMEONE WE LOVE MAY ENTER UPON THE DIFFICULT PATH WHEN SOME TRIAL OR TROUBLE BEFALLS THEM. In such a circumstance, here is what the Scripture presents to us.

#### OUR TEXT

**Romans 8:28** *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

I would like to put forward two convictions that the believer who walks the difficult path must hold in their heart at all times. The first is this:

#### I. NOTHING IS UNFORESEEN IN GOD’S PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE

Whatever has harmed me in some way in my life, whether it is physical harm or emotional or spiritual harm... God has ordained it and is overseeing it.

Let me express this in another way. There is no such thing as an accident in God’s rule of His kingdom even though we experience accidents in life as well as unfortunate circumstances, either from natural causes or man-made ones, even our own mistakes or the mistakes and errors of someone else, or trouble brought by the devil himself.

Job knew this as he journeyed the difficult path. He knew his misfortunes and physical pain did not come out of nowhere, like some cosmic accident. There is an interesting verse in Job chapter 10 where he is speaking to God, and he says in verse 12, “*You have granted me life and favor and Your care has preserved my spirit,*” In this verse Job is acknowledging that God had always watched over his

life and had blessed him. The devil was well aware of this fact when he complained to God that God had placed a hedge around Job ( Job 1:10). But in the next verse, verse 13, Job says *“and these things {meaning, all these troubles that have befallen me} You have hidden in Your heart. I know that this was with You.”* Job knew that all his troubles had ultimately come from God. He didn’t know why God had brought this into his life, but his faith in God kept him going along the path, because Job knew that nothing was unforeseen in God’s purpose for his life, and here is why.

*“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

There are times in this life when the believer is called upon to cling to this verse by faith, either for themselves or as they pray for another believer who is on the difficult path.

*“...we know that **all things** work together...”*

**“all things”** must include both the pleasant and the unpleasant, both the good and the evil. This is God’s promise to the believer, that no matter what has befallen him or her, *“we know that all things **work together for good.**”*

Who is working all things together for good in our lives? Only God Himself can be doing that. This is an outstanding truth that the believer can hold dear in their lives.

Remember how Joseph, because of his brother’s jealousy and their actions against him, found himself on the difficult path. But at the end of the journey, when his brothers were confessing to him, here is what Joseph said to them.

*“ But as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”*

- Genesis 50:20a.

And what is the “good” that Romans 8:28 is referring to concerning you and I? We find in this verse that God is referring to His good purpose in our lives.

*“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

and what is that purpose, by which all things are working together for good? It is given in the next two verses.

**29** *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image*

*of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

**30** *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”*

What a magnificent purpose God has ordained for the life of the believer, to be conformed to the image of His Son and one day to appear with Him in glory.

And what God has ordained, He is overseeing in perfect and absolute power and love. This can only mean that the path that God calls every Christian to walk, and every pathway that leads to a difficulty or a trial in life, must be ordained by God Himself.... It can be no accident.

It is for this reason that we put forward our second conviction.

## II. THE DIFFICULTY MUST RUN ITS COURSE IN OUR LIVES OR IN THE LIVES OF OUR LOVED ONES.

This is another way of saying that whatever the trial is that befalls the believer, there is grace given by which that believer will persevere in faith until the journey ends. James writes about this truth in his letter.

*“ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.” – James 5:11*

What then is God’s intended end for the believer’s difficult journey? His intention is to bring forth the gold and glorify His name. By that we mean the gold of faith that is found in the heart of every believer being refined by their unique journey in life, through the God ordained circumstances whatever they may be. Job held this conviction in his heart and made the good testimony;

*“ But He knows the way that I take, When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” - Job 23:10*

Just as the great hymn “How Firm a Foundation” testifies of Him,

*“ When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be your supply; the flame shall not hurt you: I only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine.”*

~ pastor Mike Galus, 02-11-2024