

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: SECTION TWO

Three Promises That Encourage the Hurting – Promise Two/Good from Bad

When we become a Christian, not only does heaven become our eternal home, but our earthly residence relocates to the top of the mountain. This doesn't mean that we are in any way superior to the non-Christian. We are not. Paul clarifies this in 1 Corinthians 15:10 where he writes: "By the grace of God I am what I am . . ." At the same time, the Christian lives according to a different standard, fulfilling a higher purpose. The promise of Romans 8:28-29 is especially designed for the *people* of this purpose. The second half of Romans 8:28 makes it clear that God's promise to bring "good from bad" does not pertain to everyone. It applies only ". . . to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." There is an ironic connection between these two descriptions. The true Christian is someone who does indeed love God. Yet the only reason he possesses a love for God is due to God first loving him (1 John 4:10). Paul essentially says the same thing in Galatians 4:9, where we read the following –

"But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

This confirms that the Christian knows God in a personal way. Yet the only reason why such a connection exists between the individual believer and God, rests with God, who initiated and established the relationship in the first place. Without this Divine intervention, there would be no relationship. Therefore, the Christian is someone who has been "called" according to God's purpose. The "call" isn't a general one that can be refused, but an effectual one which produces the desired result. Paul places this call in the larger context of Romans 8:30 –

". . . and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

The call is based on God's predestined purpose, resulting in the justification of the sinner and guaranteeing the glorification of the saint. The promise of God given to the Christian in order to produce "good from bad" on his behalf, applies to that timeframe between our conversion (justification), and our entrance into heaven (glorification). In other words, this incredible promise is for the time when we need it the most – right here and now in our present earthly existence as Christians, where we are so prone to experiencing so much that is bad.

The connection between the promise stated in v28 and the purpose described in v30, creates the most basic yet significant benefit for the believer: *eternal security in Christ*. Anyone whom God has justified will end up glorified. Not a single justified one will ever fall through the cracks of an adverse earthly existence and fail to become a glorified one. God's promise to bring "good from bad" is the personal hands-on expression of His purpose to take us safely and securely from justification to glorification. The path for each Christian will vary and be anything but easy, but it leads to the same certain destination. Our part in the process is stated in both Matthew 22:37-39, as well as Matthew 28:18-20. We are to love God with all our heart, soul and mind; and our neighbor as our self. That will mean reaching out to the lost with the love of Christ that is within our hearts, in order to let them know about the good news of God's plan of salvation.