

Sermon Growth Guide

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Renewed Creation | Romans 8:22-30

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Key Verse: Romans 8:28 – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Big Idea: God’s desire is not only to redeem us, but also to restore his creation, enabling us to be participants in his purposes for his beloved world.



Foundations

We’re all familiar with the slogan – *If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.* This is a clear either-or-statement, but that is not what scripture says. Scripture tells us that we are both a part of the problem and a part of the solution.

What is the problem? It is a broken world. Pastor Tim said “Everything stinks...everything is broken.” He’s right and we hate the shape the world is in. It’s not news and it wasn’t news to the Old Testament writers. Genesis 3:17 tells us “Cursed is the ground because of you.” And Isaiah 24:5 says that “the earth is defiled by its people.” We did that.

What is the solution? Ultimately the solution is in the resurrection and its life-restoring power, but our text today tells us that we – the problem-makers – are part of the solution as well. Romans 8: 19 tells us that “...the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.” Craig Barnes was fond of saying that the groaning world is waiting for us to show up – to fulfill the creation mandate of Genesis by helping to fix what is broken.

Fixing the broken does not mean worshipping the earth. Involvement in ecological causes is not our only job. We are still to exercise wise dominion, but it really means bringing God’s new life and glory into everything we do...teaching, medicine, engineering, the arts, our relationships. The list goes on.

Understanding God’s Word

Read Romans 8:28-30. These verses have been debated over the centuries with one word derived from them that generates immediate debate – *predestination*. Do we have free will or not? The questions abound. This is a clear statement about the sovereignty of God, but there is probably something pastoral also going on here. From the beginning Paul has been talking about the great love of God in saving sinners. What if this passage is about that as well? What if Paul is saying this? “God chooses you and he has known you before time began. He loves you so much he will make sure that no matter what, you will become like Jesus.”

Discuss: How would that understanding of this passage affect your relationship with God?

Applying God’s Word

Creation groans. Believers groan. The Spirit groans. And yet we all hope. In what ways do our shared groanings and shared enduring hope function in our life together?

Witnessing God’s Word

In your life and work, what are some specific ways in which you, as a redeemed child of God can “show up?”