

# All Things work...

by Stephen Kaung

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*God is working everything out for our ultimate good, even in difficult circumstances, and He is calling us to salvation and conforming us to the image of Christ.*

**Duration:** 52:52

**Topics:** "Gods Sovereignty", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that God is the one who controls and orchestrates all things in our lives with a positive and definite purpose. The concept of 'good' is explored, with the reminder that God alone is truly good. The speaker encourages believers to present themselves as living sacrifices to God and to be transformed by His will. The idea that all things work together for good to those who love God is highlighted, using the example of the Apostle Paul's imprisonment as a testament to this truth.

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## Transcript

Romans chapter 8, verses 28, 29 and 30. Romans chapter 8, verses 28. But we do know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose.

Because whom He has foreknown, He has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He should be the firstborn among many brethren. But whom He has predestinated, these also He has called. And whom He has called, these also He has justified.

But whom He has justified, these also He has glorified. We do know that all things work together for good. I think probably we are all very familiar with this statement.

Whenever we visit anyone in a hospital, we'll use this verse. It's a ready-made verse. And whenever any brother or sister has any problem, whether they are sick or whether something happened, we have a ready verse for them.

All things work together for good. Now we use that verse so often. Sometimes I wonder whether we really understand what we are quoting.

Now when you read Romans chapter 8, in verse 26, it says we do not know. We do not know what to pray for. That is fitting.

You know, brothers and sisters, in our daily life we encounter many things, different environments. And oftentimes we do not know what's happening. And we do not know what to pray and how to pray.

That will be fitting. Now because we do not know, so we say we do know that all things work together for good. You know, we do not know why certain brothers and sisters got sick.

We do not know why something happened to them. And we do not know what to say. So we use this ready verse, all things work together for good.

But do we really know all things work together for good? Now all things means everything. Everything that happens in your life, whether it comes from people, or whether they are just things, or whether they are certain events, circumstances that come your way. All things, everything.

And the Bible said all things work together. Now we know that all things include things that are inanimate, that is not living. Now how can all things work together? Everything has a meaning.

And everything will coordinate together, work together for good. Now how can this happen? There must be someone behind all things. There must be someone who controls all things.

Someone who orchestrates, put together all these things with a very positive, definite purpose. And we know this is God. All things, behind all things, there is God.

And God is the one who brings all things together. And he makes all things work together. Work together for good.

Now brothers and sisters, what is good? You remember one day in Mark chapter 10, a young man, he was a ruler, and he ran to our Lord Jesus. He knelt before him, before the crowd, because he was earnest. And he asked a question.

Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Now that is a very important question. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he addressed this question to our Lord Jesus. He said, good teacher.

And you know what our Lord answered him? The Lord said, why do you call me good? There is no one good but God. In other words, our Lord corrects him. God is good.

Aside from God, there is nothing good. No one good. And you also remember, in Romans chapter 12, it said, brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed, that you may be able to prove what is the good and perfect will of God. So in other words, what is good? You know, we have our own definition of good. Suppose you are in good health.

You say, that's good. Suppose you inherit a large amount of money. You say, that is good.

And if you are in ill health, that is no good. If you are in poverty, that is no good. If you have a good job, that is good.

But if you lose your job, that is bad. Now that's our definition of good or bad. But you know, our definition is really not correct.

What is good? God is good. And His will, His purpose is good. So the Bible says, all things work together for good.

What does it mean? It means that whatever happened to you in your life, whether it is prosperity, or whether it is poverty, whether it is good health, or whether it is sickness, whether it is smooth sailing, or whether it is hard going, whatever happened in your life, all things, you know many things happen in our life, but all things that come in our way, God is behind them. He is making all things work together for good. He is making all things work together that His will may be done in your life.

Now that is good. And you know brothers and sisters, we have the habit of quoting half a verse, or even one third of a verse. We do not quote the whole verse.

We say all things work together for good, period. But that is not what you'll find in the Bible. The Bible says all things work together for good.

Yes. To whom? To those who love the Lord. You know if you do not love the Lord, if you do not love God, does all things work together for good to you? If you do not love God, probably you will feel that all things work together against you.

Not only disaster work together against you, even prosperity, even success work together against you. To those who do not love God, not because God does not want all things work together for your good, for your eternal good. There is no problem with God.

You know our God is good. And He is at the back of everything. And He is trying to make all things work together for your eternal good.

There is no doubt about that. But whether they work together for good to you, you have a responsibility. If you do not love God, you do not understand.

You are not able to really enter into God's mind and God's heart. And because of that when you look at all things, you'll find everything, everyone is against you. It does not bring you to eternal good.

But how can you love God? In all things. Now if you have a very smooth, rosy life, it may be easy for you to love God. Suppose you live a very hard life.

Are you able to love God? What is the secret of loving God? Now quote the full verse and you'll find it. All things work together for good. To whom? To those who love God.

But how can you love God? In any circumstance, whatever happens, you love God. How can you do that? To those who are called according to purpose. In other words, you are called according to purpose.

Thank God, all who believe in the Lord Jesus are being called. And we are called according to purpose. That is to God's purpose.

You know, even before God created the heavens and the earth. The Bible tells us, even before the foundation of the world, God has purpose of purpose in his Son, Jesus Christ, for you. Now think of that.

Even before you are born. Even before your being formed in your mother's womb. Even before the world was created.

In time past, eternity, before time began, in eternity, God is eternal, self-existing. And there he purposed a purpose in himself. What is that purpose? He purposed a purpose in his beloved Son, concerning you and concerning me.

And that, the Bible called it, the eternal purpose of God. So dear brothers and sisters, it is extremely important for us to know, what is God's eternal purpose concerning us. Now if you know what God's eternal purpose is concerning you, then your eyes will be opened.

You will be able to see truly, God is at the back, managing all things in your life. Let all things work together for your eternal good. And that is to fulfill his eternal purpose in your life.

Now if you see that, then whether blessing or woe come in your way, they will not affect you adversely. You are able to see behind everything, God is working out his purpose in your life. And you will praise him, you will thank him, and you will worship him, and you will love him.

That's the secret. You know, to many believers, when they are blessed, they love the Lord. When they are met with adversity, their love for God begins to cool down.

Why? Because they are influenced by what they can see. They are influenced by their environments. They do not see God in all things.

Now if we can see God and his good will in all things, then brothers and sisters, whatever happens, if the south wind blows or the north wind blows, they will all work together for good. To those who love God. As I was meditating on this, it brought into my mind the Apostle Paul.

You know Paul, in Philippians chapter 4, he says something. You know this Apostle Paul, he suffered a great deal for the gospel's sake. And when he wrote this letter to the Philippians, he was in prison in Rome.

He was there a prisoner, not because of what wrong he had done, but because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When you look at his circumstances, you will think that he will be very downhearted. Probably he will murmur and even rebel against God.

God, I love you. I worked so hard for you. And why is it that you allow all these things to happen to me? But no.

Even when he was in prison, he was full of joy. And when he wrote this letter to the church in Philippi, instead of waiting to be comforted by the Philippian believers, instead you find he was comforting the Philippian believers. He said, rejoice always in the Lord.

And I said again, rejoice. Now towards the end of the Philippians letter, in chapter 4, that's what he said. He said in verse 11, not that I speak as regards probation, for as to me I have learned in those circumstances in which I am to be satisfied in myself.

I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound. In everything and in all things, I am initiated both to be full and to be hungry. Both to abound and to suffer probation.

I have strength for all things in him that gives me power. You find in whatever circumstance the apostle Paul was in, whether he was praised by people or whether he was persecuted by people, whether he was full or whether he was hungry, he said, I am initiated. I have learned.

I am able to face all circumstances. Why? Because he knew the purpose of God. He knew that God means well.

That God is using all things to bring him into the full purpose of God. Now are we like that? All things work together for good. To those who love God, who are called according to purpose.

Now what is that purpose? In the following verse we are told. Verse 29. Because whom he has foreknown, he has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brethren.

Now our God is omniscient. That is to say our God knows everything all the time. With God his knowledge is infinite.

His knowledge is not limited by time. He knows the end from the beginning. The knowledge of our God is infinite.

He knows everything at all times. Nothing is hidden from him. All things are naked before him.

God has foreknowledge. Now we are very limited in our knowledge. If you are very clever, if you are very observant, maybe you are able to predict something that may happen.

Now suppose you see a person walking back and forth before your house and peeping in. Very suspicious. Now if you are very observant, probably you begin to wonder whether that is a thief.

So you begin to watch. And sure enough in the night he came. It is as if you foreknow that person.

Now does it because of that you make him a thief? You are responsible in making him a thief because you have such foreknowledge? Not at all. He makes himself a thief. But you are so observant.

Now our God, his foreknowledge is unlimited. Before you are born, before you are shaped in your mother's womb, or long before of course, even before the foundation of the world, there is nothing of you yet. But God has already seen you.

He has the foreknowledge. He knows you. Dear friends, you may not know God, but God knows you, by your name.

You remember that happened? When Paul was Saul. He changed his name afterwards, you know. Now Saul means look for.

Someone that you look for. Big shot. The first king in the Jewish nation was named Saul.

So this man was named after the great king, Saul. Thoughtful. But after he believed in the Lord Jesus, he used the name Paul, which means little.

You know, isn't that true? Before we know the Lord Jesus, we feel ourselves great, big, important. But when you know the Lord Jesus, it makes you little. You feel you are just little, nothing.

Thank God for that. You know, this man Saul, he persecuted Christians. Fearfully.

Not only in Jerusalem, the capital city. He went into homes, seized men and women who believed in the Lord Jesus, and sentenced them. And he will go to the synagogues and force these people to blaspheme.

And when Stephen was stoned to death, he was there watching the clothes of those who stoned Stephen. When anyone is sentenced, he gives his vote. And he persecuted Christians even to Gentile cities.

That was Saul. But on the way to Damascus, the Lord, the Risen Lord met him. And you know what the Lord said, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against goats.

Ah, Saul said, who are you Lord? You know, we do not know God, but God knows us all the time. He knows your very name. And thank God one day he called you.

God knows every one of us. All the time. Whom he has foreknown.

You are foreknown by him. You do not know him. But he knows you well.

He knows you better than you know yourself. And our truth that is, whom he has foreknown. How does he use his foreknowledge? He said, whom he has foreknown, he has predestinated.

Ah, predestination. He has predestinated that you be conformed to the image of his son. That his son may be the first born among many brethren.

Wonderful. You know, people do not understand predestination. People even rebel against predestination.

Have you heard people say, if God has predestined me to go to hell, then there is nothing I can do. So God has to bear the responsibility. How he can judge me? Because he has predestinated.

It is not my fault. It is his fault. Ah, you misunderstand completely.

That is not predestination. God never predestines anything arbitrarily. If you have a mind, a rational mind.

How much more rational must be the mind of God? True. God foreknown. And he predestined.

His predestination is according to foreknowledge. He does not predestine arbitrarily. Say, so and so, you go to hell.

So and so, you go to heaven. No. He never does that.

Because it is God's will that all may be saved and come to the knowledge of God. That is God's heart. But he knows beforehand, when the gospel is presented to you, how will you react? Whether you will humble yourself and confess your sins and allow the Lord Jesus to cleanse you with his precious blood.

He died for you on the cross. Whether you are willing to accept his offer. Or you will harden your heart, you reject his offer of love, and you yourself predestine for hell.

So in other words, God knows how you will react. God will use every means to persuade you. But he cannot force you.

Why? Because he is the one who creates you. And he creates you with a will. God is the supreme will of the universe.

And he creates you with a will. And because he gives you a will, he respects your will. He will not force you to do anything.

He can persuade you. He can warn you. But he cannot, he will not, not cannot, he will not force your will.

If you do not want to accept his love, nothing he can do. That's what you decide to do. And God predestines according to what you decide.

Just like the illustration I used. You do not make that person a thief. Because you foreknow, he has to be responsible for himself.

Thank God, whom he has foreknown, he knows that when the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to you, you will humble yourself, confess your sins, and allow the Lord Jesus to redeem you, to cleanse you. And to fill you with his life. So he predestinated you.

Now he predestinated you to what? You know, predestination is not to predestine to death or life. Eternal death or eternal life. No.

To us, this is everything. Oh, if only I can go to heaven. That's everything to me.

If only I can accept hell. That's everything to me. It's so good.

Thank God for that. But remember, he is God. You are satisfied, but he is not satisfied.

He has to so work in your life until he is satisfied. He loves you so much. He wants to do so much for you.

Not just save you out of hell into heaven. No. That's not predestination.

Predestination is he has predestinated you to be conformed to the image of his son, Jesus Christ. Now think of that. God has an only begotten son.

He has that son even before the foundation of the world. His only begotten son. This is the very heart of God.

All his love is poured upon that son. He made his beloved son the heir of all things. As a matter of fact, he created all things for his son.

And he especially created man for his son. Because he says it is not good for his son to be alone. God will make him a helpmate, his like, to share his life, to share his glory.

That is God's purpose concerning you and me. It is because of his son. Not because of you.

Not because of me. We are not that important. It is because of God's son.

You know, God loves his beloved son. He gives everything to his son. And his son is so obedient to him.

Pleases him all the time. Everything. That is our Lord Jesus.

So his son is the model. And God wants to transform you and conform you to the image of his son. To be like him.

His son is all glorious. So holy. So pure.

So meek. So humble. So great.

So powerful. So glorious. And God said, I want to work until you are like my son.

So you can be his like and eventually be his helpmate. Eternally united with the son. In glory.

Now that is God's purpose for you. Isn't that wonderful? You know, I thank God for predestination. Because was God purposed that for your life? He will see to it that it is done.

If you cooperate, it will be faster. If you don't cooperate, it will take longer time. But it shall be done.

Wonderful. And how is he going to do that? Read the following verse. But whom he has predestinated, these also he has called.

Now God by his full knowledge, he has predestinated you for a glorious future. To be like his son. That you may be united with his son.

And whom he has predestinated, he has called. Are you called? Everyone is called. But not everyone responds in the same way.

You remember what the Bible said? Whosoever wills. Whosoever wills, come and drink of the water of life. D.L. Moody, that great evangelist, used an illustration which is very clear.

He said, when you come to the door of the salvation of the Lord, what do you see written on the door? Whosoever wills. Whosoever wills, can enter. Now if he said, if on the door it said, D.L. Moody wills, you can enter in.

Then he wonders whether there are another D.L. Moody than himself. You cannot be too sure. People may have the same name.

It means other people, not you. But he said, whosoever wills, that is no doubt including me. Right? So he said, I will.

So he entered in. And after he entered into the door, he looked back. And he saw written at the back of the door, you who are called and predestinated.

So how can you know you are called? Enter in. If you have entered into the door of salvation, if you have believed in the Lord Jesus as your personal saviour, if you believe that he is the son of God, he is raised from the dead, that you may be justified. If you believe with your heart and confess him with your mouth, then you look back and you are told, you are called, predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's beloved son.

So you know it. Whom he has predestinated, he has called. And whom he has called, he has justified.

What is justified? How can a sinner be justified, be just before God, before the just God? Our God is just. He knows everything. Now how can I be justified before him? I have committed many things against God, against myself, against people.

God knows. How can I be justified? Just as if I have never sinned. Who is able to cleanse me from all my sins? Whom he has called, he has justified.

In other words, you cannot justify yourself, but he can justify you. Why? Because he has sent his beloved son into the world to die in your stead. His son bore in his body all your sins.

And he was crucified on the cross for you. And now justification is offered to you. If you believe, we are justified, not by our works, but by faith, by believing in God's gift, believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord.

What is that? He says whom he has justified, he has glorified. You know, justified is just the beginning. Your sins are forgiven.

You receive a new life. But that is just the beginning. And now God is working to make that life grow.

Now that is what God is doing to you today. Now how is it to be done? How can the justified be glorified? All things work together for good. To those who love the Lord, who are called according to purpose.

Now brothers and sisters, I hope you understand. Why is it that certain things happen in your life? Why is it certain people come into your life? Why is it nothing happened to you by chance? The Bible said even your hair has been numbered. You know how many hair you have? Nobody knows.

But he knows and he numbers every one of them. In the morning when you comb your hair, God says well number a thousand and five fall down. That is the love of God.

Therefore brothers and sisters, you who are called, you who are justified, he is working in your life. Every day, every moment, God is moving all things to work together for good. By all these things, those that are not pleasing to God, those who are natural, carnal, fleshly, worldly, against God, God used all things to bring these things to death.

And at the same time, he is using all things to build up the Christ character in your life. You know only Christ is glorious. His life is glory.

So whenever the character of Christ is built in you, then you see glory. And God's beloved Son, only begotten Son, will be the firstborn among many brethren. What does it mean? It means that many brethren will take up upon themselves the character, the image of the firstborn.

So he will be the firstborn among many brethren. He will be the model, the example. You know in the Bible, firstborn has two meanings.

One is the common meaning, first in time. Suppose in your family you have five children and the firstborn, he is born first in time. He may not be first in character, but certainly he is first in time.

That's one way. Another way you find in the Bible, firstborn is according to quality. Not according to time, but according to quality.

Just like you remember Jacob make Joseph the firstborn. You know, a character. So we will take our character from Christ.

He is the firstborn. He has the priority, he has the sovereignty. And we begin to take character from him.

So he becomes the firstborn among many brethren. Wonderful, brothers and sisters. You know, I feel really excited.

Wonderful. You know, you do not know what God is doing with you. If you know what God is doing with you, what can you do but worship? God is good.

So may the Lord help us. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, our hearts are warmed. We thank you for loving us so much.

Your thoughts concerning us are noble and many. We do thank Thee that Thou art not satisfied just to justify us. Thou wants to glorify us.

Oh, that we may take up the character of Thy beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is worthy. Dear Lord, we do pray that by Thy word Thou will open our understanding.

That we may not murmur, but we may praise Thee. That we may not rebel against Thee, but we may submit ourselves to Thee, knowing that Thou does all things well. Oh, work out Your full salvation in each of our lives that you may be glorified.

We ask in the name of our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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