

## The Heart of Romans: “With” Weekly Recap

*Chris read our passage (Romans 8:28-30), first from the NIV. There are so many translation variants just for verse 28. For our purposes, we used Wright’s translation, which mirrors the RSV:*

***We know, in fact, that God works all things together for good **with those who love him**, who are called according to his purpose.*** (8:28, Wright)

Context of Verse: Groaning of Creation, ourselves, and the Spirit with us. Fellowshiping in the suffering of Christ and of all Creation, not least Humanity.

Structure of Verse: God is working. We are working. All Things are worked together. All things don’t “just work out”. We are called to work with God to achieve his good purpose, the restoration of all things.

If there is ample linguistic, literary, and logical support for the RSV translation, why do the newer translations like the NIV maintain the traditional wording? The problem (according to Wright) is a reaction to something called “Theological Synergism”. Synergism is a view of salvation through a combination of God’s work and our works to achieve salvation. This doctrine is in conflict with “salvation is not by works, so that no one can boast”. If Romans 8 were about salvation, then the “with” wording in verse 28 would be problematic. But Romans 8 is about VOCATION not SALVATION. The writings of Paul are full of statements about God working with us to accomplish his purpose. For now, let’s work through the remainder of our short passage.

***Those he foreknew, you see, he also marked out in advance to be shaped according to the model of the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn of a large family.*** (8:29, Wright)

Fellowshipping with the suffering of Christ is a prerequisite to being conformed to the image of Christ. He brought New Creation with him at his Resurrection. (Phil 3:10)

***And those he marked out in advance, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*** (8:30, Wright)

“Called” refers to our mission (vocation), not our salvation. “Justified” refers to our reconciliation through the **suffering with Jesus**, and **transformation into the image of Jesus**. Justification is closely tied with RESURRECTION.

“Glorified” is not about heaven as our reward. It is about us bringing heaven here. It is about the glory that Jesus had when he was lifted up (John) and the glory we show as we do the work of the Kingdom “on earth as in Heaven”. It is the *Shekinah* Glory of Exodus. Explain *Shekinah*.

***In the same way, **let your light shine** before others, that they may see your good deeds and **glorify** your Father in heaven.*** (Matthew 5:16)

Think back to our study in John. Light shining into darkness was imagery by John that recalled the glory of God reflected in Moses, and that glory was now seen in Jesus Christ. Paul, in II Corinthians 3:7-18 spells this out further. Look at verses 17-18 in particular:

***Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate (reflect) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.***

Now, let's revisit Romans 8:28:

***We know, in fact, that God works all things together for good **with those who love him**, who are **called according to his purpose**.*** (8:28 Wright)

Now look at other things Paul (a BIG fan of salvation by grace) says about our works.

***For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*** (Ephesians 2:10)

***Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*** (Philippians 2:12-13)

And now let's go to the Hebrew writer (Hebrews 11:1):

***Faith is the **substance of things hoped for**, the **evidence of things unseen**.*** (KJV)

Last week, we focused on verses 23-27. Remember verses 25-26:

***For in this **hope** we were **saved**. But **hope that is seen is no hope at all**. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we **hope for what we do not yet have**, we wait for it patiently.***

The rest of Hebrews 11 sounds like this:

By Faith...

Able brought...

Enoch pleased...

Noah built...

Abraham obeyed, went, made, and lived.

**Faith does.**

**Faith can move mountains.** (Matthew 17:20)

**How will you see yourself as an excavator this week instead of just waiting for things to work out?**