

Part 5
Goal of the Believer

Power to Heal; Power to Destroy

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God has a purpose. He is after something. He has a goal in mind and He has called certain ones out of this world, out of the ranks of humanity to fulfill that purpose. Romans 8:29 shows us that the purpose of God is to have many sons just like Jesus. The mark of those who are called is simply “those who love God.” Do not be disturbed over the question, “Am I called?” “Am I not called?” If you were not called to be part of this you would simply not care. You would have no thought, no concern; you would simply not care. It would have no meaning to you.

Do you love God? Do you want to be with Jesus when He stands in His glory? If that is true, then believe God. Believe Him!

Through Paul’s entire argument in the book of Romans, he is building the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That argument is culminated in the second half of Romans 8, in God having many sons just like Jesus. After that Paul says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

We have everything we need to be conformed to the image of Jesus. This is God’s purpose. We not only have everything we need,

we have God's backing, His intent, His purpose, His desire. God wants us to be like Jesus far more than we do. God is for us; He is on our side. He is our biggest fan, He's rooting us on. He believes in us; He knows we can fulfill His purpose.

One of the ways in which we are just like Jesus is that we are created to contain all the fullness of God. Not part of God, not something other than God. We are not called to be sweet little angels floating on the clouds of heaven. We are created to contain all the fullness of God. This is one of the ways we are being conformed to the image of Jesus.

The second way is in John 7.

We understand that Jesus is the image of God. In the Old Testament times, God was distant. He spoke to His people through the prophets; He set up an order by which they could relate to Him. If you read the Old Testament without the Holy Spirit, it is a horrible book. To understand the God of the Old Testament without the Holy Spirit is to see a definition of God that does not really show us who God actually is. The reason is Jesus had not yet shed His blood. Though God wanted to be with man, God had to hold man at arm's length because of the presence of sin. In the Old Covenant God is dealing with sin, showing man the sinfulness of sin. Showing man how much God cannot live with sin, how much the coming Redeemer was needed. But Jesus dealt with sin on the cross, and the blood of Jesus covers us. We are in an entirely different place with God than the people of the Old Covenant, and we cannot see our true relationship with God by looking at them apart from the Holy Spirit.

In sending Jesus, God sent a picture of Himself. God wants us to understand what He is like by looking at Jesus. Jesus is the express image of God. So when we look at Jesus as He walked in His ministry, we can understand the heart of God. We look at Jesus, how He treated people, and what He did; and we see God.

If you look carefully at what Jesus did and what He taught, you will see that the central message of Jesus was "Meet people's needs." You are called and sent out to meet people's needs. Jesus

went about meeting people's needs.

Jesus did not do miracles to do miracles to show how great and powerful He was. No! When Jesus did a miracle, it was simply the best way to meet that person's needs. Here is one who is blind; he needs to see. Here's a widow woman who just lost her son. Meet her needs. How? By raising him from the dead. Jesus did not raise people from the dead to show powerful He was. When He raised people from the dead, He was simply meeting the needs of the families who had suffered loss.

Jesus told us, if you want to be great in the kingdom of God, then be the servant of all. A servant is one who lives to meet other people's needs. Jesus said, "Here is the judgment"; here are these who went around meeting people's needs and these are the ones who did not. He said that when you meet people's needs; you are doing it to Me.

Jesus met people's needs. His whole focus is for us to go about meeting people's needs. But how can you do that without power? Jesus had real power to meet people's needs. When you look at the life and ministry of Jesus, you see that it was not God's intent for anyone to be sick. When Jesus met someone who was sick, He healed them. He met people's needs.

Teaching, understanding, revelation, whatever people needed, He met their needs. He said, "Come to Me and learn of Me, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." He trained His disciples; early on He sent them out with power, "Go. Heal the sick." They saw power beyond the human moving through them. God moved through them to meet people's needs. They came back really excited. Jesus was excited too, not because they were doing powerful things, but because they were learning to be sons of God.

John 7.37-39

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But

this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive . . .

Jesus is referring directly to the river of life spoken of in Ezekiel and Revelation 22. The river of life that, as it flows out, it touches and heals and gives life and meets people's needs, their real needs. Whether it be spiritual life or teaching or healing or provision for the needs of the body: meeting people's needs. A river of life that heals and gives life. He said that this is the normal way of life for those who "believe in Me."

The prerequisite – believe in Me.

With this truth there is an inside element as well. Just as we saw in Ephesians 3, we are the temple of God, we are created to contain God. But on the inside of that we see this foundation, being rooted and grounded in the love of God, knowing that God likes me. I cannot contain God if I imagine that God wants me dead. Many Christians believe that God wants them dead. We need to look carefully at Paul's argument in Romans about what God wants with the human me. Because I can assure you that He does not want me dead. He wants me filled with Himself. He likes me. He made me the way I am because that's how He wants me and if I don't fit someone else's definition of what a good human should be, that has nothing to do with me. God made me exactly the way He likes me; He likes me the way I am. And He wants to fill me as I am right now. I am made clean by the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus is more profound than most Christians allow.

But before the rivers flow out, something else must happen first. Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." Before the river of life can flow out of us, it must first flow in. We come to Him and drink. What is our capacity for drinking?

"If anyone thirsts." How thirsty am I?

We receive as much from God as we want. How much do I thirst? How much have I drunk of His Spirit recently? In order for me to move in this river of life, I must first drink. Jesus said, "The water that I give you will spring up to eternal life." Jesus is that living

water. How much do we thirst?

So many of God's people are content to get their toes in the river of life, to get a little water splashed on their ankles. To worship for 20 or 30 minutes and that's great. God touched us and that's good for a week. 30 minutes of worship in the river of life, 30 minutes a week is not enough. Do you desire more? God gives us as much of Himself as we want.

As we drink of him, we enter the rivers of living water.

This statement of Jesus, "He that believes in Me, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water;" is all we need to hear to understand that God's intent for us is to move in a ministry, not just as Jesus, but as Jesus said, "Greater things than I do shall you do." It is God's intent for this river of life to flow out from us healing all whom we touch. Is there an answer to the problems of the world? Of course! And it is not electing the right king. The answer to the problems of the world cannot be found in the world. The world only produces problems. Shuffling the decks, moving the chairs around, changing the names and the faces, cannot solve problems. Passing laws, writing constitutions, dropping bombs, none of these things can solve problems, no matter how enamored we might be with them.

There is a simple solution to the problems of this world and it is in the belly of every believer whether they know it or not. The flowing of the river of life. The river of life inside you, as it flows out, as you believe, will touch people, heal them, meet their needs, and give them life.

The world does not need more laws or better laws. There is no law given that can give life. What the world needs is life and that comes from the river that is boarded up, damned up, held back inside the hearts and bellies of God's people. God is waiting.

How do we move in this river of life? Simple. Practice. Practice! Pray for someone to meet their needs. We practice meeting people's needs. When we really want to meet people's needs, the power comes. So what if you pray and they are not healed, or this

provision didn't come. A young man training to win the 100 meter dash has set himself a certain time he wants to beat and he runs and doesn't beat it, does that mean he quits? No. He keeps practicing until he wins.

So it is with our growing up into the image of Jesus. We are in training. The river of life is in us. As we drink of Him, we have the fountain that releases that river to flow out of us. The river is there whether we drink of Him or not. But it is as we drink of Him that we are able to release that river into the lives of others. And as we cultivate an attitude of meeting people's needs, we desire to meet those needs with more than earthly power. And we should, because we are not earthly beings. We are sons of God. God has given us supernatural power, the same power that He gave Jesus in order to meet people's needs, in order to fulfill the ministry He's given us. And we learn to do that by practicing. And just because we don't succeed, just because we don't see healing or provision, just because, when we walk down the street, people are not dropping to their knees in repentance, does not mean that we're failures or that it is not God's intent. Not at all!

The truth is founded upon what Jesus says. "He that believes in me, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water." That is absolute. You cannot change it. You can ignore, or not believe it, but you cannot remove it.

Or we can believe, believe that God fills us. He fills us because He likes us. That is so important. If I don't think God likes me, I am crippled. Since I know that He not only loves me, but He likes me and He loves to be with me and His purpose is that I grow up to be just like Jesus and this river of life will flow. It will flow! As I seek to meet other people's needs, it will flow.

God said, "Prove me." "Prove me." It's His intent, His desire.

Then we go to Revelation 12. Because there is a third way in which the primary verse, God's purpose to have many sons just like Jesus, is worked out in practical application. One more verse that helps us to understand the whole thrust of the gospel.

Revelation 12:9-11

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down." And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

First the outward, "They overcame him." Specifically "that serpent of old, the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."

We're talking about Satan and his angels, particularly in their role of deceiving, that are cast out. In verse 12 we see that they are cast out of the heavens and into the earth. And they are defeated by (in verse 11) "THEY." In the moment of Satan and his angels, the deceiver, being cast "out" in verse 8, "down" in verse 10, that is the moment when heaven declares that the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ have come. And why is that? Because the accuser of the brethren, the accuser, the one who says, "God doesn't like you, you sin, you need to die, you're no good." This accuser. And more than that, it is not just us he accuses, but right from the beginning the accuser accused God. The first words God spoke were "Let there be light." The first words that Satan spoke were "Did God really say that"? "Did God indeed say"?

Satan began by accusing God, right at the love of His heart – His word. Satan didn't really challenge God; he had no illusions that he could do so. What he challenged is what God says. Satan is not fighting God; Satan is fighting what God says. God's word: Jesus. That's what Satan is fighting with us and in this world. This is the great contest.

Whether you realize it or not, the great contest is not trying to get as many people saved out of this world and into heaven as we

possibly can. Now, God has many in that ministry and God's blessing is upon bringing many into His kingdom and that is part of what we do as believers. But that is not the contest; the contest is over the word God speaks. Here is the contest: Jesus said, "He that believes in Me out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Satan comes along and says, "Ain't so." Here is the contest of the ages, the great war, the great battle, whether we realize it or not. Do we go with God or with Satan. Where do most Christians place themselves? Decidedly in the "Ain't so" side. Because it's not what we think with our head. Belief is found in the ways of a man, in the practice.

We are theoretical Christians, but practical atheists. In the theories of our theology, we side with God, in the practice of our lives, God doesn't exist. Jesus is true in our minds, but when Jesus said, "Rivers of living water will flow out of the hearts of those who believe in Me," we are more likely to be found on the "Ain't so" side of the line. It is a fight, a war.

Verse 11 says that the reason the deceiver is cast down is that THEY overcame him. This is one of those several places in the book of Revelation where the pronoun "they" has no antecedent. Who are they? It doesn't say. In other words, this is for anyone who wants it to be part of it.

They overcame him by three things. First, "by the blood of the Lamb," the absolute certainty of the cleansing power of that blood. Second, "by the word of their testimony." We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Here is what changes the way we think, it is the words that we speak. The words that we speak are more powerful than we understand. "And they did not love their lives to the death." In this reference, that phrase is not talking about that sad, sad belief that has worked its way into Christian theology and is found in so many groups today, "I am bad, and bad me must die." No! We understand, Paul says in Romans 6, we already know that everything that God hated, everything that needed to die, is dead. That's what we are talking about when we say the blood of Jesus. We're saying that everything inside of me that needed to die is dead; it is gone.

And then we obey God; it is the second command of the gos-

pel. The first command is to love one another, the second command is to reckon the old man dead. Confess, believe, live your life on the premise that everything that needed to die is dead. We stand upon the cross, not before it. We go out from the cross, not toward it. The cross is behind us, not before us. And we are commanded by God to believe it is so. People talk about obedience. But if you cannot obey God on that command, then you're life will be marked by ups and downs, ins and outs, by confusion, by uncertainty. The very opposite of the confidence that we must keep to be partakers of Jesus Christ.

When it says "They did not love their lives to the death," it is talking about commitment in battle, it's talking about our training as sons. A soldier gives everything in battle, not to die, but to live and yet he counts his life as worth nothing because he is fighting a battle for his commander in order to win. This is talking about our relationship with Jesus. It's called devotion, commitment, ready to fight this issue down to the wire. The issue that what God says is true and it must be fulfilled in this age, in this earth, in my life, right here, right now! When there is a people who will not shove God's word off to heaven somewhere, who will not side with the "Ain't so" voice, but who say, "God whatever You say, let it be to me according to Your word, right here, right now."

This is the place of contest; this is where God will triumph. It is the purpose of God that the life of Jesus be revealed in our dying bodies, in our mortal flesh, not somewhere else. When we commit ourselves to the triumph of God, it is a commitment of everything we have and everything we are. That's what it means here, we commit ourselves absolutely to victory. We speak the truth, we speak the truth to ourselves and we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we stand fully upon the blood of Jesus, that it is sufficient and complete, and in so doing we overcome the original deceiver in his original deception, the accuser is cast down.

You take these three verses. Starting with the understanding that God's whole plan and purpose is not to retrieve a disaster. It is not to pull as many people out of this earth as He can and take them off to heaven to clean them up there, "because He sure can't do it here." God's purpose has never changed from the beginning all the

way through. It is to conform many sons to the image of His Son, the image of Jesus.

The place where that happens is in this age, in this life, in this earth, in these mortal bodies. That's where it takes place. That's where this process is to happen, to be completed. Inside of that purpose, we find three primary verses, one talks about God in us. We are the temple of God; we are created to contain all the fullness of God. We are sons of God, it's talking about who we are and God's relationship with us. Then there is the verse in John where Jesus said, "He that believes in me," and this is talking about our ministry. Our ministry to other people with the very life of God flowing out of us. We contain God; we release God to others to meet their needs.

This is the only solution to the problems of the world. My God, writing congressmen, passing laws, throwing people in jail, do not be absurd. Those things cannot give any help to any problems in the world. They can't. You're wasting your time. In fact, all that stuff is really doing is building the kingdom of the beast, the one who rules from the outside in.

There is only one thing that can bring answers, that is the river of the life of God. And you have it inside of your belly.

And then, the great contest of the ages, because you see this world, and the church in this world, stands with Satan in denying the truth of God, in denying that what God says will come to pass here in this earth. And there is a contest, and that contest is being decided in our day. Here is what you must understand. The whole world sides with the accuser. The whole world! Every part of this world system sides with the deceiver. It is a contest. And we know who will win. The question is on whose side do we stand.

We take these four verses, the purpose of God and how it effects our lives, we take these all the way through the New Testament and in order to understand anything in the New Testament, we must understand it through the lenses of these four truths. You need to understand this; I'm not talking heresy here. You already interpret everything in the Bible on the basis of a handful of statements, the

central statement being something not from the Bible; “The goal of the believer is to go to heaven when you die.” We are removing those concepts and replacing them with the intent and purpose of God and then using these verses to assist us in understanding the entire Bible until that is our only thought. Every time we read a verse, we simply see it inside the purpose of God, inside the fact that you contain God, that you release the life of God to others, and that you are in a cosmic battle over whether what God says is true and to be fulfilled right here right now, or if it “Ain’t so.”

When you have that as your framework of thinking, then as you go through the New Testament from beginning to end, every single verse fits, has its place, is a word of truth, and we can believe what God says. We can believe what God says! We do not have to compartmentalize it, doctrinalize it; all we need to do is believe it.

“I am Your servant; let it be to me according to Your word.”

