

OUR GLORIOUS SALVATION
A Priceless Jewel of Unparalleled Worth
A Golden Chain of Unbreakable Strength

Romans Series
PBC 2026

Text: Romans 8:29-39

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ *What then shall we say to these things?*

If God is for us, who can be against us?³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*

³⁴ *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am sure* that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Introduction

Many of us who came to Christ at a young age often face a prolonged and sometimes intense struggle to obtain and maintain an unshakeable assurance that the salvation described in Romans has become ours.

The point of our doubt is not whether God can and does save people through the gospel – we are convinced he does. The real question is whether He has actually saved me. And while there might be extended moments when we talk ourselves out of our doubts, sooner or later they return with a vengeance, leaving us crippled by doubt, debilitated by discouragement, distant from God, and even at times wondering whether we were misled into believing we were chosen by God, when in fact it looks like we might be destined for condemnation despite all the praying and repenting we have done.

Our text this morning offers astonishing help to people like us when our hearts struggle to keep believing in the gospel we embraced when we repented of our sins, turned to Jesus, and asked God to save us.

The five truths in our text are the high point of Romans because they provide an inspired explanation of the irrevocable nature of our salvation. When properly understood and personally appropriated, they will banish all doubt from our minds, eradicate all fear from our hearts, and engender strong endurance and triumphant joy no matter what might be happening around us, to us, or even in us (our mortal bodies).

The Puritan pastor, William Perkins, found hope and comfort in this verse almost 450 years ago and described these five salvific truths as five unbreakable links in a golden chain of unbreakable strength.

Several hundred years later, Charles Spurgeon described the value and worth of these same truths as a rare and valuable jewel with five wondrous facets.

This morning, I would like us to find this kind of strength and see this kind of worth by looking at this text from three perspectives:

- How God determined to relate to us in the past
- What God determined to do in and for us in the present

- How God determined to bring this about now and forever

I. How God Determined to Relate to Us in the Past

This refers to the Inexplicable Love of God (Foreknowledge)

Note: In describing our great salvation, Paul uses five strong verbs that have four important aspects we can't afford to miss:

- a. They all have God as the subject.
- b. They all have the same specific group of people as their object.
- c. They are all in the past tense – they are describing something that, from God's standpoint, is already accomplished because it is already in motion.
- d. They are all connected – in other words, they describe one thing God is doing in five connected, dependent, unbreakable stages.
 - It is a process that can't be stopped once it is started
 - It is like a Jewel with separate facets – the facets cannot be separated from the Jewel – they are distinct yet integrated parts of the one Jewel.

And one of the most important things Paul wants us to make sure we don't miss about this Jewel is where this glorious salvation began and why it came about: ***it began in the heart of God (not just in His mind) when He determined to do three things for His glory.***

1. He determined to know certain people (those whom He describes in 8:28 as those He called according to His purpose) – to relate to them in a specific, personal way – through a covenant He made with them.
 - And the word the Holy Spirit chose to describe this relationship is “foreknowledge” (προέγνων from προγινώσκω).
 - It occurs 5x in the NT, and three of those times it refers to the way God relates to believers.

- **Romans 8:29** – Speaking about the people in 8:29 who are called by God according to His purpose: *“For those whom he **foreknew** he also predestined.”*
- **Romans 11:2** – speaking of Israel even after they rejected and crucified their Messiah, Paul said, *“God has not rejected his people, whom he **foreknew**,” even though they had rebelled and sinned against Him egregiously as he goes on to say in the rest of the verse, “Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life! But what is God’s reply to him? I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. So too, at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace!”*
- **1 Peter 1:1-2** – Speaking about Gentiles, Peter describes them as, *“Elect exiles . . . according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”*
- Foreknowledge is not “prescience” or knowing things, actions, responses, or outcomes ahead of time. God does know these things because He is omniscient. But that is not what is in view here. Paul has something far more profound in mind!
- Foreknowledge in this text is best understood as a NT parallel with the OT word “know” (יָדָע) that is often used to describe intimate, loyal, loving relationships between God and His people or between two people. Let me give you four texts that are examples of this term in action:
 - a. Gen 18:19 God describing the origin of His relationship with Abraham, *“For **I have chosen him** (“known” יָדָע), that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”*

- b. Exodus 33.12b Moses describing the origin of God's relationship with Him, *"Yet you have said, 'I **know you** by name, and you have also **found favor** in my sight.'"*
- c. Jer 1:5 God describing the origin of His relationship to Jeremiah, *"Before I formed you in the womb I **knew you**, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."*
- d. Amos 3.2 God describing the special relationship He has with the Nation Israel that is unique from the way He relates to all the other nations of the earth, *"You **only have I known** of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."*

Long before I knew God, God knew me!

2. He determined that the nature and flavor of that relationship with those people would be a ***loyal love born out of grace, marked by favor, sustained by mercy, and experienced through kindness, directed to goodness, and guaranteed by covenant.***
 - Listen again to Amos 3:2, *"You only have I known of all the families (nations) of the earth."* God is clearly relating to Israel on a different basis entirely than how He relates to all the other nations in the world – and that relationship is best described by the word "covenant."
 - God entered into a special covenant with the people of this nation that He has not made with the other nations of the World. That covenant was given to Israel by God through Moses.
 - BUT . . . as glorious as that first covenant was in that it communicated God's loyal love for Israel – it could not produce in them that same loyal love for God.
 - Which is why God promised to establish a new and better covenant with His people, this time not with the nation of Israel (though it would certainly eventually extend to them) but with a group of people He determined to give to His Son to lead as His distinct people (think of how the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to

describe the Church in terms remarkably similar to the national terminology He used for Israel in 1 Peter 2:9).

Long before I loved God, He loved me!

3. He determined to guarantee this relationship with these people through a covenant He made with His Son to give them to Him as brethren.

So that is the first facet of the Jewel or the first link in the golden chain that is our salvation.

- ***By starting with foreknowledge, Paul helps us to see how God feels about those who are in Christ Jesus. He loves them.***
- Foreknowledge does not tell us why God loves us – it just tells us that He does so with an unlimited, inexhaustible love!

Long before I sought God, He sought me!

But there is something else Paul wants us to see. ***He wants us to know what God decided to do with these people*** who are the object of His inexplicable love. Because of His great love for them, He has determined to do something for them and through them.

II. What God Determined to Do in and for Us in the Present

- ***This refers to the Sovereign Purposes of God – Predestined.***
- The term “predestined” (προώρισεν from προορίζω) means to set boundaries or to determine ahead of time the parameters of what will or will not happen to someone or something.

A. Predetermined to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29)

- Not just that we would be similar to Christ.
- But of the same nature and character that is true of Christ.

- Just as Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, and we were born in the image and likeness of Adam (after he fell), when we were born again, we were recreated in the image and likeness of the 2nd Adam, Jesus Christ.

B. Predetermined us to the adoption of sons (Eph 1:5)

he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

- Adoption into sonship is not how we entered the family of God. We entered God's family when we were born again from above. So adoption is not the same as being "born again" or "being saved."
- Adoption in Ephesians 1:5 is what Paul talks about in Romans 8:15 and then defines in 8:23 as the "redemption of our bodies."
- In other words, adoption means to come into the full possession of the rights and privileges that belong to us as sons and daughters of God! And that will happen when we get our glorified bodies!
- And Paul reminds us that this outcome has been established in advance by the unstoppable, irresistible will of God for us.

C. Predetermined to give us an inheritance with His Son (Eph 1:11)

In Him we have obtained (past tense) an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

- What is the inheritance that God has boundaried off in advance for His people? He determined to give to them everything that He has determined to give to His own Son.
- What He determined to give to His Son (and to us) is "all things!"
- And the "all things" has three components:
 1. God determined to give His Son an eternal kingdom that is greater than any other earthly kingdom.
 2. God determined to give His Son all authority and majesty over all the kings and kingdoms of the world.
 3. God determined to give His Son brethren (brothers and sisters) who would love, serve, and honor him forever and who would co-rule the universe with Him as princes and princesses

WHY: So His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers!

- Firstborn (πρωτότοκον) does not mean born first in time or the first son born of many other sons and daughters. It means first in rank, importance, authority, splendor, power, might, and majesty.
- Here in this text (8:29), God determined to give His Son the greatest honor and position above any of His brethren.
- In Colossians 1:15-18, God determined to give His Son the greatest honor and position above anyone or anything in all of creation! And He did so that Jesus might have the preeminence.

So, that is what God has decided to do for and through the people He determined to foreknow. **But how will He bring this about in the lives of those people in real time and history?**

III. How God Determined to Bring this About Now and Forever

A. He Called Us (ἐκάλεσεν) (1 Peter 2:(9))

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

This refers to the gracious summons of God

1. It is enlightening

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

This calling involves opening our blind eyes so we would comprehend the truth of the Gospel that, up to that point in our lives, we despised and rejected.

2. It is enlivening

Ephesians 2:4–6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

This calling involved quickening our dead heart so that we would obey the demands and embrace the beauty of the gospel that we had been disobeying and suppressing up to this point.

3. It is irresistible and irrevocable

- **Paul** – He resisted until one day on the road to Damascus, God opened his eyes and enlivened his heart and he became obedient to the gospel he had formerly despised.
- **Israel** – all day long God has held out his hands to a disobedient and contrary people – and their rebellion was so deeply seated in their hearts that they rose up and slew God’s Son when He arrived in their midst. And yet – this is not the end of the story! Here is what Paul says, “As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Rom 11:28).
- **You and me** – you didn’t believe no matter how many times you heard or what illustration or evidence someone put in front of you – until one day, in ways that seemed out of the blue to you, you found yourself believing.
- **Illustration:** Eta Linnemann, disciple of Rudolph Bultmann who denied the historical record of Scripture, denied miracles, and considered the gospel to be an outdated myth about a Jesus who may or may not have existed. And then one day, she found herself in the presence of a small group of believers who extended kindness to her in her deep loneliness. Over time she began to sing the hymns. What was polite listening began to be

engaged reflection. And then came the day when, in the middle of giving a class lecture, she realized she no longer agreed with what she was teaching because, somehow, along the way she had started to believe and had become fully convinced of the truth of the gospel that for years she believed, taught, and wrote was a myth.

B. He Justified Us (ἐδικαίωσεν)

This refers to the saving grace of God

Paul has spent the entire first half of Romans explaining how God justifies sinful people and makes them His own by declaring them righteous before the universe in a way that displayed His righteousness to the Universe.

Here is the central passage:

Romans 3:23–26 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Justification means three things for us:

1. The wrath of God against us has been propitiated.
2. The guilt of sin in us has been expiated.
3. The just demands of God's righteousness, as expressed by the Law (His holy representative and His righteous voice), have been fully satisfied.

Justification permanently removed all condemnation over us; dismissed all charges against us; and eternally imputed all of God's righteousness to our account.

C. He Glorified Us (ἐδόξασεν)

This refers to the unstoppable work of God

- God is on a mission to fulfill an ancient promise by which He would redeem (free) us from our mortality and restore to us the gift of full and total immortality. He is making mortals immortal!

1 Cor 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

- Internally, this happens as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to our lives, shaping our character into the image of Christ and aligning our beliefs, values, and responses with Christ's.

2 Cor 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

- Externally, this will happen when the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead will one day raise and transform our physical bodies into the likeness of the glorified body Christ received upon His resurrection.

Phil 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Conclusion

How should we respond to this gospel jewel that has been given to us?

We should respond in biblically shaped ways that give us unshakeable assurance that there is no condemnation because God is for us as our mighty Defender.

We should be fully persuaded of biblically grounded truths that there will be no separation from God now or ever because God is with us as our loving Father.

And that should produce three important responses:

1. We must rest in the assurance of our salvation.

- In other words, stop doubting your salvation!!
- How? Reckon!! Gather all the evidence (yours and God's) and assess it carefully, thoughtfully, accurately, and faithfully.
- **There is Biblical Evidence** that you must make sure to gather, understand, and believe.
- **There is Divine Evidence** – the golden chain we have looked at.
- **There is Objective Evidence** – The internal presence of the Holy Spirit that operates in our inner man in ways that are very different than how we thought and what we valued before we came to Christ.
- **There is Subjective Evidence** – do you want to be God's child? Do you want Jesus as your Lord and Savior? People who are not called by God do not want this – in fact, they resist it and, in their hearts, despise it as foolish thinking by misguided, misinformed, or weak people.

2. We should rebuke all doubt, resist all sin, and reject all fear because we are persuaded that there is neither condemnation nor separation from God.

3. We should engage fully in God's mission to bring many sons to glory with all our strength.