

# Unbroken

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Father, we confess before you that there are texts in your word that terrify us. And we also confess before you, Father, that there are promises in your word that frighten us.

Because your promises, Father, seem to be too big and don't seem to have the qualifications that we're comfortable with. So, Father, we confess before you that there are both promises and other texts which just frighten us.

That we want to edit or that we want to remove. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would still our mind and still our hearts and still our wills. So that we might receive your word.

And we ask, Father, that your word would enter deep within us. And by your grace, as your word enters deep into our lives, may our lives bring forth much fruit that brings you glory.

And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, I've already given you a bit of a warning that in a couple of minutes I'm going to deal with, I think, I can't remember who said this, but it's a text of terror.

[ 1 : 17 ]     Predestination. A text of terror. And I can also say that I, in fact, we're going to look at a text of terror. We're going to look at predestination two weeks in a row.

And I'm going to say more about it next week than this. Because next week, in Romans 9, there's a real in-your-face text. Where God gets right up and close and in our face.

It's the text, if those of you are familiar with the Bible, What right does the clay have to say to the potter, what on earth are you doing with me? Like, it's a really in-your-face text. So we're going to look at it a little bit more next week, but we're going to look at it a bit today.

And just one other thing before we get into the text, Romans chapter 8. I ask your prayers for me. As you know, one of the ministries of our church is a ministry called Church on Wednesday.

And it's always good if you pray for that ministry. Please pray for it every day if you can. And I'm not just asking for your prayers because I speak two Wednesdays from now on the 24th.

[ 2 : 20 ]     I'm asking your special prayers because we'll be right in the university center, the heart of the university, where people can wander by. And I get to preach on wives, submit to your husbands.

And, of course, you know that's a very popular idea at the University of Ottawa campus. They have faculties for it and everything. No, you know I'm joking. So it's my great honor to talk about that and slaves as well.

And it's really to Daniel's credit and Church on Wednesday's credit that when we, they preach through books of the Bible and that means also dealing with harder texts. And I will do that two Wednesdays from now.

So I ask your prayers for that, that God would be honored and glorified, that I won't do anything to mess things up. But I also, that I won't want, I'll just speak, try to make it clear what it is that the Bible is saying.

So let's look at this, this text of terror. But before we get to the text of terror, about God foreknowing us, about him predestining us, about him calling us, justifying us, and glorifying us, we like the justifying bit and the glorifying bit.

[ 3 : 31 ] The other three things causes a little bit of problems and we wish we could edit it out. Many Christians do. Before we get to that, the Bible talks about prayer. And talks about prayer in a very, very, very, very, very helpful way.

Romans chapter 8, verses 26 to 27. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Now just sort of, we're going to just pause here for a second. I don't know what you're like with prayer. You know, at the 8 o'clock service, I thought to myself, how would I sort of score my prayer life right now?

Maybe I'd give myself a C. I don't know. Maybe as soon as I say C, God is up there groaning and going, oh, George, you're not even close to a C. But here's the thing.

[ 4 : 40 ] One thing I do know is that there's been times in my Christian life when I want to pray that it seems as if I only have one of two brains in my head. One brain is like a hummingbird that's been chugging Red Bull.

And my thoughts just flit constantly all over the place, and I can't stay focused in my prayers at all. My mind just races all over the place on everything except on what I should be praying about.

And then there's other times when I go to pray, and it's as if my brain has been replaced with a bear's brain who's hibernating. And I can't get past a few sentences of prayer before I'm going, I'm just falling asleep.

We're going completely blank. And I guess compared to those seasons of my life when my brain is like that, I'm doing all right in my prayers. But here's the thing about this particular text.

I don't know if you noticed what Paul said in this text. It was something that really jumps out at you. It's verse, look at 26 again. Likewise, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for.

[ 5 : 51 ] Just pause there for a second. Paul says we. He's including himself. Now just think about this for a second. Paul is going to end up dying a martyr's death rather than denying Jesus.

Paul is the person who brought the gospel to Europe. Paul is a person who did, who was the very first person to speak about Jesus in a pagan empire all over the Mediterranean.

Paul is the guy that God chose to help write part of the Bible. Paul. Like, if there, and in 1 Corinthians he says he speaks in tongues more than anybody else, and he wishes we could all speak in tongues as much as him.

And Paul says he doesn't know how to pray. Now doesn't that take a little bit of a load off of you? If you're having problems praying, like if Paul's having problems praying, like is it any, you know, I don't want to put you down.

Yeah, come to Church of the Messiah. George is going to put you down. I don't want to put you down. But it's a little, it takes a little bit of a load off of us to know that Paul had problems praying. That he in fact describes himself with you and me, that we do not know what to pray for as we ought.

[ 7 : 10 ] Like that's actually helpful. It takes a bit of a load off of our minds, that we have to be these types of spiritual athletes, or that we have to feel certain ways, or we have to pump ourselves up with praise songs to be able to be in the zone to pray, or maybe you pump yourself up with Bach, or I don't know what it is, but whatever, you have to pump yourself up, you have to screw up your willpower to be able to pray.

Anyway, Paul here says that we don't know how to pray. And what is also so helpful here in the text is that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

That God doesn't look down at you and me and says, gosh, George is pathetic at prayer. You'd think at his age, and after all these years that he was ordained, that he'd be a lot better at it, you know?

The Father's not saying that to the Son, and just sort of despising me or despising you, the Father knows that we can't pray very well.

And because the Father knows that we can't pray very well, the Holy Spirit doesn't mock us in our weakness, scorn us in our weakness, abandon us in our weakness, deride us in our weakness, insult us in our weakness.

[ 8 : 24 ] He helps us in our weakness. And then, we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Now, some people use this to refer to speaking in tongues. There's other passages that speak about speaking in tongues, but this isn't one of them. It literally means wordless groanings. So it's hard to get from wordless groanings to speaking in tongues, actually.

Like, it's sort of the opposite. But what it does mean in here is the groaning too deep for words is a way of trying to capture that it isn't just that the Holy Spirit is like some little, you know, like the Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheels, and they just sort of, you know, there's this mechanical thing that just goes round and round and round, and it's as if it's prayer.

Well, the Holy Spirit here isn't like just a disinterested mechanical prayer wheel that's just going, praying for George, praying for George, praying for George, praying for George. It's not like that at all. Well, the groanings, wordless groanings, is an image of emotional connection, that the Holy Spirit, in a sense, is emotionally involved in our lives, and that he's not only just helping us.

I once, when we used to own a church building, I came out of the building, and there was a street person. It was a cold day, almost as cold as this cold night, and the street person had fallen in the garden.

[ 9 : 51 ] He wasn't supposed to be there, but he was lying on the ground, and he couldn't move. And so I did two things. First, I ran in, and I was able to find some old, some blankets and stuff, and I put the blankets on them, and then I called 911, and an ambulance came.

And I, it was sort of a bit hard to find, so I was out in the street so I could flag down the ambulance, and I flagged down the ambulance when it came. It's so funny. The ambulance drivers said, I said, I'm the one who called me.

They said, where is it? And I said, here. It's just down here, and they're walking along, and the guy's saying, bleepity, bleepity, bleep, not another bleepity, bleepity, bleep. You can guess what bleepity, bleep means.

Street person. I, bleepity, bleep, hate picking up these bleepity, bleep street people. This is what he's saying. He says, I was hoping to go home to have dinner, and now this is another hour out of my life because, anyway, he was giving me this big, long rant for these 200 meters as we're walking to where the street person is.

Now, fortunately, as soon as he saw the street person, him and his partner, he was very kind. But his heart wasn't very kind. I knew what his heart was like.

[ 11 : 01 ] His heart hated doing this, but at least he was kind and professional with words when he was with the street person. So what the Bible's saying here is that the Holy Spirit's not interceding for us like that.

He's not interceding for us in a mechanical way. He's not interceding for us in a heartless way. In a sense, he's emotionally connected and involved in what we're going through.

So likewise, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

And he, that's referring to God, God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit. And here it says, because, or it can also be for, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This is another great comfort. We never have to worry in the Christian life that God has these plans and the Holy Spirit has these plans, that God the Father is, he's sort of really hard, he's like a really mean and nasty God that writes Ten Commandments and has high standards, and the Holy Spirit is warm and fuzzy, and the Holy Spirit and the Father have to have a bit of an argument about what's going on.

[ 12 : 16 ] No. It's not like that at all. The Father knows what's going on in our lives. The Father knows the mind of the Spirit.

The Spirit's heart is for us and with us. And the Holy Spirit is always interceding for us. As you sit here right now, and maybe some of you are sitting here right now, your life is a horrible mess, maybe you're feeling unbelievably depressed, maybe you feel like you're all alone, that nobody knows, nobody cares, but the Holy Spirit, even now, is interceding for you.

If you're in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is interceding for you. You never have to pray alone. You're never praying alone. And that's what the Bible is telling us here.

So here's the thing. Andrew, if you could put up the first thing, and what I've done this morning, some of you who are used to coming here, sometimes my points are in the forms of prayers.

And if you don't have time to write these down, they'll be on the webpage once Shirley gets back from holidays. They'll be on the webpage Tuesday or Wednesday. And, you know, one of my roles is just to try to help myself to learn how to pray and help you to learn how to pray.

[ 13 : 35 ] And rather than just putting down an abstract type of point, I've put it in the form of a prayer. Heavenly Father, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowing that I am weak, but the Holy Spirit always intercedes for me.

Like, I want to encourage you to sometimes pray in acknowledgement that you're weak. I know that we don't like to show weakness to our friends and maybe to our family.

One of the persistent hard parts in marriages for men is that men don't like to share their weakness with their wives. It's one of the things that makes wives wonder whether their husbands trust them and love them because they don't want to share that they're weak.

The wife can see that the husband's struggling with something, and yet the husband won't share with his wife what it is that he's struggling with and is overwhelming him.

It's often a cause of marital problems. And sometimes we Christians feel that we have to just always come to the Father with our strengths, but listen, this text is reminding us that we need to know that God knows we're crappy prayers.

[ 14 : 50 ] You don't have to zip that out. Oh, Andrew's not here. Crappy. It means sometimes we're crappy prayers. And so this text is encouraging you and me to say, Heavenly Father, please grow in me a humble, trusting, knowing that I am weak, but the Holy Spirit always intercedes for me.

Now, just before we get to this whole thing about predestination and God foreknowing us, we have this other text, and it's very interesting that on one hand, we don't like the doctrine of predestination, but often this next verse is on posters and on cups and on fridge magnets.

And on one hand, lots of us love it because it makes us feel that we can do anything, that we can accomplish anything. It gives us this positive spirit and this positive attitude.

And for those of us who aren't as positively inclined in life, we hate texts like this, although you can never say that you hate a text in the Bible. But what we do is we don't get fridge magnets like this.

And when we go to a house that has fridge magnets like this, we sort of roll our eyes at fridge magnets like this because we have more of a sense of the tragedy of life and the weakness of life and how things just often all seem to fall apart.

[ 16 : 07 ] And so this same text encourages fridge magnets and the same text in our culture encourages lots of eye-rolling up to the ceiling. And it's verse 28.

It goes like this. Some of you optimist types didn't realize that your fridge magnets are causing people to go, oh, good grief. At least not in public.

It's after they leave. Oh, good grief. Did you see all those fridge magnets? Anyway. It's fine for optimists to find that out about some other Christians, right?

Anyway, here's verse 28 without eye-rolling or overly being optimistic like you're the top 1% sales agent in the world for real estate. And we know, verse 28, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

It's a great verse to memorize. The big problem with this verse is that usually we just want to memorize this verse and we never read verses 29 and 30. And part of the reason we don't read verses 29 and 30 is because we don't like this whole idea of God foreknowing and predestining things.

[ 17 : 16 ] But actually, verse 28 only makes sense if you read verse 29 and 30. We're just going to look at verse 29 right now and it can be seen because the word for is there in verse 29.

In other words, 28 assumes you're going to keep reading at least to verse 29 if not verse 30. So let's look at verses 28 through 29 when you read them all together. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Ah. So when you look at that text with verses 29 and 30, you'll see that all things work together for good for those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus.

It's not saying that all things work together for good for everybody. Like, it couldn't just be a business logo.

[ 18 : 25 ] Business logo. And that's a bit of a frightening thought for some of you, for all of us, I guess, to a certain extent. I'm not going to say that much about it other than to just lay it there.

It's not a statement that the world is unfolding the way it should and that everybody is going to just have everything work out for them. It's referring to those who are in Jesus.

And it's saying that God is making you to be like Jesus. And that as God is making you to be like Jesus, all things work together for good.

Bible is not talking about your circumstances. You can't take this text to take it to mean that, you know, guys who are single, that God's going to give you a trophy wife with trophy kids and a job that gets you seven figures.

And I'm not counting the pennies. I'm just the dollars. And that the senators are going to win the Stanley Cup and all sorts of other things are just going to work out the way that they should.

[ 19 : 35 ] It's not talking that God is going to make circumstances work in your life in such a way that in the eyes of the world, everything about you is a great success. That's not what the text is talking about at all.

Now, the Bible here isn't forbidding you to pray about your circumstances. There's lots of texts, not this one, but there's lots of texts to tell you that you should pray about your circumstances. The Bible is not telling you not to pray about your circumstances.

But what the Bible here is talking about is that for those who are in Christ Jesus, the things that are going on in your life are under God's sovereign control and God is using the things in your life to make you more like Jesus.

That can include tragedy. In fact, it will include tragedy. And it will include times of brokenness.

It might involve being unemployed. It might involve having a really hard time with your kids or your family. And it's not telling you that all of your circumstances, it's not telling you to have rose-colored glasses.

[ 20 : 46 ] But it's actually a profoundly hopeful text. You know, there's that serenity prayer that really comes out of this.

I'm going to probably get it mixed up because I should have written it down. But, you know, Lord, grant me the courage to deal, to change the things in my life I need to change and the serenity to accept the things which I cannot change and the wisdom to know the difference.

And that's really fitting in with this text. But everything that's going on in your life, God is using in a good way to make you more like Jesus.

And sometimes we need to just look at the circumstances in our life and say, well, Father, are you humbling me? About some way are you teaching me patience? But we know that whatever it is, that it is infallibly, in an unbroken way, not by George's word, but by the Bible's word, in an unbroken way, it is making you more like Jesus and it will culminate in you being like Jesus.

I'm not saying that on my authority. I have no authority. I'm saying that's what the text... Listen to the text again. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose, for those whom God foreknew, God also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, conformed to the image and likeness of his Son in order that he, that's Jesus, might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

[ 22 : 24 ] If you could put up the next point, Andrew. Once again, I put it in the form of a prayer. Heavenly Father, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowing that you work all things together for good as you make me like Jesus.

Heavenly Father, please grow in me a humble, trusting knowing that you work all things together for good as you make me like Jesus. That's what this text is inviting us to pray.

It's a very, very, very profoundly important text as we're dealing with failure, as we're dealing with success, as we're dealing with ambition working out, as we're dealing with our ambitions not working out, as we're getting stronger and stronger, and for those of us who are older, as we get weaker and weaker.

It is a prayer for all of our life. And it's very funny. We like this thing, but on the other hand, it also implies that God is sovereign over something like predestining and actually working in a sovereign way.

But then when it actually talks about things like predestination, we get very, very worried. Let's look at verses 28 to 30, and we're really just sort of going to camp for a moment here in this whole text of terror for many Christians of predestination.

[ 23 : 53 ] Let's look at 28 to 30. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

And those whom God predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified.

Amen. Sorry. Probably doesn't bring out an amen in a lot of Canadian congregations. Well, hopefully we'll change that. It's a terror text. So today we're going to just talk a little bit about this text tomorrow, next week.

God, you can pray for me when we look at Romans 9, 1 to 29. We'll talk more about it sort of in a more general philosophical and theological way. But what we need to understand here is this text is working in a particular context.

[ 24 : 54 ] And the word of God is always addressing our heart, the reality of our heart in the context of the living God. And the reality is that our hearts love to boast.

that our hearts love to boast. And that even when we seem to be most Christian, we're often boasting.

I was at a gathering a couple of years ago where a man gave a testimony as part of the sermon. And part of it was he talked about the fact that he had sex with a girl when he was 12.

And then he went on to talk about the huge number of women that he'd had sex with. He was boasting. He was boasting to us all.

He was trying to have it both ways. He was very pious. A very pious expression on his face. But he was actually boasting both of that he, in our culture, the sinfulness was actually, he was boasting about it.

[ 26 : 02 ] And then, of course, he was boasting about how great God's grace was in his life. And many testimonies are actually a form of boasting in evangelical contexts.

And human beings love to boast. And human beings hate feeling helpless. So here's the thing.

Before we look at this text, I'll just put them up very briefly. Andrew, could you put up the next point? Here's the first thing for us to remember when we look at this text. Okay? In the presence of the living God, all boasting ceases.

In the presence of the living God, all boasting ceases. If you're thinking, gosh, I can't wait till I get to heaven till I can tell God about this great successful pro-life ministry I've had or my, you know, I don't know.

You know, if Bill Hybels is thinking, I can't wait to tell God about getting the 30,000 a Sunday at my church. Like, if we think that at all, we just have to remember that in the presence of the living God, all boasting ceases.

[ 27 : 07 ] And the other thing is that in this context, because the thing that we worry about when we boast is if we can't boast that we're feeling helpless, the thing that we worry about is, you know, that if we can't boast that we're going to be helpless.

That leads us to the next point, if you could put it up, Andrew. I am helpless, but God is the helper of the helpless. If I just said I am helpless and said, okay, now let's go and move on to communion, that wouldn't be very helpful to anybody, and it wouldn't be what the Bible is telling us.

But the Bible wants us to understand that in God's presence, in the presence of the living God, there will be no boasting whatsoever. I mean, the person who's in heaven because they died in the womb through abortion, the person who was born profoundly mentally handicapped, and the person who won gold medals in the Olympics, and by their work and their energy was able to make billions of dollars, all of them will be completely equal before God.

None of them will be able to boast. None of us will boast. And God wants us to understand that we are helpless, that there is a helper.

In fact, see, what often goes on in churches, and here's something that we Anglicans can be very guilty of. I could introduce myself as I'm the Reverend Cannon, George Sinclair, rector of Church of the Messiah, principal of Ryle College, regular speaker at Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship, speaker on CFRA radio, chair of being biblically faithful in my denomination, original chair.

[ 28 : 44 ] I could go on and on and on, okay? And that's often how people like to get introduced, especially if you go to some Anglican gatherings. It's not just, you know, George and Fred and Sarah and Alice.

It's the Reverend Cannon, George Sinclair. Too bad I don't have a doctorate, then I could be the Reverend Cannon Dr. George Sinclair. Not putting down people with doctorates, not at all.

But what we should really do, what this Bible text is saying is that really every church service should be like an AA meeting. In an AA meeting, if you're a multimillionaire and you go to the AA meeting, you don't say, hi, I'm George, I'm a multimillionaire.

What do you say? Hi, I'm George, I'm an alcoholic. And really, in church, we should introduce ourselves by saying, hi, I'm George, I'm helpless. I'm George, I'm helpless.

And then Daniel would say, hi, I'm Daniel, I'm helpless. And Anne would say, hi, I'm Anne, I'm helpless. Because you see, what we want to do is we want to try to make it look as if at some point in time we are in fact not helpless, but we are responsible for making ourselves right with God.

[ 30 : 02 ] Andrew, could you put up the Romans 1 text? Those of you who are guests might not know this, but every week that we've talked, we're going through the book of Romans and every week we read this text. Because the way the book of Romans was written was that there's the first, like a greeting type of thing in the first few verses and then Paul says, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do this, I hope to see you soon.

You know, and then he says verses 16 and 17 and it's like an explanation, a preface of everything that's going to go on in the book of Romans, summarized right at the beginning and then he basically, the rest of Romans is just unpacking this.

So could you read Romans 1 with me out loud? For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. That's what the whole book is about.

And notice up there it says, for I am not ashamed of the gospel. And one of the reasons you're not ashamed of the gospel because the gospel is going to try to make people realize that they're helpless. And God's word is going to regularly try to humble you and me to make us understand that we're helpless.

[ 31 : 19 ] It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed.



And what the righteousness of God means is that not only is God going to act in a way that at the end of the day when everybody looks and sees everything that God has done to make human beings right with himself, there'll be no one who can't say that God did the right thing.

He acted in a way that was right. And God acted in a way that was right. He did what was right to make human beings right with him.

He does it all with nothing left over. Nothing of ours. It's God's power, not God's power plus George's power.

Not God's power plus the Anglican Church's power or the Roman Catholic Church's power or the Pentecostal Church's power. It's not God's power plus somebody else. It's the power of God for salvation.

[ 32 : 20 ] And he will act in a way that is right to make us right with him. He does it all. That we will have no cause for boasting. And what is it that we do?

How is it the different ways that we subtly try to go in that we're boasting? The fact of the matter is that many of us carry around within ourselves is, you know, there's really something a little bit special about me.

You know, there's something special about me. In fact, there's something so special about me. It's no wonder that I'm a Christian. It's no wonder, like, I'm just, you know, good at Bible studies and good at witnessing and good at this and good at that and there's something just special about me.

No wonder God chose me. No wonder I'm a Christian because I'm special. Now, we're Canadians and we don't go out, you know, we don't begin our prayer by saying, Father, thank you so much that I'm special.

Thank you so much that I'm just really special and that I'm so special that no wonder you chose me. Like, we don't say that in our prayers. We're too well behaved, right? But what happens in our periods of depression and tragedy and sadness is that our sense of being special is lost.

[ 33 : 40 ] So what we don't realize is that this sense of there being something special is part of the background noise of our souls and our hearts and we only know that it's there when it seems to be gone.

And we feel depressed and we wonder how God could love us because we're not special. And in the face of us thinking that there is something about us that brings out God's love, the Bible says that God foreknows us.

Foreknows here doesn't mean omniscient. Foreknow could also be translated as foreloved. Know is the relational word know.

In terms of entering into a relationship and before we thought there was anything special about us or we did anything at all before anything like that before there was anything about me God foreloved me.

And some of us in our testimonies when we talk to other people we talk about all the things we did and all the things that we figured out and the whole process that we went through to come to a saving faith in Jesus.

[ 34 : 50 ] Jesus. But the Bible says that He, God, organized all the events that He predestined us that He set the course.

The word there predestined just to get your worries up on one hand but it's not to be a worry because all of this teaching here is in the context of the profound human lust and addiction to boasting.

and the profound human need for us to understand that we are never gods with small g's but that we are always creature dependent upon God fallen creature even more dependent upon God that we are helpless.

But the word here predestined is exactly like when you go to the Star Wars movie and Han Solo and Chewbacca or whatever and they're in the front of their spaceship and they do this and they do this and they do this you know whatever that means and then they've set the course and then they go into hyperspace and after they've set the course they can spend the rest of the time arguing or flirting or you know doing whatever you know preparing weapons because the ship flies itself.

That image is what predestined does mean. So I can't boast about all of the things that I did and how I went to this speaker and had this experience and was seeking this thing.

[ 36 : 12 ] No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Bible saying I set the course is what God said and some of us might be able to have these times where we have our profound spiritual experiences where we called out to God and it gets us on focus on the family on the radio and it gets us on that crazy afternoon radio show on CHRI about virtual online community is an oxymoron just so you know.

Okay? Online community is an oxymoron. Two words that contradict each other and excuse me and we can have these things about how we called out to God and we had these emotional breakthroughs of calling out but Bible says no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

I called you first. I called you and justified that's the thing that we sort of get our minds around that we have to trust in Jesus that God is the one who does something in Jesus for us and we put our faith and trust in him and that he then makes us right with himself but we're so deeply addicted and lustful after boasting and we're so deeply afraid of ever being helpless that as soon as we understand that we have been made right with God through faith in Jesus that it's by grace alone through faith alone and Christ alone the second we understand that we immediately want to think that it's all dependent upon how good we are at doing things how good I am at leading the church how good I am at preaching how good I am with my family how good I am talking to outsiders how good I am and that somehow or another if I'm not being really really good at these things then it's almost as if my justification doesn't count because it's all about me being able to accomplish these things for God and if I can't accomplish these things for God then God's not going to accept me as his child it's going to be revealed that I'm helpless and it's going to be revealed that I'm not special

I am George I'm helpless and in terms of prayer I'm weak but God is the helper of the helpless and this profound text these five active verbs five active verbs listen to verse 29 for those whom God foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that God that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters and those whom God predestined God also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified I am helpless I have no ground to boast God does it all and this text should be once again I don't encourage tattooing but if you're going to do a tattoo tattoo this on your arms so you can look at it every day on your hand as you're paying bills tattoo it there or something don't get a tattoo but if you're going to do it get something like this tattooed that once we stand in Jesus it's as if there's an unbroken chain

I should do it from your point of view from there to there unbroken chain that he wants us to stand there and look down the course of our life and understand that before anything about myself God foreloved me before anything about myself God predestined me before anything about myself God called me that Jesus is the one who justified me and as I look to that which is my future the word glorified is in the past tense because Paul wants you to understand the Bible wants you to understand that once God's power for salvation has been received by you by grace alone through faith alone and Christ alone that once you have received that your future glory is so certain that it's written in the past tense it is so certain that it is in the past tense that you one day will stand on the far side of judgment in the new heaven and earth that God will create where the entire created order is freed up and completely and utterly unleashed and you will stand there with your resurrected body and your new soul and spirit still completely and utterly you at one with your creator at one with the creation at one with your brothers and sisters and that future is so certain that Paul writes it in the past tense

[ 40 : 41 ] Andrew could you put up the almost final point this text is inviting us to pray something like this heavenly father please grow in me a humble trusting knowing that by your grace you foreknew me and predestined me and called me and justified me and glorified me heavenly father please grow in me a humble trusting knowing that by your grace you foreknew me and predestined me and called me and justified me and glorified me.

And for some of you, for some of us, this just makes us go like this. Because we feel, you know, dang it.

And, you know, I just knew that God picked some people to be special and that I was left outside of that.

You know, George, when I was in elementary school and they were picking sports teams, I was never picked first. In fact, there were some years when I was the last one left and the two coaches fought over who had to take me.

And, you know, I get passed over for promotions. You know, my parents seem to have rejected me. My family seems to have rejected me.

[ 42 : 16 ] I don't get any dates. If I do get dates, it just is some loser guy who just wants to use me and then I get dumped. And I haven't done well at school and I'm not doing that well financially and I've never been picked for anything.

And now you're just telling me that this whole Christian thing is just God telling me to shut up and just get used to the fact that I'm just sort of rejected as well. But God doesn't write this to you who are hearing this today to stop the conversation.

But this is God poking you on the shoulder and saying, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, my precious one.

This text is for you. I'm not saying this so you will turn away and think that I've rejected you. This is your opportunity today to know that this text talks about you.

I don't care about your litany of failures. Just like I don't care about your litany of success. I didn't say this to you so that you would walk away thinking that the conversation's over.

[ 43 : 30 ] I said this to you because it's true and I'm talking to you. I'm talking to you. Friend, we're going to just read this wonderful text of 31 to 39 in a moment.

But just before we do that, if you are here and you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus, there is no better time than right this instant. I'm not going to tell you some fancy magical prayer.

I remember the early days of going to evangelical churches. I talked to somebody about the gospel and I think, oh, dang it, what's the right words for that prayer? Like, what am I supposed to say? And I get all confused.

And like, that's just magic. That's like the minister's a shaman and teaching you a spell. God doesn't have to know a fancy set of prayers.

There is no better time than right now just to call out to God and say, Jesus, I want you to be my savior. What George has just talked about, I want that.

[ 44 : 35 ] And I know that you called me first. Just call out to God in your own words. There's no better time than right now. No better time. Won't be better next week or when it gets warmer. Just no better time than now.

And one other thing for those of us who are really tongue-tied evangelists, I can just think of, I had a terrible, not a terrible experience, but not a very good experience yesterday talking about somebody, talking to somebody about Jesus.

And, you know, this text is a profound encouragement. We don't have to carry the weight of evangelism. God foreknows. He predestines. He calls. He justifies.

He glorifies. All we have to do is bear witness. And the wonderful thing about this text is there's people in Ottawa who have not yet recognized that God is calling them, but they are here in this city.

And he just asks us to play a small part in bearing witness and praying for them. Andrew, if you put up the last slide, because we're going to pray this last slide together in a moment as a congregation.

[ 45 : 38 ] Or, yeah. But before that, let's just stand. And after we now have this sense that maybe this whole thing about predestined is something that if I was going to get a tattoo, I should tattoo on my hand so I could remember it every day.

Because it's a profound truth that you're helpless and you're weak, but God is the helper of the helpless. That God does what is needed to make you right with himself.

That there's no boasting. And so mindful of that, listen to verses 31 to 39. 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 gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God.

[ 46 : 46 ] Who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No. No. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come. Nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen. Let's pray this together in closing. Heavenly Father, may your Holy Spirit grow in me a humble, trusting knowing that there is no condemnation for me in Christ Jesus.

And that in Christ Jesus you are always for me. And that nothing can ever separate me from your love in Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.

[ 48 : 00 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.