

Miscellaneous Sermon #2512

Title: **GOD’S ADORABLE PROVIDENCE**

Text: Romans 8:28

Subject: *Divine Providence*

Date: Sunday Morning — Live Stream Only
April 5, 2020

Reading: *Revelation 9:13-10:6*

Introduction:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1). — *“For God so loved the world”* (John 3:16). — *“All things work together for good”* (Romans 8:28). — I suppose that men and women quote those three portions of Holy Scripture more commonly than any others. People who don’t know God from a Billy goat use those phrases all the time. How often I have heard people quote that portion of Romans 8:28, as if they were knocking on wood, rubbing a rabbit’s foot, a crucifix, a piece of four leaf clover, or something else to conjure up a little “good luck,” trying to mix magic and religion, superstition and faith together. But what does Romans 8:28 say? What does that blessed verse of Holy Scripture teach? Let’s look at it together — Romans 8:28.

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(Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

AND

“*And*” — What a blessed word that word “*and*” is, as it is used by the Spirit of God in this place!

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁽²⁾ *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* ⁽³⁾ *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:* ⁽⁴⁾ *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* — (Romans 8:28) “*And* — we know that all things work together for good to

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them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

(Romans 8:16-17) “**The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:** ⁽¹⁷⁾ And if children, then heirs; **heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;** if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.” — (Romans 8:28) “**And** — we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

(Romans 8:26-27) “Likewise **the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities:** for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ⁽²⁷⁾ **And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**” — (Romans 8:28) “**And** — we know that all things work together for good to them that love

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God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

It is my delight to preach to you once more about the providence of God. — **GOD'S ADORABLE PROVIDENCE** — That is the title of my message. — Hold your Bible open at Romans 8:28; and ask God the Holy Ghost whose Word you have in your hand to inscribe the message of this text upon your heart.

(Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

Divine providence is the daily, constant sovereign rule of our God over all things for the accomplishment of his eternal purpose of grace in predestination.

Predestination is the sovereign, eternal, immutable, unalterable purpose of God almighty, by which he ordained and ordered, according to his own will and good pleasure, all things that come to pass in time.

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Divine providence is the accomplishment of God's sovereign will and purpose. Providence is God doing in time what he purposed in eternity. Providence is God sovereignly and absolutely bringing to pass in time what he predestined in eternity.

Predestination is God's purpose. **Providence** is God's execution of his purpose.

Hear me well. — **Be sure you understand the doctrine of Holy Scripture with regard to the providence of God.** Nothing in the universe happens by luck, chance, fortune, or accident. Everything that comes to pass in time was purposed by our God in eternity, and is brought to pass by his holy, wise, adorable, and good providence. **Nothing comes to pass in time that God did not purpose in eternity, in sovereign predestination. And all that God purposed in in eternal predestination he sovereignly brings to pass in his providence.**

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Proposition: That which God predestinated in eternity and brings to pass in his providence is for the good of his elect and the glory of his name.

Let's see if that is truth or heresy. — What does the Word of God say? — “Let God be true, and every man a liar!” (Psalm 76:10; Proverbs 16:4, 9, 33; 21:1; Daniel 4:34, 35, 37; Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 11:33-36).

(Psalms 76:10) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

(Proverbs 16:4) “The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

(Proverbs 16:9) “A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.”

(Proverbs 16:33) “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.”

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(Proverbs 21:1) “The king’s heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

(Isaiah 46:9-11) “Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (11) Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.”

(Daniel 4:34-35) “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: (35) And all the

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inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

(Daniel 4:37) "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

(Romans 11:33-36) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory forever. Amen."

Specifically, I want us to look at that which the Holy Spirit reveals and teaches in Romans 8:28. If

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we can learn just that which is taught in these twenty-five words about God's adorable providence, we will have abundant reason to rejoice in God our Savior forever.

(Romans 8:28) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose."

Divisions: May God the Holy Ghost, who inspired these words, effectually inscribe them upon our hearts for the glory of Christ, enabling us in all things to believe, worship, and give thanks unto our Triune God for his wise, adorable, and good providence. I call your attention to just four things in our text...

1. A Delightful Persuasion — "*We know...*"
2. A Divine Providence — "*We know that all things work together for good...*"
3. A Designated People — "*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called...*"
4. A Declared Purpose — "*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to*

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them who are the called according to his purpose.”

A DELIGHTFUL PERSUASION

1st — **Our text speaks of a delightful persuasion** — **“We know...”** — The word “*know*” in this sentence refers to a knowledge beyond speculation, theory, doctrine, or even sound judgment. **It is the knowledge of a confident, assured persuasion based upon fact and experience.** It is my prayer that God will graciously and thoroughly convince you of these things as he has convinced me, as he convinced the Apostle Paul. Paul says, **“We” — All true believers — “know.”** But how do we know? What is the basis of this knowledge? Is this a pipe dream or a matter of established fact?

We know these things by the revelation of God's Word.

(Psalms 84:11) “For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no

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good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

(Psalm 57) I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.

(Proverbs 12:21) “There shall no evil happen to the just.”

(Hosea 2:18) “And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.”

We know these things, and walk in the comfort of God's providence, because of the inner witness and anointing of the Holy Spirit, who teaches us all things, by whom we have the mind of Christ (1 John 2:20; 1 Corinthians 2:16).

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(1 John 2:20) “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

We know the wisdom and goodness of God's adorable providence because we have experienced it. — Rolfe Barnard used to say, “We only believe what we experience.” He was exactly right. Are you persuaded, really persuaded of what Paul teaches us here? If you are, you have a persuasion that will keep your soul in peace. Indeed, this is the only persuasion that will keep your soul in peace...

“When sorrows like sea billows roll.”

A DIVINE PROVIDENCE

2nd — **The Holy Spirit here reveals a divine providence by which all things are ordered, ruled, and disposed of in time.** — *“We know that all things work together for good...”*

Providence is God's government of the universe. This is a subject of deepest importance. If we have a proper

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view of God's providence, we will see the hand of God and the heart of God in everything, in all the experiences of our lives. Let us never talk like the unbelieving Philistines who said, "*it was a chance that happened to us*" (1 Samuel 6:9). Believers talk like...

- Job (1:21).

(Job 1:21) "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

- Eli (1 Samuel 3:18).

(1 Samuel 3:18) "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, *It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.*"

- David (2 Samuel 16:11-12).

(2 Samuel 16:11-12) "And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which

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came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. (12) It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.”

God is never idle. He is the one Person who is always on the job. He never needs to rest, recuperate, or regroup! God almighty, our God and heavenly Father, is always at work, governing the world.

(Psalm 121:4) Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

You may sometimes think, “God is not doing a very good job of running this world.” I have often heard fools say, “If God were running everything, then this or that would not happen.” You might, in your great depth of wisdom, propose a lot of changes. **Could not the Almighty easily put an end to...**

- Sickness, Poverty, and War?
- Sin, Crime, and Disease?

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- Fornication, Adultery, and Sodomy?
- Famine, Earthquakes, and Death?
- Rape, Murder, and Abortion?

Indeed, he could. But **God almighty will not be dictated to by us!** Who are we to dare set ourselves up as instructors to the all-wise God? He “*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” **I want to remind you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, of three things about God's providence.**

1. **God's providence is mysterious** (Romans 11:33-36).

(Romans 11:33-36) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

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His judgments are a great deep. His ways are past finding out. But I know this...

- God always has his way.
- His ways are not our ways.
- His way is always right and best.
- 2nd Corinthians 12:1-10

2. **God's providence is minute** (Matthew 10:30).

(Matthew 10:30) "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Divine providence is all inclusive! God rules everything, great and small, everywhere, and always!

God is in control of all inanimate matter.

- The Creation
- The Red Sea
- The Jordan River
- The Fiery Furnace
- The Whirlwind

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Our great God is in total control of all irrational creatures.

- The Flies, Frogs, and Locusts in Egypt
- The Whale that Swallowed Jonah
- The Cock that Crew for Peter

“The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; his kingdom ruleth over all!” — **Our God and heavenly Father controls (absolutely and totally controls) all rational creatures too.** He controls all men and women everywhere, good and bad, in the good they do and in the evil they perform. All angels, all demons, and Satan himself are under the total control of our God.

(Psalms 76:10) “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

(Isaiah 14:12-14) “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken

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the nations! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

(Isaiah 14:24-27) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: (25) That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. (26) This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

We have no trouble believing that God controls good things and good people; but those are not the things

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that bother me. It's the bad stuff that disturbs me. I want to know who is in control of wickedness and evil. That is the One I will worship.

Many have a lot of trouble with this. They do not understand that God truly is God, as fully in control of hell as he is in heaven, as totally in control of wickedness as of righteousness.

What about sin? What about the fall? God ordained sin, the fall of Satan and 1/3 of the heavenly angels and the fall of Adam and all the human race because that he might use them and overrule them for his own everlasting glorious and great name. No, God is not the Author of sin. But he is the Controller and Director of sin. Men are rebellious; but they have not pushed God off his throne. They are not out from under his control.

Illustration: *Irrigation Canals*

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(Proverbs 16:4) “The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

(Proverbs 16:33) “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.”

(Proverbs 21:1) “The king’s heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

(Acts 2:23) “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

(Acts 4:27-28) “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, (28) For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

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3. God's providence is mysterious and minute. But be sure you get this third thing. **God's providence is good!** — *“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

No event in history is isolated from any other event.
— *“All things work together!”*

What does Paul mean when he says that “all things work together for good”?

- Not Necessarily Immediate Good.
- Not Necessarily Temporal Good.
- But Spiritual Good.
- Eternal Good.
- Collective Good.

Actually, that which is truly good for me is very often the exact opposite of that which is presently good.

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Illustrations: Tom Dejarnette — “If I had not been in prison for murder, I would never have learned the gospel.”

Brad and Iris Johnson

Paul on the Damascus Road

The Prodigal Son

Onesimus

It is good for me to know Christ and be found in him. Whatever it takes for God to get my attention and turn my eyes and my heart to Christ, that is good! **It is good for me...**

- To fellowship with God and walk humbly before him.
- To be a blessing to others.
- To be weaned from this world.
- To be a better preacher.
- To continue in the faith.
- To finish my course with joy.
- To die in the faith.
- To rise in glory and be like Christ!

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Whatever God sees fit to use to accomplish these things for us and in us is good! At your leisure, read Psalm 107 again. There we are given a detailed view of God's providence. — *“All things work together for good.”*

Illustration: A Pharmacist Mixing Medicine

Too much joy would intoxicate me. Too much misery would drive me into despair. Too much sorrow would crush me. Too much suffering would break my spirit. Too much pleasure would ruin me. Too much defeat would discourage me. Too much success would puff me up. Too much failure would keep me from doing anything. Too much criticism would harden me. Too much praise would exalt me. — **My God knows exactly what I need.** His providence is wisely designed and sovereignly sent for my good! Let him therefore send and do what he will. By his grace, I will...

- Face it.
- Bow to it.
- Accept it.

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- Give thanks for it.

“I welcome all His sovereign will,
For all His will is love.
And when I know not what He does,
I'll wait for light above.”

A DESIGNATED PEOPLE

3rd — **Paul speaks of a designated people.** — “*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called...*”

This promise of God is not for and is not given to everyone. It is a special promise, made to a special people. It is God's promise...

- “*To them that love God.*”
- “*To them who are the called.*”
- Those who love God are those who are “*the called.*” — The Elect! — The Redeemed! — The Regenerate!

A DECLARED PURPOSE

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4th — **Here is a declared purpose, according to which God almighty rules, governs, and disposes of all things.** — “*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”

(Romans 8:28-31) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

Oh, how I give thanks to God my Savior for his wise, good, adorable providence!

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Amen.