

Notes on Romans 8:26-39

Romans 1-8 @ CNL

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8:26-27 — The Spirit's help in our weakness

8:28-30 — The Father's electing love

those who love God. Paul thinks of believers as those who truly, from the heart, fulfill Israel's "Shema": "Hear, O Israel ... you shall love the Lord" — theirs is "an obedience of faith."

called according to God's purpose ... to be conformed to the image of his Son. The whole purpose of God's redemptive plan is to sum up all things in his Son (Col 1:15-20; Eph 1:10), and to reflect his own glory out into the world that he is reclaiming through his reclaimed image-bearers (see Eph 1:11-12; 1Pt 2:9).

What we experience in the process of being conformed to the image of God's Son:

- a Spirit-led "walk," putting to death the deeds "the old man" who has died (8:4, 14; ch. 6)
- a Spirit-enabled assurance/witness/confession that we are children (8:16-17)
- Spirit-prompted "endurance" in suffering (8:17-25)
- Spirit-aided "interceding/groaning" (8:26-27)

What God the Father does in the process of conforming us to the image of his Son:

- foreknows — this is knowledge, not as in having information about, but as in being intimate with, as in "Adam knew Eve and she conceived and gave birth ..." (Gen 4:1; see Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Gal 4:9 [cf. Mt 7:23]; 1Co 8:3)
- predestines — paralleling in us what God has done with Jesus himself — note the linguistic parallels between 1:4, where Jesus is "appointed" (*horizein*) Son-of-God-in-power by his resurrection, and 8:29, where we are "pre-appointed" (*pro + horizein*) to be conformed to his image
- calls — what happens inside us when we hear the gospel, and "get it" (1Th 1:4-5; 2Th 2:13-14) — when we "get it," it's a God-thing
- justifies
- glorifies

8:31-39 — If God so loves us ...?

If God has so bonded his people to himself—as in chs. 5-8), “what then shall we say to these things?!?!” Paul hurls into the face of his imagined interlocutor five questions the apostle considers to be unanswerable:

- “If God is for us, who is against us?” (v. 31b)
- “If God wouldn’t even withhold his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn’t provide?” (v. 32)
- “If God acquits/vindicates his elect, who will charge them with anything?” (v. 33)
- “If Christ is our advocate, who can condemn us?” (v. 34).
- “If such love (vv. 35,39) has taken hold of us (reading these as subjective genitives), what could possibly separate us from it?”