

Five-Fold Program

Let's look at Romans 8:28 and break it down to identify with a greater level of clarity. Usually in English when you see a "for" or "therefore" or "wherefore", it's the link from what has been said to what is about to be said: For whom he did foreknow, he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, he also glorified. In simple terms, there are five topics that are broached coming out of that 28th verse. We know that all things work together for the good of "them", and then the "them" is defined with greater specificity in the next several verses.

I've reflected on this concerning my own life, realizing over the years that there is an expectation of me from my father – that God's intent and the accountability to that intent has to be taken as a personal responsibility. We'll get into that in a second, but these five things begin with God. We can see the stories of scripture, and I don't know if you have ever read a story in the scriptures and thought, You know, if I was doing that, I wouldn't have done it that way. I have thought about it, and I wouldn't have given Joseph those two dreams before he got sold into slavery. I would have given them to encourage him somewhere along the path of his incarceration. I would have had Saul converted before he held Stephen's coat. You know, just small things, but this says, "all things work together."

The organization of God's economy isn't dependent upon our resources, which is a very fortunate thing for the kingdom of God in that we have the opportunity of drawing down on a reservoir that is limitless. It's so limitless that many saints looking at "sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning" have postulated that we would

ever be learning at his feet, that there would be no end to the sea that was in front of that shore for all eternity, and we know that it's because of the super abundance of the provision of God, that that's reasonable. However, we do know that there's an expectation of God investing in this way. In personal accountability, I began to think, Well, okay, so, whom he foreknew... Well, if I was called, if I'm being justified, if I have hope of a glorification, then I must have also been tied back to foreknowledge, but I didn't do that. I didn't have foreknowledge. I still don't have foreknowledge. Sometimes, I'm not sure how clearly I see the past. So, Whom he foreknew, that is his point of origin.

He's foreknown you. Before you knew, he knew, and foreknowledge is a subset of omniscience. By "subset" I mean that if you're omniscient, it would include foreknowledge. You couldn't be omniscient and know everything if you didn't know the future; you'd be like semi-scient. You would be sort of omniscient but not "omni". Those he foreknew there was a predestination. You know, the church has been fussing with this part of the picture for a long time, still even: predestination versus freewill. Have you ever followed that rabbit trail? But it's not difficult to me because I see predestination as the influence of God.

We could take several lives but maybe the most obvious example, just as a picture, would be Moses. Moses was born in a time when the prophetic window was narrowing on this: that for 400 years, Abraham's offspring would be in bondage, would be in Egypt and that God was going to bring them out with a mighty hand by a deliverer. Pharaoh thought, Well, I can beat those odds. I'll just have all the male children killed. But Moses wasn't and he didn't have anything to do with not being killed. He was predestinated through foreknowledge. When you get halfway into predestination and you get a block, you have to work backwards. I have to

work backwards into foreknowledge and say, Well, so what's the difference between Aaron and Moses? Remember that after they crossed over the Red Sea, Aaron and Miriam went to Moses and they said, Hey, bro, you know, we love you, and God did some really great things like with the snake deal, which was really amazing, but we think you're taking too much on yourself. Moses, being the meekest man on the earth, didn't answer. Now, meekness isn't weakness; meekness can be power under authority.

So, Moses didn't answer and the next voice, according to the scriptures, was God. What was it that caused God to back Moses and withstand Aaron and Miriam? Foreknowledge. What was the foreknowledge aspect? God in foreknowledge knew how Moses would respond to the circumstances of his life, that he would yield, that he would listen, that he would ask, he wouldn't presume on the 10 plagues and the three gifts that he was given in order to certify himself to the nation of Israel. Do you remember those three gifts? Not the 10 plagues, those were for Egypt, but the three gifts – the three miracles, if you please: the hand, leprosy... hand, clean, ...poured water out of glasses, when hitting the ground, it was blood. These are the things by which God certified Moses to the nation of Israel, certifying that this is the Messiah, this is the deliverer, this is the one spoken of. Of course, there were the plagues and the deliverance at the Red Sea, the dry land. God foreknew that Moses wasn't going to take these and say, I'm the guy..., that he wasn't going to answer Aaron and Miriam and defend himself or accuse them. He knew that Moses wasn't going to run his resume up the flagpole and say, Well, you know, here's my staff. You've made a mistake. He wasn't trying to push himself because there was this brokenness and this humbling that had taken place in his life before God sent him to Pharaoh, before God authorized him to go to a nation that was in bondage.

There was this foreknowledge, the work that God knew, so he predestinated and he saved the baby Moses' life and he guided the bullrush ark, and it bumped into Pharaoh's daughter's feet. She went home and she said, Daddy, Daddy, can I keep it? And he was fed and raised and educated by Pharaoh – the one who was going to overthrow his kingdom and destroy his army. The ways of God and the resources. You see all things working together for the good of them who love God and are the called according to his purpose, and God knows those things ahead of time. So, he predestinated these events. You know, he predetermined the means by which the destination would be arrived at. The destination for Moses, as far as I can tell from scripture, was the Mount of Transfiguration when he appeared with the Lord in glory. God knew what it would take in Moses' life to get him there, and he organized those events so it would.

Another good picture of predestination to me from a scriptural pattern is Jonah, sitting there in his armchair with his feet up, reading the paper and a nice fire in the fireplace, minding his own business, established as a prophet in Israel and a credible existence in the community. The Lord said, Hey, I want you to go to Nineveh. I take some of these stories and put my experience into the mix. I don't know about you. Maybe I shouldn't, but I do, and when the word of the Lord comes to John, it doesn't just come once. He usually backs off if he knows I'm going to drag my feet for two weeks. He starts two weeks before he wants me to agree with him. I don't know if you've ever had that kind of experience so that when you get there reluctantly, you're right on time. That's my experience. So, he and Jonah talked for – I don't know, a month – I think and say that because sometimes I recognize that even though the Lord says he wants me to do something that I don't want to do, there's an energy that comes with the word of the Lord because it's

living. It's powerful. It's not something you can shake easily. Finally, Jonah says, Well, I can't stay here; I got to go somewhere. There was too much energy building up, you know. He couldn't stay comfortable by the fireplace reading the paper, so he booked passage to Tarshish. Never a good thing to play chess with God, but he didn't know that. He said to God, I've got a boat. God said, I've got a storm. He said, I think I can coerce the captain of the vessel to throw me overboard. God said, Good, because I already got the fish waiting. That's predestination. Right? The destination for Jonah in the story is the hill overlooking Nineveh. God foreknew that when he preached in the city they would repent, and it became the foundation of the next major argument that Jonah had with God. One of the verses we sang in the song was "Child, you are mine."

He predestinated and he called. Again, throwing myself into this verse, I just realized I couldn't respond until he called. Put it back into Moses' picture. Moses is talking with God, and he said, I've found grace in your eyes, and you have called me by name; show me now thy way that I might know you. You called me by name. I don't know exactly when Moses recognized this. I think it was at least forty years before. It's a pretty clear line to me that he realized that he was not Egyptian, that he was Hebrew because his mother was his wetnurse, and in the movie, he had that blanket, you know. Obviously, it began to process through the expression of who he was by God's intent. He began to move in a direction to bring deliverance for Israel from the yoke of bondage. He killed an Egyptian, and although he buried him in the sand to work it out, he had to flee, so I think that you can make a case for him knowing at that point that he was called. Then, we get the conversation at the burning bush, and God said, Okay, it's time. Moses did not say, I'm not the guy. He didn't say, You've got the wrong guy. He said, Okay, I'm the guy. I've known I'm the guy for a long time, but I can't do this.

So, we get called and we respond, and then, our turmoil really starts because do you know the next step after being called? People linger at being called; some linger there for the rest of their natural lives. They say, I'm called; then, they try to live by the vision. You can't live by the vision. You have to live by every word, and some of the next words are, You've got to be justified. God's process of justification is a long, torturous, difficult path, but I take some heart in this because I recognize that God was 40% – I mean, if you take all five things: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification and you break them down and say each represents 20% – God was 40% into the program before I even knew. We should take courage in that.

What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, it's impossible that it should fail. His resources know no obstacle, you know. You can talk with Paul and say, Okay, Paul, what are the problems here? He would say, Well, I don't know – neither life nor death. That's kind of comprehensive. Death isn't going to stand in God's way of fulfilling his purpose in your life. These things are considerations that we don't incorporate into our normal path of thinking, and we certainly haven't been trained by the ecclesiastical historical viewpoint of the scriptures in that way. We're kind of more on a path of the disciples and the crew that was with them approaching Jairus' house when Jesus went inside and his daughter was horizontal – no pulse, no breathing. Jesus said, She is not dead, and they mocked him. It says they laughed him to scorn, or something like that. I forget how the Old English says it. Jesus said, Okay, everybody out. Then, they approached Lazarus' tomb, and he said, He's not dead.

These are realities that are the resources that are of God. Jesus was walking with them on the road to Emmaus, and, I know, he had to contain himself pretty well. Of course, he was shrouded so that they couldn't see. They saw something, but they didn't see him for what he was. It says that he began at Moses and the prophets, declaring all things pertaining to himself, but what he said to them was, You slow of heart, why don't you understand that Christ should suffer these things. He didn't say "I." He didn't say, "Jesus." He said, "Christ," because this is being expanded exponentially. The gates have been thrown open; this is for all men to experience. The foreknowledge of God isn't limited to a certain narrow slice. To be the first born of many brethren.

Go to Ephesians 4, and it says, Till we come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, growing up into him in all things, who is the head. You know, we've had preliminary pictures and types and shadows given to us to facilitate our insight into things that are essentially unseen, and, from the natural venue, are unknowable. We have a picture of the Body of Christ patterned after the physical body: many members organized, interacting, to provide for the welfare of the whole body, and he's the head. Right? And you might say, Well, that's the Body of Christ. Well, yes, but no, it's not. It's not. It's a preliminary picture; it's a working model.

About three days ago, Sparks had a devotion. He talked about how there were things that we believed that we were so confident in, and they seemed to be unshakable and well-versed, and the pathway clear with a lot of scriptures backing them up. Then, as we walked, we realized that it wasn't that it was wrong; it's just that it was right for then, but there's more. He talked about the best being undermined by confidence in what you have. You know that the good becomes the enemy of the better, and the better becomes the enemy of the best. We're following

on to know him in fullness, so let's not stay just in the preliminary type and shadow. Although the liver is a vitally functioning member of the body in the welfare of the body and it isn't independent of the function of the heart and the kidneys, at what point does your liver grow up to become your head? I mean, that should take us out of the type and shadow being the limitation of what the body of Christ is based on – an interactive collaboration of body members with Jesus the Head. Yes, but no; it's more than that. It's every member having a vital connection with the father and moving out of types and shadows, moving out of giftings and anointings into son.

Jesus was on the road to Emmaus; he was talking with the disciples. He began at Moses and the prophets, declaring all things concerning himself, and by some count – I don't know who counted; I have no instinct to verify their results – but by some count, there are over 400 prophecies in the scriptures before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Even if it's 200, it's a lot. Prophecy for us is a pretty amazing thing, you know, because it's part of the unveiling of God's foreknowledge; but for God, it isn't hard. There are those who have debated over issues concerning whether or not God actually repents. Some of the standpoints have been, Well, in the Bible it says he repents. I thought, If you have foreknowledge... Then, I thought, Okay, let's even set aside the foreknowledge thing. Let's just say he's omnipresent, and not just in a geographic sense of the word but even in the sense of time; he's not bounded by time. If God got to a point in time and there was a mistake, he could go back in time and fix the thing so that it wouldn't show up as a mistake. Right? You saw *Back to the Future*. If Hollywood could do it, God could have watched the movie and gone, Oh, now I know how to fix it.

There is the prophetic that is still unfulfilled. There's prophetic that's involved in finishing the cycle, beginning with the foreknowledge and predestination of God and the calling of God and the justification of God – which can't be skipped over lightly – but the glorification of God is as much a part of his program as is the calling. He called to justify, he justified to glorify. An account of this glorification is picked up in I Corinthians 15. We could take more time to work through it in a more step-by-step process, but I'm going to jump a little bit.

The task that we face of being justified, the beginnings of the lessons of justification, for me, John, have been in sin. Sin has to be justified; sin can't stand as a monument and finish the cycle. It has to be dealt with. The dealings of God and sin are well-scripted, and they've been well-rehearsed by all of us. You who were dead in trespasses and sins hath he quickened; you who were far off hath he made nigh by the blood of Jesus. We believe that our sins are forgiven and that there is a functionality to that as well. It's a present functioning thing. If any man sin, confessing his sin, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse. It's not just that justification exceeds the issue of forgiveness of sin. Justification is that I'm actually going to be in a position whereby God can glorify me. You can't glorify something that is dependent upon an imputed righteousness. Does that make sense? The righteousness whereby a sinner can be maintained in a relationship with God for the going forwardness of God's purpose in his life is imputed righteousness, and if it didn't need to be imputed, it wouldn't be there. If there wasn't a problem that couldn't be solved, then a solution wouldn't have to be imputed. Right? I have to have imputed to me what I don't have. The confidence that I have with God to continue long enough to get through this process of being justified so that I can be glorified is sustained by the provision of the sacrifice that he made for me. However, the purpose of justification is to bring us to a place

where the problem that Jesus had with the Pharisees is completed and finished. What I mean by the problem that Jesus had with them is if you look like one thing on the outside but the inside is not what you look like, you're whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones; you clean the outside of the cup and leave the inside nasty.

Justification involves the word of the Lord getting down to separating thoughts and intents; they are not the same. You can have a thought that looks good and the intent of having that thought is really not good. This is getting down to what John is, not what John does. This is the cleansing of the temple so that it is every whit complete, that there's no thought, there's no intent. Did not Jesus speak to this? He said, You heard Moses say – and I am not arguing with Moses – I still believe it's wrong to murder, but if you hate, you're guilty. Then, the Apostle John came along and finished the rest of the consideration: if you hate, it's bad; but if you don't love, the truth isn't in you, and you don't know God. Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Back up just a little bit.

I Corinthians 15:47. The issue that we face is getting from a natural state to spiritual existence. The issues that we face may be detailed at times by right and wrong, the authority of insight or the deception, you know; it can be an encompassing thing. God doesn't seem to be worried about what it costs him by what he puts us through. You know, it was rude for him to give Joseph those visions before he went to prison. Do you know how many times Joseph said, But I thought... How is this...? The frustration, the energy that got revealed and had to be dealt with, the breaking that he had to go through, the confidence that he had to come to. It's very similar to the path that Abraham took when he held on to the promiser rather than the promise when he was about to offer his son, willingly.

Sorry, that is not natural. That's our test – to go from natural to spiritual. It's not only to be led of the Spirit and do something unnatural; this is being something different.

Here in verse 47, it's talking about justification: The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. And as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. Here is one of the two points that I want to make. It says, And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Most of the time when I've heard this verse referred to, I've heard it referred to as a promise. This is not a promise; it's a definition. This does not say, If you've borne the image of the earthy, you will bear the image of the heavenly. It doesn't say that. It says, as you have borne the image of the earthy, in the manner by which you looked earthy and were earthy because by birth that's what you were born as and whatever you expressed – good, bad, ugly – it was earthy. It was sourced in what you had by first birth, so also shall ye bear (manifest, appear) as the expression of that which is heavenly. How? Obviously, it begins at new birth. The second birth, to be birthed into something that isn't earth, but then to learn to live as an expression of that. This was the basis of what Paul wrote to the Galatians, Who has seduced you? You began in the Spirit and now you think the energy in the flesh is going to bring you to the fulfillment of his purpose. Are you nuts?

Being justified. Being called, being justified. It says, Being in a sense – and please, it may not be the best way to say it, but I'm saying it for a reason and that is – that we've got to justify God having called us by allowing his work to be finished in us (that is his intent) so that we can be glorified, because the automatic outworking of justifying God is that we are glorified. That is his purpose. It continues and it says

so right here. Here is the same pattern; it's a different scripture, a different thought and context. We're talking resurrection here; we're not talking about the manifestation of the sons of God in Romans 8. It's the same author. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The next verse is the key: For this corruptible must put on incorruption. It cannot be raised incorruptible and be still corruptible. God can't give it a glorified body if it's not a glorified soul. This thing has got to work. We have to go through the process of being justified by the ongoing working of the Spirit of God. This corruptible must put on incorruption. If the full purpose of God involves five steps and glorification is the last step, the world cannot see the intent of God in the manifestation of the sons of God until some have finished the process. There can't be a manifestation of what hasn't been completed. The "twinkle" is the manifestation, but it is not a twinkle getting there.

The mercy of God is extended to us in an extraordinary way. The mercy of God operates so that regardless of where you find yourself, it doesn't matter. Human experience from A to Z, wherever you've been, whatever you're going through, the mercy of God is a provision that will take you from where it is that you stand and bring you through to a glorified body without respect of person, without respect of background, without respect of personal history,

We were disqualified when we were born in Adam. We were born in sin, shapened in iniquity. How can that receive a glorified body without that existence being offset? The participation of that new birth and the yielding of that life through

trust and staying invested is a difficult thing – to stay invested in what you can't control. You're not putting your life savings into something; you are putting your life into it. The mercy of God is there to carry us through if we will follow on. Stay the course. Petition with strong crying and tears. Let it bother you what you're not yet. The evidence of hope is becoming something other.

John Cheever
January 27, 2023
Alaska