

Out of Context
All Things Together for Good- Session #4
Small Group Notes

Introduction:

If you had to pick one word to describe your life today, what would it be? Why? In what way do you see your life being “good”? What are ways that the word “good” gets used in our culture today?

When you hear that God is “all-good”, what does that mean to you?

Make a list to show the differences between how the world defines goodness vs how God defines goodness? How can you sometimes fall into seeing goodness as how the world defines it? How can seeing goodness from a worldly perspective negatively impact how you understand the nature of God?

Discuss:

1. Read Romans 8:26-27

The place that we begin to understand the goodness of God is when we pray. As Christians, we've all faced times when we weren't sure what to pray for. Paul assured his readers that in those moments the Spirit Himself intercedes for us. Paul was depicting the Spirit's ability to understand our innermost thoughts and weaknesses and then to intercede for us with the Father as only another Member of the Trinity can do. The Spirit works in believers to search their hearts and to ascertain their true concerns. We can trust the Spirit to pray for us when we don't know what to pray, and we can trust Him to pray for us according to God's will. This truth can take so much of the pressure off when it comes to prayer. The Holy Spirit is our prayer warrior, interceding whenever we need Him. The God of the universe prays for and with us. This should make us want to spend even more time with Him in prayer.

Describe a time when you struggled with prayer. What is a time that you were motivated to pray more? What was the difference in these? What eased the situation? Why are excuses that people can have for

not wanting to pray? How do these verses encourage you to pray more and not less?

What does it mean to you to know that the Holy Spirit gets involved in our prayer lives? How does the Holy Spirit's involvement in our prayer affirm the personal nature of God?

What is an example of someone that intercedes for another? Read Hebrews 9:15 and 1 Timothy 2:5. How do these verses help you to understand verse 27 even more in the role of Jesus and the Holy Spirit when we pray?

2. Read Romans 8:28-30

When we hear about “all things work together for good”, it's important to know that this is not a blanket promise to everyone that “everything will turn out for the best.” This promise first belongs to people who love God, which in this context means those who are in God's family of faith. God promises to work all that happens to His children into a pattern that results in good for them. Furthermore, the promise does not mean God directly causes all things, for that would mean He causes evil. God promises to use things or events for our good even the worst things that can happen to us. Therefore, the “good” comes by God's working in our lives. He is the only One who can turn tragedy into triumph. Therefore, those who love God are the ones called to salvation according to His purpose. That purpose is stated in verse 29 and defines the good of verse 28, namely, that we be conformed to the image of His Son. God's good purpose is to use everything that comes into our lives to make us more and more like the Lord Jesus. Rather than ask Him why particular things happen to us, we should be asking in faith how He wants to use those things to fulfill His purpose for us.

When has it been hardest for you to believe this truth? How have you seen God bring something good out of a bad situation in your life?

What confidence does verse 28 give believers about events that occur in their lives? What does verse 29 give as the bottom line (goal) of God's work in us? How should we be reassured by the truth that God has known a plan for our lives since before creation?

3. Read Romans 8:31-39

Finally, the goodness of God ties to the love of God, even when we may experience suffering. Paul had been laughed at, stoned, beaten, and imprisoned because of his faith. Ultimately, these calamities did not shatter his confidence in God but reaffirmed and deepened it. In fact, God alone is qualified to bring an accusation; but God is the One who justifies, or puts Christians in a right standing before Him. Obviously, no accuser has the power to overrule God. The only possible accuser has declared us innocent. Likewise, only one could condemn us, Christ Jesus. Instead of condemning us, however, He actually has done the unthinkable. He died and has been raised for us. His sacrifice means believers are free from condemnation. God is for us.

Therefore, Paul affirmed that nothing has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The list of potential separators includes physical danger, spiritual beings, present and future occurrences, and powers above us and below us. Absolutely nothing can come between us and our Lord. God—the one who spoke the entire universe into existence and who holds everything together by the power of His word—He is for us. Nothing can remove us from His family.

Read Romans 8:1. What do verses 8:31-34 reveal as the reason why “there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus”? Why is this good news for us? How should this truth change how we live each day?

Of the things listed in these verses that cannot separate believers from the love of Christ, which stands out to you the most, and why? Share an example from your own experience that relates to that point.

What difference does trusting in God’s love for you make as you try to persevere through difficult times? In what situation will you trust Him more this week?