

John 3:16

by Neil Fraser

The sermon emphasizes the purpose, provision, and power of God in our lives, and how we can trust in his love and provision to overcome obstacles and achieve glory.

Duration: 38:14

Scripture: Proverbs 28:1, Romans 8:28-29, Romans 8:31-32, Romans 8:35, Romans 8:37

Topics: "Gods Purpose", "Christian Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses three key things that made a difference in the lives of certain individuals, particularly the apostle Paul. Firstly, Paul had grasped the purpose of God, understanding that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Secondly, Paul understood the provision of God, recognizing that God freely gives all things to those who believe in Him, as demonstrated through the sacrifice of His own Son. Lastly, Paul embraced the power of God, knowing that through Christ, believers are more than conquerors and can overcome any obstacle. The speaker encourages the audience to also grasp these three things and find assurance in their faith.

Transcript

Now, as I indicated yesterday, I have been selecting some books from the bookstore in order that we might justify our brother's labor in bringing these things to our reach. Yesterday we had various copies of the Bible, and our brother has a splendid selection of Bibles down there. Now today I have a selection from various publishing houses.

We have Gleanings and Exodus put out by the Moody Press, of which our brother Mr. Cole is the distribution manager, by Arthur W. Pink. Now Pink, Mr. Pink wrote on Genesis many, many years ago. Many think that his first writing was probably his best.

However, those who have read Exodus claim an equal value to it. I'm sorry I haven't read it as yet, but I saw it reviewed in, what is it called, Food for the Flock, of which our brother Mr. Gunn is editor, and he spoke most highly of Gleanings and Exodus. Those of you who want to study Exodus seriously ought to get this volume.

It's 450, but it's got double columns of material. It has about close to 400 pages, equivalent to 800 pages in any other book. Then Walter Wright Printing Company is represented here.

Our brother Mr. Walter Wrig is here, and his sales manager. I want to speak a good word for Mr. Gibbs' book, *You Must Be Born Again*. Those of you who have unsaved relatives and you're serious about their conversion, you are serious about their conversion, give them this book.

A message for all who are willing to consider eternal realities. Sales for 60 cents. Our brother has a host of books down there.

If I might be permitted, I was asked indeed if I would say a word about my own book, *The Grandeur of Gold Gossip*. Half of those articles were written for *The Witness* some years ago. I added six more, and it was published.

Very favorably reviewed in Britain, and in Dallas Theological College, Quarter Lake. And Mr. Barnhouse did me the honor of printing an article on the cross in his magazine. You might be interested in that.

Sales for \$2, *The Grandeur of Gold Gossip*. Now, when our brother Mr. Cole spoke yesterday, I had in my Bible a message to speak on the very portion which he had read to us. I was tempted to follow.

I didn't, but wish afterwards I had. I asked him today what he had in mind, and he told me. And I turned to my Bible, and there I had a message on the very same theme.

And then I asked him what he had in mind tonight, and he said John 3.16. I turned to my Bible and showed him something I had brought to fall this conference, the Lord willing, in John 3.16. It's amazing how these men get my service. The only thing was that I, in the ministry, from which he must take it that the Lord was directing both of us to the same portions. Now I'm going to try to follow him this afternoon from Romans 8. The only misgiving I have, I spoke this message the other night in Portland, and my brother Upton, I think, is here this afternoon who heard that message.

I crave his indulgence. But I consider it so important that I'm going to, if I can, follow the line of our brother in Romans 8, and with the verse and Genesis in mind, all these things are good. Now I may be a little after the half hour before I get through, but our chairman is a special friend of mine, and I think he'll give our brother Mr. Crawford ten minutes' indulgence, won't you? Thank you.

Half an hour if necessary. Now shall we read, please, in Romans 8? And we shall read from verse 28. And we know that all things, here are some of the all things we heard about, and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are recalled according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be confirmed to the image of his Son. But he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called.

And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. Yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sort? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long.

We are accounted a sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Now, as we have heard this afternoon, there is a vast difference between the tragic cry of Jacob and the triumphant cry of Paul.

The one is a throb of pain, and the other is a thrill of pleasure. All these things are against me. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.

Now, some people would imagine that the difference in those two utterances lay in the fact that one man had known sorrow and suffering and trial, and the other man hadn't. But you would be wrong if you thought so. Indeed, the man who uttered the triumphant cry probably knew more about real trouble than ever Jacob had known.

So that the difference did not consist in one knowing trouble and the other not knowing trouble at all, like Thomas Carlisle. So let's go back a little bit and think of the justification which Jacob had for his utterance. In chapter 35 of Genesis we have the record of three burials, all of which brought pain to the heart of Jacob.

The first burial was the burial of the beloved mistress of his mother, Deborah, a woman who must at that time have been of very great age. When Jacob's mother left her home to become a bride and to go with that unnamed man across the desert, she took with her for her maid, Deborah. The maid was very much attached to her mistress and followed her everywhere.

And it would seem as though after the mother died that old Deborah did not stay in the encampment of Isaac but made her way back to the encampment of Isaac, the favorite son of that favorite wife. And after twenty years or more, very probably much more, Jacob comes back and old Deborah is with him, very, very advanced in age. But on the homeward journey she dies and Jacob's sorrow is reflected in the name of the place where he buried her.

He called it the Oak of Weeping. It affected him very much to see this tie with old Abraham even and of Isaac and of his mother broken at last. And then as you come down the chapter you have the death, the tragic death of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel.

The cavalcade was proceeding rather hastily, I think. It perchance it might make Bethlehem before nightfall. And almost within the lights of that city, if it had lights, the cavalcade was made to stop because Rachel was in childbirth.

And how uneasily they must have waited for word and at last came the word that a baby boy had been born, Benjamin by name. But in giving birth to her baby the mother had died. Rachel had passed away and Jacob, as we heard this afternoon, never forgot the death of his beloved wife.

And years later, when he himself is dying in an Egyptian room, perhaps with the walls decorated with the hieroglyphics of Egypt, old Jacob remembers the death of his wife. And he says, and there at Bethlehem Ephrathah, there I buried Rachel, his beloved wife, gone. And then when you get to the end of the chapter, you have the third burial, you have the burial of his father Isaac.

And Jacob's twin brother comes out of the obscurity and they join hands for a little while and unite in the burial of their father. But Esau and Jacob had nothing in common and they part once more. Esau to go to far off Eden, a prosperous man, a businessman, a man prosperous in every way, I think good to look at, whereby Jacob was limping heavily as he attended the funeral.

But they part and they are never seen again, not even in the third generation. The bereavement of Isaac and of course of the twin brother of Jacob. But not only that, but he had so much trouble in his own family and that cuts us deeply, doesn't it? Concerning two of his sons, old Jacob said, Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of cruelty are in their hands.

In their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they dig down a wall. Judah never brought much pleasure to his father, nor Reuben, both overcome in immorality. And concerning his other sons, Jacob said, You have made my name to stink among the inhabitants of the country.

Oh, it's sorrowful to see that Jacob's sons brought him so much grief. And then he saw that rift among his sons, almost from the day that he made Joseph a special object of his favour, when he gave him the coat of many colours. A coat which was to mark Joseph out, I believe, as the prince of the clan.

And perhaps even Jacob rude the day when he made Joseph thus distinctive from his brethren, for from that day they hated him. And when he came to them as son to the father, they said, Here's a dreamer coming, let's kill him. Instead of which they sold him into slavery in Egypt and expected that they would never see him again.

And then they stained the blood, they stained the coat of many colours with the blood of a goat and brought it to Jacob and said, Is this thy son's coat which we found in the field? And Jacob took a look at the coat and said, It's my son's coat. Some evil beast has devoured him. And he lifted up his voice and wept.

And those hypocritical sons of his came around ostensibly to comfort their father, for as they knew that he had sold him down into slavery. And then the trial of famine came and the sons of Jacob were looking each other in the face so helplessly until the father irritably sent them down to Egypt to buy corn. And when at last they returned, they returned minus one of the other sons of Jacob.

And as we heard this afternoon, he was left as a hostage in Egypt. And you all must feel in the utterance of Jacob that he had suspected for a long time that Joseph was not slain at all. Or rather, if he was slain, that he was not slain by an evil beast, but by the hands of his son.

Because he burst out with the words, Me have ye bereaved. Me have ye bereaved. Joseph is not.

Simeon is not. And he will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.

Always sympathize with Jacob. Although we know in our hearts that much of his own trouble was his own doing. He who deceived his father with the skin of a goat will be deceived by the blood of a goat.

He who took advantage of his father's darkness to deceive him will be taken advantage of in the darkness by Laban and deceived in regard to his own life. The wheels of God may grind exceedingly slow, but they grind exceedingly small. But now I want you to turn in thought to Romans chapter 8. What made the difference between those men? I submit it was because Paul had grasped three things that he indicates to us in this chapter.

He had grasped something of the purpose of God. He had grasped something, secondly, of the provision of God. And thirdly, of the power of God, as they are indicated in these texts in which the word things or all things occur, for instance.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. According to his purpose. He had grasped something of the purpose of God.

Secondly, he that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Freely give. Freely give the provision of God. And thirdly, nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.

The power of God over every obstacle in the way. I want you to think about these three things this afternoon. Now notice what he says.

And we know the certainty, and we know that all things work together for good. The course. To them that love God.

The condition. To them who are called according to his purpose. For.

Now don't miss that word for, please, in the next verse. Look at it. For.

Whom he did foreknow. Then he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. And whom he did predestinate, then he also called.

And whom he called, then he also justified. And whom he justified, then he glorified. Now, the word for connects 28 with 29.

And it seems to me the Apostle Paul is saying something like this. Now when I grasp, or try to, the broad sweep of the overall purpose of God for the redeemed, I realize that individually all things must work together for good. Now notice the broad sweep of God's purpose as it's indicated in those five words.

Foreknowledge. Predestination. Calling.

Justification. And glorification. Now you'll notice, please, that all five are spoken of as historical.

As if they had all taken place. Whereas, as a matter of fact, they had not taken place historically. They had taken place in the purpose of God.

As I look down on you this afternoon, four, if you're a Christian, four of the five have already taken place. You are foreknown of God, and you were predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Not predestination to a place, but to a purpose.

To be conformed to the image of his Son. In time you were called by the Gospel. And you responded to that, and believed the Gospel, and all that believe are justified from all things, and so you are justified.

Foreknown, predestined, called, and justified. But you're not yet glorified. I can tell you're not.

Because a lot of you are far greyer than you were seven years ago when I was here before. I am different. I don't get that old.

Or do I? You're not yet glorified, dear friends. But here, because it's the purpose of God, all is spoken of as if it had already taken place. And there's someone here, if there's someone here this afternoon, and you're not just clear on the eternal security of God's people as it's called, let me remind you of this.

For those whom he thus foreknew, way before the world began, then he did predestine to be conformed to Christ. And those whom he did thus predestine, he called effectually in the Gospel. And those whom he called effectually, he justified.

And whom he justified, then he glorified. Are you justified? Then you will be glorified. It's the purpose of God.

Now, says Paul, when I consider the broad sweep of God's purpose, it leads me to know that even now, to me individually, as to every other Christian, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God. Everything must inevitably work for good to them that love God. Everything that must come to the heirs of salvation must be one of those things, however we do not regard it, that will work for good to them that love God.

Some weeks ago I was in one of the Canadian bakeries in Vancouver. I saw all the things that go into the making of a loaf. Some, of course, I was familiar with.

Some I wasn't. I was familiar with the fact that there went flour into the making of a good loaf. But I did know that flour in itself is not a palatable thing.

I've never gone into a house and a woman say, now while you're waiting for supper, have some of this nice dry flour. You don't do that, for dry flour is not very palatable. And I suppose that in a good loaf there is yeast.

Now nobody eats yeast whole unless they're health fiends, although someday I'm going to start. But yeast in itself is not a palatable thing. I've gone into thousands of homes to eat, but I've never once had a hostess say, now while you're waiting for supper, have a bite or two of this yeast cake.

It doesn't taste very good. In itself it's not palatable. What else? Salt.

I know there's grey big bins of salt there. No, salt's not palatable in itself. What else? Soda.

We all know the taste of soda, especially preachers. It's not very palatable, but we have to take it. And what else? Well, a lot of other things, friends of mysterious name and taste, I saw in that bakery.

But put them together with the action of the heat, and they'll work together and produce a palatable thing in the end. Now the things that come to us individually and viewed by themselves are so many adverse unpalatable things that we don't like and don't want. But they'll work together ultimately.

They must, says Paul, work together ultimately. For if you are one of the chosen heirs of salvation, God is going to see, dear friends, that things must ultimately be working for your good. I suppose that horseshoes at its lowest value, steel at its lowest value, consists in the horseshoes which we picture at.

But steel in its highest value attains that through constant heating and hammering, and heating and hammering, and heating and hammering again. And when that's carried on ad infinitum, you have steel at its highest value. Now it's the same in those things.

I think Paul grasped that. He said that the broad sweep of the purpose of God, from eternity to eternity, for the heirs of salvation, convinces me that all things must inevitably work for my good, I who love God. Oh, you see, Mr. Fraser, I don't think I could say that I love God enough.

But the verse goes on to say, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Now because the first was true, the apostle Paul could move on to the second. And the second was this.

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Paul says, if I am thus the heir of salvation, then God's provision for me must be security. If he spared not his son, giving his best, then no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. He shall with him freely give us all things, all things necessary for the journey straight home to heaven.

I heard a story about a man and his wife who were Christians and quite wealthy. They lived in a very large house and servants and everything that wealth brought. But there came in a depression, and they began to lose their vested interests.

Until one day they got a telegram, and they stood and read it together, telling them that their best investments were gone. And they saw at once they would have to leave the big house and the servants and stay in a very small place. And as they stood and read the telegram together, the woman shook her head, and she said, It's the Lord's will, and we must put up with it.

And they did. But somehow in the little house, they were wonderfully happy. As they saw God supplying their need day by day, they began to really grasp truth, which they had held in theory before, as to the supply of all their need.

They were cast on the Lord, they enjoyed his word, they were wonderfully happy. But the years passed by, several years, and business took a trend upward. And little by little their interest began to return.

Until one day they got a telegram telling them that their vested interests were good. And they saw that they could go back to the big house if they so desired, and the servants. And they stood and read the telegram together.

And when they read it, the husband, thinking of those recent years, and of God's provision, and of their peace within, shook his head and said, Well, it's the Lord's will, and we must put up with it. I like that, friends. I do.

They found that he who had steered not his own son, but delivered him up for them, had with him also freely given them all things. Now, I think Paul grasped that. And that one was a natural consequence of the other.

As I grasp the purpose of God, so do I grasp the provision of God. And because these two things were true, the third followed. He mentions seven things that can't possibly separate from the love of Christ.

At least he raises the question, can these seven? And he says, nay, in all these things we are more than conscious. And then to finish up, he mentions ten things, everything he can possibly think about, none of which can separate him from the love of God. It would be very interesting if we had the time to go into those.

I just mentioned the first. Notice what he says, I am persuaded that neither death nor life. Now, he doesn't say life or death, but death or life.

Because the apostle Paul knew that sometimes the ordeal of living is harder than the ordeal of dying. Lots of Christians would rather die than live in their constant pain and trouble. But they don't die.

They tell me that under the reign of Vladimir, many hundreds, if not thousands of Protestants were put in prison. Some were put to death and the others expected to die for their faith and were ready to die. But afterwards, Queen Elizabeth came to the throne and she turned around and persecuted the Catholics and liberated the Protestants.

And many of those Protestants got out of prison and went back to their living. And I was sorry to read that many of them went back into the world and some of them denounced the very faith they were ready to die for. They've discovered that the ordeal of living for Christ was greater than the ordeal of dying for Christ.

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, and so on. Now, let's go back to Jacob. All these things are against me.

Was it really so? Was Joseph dead? No, he wasn't dead. He was very much alive. He was the governor of all the land of Egypt.

Was Simeon dead? No, Simeon wasn't dead. He was the guest of honor down there in Egypt, really. What about Benjamin? Was Benjamin going to be taken away? No.

In fact, dear friends, things were not so good for Jacob than they were up there. Why? Because of Joseph's purpose. And because of Joseph's provision.

And because of Joseph's power. Later on, when the sons of Jacob came back, tumbling over one another with descriptions of the magnificence of Egypt and the position of Joseph, and they said, Father, do you know what? Joseph wants us all to come down and live in Egypt. There'll be five years more famine yet.

Things will continue to get worse. But Joseph says, come down and live in the land of Gershom. Father, Joseph's purpose is that you don't continue to live here, but that you live down in a wonderful country.

That's Joseph's purpose. But the Bible says, Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And those sons of his said, well, Father, come outside.

Come outside and we'll show you something. So they took that tottering old man outside, and they said, take a look at those. And when Jacob looked at those, he opened his eyes wide.

What do you think they were? The gilded wagons of Egypt. And they said, Father, that's what he sent. That's his provision to take you down there.

And Jacob looked at those wagons. Talk about four-wheel brakes. And look at that paint job.

And look at the insignia of the pharaohs on the side. And everything that went with a beautiful wagon. Jacob knew these could belong to nobody else but the mighty pharaoh.

And the next thing I read is, and Israel said, not Jacob. It was Jacob that said, it was Jacob's heart that fainted. But Israel said, it is enough.

I will go and see him before I die. And Jacob discovered all the power of Egypt lay behind that invitation and that provision. So that Jacob and all his company went down to that bountiful land and lived in affluence with the Savior of Egypt.

Dear friends, some of these days, the purpose of our God in Christ Jesus will be fulfilled. He's going to send those chariots of heaven, thinking of the simile of Elijah. They're going to be caught up to meet the Lord.

Provided for until then and afterwards. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. And when we grasp those things, friends, I believe we shall be able to say, nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

God grant it.

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