

Called, Justified, Glorified

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0 : 00] And as you're seated, I want you to get out your Bibles, your copy of the Scripture, and open up to the book of Romans chapter 8.

Now, if you didn't bring a Bible with you this morning, or if you simply want to be able to follow along more easily in the translation that I'm reading from, which is the English Standard Version, then you can grab one of the Bibles that we have scattered around in the chairs.

And if you're using one of those Bibles, you only need to turn to page 944. For the rest of you using your own Bibles, find Romans chapter 8. We've now been in Romans chapter 8 since the beginning of August.

And we're actually finally beginning to draw somewhat close to the end of this great chapter in the book of Romans. Perhaps the greatest, at least one of the greatest chapters in all of the Bible.

And we're now, for the third week in a row, we're going to be in Romans 8, 29, and 30. And so I want to ask you guys to stand as we look at these verses. We read here the Apostle Paul's words.

[1 : 09] We give you thanks, Father, that your Spirit inspired Paul to write these precious words this morning.

And pray right now that that same Spirit who is present among us would open our eyes to see the truth contained in these words.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. There are certain words in certain contexts that can be a bit explosive, a bit dangerous words to say or to bring up in conversation.

So, you know, in a couple of days on Tuesday, Nate and I are going to be getting on and boarding a plane. And we're going to be flying to Boston so that he can see some of the historical sites and locations that he's been studying in history for the last year or so.

So he can see firsthand. But when you go to an airport, you'll always remember there are certain things that you don't want to say around those who check you. I mean, anytime you're dealing with people who are willing to make you take off your shoes to check for C4 and give you a full body scan to make sure you don't have a pocket knife on you, you know you've got to be careful around those folks.

[2 : 36] And so you don't want to say things like bomb. You don't want to say explosion. You don't want to mention a gun. You don't want to say any of those key words that would set them off to tackle you to the ground and search you and do all those kinds of things.

These are dangerous words that you can say in an airport. But there are also certain words that are kind of dangerous to say among some Christians. There are certain words that we sometimes have a tendency to avoid.

And to be quite honest with you, that a lot of preachers and pastors have a tendency to try to avoid at times. Last week we encountered one of those sort of explosive, dangerous theological words as we began looking at verse 29, where we're told that those whom God foreknew, He also predestined.

There's the dangerous word that's often thrown out there. And I can remember the first time that really I came to confront this particular term was when I was a freshman in college.

Now I had been raised in church. I had been in a Southern Baptist church my whole life. It wasn't as if I was unaccustomed to what the Bible had to say or had never heard the gospel.

[3 : 45] I was a believer, but I had never really had this particular word from the Bible sort of pushed in front of me until I overheard a conversation among some of my fellow students talking about the doctrine of predestination.

And I just thought, it's ridiculous. I went off to my room and got out my Bible and my big fat Strong's Concordance, a big huge blue Strong's Concordance that I had, started to look up words.

And there it was all over the place throughout the Bible. It just started to drive me crazy that this word was all over the place. And so we saw this word last week, and people have all kinds of reactions.

Some people react the same way that I reacted initially when I was just 17. And you don't want to hear about it. You don't believe that it's actually there in the text. Then other people have been taught this doctrine and have heard this doctrine, and they become fascinated with it and riveted on it.

It's the only thing that they want to talk about when they talk about the Bible or theology or anything else. And so you get these diverse reactions to this word, which is one of those kind of explosive theological Bible terms.

[4 : 48] And as we encountered it last week, we didn't encounter it as a word that we looked at as being explosive or being divisive or anything else. We saw it as the ground, as sort of the foundation that Paul builds up under the promise of verse 28, where he tells us that God is working all things for good for those who love God, for those who are called according to God's purpose.

And so it's not meant to be a theological bomb that's thrown into the middle of things. It's meant to be a comfort. It's meant to be something to come in and give us a sense of certainty and assurance about what God has done and is continuing to do in our lives to ensure that all things ultimately do work for our good.

Ultimately, we will receive what Paul calls being glorified in verse 30, which he calls being conformed to the image of Christ in verse 29, that that reality rests not on our own abilities, on what we do, but it rests upon God and His intentions from eternity past.

So this dangerous, explosive word is not dangerous. It's not explosive. It's comforting. It's assurance building if you understand it.

But it's not the only word in this passage. In fact, it's in the middle of a string of words that are put together in a very specific order by the Apostle Paul, all aimed at encouraging us and strengthening our hope in the great promise of verse 28.

[6 : 16] So just look at the words. We considered the first two in this string of words last week. We begin with foreknew. Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined.

And then you can move down to verse 30 so we encounter the next term. And those whom He predestined, He also called. And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified.

So we have three more terms to add to the terms foreknew and predestined this week from this verse. But as we saw last week, this term predestined is a simple term.

It means exactly what it appears to mean on the surface. It means to determine someone's final destiny or destination beforehand. And that's what we're seeing Paul says that God has done.

God has determined the destiny of those who are called according to His purpose, those who love Him. He has determined their destiny. And He refers to those whose destinies He has determined as those whom He foreknew.

[7 : 16] And we spent some amount of time last week sort of sorting out the meaning of that word foreknow. And we asked the question, what does the Bible mean when it talks about God foreknowing people?

Because that's what's happening here. He foreknows people. So what does the Bible mean when God knows or foreknows people? And our answer was that consistently, from Genesis all the way through to the New Testament, consistently when we see the language of God knowing someone or knowing someone beforehand, it refers to God loving that person or setting His covenant love upon them.

Or we saw even sometimes it's even translated at times as to choose. Because God chooses, sets His love upon certain people. And those whom He chooses, then He determines their destiny.

So that's Paul's point in verse 29. There are certain people that God from eternity past set His love upon. He chose them, set them apart. Sometimes we use the word election to refer to that.

And those whom He foreknew, those whom He loved beforehand, He also predestined, determined their destiny. And now we have these three terms that are going to tell us how He gets us to that destiny.

[8 : 27] How does He get us to that final destination? And what is the destination? So we need to look at these three terms. So that we can finish this passage before we move on to verse 31, which is almost an explosion of praise in the light of everything that He says here.

So we have these three words. Called, justified, and glorified. All those whom God has predestined, we are told He called. All those whom He called, He also justified.

All the justified, He glorified. So let's consider these words. And I want to jump in with the middle term this morning with justified, because it's the one, for those of you who have been walking through the book of Romans with us, it's the one with which we should be most familiar by now. Because over and over and over throughout the first half of Romans, Paul has dealt with the doctrine of justification. He has told us, He has explained in detail what it means for a person to be justified by God, and how a person comes to actually be justified by God.

And what we have learned so far in the book of Romans is that for God to justify someone is for Him to declare that they are now in His eyes, in His sight, and in His court, determined to be righteous before Him.

[9 : 43] He declares people to be righteous in His sight. He is the great judge of all the earth. It is His opinion of us that ultimately matters, and we need to be declared righteous by Him if we want to enjoy eternity.

Because really, there are only two ultimate destinies to which we can go. We can either spend eternity in the presence of Christ, or we can spend eternity away from His presence, experience the wrath of God in hell.

And Paul says that in order for you to avoid the verdict that we all deserve as sinners, of God's wrath, we need to be declared righteous by God. And the way in which we are declared righteous, Paul makes clear, it's not by becoming righteous.

It's not by doing enough good things to outweigh the bad things that you've done, because that's not really possible, because we're sinners to the core, so even the good things that we do are tainted by our own sinful natures.

So it's not, Paul tells us, it's not by the good works that we do, but we are justified by faith. In fact, if you just turn back a page or two in your Bible, you can see this clearly in Romans 5.1.

[10 : 56] Paul says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, God declares us righteous on the basis of faith, of believing and trusting in Jesus.

Or even more clearly, turn back to chapter 3, another page in your Bible. In chapter 3, verse 28, Paul says, We hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

So here it's very clear. One is justified, declared righteous by God, not on the basis of our works, not even on the basis of our obedience to the law of God, but on the basis of faith and faith alone, so that when we put our trust in Jesus, two things happen.

One, all of our sin is transferred to Christ and receives the just punishment that it deserves on the cross. Because on the cross, Jesus was himself bearing the penalty for our sin.

Return back to chapter 8 of Romans. We can see it in chapter 8, verse 3. In the middle it says, By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

[12 : 14] How did God condemn our sin? He condemned our sin in the flesh of Jesus. And that happened on the cross. So when we trust in Jesus, all of the wrath that we deserve for our sin is transferred to Christ on the cross.

But more happens than just that. Because we need more than simply to have our misdeeds erased. We actually need to be righteous in God's eyes. And so not only does God transfer our guilt to Jesus, but he takes Christ's perfect obedience throughout his life, his perfect righteousness, and he credits it to our account so that when we stand before God, we don't stand before God and say, Here are all the things I've done.

I hope it's enough to get me in. That's not how it works. Instead, we stand and say, We trusted in Jesus. His perfection counts in our place. Here's everything Christ has done, and it is more than enough.

We are justified, Paul says, and we are justified by faith. But it's interesting because in these verses that we're looking at this morning, Paul doesn't make the connection with faith here.

He assumes it because he's already established it so well throughout this book that he doesn't mention faith. faith. These terms, called, justified, glorified, occur in that order, and they're all logically connected.

[13 : 43] So that if you begin at the end and you say, Well, how can a person have the hope of glory? The answer is, Well, they need to be justified. Well, if you say, Well, how can a person be justified? Obviously, from the rest of Romans, we would say by faith.

But from here, from this context, the answer is, Well, if a person is going to be justified, they must be called. Or we could turn it around the other way. If you're called, you will be justified. All the called are justified. So we have to ask the question, Number one, what does Paul mean when he mentions called here? And what's the connection between being called and being justified, which we know happens by faith?

And we've already encountered this word called or calling in Romans chapter 8. We know that we can use the word call in a lot of ways. And the Bible even uses the word call in a lot of different ways.

Sometimes we use the word call just to refer to what somebody's name. Well, he's called Bill or he's called John or any number of things. We can use the word call in that way. Or we sometimes today use it when we call someone on the phone.

[14 : 49] You can use it in a similar way any place. It doesn't have to be on the phone. You can just call out to somebody. I call them to come over here. And we use it in those kind of ways. We use it sometimes to refer to somebody's life's work, their vocation.

Well, he has a calling to be a teacher. He has a calling to be a mechanic or any number of things. We use the word call or calling in that way. But sometimes in the Bible we use the word call to refer to the preaching of the gospel.

So Jesus says in the gospel of Matthew, Many are called, but few are chosen. And there called means the call of the gospel. As we preach the gospel, we call people to come to faith in Jesus. But even that is not the way that Paul means the word called here in Romans. And that's not the way that Paul generally uses the word call. Here the word call does not refer to an outward call that we issue to somebody.

It doesn't even refer to the outward call of the gospel to come to faith in Jesus. Here the word call refers to an inward work of God This is God summoning those who are spiritually dead to spiritual life.

[15 : 57] And this call never fails to accomplish its purpose. Because if you notice, all those who are called are justified. There's no distinction here.

Those called are the same as those who are justified. So there can be no failure here. When we call people to Christ with the gospel, some come, some don't come. Some believe, some don't believe. Some respond, some don't respond. But here, all the called are justified because this is an inward work of God in which He gives life to those who were once spiritually dead.

This is God actually bringing us to faith in Christ. Paul uses this terminology most clearly in 1 Corinthians, which is a place we went to a few weeks ago.

And I want to go there again this morning just briefly. So hold your place in Romans 8. Turn over several pages to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 where we're going to see Paul use this exact same language of calling to describe what God is doing in us.

[17 : 03] And he starts in verse 18 where you can see that he begins talking about the outward preaching of the gospel. He says, So Paul says, The gospel that's preached, the word of the cross, it encounters people.

And when it encounters some people to some people, it is the very power of God. But when it encounters other people, when other people hear it, it's just foolishness to them. And then Paul's going to begin to account for why.

Why does this word that's proclaimed, why does it land on some people as foolishness and some people as power for salvation?

Move down in the passage just a few verses. Verse 21. For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach.

So there it is, this outwardly foolish word to those who are perishing. It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling buck to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

[18 : 21] So he recognizes this word that we preach is not received by most people as power. It's foolishness. It may be viewed as foolish by the Jews for one reason and the Gentiles for another reason, but it's received as foolishness by the vast majority of people.

Verse 24. But to those who are called. There it is. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

What transforms this foolish message into the power of God for some people? Paul's answer is, it is the call. To those who are called, which means not everybody is called in this sense.

Everybody here, Jews, Gentiles, perishing, being sick, they're hearing the outward call. They're hearing the word preached, the word of the cross. But only some are being called in this sense. And those who are called receive it as the very power of God. It's powerful. And what makes it powerful is the call of God.

[19 : 28] The inward work of God by which He infuses spiritual life into those who were once spiritually dead. Sometimes we use the phrase, we say that this is the efficacious call of God.

Or we say that this is the effective call of God. Because it always achieves its desired effect. It always achieves the end that God has in mind, which is bringing life to those whom God calls. And the result of life, of spiritual life, is faith. That's the result. When God calls someone to spiritual life, their response is immediately believing.

Believing for those who are spiritually alive is like breathing for those who are physically alive. It's the automatic response to someone who is now alive spiritually.

They just believe. In fact, I want you to turn to one other place where we'll see this connection. And then we'll come back to Romans 8. In 1 John chapter 5. Here, John uses language different from Paul.

[20 : 40] He uses the language of being born of God. Or born again, we say sometimes. Which refers to the same act of God. When God calls someone, that's the same thing as God causing them to be born again.

Those are almost interchangeable terms in the New Testament. But I want you to notice the connection between believing and being born of God in 1 John 5. 1. John says, Everyone who believes, presently, everyone who believes, that Jesus is the Christ, has been born of God. Notice the order of events there. Everyone who believes has been born of God. So it's being born of God that leads to or causes believing.

So the call of God creates faith. Or the new birth creates faith. So often we have gotten those things backwards in our thinking so that we have thought for so long, many of us, that you need to believe in order to be born again.

But what the New Testament writers are saying, no, you need to be born again in order to be believed. Or in Paul's language, you need to be called in order to be justified because the calling produces the believing.

[21 : 56] It produces faith. Some of you recall the story of Lazarus in the Gospel of John. Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, was very ill and his sisters Mary and Martha sent for Jesus to come and tend to Lazarus and heal him because after all, he'd been healing people all over the countryside.

Surely he could heal this close friend of his. And yet we're told in the Gospel of John that Jesus intentionally delayed coming. He did not come immediately. And the reason that he did not come was so that Lazarus would die.

Had he come on time, he merely needed to speak the word or lay his hand on him and he would be healed. But his intention was to do something greater than healing. He allowed his friend to die. And Jesus returned to Bethany, the hometown of Lazarus.

And he came to the tomb of Lazarus and many of you remember it. It's a great, it's a great, one of those Gospel stories. It's fun to tell to kids because you can get loud with it and it's an exciting story. And Jesus comes to the tomb of Lazarus. He tells them to roll away the stone and then he simply speaks the words, Lazarus, come forth. And suddenly Lazarus is walking out in the grave clothes and they have to take the old grave clothes off of him.

[23 : 10] But can you imagine any kind of world in which Jesus would have said, Lazarus, come forth. And then they would have just stood around and heard crickets. Nothing.

Is anything going to happen to you? We told you he was dead, Jesus. You can't heal him now. He's dead. We can't even fathom that. We can't imagine that. Why? Because we know that the call of Jesus to Lazarus to come forth, the call to come alive is not a call to say, Hey, Lazarus, if you would like to come alive, come alive.

No, the word of Jesus creates life in the bones and flesh of Lazarus and he immediately comes to life. Well, that's the call of God spiritually upon us here in Romans chapter 8.

It's the call that creates life. God says, Live! And because we live, we breathe spiritual breath, which is faith, faith, and therefore we are justified by that faith in Jesus so that all those who God in

eternity past set his love upon, those whom he foreknew, he determined their destiny, but he doesn't just automatically move them there.

He in time calls them, they come alive, they believe in Jesus, and they are justified by their faith in Jesus. If you think that God's working all things for your good is based upon your ability to remain faithful to Jesus by your own self-determination and strength, then you have weakened your assurance.

[24 : 42] But if you see, as the Apostle Paul lays out, that his working all things for good is rooted in God's sovereign power to bring, not only to life, but to glory, all those upon whom he has set his covenant love, then you will know there's a firm foundation for you to stand upon.

But before we close, we need to look at that final destination. Back to Romans chapter 8 here. Those whom he justified, he also glorified.

It almost feels like strange language to speak of us being glorified. Because we're so accustomed to speaking of Christ receiving glory, or we're the ones who glorify God.

So to hear of God glorifying us just seems, it seems like strange language. It doesn't resonate well with us when we first hear it.

But we have to understand this word in the context of Romans chapter 8 for us to understand what is that destination that God has set for us and that he will most surely bring us to.

[25 : 57] Look all the way up in Romans chapter 8 to verse 15 where Paul lays out, begins to lay out the doctrine of adoption, how we become God's children. He says, you do not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

And then he says that the spirit who causes us to cry, Abba, Father. He bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God. And if we're children, then we're heirs.

Now here's what glory looks like. We're heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. That's what glory looks like. How do I know that? Because of what follows. Provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

There's that language again. Us being glorified. But what is it parallel to here in this verse? It's parallel to being fellow heirs with Christ. So to be glorified is to fully experience along with Christ all that Christ himself has earned.

All that he deserves. The reward of Christ. The inheritance of Jesus as the Son of God. Now ours through faith in him and by adoption into his family.

[27 : 15] That's what it means to be glorified. It means to be a co-heir. It means to share in the everlasting joy of Jesus in the presence of his Father and now our Father.

Verse 18. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

There it is. Glory. Verse 21. The creation itself someday will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

And how does he define that glory? He says, not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we eagerly wait for adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies.

So that the glory that God has laid up for us or the way in which he will glorify us is by raising us to life just as he raised Jesus to life with resurrection bodies just like Christ so that we can fully participate as sons in enjoying the inheritance that Jesus deserves.

[28 : 33] and now you see why all the justified all those who have received Christ's righteousness as a gift as a covering now receive the reward of Christ's righteousness all those who become children of the Father by becoming brothers of Jesus receive the inheritance of the only begotten Son.

This is what it means to be glorified. It's not to be made much of no it's so that we might be fully united to Jesus and enjoy all the benefits that Christ himself has earned from his Father for all of eternity.

Infinite ever increasing joy with Jesus. That's a destination that I want to be my own. that's a place that I want to end up someday.

And you might say but we don't have any control over that because you already said that God sets our destiny in eternity past if he sets his love on us and he calls us I don't have any control over that and from one perspective that's true but then on the other hand there is the constant command of

the scriptures believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.
Believe upon him and you will be saved. All those who trust in Jesus receive his righteousness. All who receive his righteousness will someday be glorified and you can rejoice that you know once you've trusted in Jesus that even that act trust is one wrought in you by the power of God.
[30 : 29] But first you must hear first you must respond to the simple command believe in Jesus and be saved. Let's pray.