Wilderness/Promise #14 Pastor Rick Baker

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From the Mystifying Wilderness of Difficult Things

*to the Promise of God’s Providence*

Romans 8:28

Is it normal for a Christian to face so many hardships and are these things hindering my spiritual advance?

Can good things really come from bad things?

Is it true that if I lose something, it’s always because God has something better for me in this world?

**A Promise**: *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose...* (Rom. 8:28)

**Setting/Situation/Background** from which the promise was made...

* Written from Corinth 3rd missionary journey 57 AD
* Church in Rome founded by witnesses to Pentecost (Acts 2:10)
* In 49 AD all Jews expelled from Rome by Claudius (Acts 18:1-3)
* By time of writing Jews allowed back (Rom. 16:3)
* Nero (54 AD-68 AD) now in power persecuting the church
* Big Church issues--significant unity challenges (11:18-23, 25; 13-14; 14:1-1513) and SUFFERING greatly

**Context**: Assurances life in the Spirit brings, especially in the context of suffering...*”the sufferings of Christ that are ours in abundance.”* (2 Cor. 1:5)

* *We know that all of creation is groaning under the painful strain of sinful fallenness.* ( Rom. 8:19-25)
* We don’t know what to ask for to align our desires with the will of God. (Rom. 8:26-27)
* *We do know who will sort it all out and why.* (Rom. 8:28)

THE ASSURANCE OF GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN CAUSING ALL THINGS TO ASSIST IN OUR SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION: Boundaries and qualifications of this amazing promise...

For whom is this promise?

1. For believers—*those who love God, who are called*

What is the *good* that comes out of this promise?

1. “For the good”— God’s purpose for us--*to be conformed to the image of Christ, fitted for glory*

“The Spirit tends to the spiritual good of those that love God, in breaking them off from sin, bringing them nearer to God, weaning them from the world, and fitting them for heaven.” (M. Henry)

The cosmic showdown of Job

How many “things” in your life does this promise cover?

1. “All things” are not necessarily good—*“in all things GOD WORKS for the g*ood...” (emphasis on God working, not the mix of the things—God works vs working together)

There is not one thing that happens to us that God cannot cause to be for our transformation—the scope of God’s dominion in the destiny of our lives is absolute.

“*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives*.” (Gen. 50:20)

What about your own failures?—Peter (Lk.22:32; 1 Pet. 4:12-19)—*God doesn’t manufacture evil things to add into the melting pot of all things and neither must you (shall we go on sinning that grace may abound?), but God is not thwarted by your sin either in the purpose this promise He makes.*

How does this promise help you?

1. We get to know the truth when our emotions are screaming at our soul—*“What is going on here?” “What is God doing in your life?”*

In the hardest moments, your feelings will fail you, but your knowledge of the truth will have to carry you—faith over feelings will ensure that God’s intended purpose prevents you from wasting your suffering/hardship.

All things, pain and suffering, blessings and plenty, persecution and deaths, assist our salvation and sanctification by God’s providence.