

Son and Sonship #1

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of sonship and being conformed to the image of Christ, which is God's purpose, calling, and predestination for us.

Duration: 1:16:46

Scripture: Romans 8:28-30, Galatians 4:1, Galatians 4:3-6

Topics: "Sonship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by reading Galatians 4:1-7, which talks about how believers were once held in bondage under the principles of the world but have now received sonship through Jesus Christ. The preacher emphasizes the importance of believers growing into sons and daughters of God and living according to His will. He then references Romans 8:28, which states that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. The preacher explains that what is truly good is whatever aligns with God's will, and encourages the congregation to seek God's will and live for eternity rather than for themselves.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the book of Romans. Romans, chapter 8. We will read from verse 28 to 30. Romans, chapter 8, verse 28.

Romans, chapter 8, verse 28. But we do know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose. Because whom he has foreknown, he has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brothers.

Because whom he has predestinated, these also he has called, and whom he has called, these also he has justified. But whom he has justified, these also he has glorified. Because whom he has predestinated, these also he has called, and whom he has called, these also he has justified.

But whom he has justified, these also he has glorified. And will you please turn to Galatians. Galatians, chapter 4. We will read the first seven verses.

Galatians, chapter 4, verse 1. Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he differs nothing from the bondman, though he be lord of all. But he is under guardians and stewards until the period fixed by the

father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world.

So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the principles of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law.

That he might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship. But because you are sons, God has sent out the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So thou art no longer bondman, but Son.

But if Son, heir also, through God. Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, indeed we are gathering together here unto thy name.

The name that is above all names. We do praise and thank thee because of thy precious promise to us. Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them. We do praise and thank thee because we know that thou art here with us. There is nothing better than this.

We thank thee for thy presence here. And we do desire to remove our shoes. Lord, what is it thou want to say to us this morning? Speak, thy servants hearing.

May thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May thy kingdom come. And may thy name be exalted.

We ask in thy precious name. Amen. Thank God for gathering us together here this morning.

I am so glad to see you dear brothers and sisters. Before I came, I waited before the Lord. I looked to the Lord to see what is it that he wants us to share together during this time.

It seems that the Lord put upon my heart one thing. And that is sons and sonship. The reason why I feel impressed upon my heart of this theme.

It is because I feel very deeply that this is not just something small. I feel that this is something that is related to the eternal purpose of God. We know that our God is the eternal God.

Everything that is related to him is eternal. There is nothing temporal, nothing passing. And it is of immense importance.

That we too will be related to him with eternity in view. I believe brothers and sisters we all understand. Since God is eternal.

Whatever he does is eternal. And everything that he does to us is eternal in nature. And if we are to be related to God in any way, it has to be eternal in nature.

If our life on this earth is not related to the eternal God, it has no value. It is vanity of vanities. So when I think of this matter of sons and sonship, I feel that it is so essential to us believers.

Because it is very much related to God's eternal purpose. Do you know dear brothers and sisters, when God created man, he has eternity in view. That's the reason why we find that he made man according to his image.

Because he is eternal. So he wants to create man with eternity in view. You remember in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 11, he says God made all things beautiful in his time.

But he put the world in their heart. You know the word world actually in the original is age. And in some translation it is put as the eternal, the infinite.

When God created all things, they are beautiful in its time. Whether you look at a flower, or even you look at a mountain, everything is beautiful in its time. These things are created with time in view.

A flower will blossom in its time. And after its time, it fades away. Because it is created with time in view.

Even when you look at the world, when you see the mountains, and you see the sea, as if they will continue and continue on. But even these things are beautiful in its time. Even the heaven and the earth will pass away.

But when God created man, he created man according to his image. And because of this, he put eternity in man. You know brothers and sisters, thank God we are not created for time.

We are created for eternity. Because this is God's purpose for man. Now if we live for time, whether it is good time or bad time, in the sight of God, it is nothing.

It is more than nothing, it is vanity. And it is out of the will of God. But unfortunately brothers and sisters, most people live for time.

Most people live for this temporary world. As if these are what man are for. And unfortunately even Christians, even though God has given us his own life, and that life is eternal.

And yet we forget that we have this life in us. And we still live by our natural life. And we still seek after the world that is passing.

If I may put it in another way, anything that we do, which is not in relation with God's eternity, is vanity. I wonder if these words are too serious to you. But thank God this is the truth.

So we need to measure our life by the eternity of God. Every day that we live, if it is according to the eternal purpose of God, there is value in it. Anything that we do, if it is not in line with God's eternal purpose, brothers and sisters, it doesn't count.

One day when we stand before God, there will be a reckoning. And God will look to see how many days do we really live according to his will. Anything that is not in his will, it doesn't count.

So brothers and sisters, to me I feel this is something that we should seriously consider. Why we who believe in the Lord Jesus must grow? Why is it that we must seek the Lord earnestly? Why is it that we must grow into sons and into sonship? Why is it so? It is because all these things are closely related with the eternal purpose of God. Do we live for time or do we live for eternity? Do we live to please ourselves or do we live for the will of God? These are the things that should be ever before us.

Now with that in view, let us turn to Romans chapter 8. Now with that in view, let us turn to Romans chapter 8. Here the apostle Paul said, We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose. We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose. All things work together for good.

If this sentence is true, then how many blessings do we have? We often say, all things work together for good and that would be a miserable life. But the apostle Paul said, we do know, we really know it, that all things work together for good. All things work together for good.

No exception. Brothers and sisters, do you really believe that? Or do you think that exception is the rule? What do you believe? You believe the Bible or you believe the experience? All things work together for good. Now what is good? Now that is another basic question.

What you think as good may not be good. What the world considers as good may not be good. What is really good? You remember in the Bible? A young man came to the Lord.

Good Master. What can I do that I may inherit eternal life? You know what the Lord said? Why do you call me good? There is no good but God. Now that is what good is.

God is good. Anything that is in God's will is good. Anything that is in God's will is good.

Whatever good you may think good, it is contrary to God's purpose that is bad. There is nothing good but God and His will. There is nothing good but God and God's will.

All things work together for good. Whatever circumstance it may be, whoever person you have met, anything that happened to you, behind all these, God's thought is good for you. God is love.

Because He loves us. So He makes all things work together for our real good. God is almighty.

He is well able to control everything. And make everything work together for good. Don't look at the things.

Don't look at your environment. Don't look at what you consider as good. Believe that God is love and God is power.

And He is working everything for your good. Not the good as you think. But the good in His thought which is eternal.

Does this apply to you? Does all things work together for good for all man? Not so. There is a condition. All things work together for good to those who love the Lord.

Now if you do not love God, you will not see that all things work together for good. On the contrary. When anything that you think is bad, you begin to murmur against God.

But whose fault is that? Is it God's fault or your fault? All things work together for good to those who love the Lord. What do you mean by love the Lord? It is more than just an emotional thing. Love is deeper than emotion.

God is love. And if you really love God, you love His will. That is real love.

And anyone who really loves God to those who are called according to purpose. Dear brothers and sisters, we do thank God that we have been called. God calls us.

He calls us with a holy calling. He calls us with a heavenly calling. He calls us with an all-high calling.

But He calls us according to purpose. You know in Ephesians 1 verse 9, it is said that even before the foundation of the world, God has purpose. And that purpose is according to His good pleasure.

Our God is a God of purpose. It is not like us. You know sometimes we do things at the moment.

We do not even think about it. And we say it. Or we do it.

We do it by chance. But God never does things like that. Before He does anything, He has a purpose.

And that purpose is according to His good pleasure. Because it pleases Him. You know when He thinks of what He is going to do to man, it pleases Him to set a purpose.

And then He calls us according to that purpose. Brothers and sisters, I often think that we think too little of God's calling. All the time we think of calling.

What is calling? Oh, my calling is to be a teacher. My calling is to be a housewife. Oh, my calling is to be a professor.

No, we think of calling in that limited sense. But actually you find that there is a calling that comes from God. And that calling includes all of us.

Because that calling is according to God's purpose. Even before God created anything, even before God created us, God already, according to His good will, He made a purpose. He wants what we are to be.

You know He created us with a purpose behind it. That's the reason why He created us in His image. Because this is with calling in view.

With that calling. According to that purpose, He calls each and every one of us. Now, what is that calling according to purpose? It is explained in the following verse.

He said, because whom He has foreknown, He has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He should be the firstborn among many brothers. Let me re-emphasize it. We are all called according to God's purpose.

God has a purpose in each and every one of us. And that purpose is not specific to anyone. For instance, God seems to call one to be a teacher.

Or He calls one to be a teacher. Not all are teachers. But this calling is for each and every one of us.

They are all the same. So we must all know what this calling is. The revelation of God, He reveals it to us.

Because whom He has foreknown, He has predestinated us. You know, some people, they are very much afraid of predestination. Or election.

They think that is too arbitrary. But I thank God for predestination. I think this is the greatest comfort that we can ever have.

It is a great assurance from God. God does predestinate us. But He does not predestine us arbitrarily.

Without any reason. Because that is what pleases Him. So He does it.

No, God is not like that. He predestined us according to His foreknowledge. You know, our knowledge is limited.

But God's knowledge is unlimited. He knows the end before the beginning. He knows everything.

And because He knows everything, so He based upon His foreknowledge, He can predestine. I often times use an illustration. Now suppose you are a very observant person.

One day, you look out from your window. And you see a man walking by your house back and forth. And he is looking here and there.

Why? He can be a thief. So you begin to be very careful. And sure enough, at midnight, he comes.

Now, does this foreknowledge of yours make that man a thief? Of course not. He is a thief. But you seem to have a foreknowledge about it.

So, you are not responsible to make him a thief. But it is your wisdom to know that he will come and try to thief. So if you begin to enlarge it, and you think of God.

He knows the end before the beginning. He knows what will happen to you. Whether you will really believe in His beloved Son.

Or whether opportunities are given to you but you will reject. And then, according to that foreknowledge of you, He will protect you. So, whom he has foreknown? Brothers and sisters? Is it terrible or is it wonderful? That before you are born, before you do anything, He already knows what you will do.

Before Rebecca gave birth to His two sons, Esau and Jacob, they haven't been born yet. They haven't done anything good or bad yet. Yet God said, Esau I hate, Jacob I love.

My, what prejudice that is. You know, when I was a boy, my parents have seven children. And we have an American grandma with us.

She was a missionary. And she came to China, and when my father was young, she led my father to the Lord. So after she retired, refused to come back to this country, she stayed with us.

And she loved my youngest brother. And we used this pride to stir her up. You are impartial.

You love my youngest brother more than any other people. Oh, he said, no, no, I love every one of you. We said, no.

And then he explained. He said, I love you all, but this youngest son is closest to me. That's why.

You know, God is like that. He loves us all just the same. But some are closer to him, some are farther.

Thank God. He loves every one of us. And according to his full knowledge, he has predestined us.

Predestination is the surety of our eternal salvation. Now what does he predestine us to be? We often think predestination as predestine me to be saved and go to heaven. Or predestine me to go to hell.

But that's human limitation. Our mind is so narrow. We think that heaven and earth, or hell, are the two greatest contrast.

But think of God. This is nothing to him. He predestined us according to his eternal purpose.

Can that purpose just be that you go to heaven? Or you go to hell? That is not God. His predestination is so wonderful. It's so glorious.

It has to be as glorious as he is glorious. Anything less than that is not fit for him. So what has he predestined us for? Brothers and sisters, what are you predestined for? And for eternity.

What is it? Here you find it is said, he has also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son. Can there be anything more glorious than this? He has called us. He has predestined us that we may be conformed to the image of his only begotten son.

Have we ever dreamed about that? Or we think, as long as I won't go to hell but to heaven, that's good enough. But that's not good enough for God. Save us to the uttermost that he will really be in agreement with his own glory.

If you look into the heart of God, what do you see in God's heart? Oh, you say, God sees me. Not so. God sees only one person.

He sees his beloved son. This is my son in whom I have found my delight. God's only begotten son is the very heart of God.

His son is the exact image of God himself. We often say, like father, like son. Now you can say that to God.

Whatever the father is, that is the same. No man has ever seen God at any time. God is the greatest mystery in the whole universe.

But one day, when he sent his beloved son into this world, he has declared God. He can say, if you see me, you see my father. Do you want to know God? Just look at me.

I am the replica of the father. I am the expression of the father. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in me.

And you are complete in me. Brothers and sisters, God put up his son as the image. And we are to be conformed to that image.

Like him. This is God's purpose. This is God's predestination.

This is God's calling. Anything less than that comes short of the glory of God. Brothers and sisters, what God has expected of us is so glorious.

And how much we have let him down. We are to be conformed to his image. So pretty simply, we are to be like him.

We will, by the grace of God, take upon ourselves the character of Christ. So that he may be the firstborn among many brethren. What is firstborn? Firstborn in the scripture has two different uses.

One is the common usage. It is according to time. If in your family you have five children, the first one who is born is called firstborn.

Now that is according to time. That is the way that we commonly use the word firstborn. But in the bible, the firstborn has another sense.

It is not according to time. It is according to the character. And that firstborn in the scripture means two things.

Those who understand Greek tell us the special use of firstborn means two things. One is sovereignty. The other is priority.

He has the sovereignty over all. And he has the priority, the preeminence among all things. That is the scriptural use, special use.

So when it says that he may be the firstborn among many brethren, it does not refer to time. He is the firstborn of all creation in Colossians chapter one. He is the firstborn of all creation.

But that does not mean that he is created. If you take it that way, you are taking it in a common sense. But he said he is the firstborn of all creation.

Why? Because all things are created in him, by him and for him. Now that is sovereignty. That is priority.

So the Bible teaches us the preeminence of Christ. Everything comes out of him. Everything must return back to him.

He has the sovereignty over all things. And he has the preeminence of all. So here you find that when we are conformed to his image, image in the scripture does not speak of appearance.

Image in the scripture speaks of character. Inward character. When we begin to take up the character of Christ, then Christ will be the firstborn among many brethren.

He will be the firstborn of many sons, brothers and sisters. This is God's eternal purpose concerning us. Isn't that glorious? How can we take anything less than that? How can we be contented with anything less than that? If this is what God has called us, if this is his will for us, what should we do? Should we not press on towards the goal? Should we not learn to take up the character of Christ? It is not something external.

It is something internal. That the life of Christ will really grow within us from babyhood to young people, from young people to fathers, brothers and sisters, that Christ may be the firstborn among many brethren. So that Christ may be the firstborn among many sons.

How does it work? In verse 30 it tells us the process. He said, but whom he has predestinated, these also he has called. How do you know you have been predestinated? Because you have been called.

And whom he has called, these also he has justified. How do you know you have been called? Because you have been justified. You were a sinner.

Come short of the glory of God. You cannot stand before God. You have no standing.

You are condemned. But thank God. He sent his only begotten son into this world to be a man.

The sinless made sin for us that we might be the righteousness of God. Now we can stand before God justified. For our offense he died.

By his resurrection we are justified. So today, brothers and sisters, we can stand before God because we are close with Christ. Because we are with Christ.

When God looked at us, he saw Christ. That's our standing. And thank God we all have that standing.

But often times we stop here. My, that's good enough. But God is greed.

God said, that's not enough. Whom he has justified, he has glorified. Anything less than glory will not satisfy God.

We have come short of the glory of God. And now God will glorify us. He will bring us into glory.

That is his marvelous redemptive work. Now, will you please turn to Hebrews. Hebrews chapter one.

Now all who study Hebrews know that Hebrews chapter one speaks of the Son of God. Jesus, the Son of God. So here you'll find in Hebrews chapter one, verse three.

Who being the effulgence or outshining of his glory and expression of his substance and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made by himself the purification of sin, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness of God. Our Lord Jesus, the only begotten Son of God is the effulgence or the outshining of God's glory. God is glory.

And outshining is our Lord Jesus. And he is the expression of God's substance. Substance is what God is.

And the expression of that substance is our Lord Jesus. So he is the exact image of God. He upholds all things by the word of his power.

Not only he created the world, but he upholds the world by his word. And then he made himself, made by himself the purification of sin. And he sat down now at the right hand of the greatness of God.

So here you'll find the glory of the Son of God. Then if you turn to chapter 2, chapter 2 speaks of the glory of the Son of Man. Because here you'll find how he comes to be a man.

Made a little lower than angels. And account of the suffering of death now crowned with glory and honor. The glory here is the glory of the Son of Man.

Now if you read John chapter 17, you will find in John chapter 17 our Lord Jesus prayed a prayer. And he mentioned two different glories. The first one you'll find in verse 5. He prayed and said, Now glorify me, thou Father, along with thyself with the glory which I have along with thee before the world was.

Now glorify me, thou Father, along with thyself with the glory which I have before the world was. Our Lord was free. I am now going back to glory.

He came out of glory. The glory that he shared with his Father even before everything. Now he left this glory and came into this earth to be a man.

To be a bondman and obedient to the Father even to death and the death of the cross. And now he is going back to that glory. The glory that he shared with his Father before time in eternity.

That is the glory that he and the Father shared together. Nobody can share that glory. That is the glory of the Godhead.

But he prayed towards the end of his prayer. You will find that in verse 24. Father, as to those whom thou hast given me I desire that where I am they also may be with me that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me for thou loveth me before the foundation of the world.

Here you will find our Lord prayed that we may see the glory that the Father has given him. In other words after he had come upon this earth as the Son of Man and as the Son of Man he accomplished the work of redemption. Now he returned to God.

Not only as the Son of God not only as the Son of God returning to his former glory but as the Son of Man he is entering into a glory that the Father has given him. God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name and to that name every knee shall bow. Every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

That is the glory of the Son of Man. And that is the glory that he leads us into. He is to lead many sons into glory.

We will never enter into the glory of the Godhead. We will share with the glory of the Son of Man. And that is also glorified.

So dear brothers and sisters this is the will of God for us. How can we be so contented thinking that to be justified, that's all. How much we come short of God's glory.

God wants to glorify us. His beloved Son will share his glory with us. We will talk more about that later.

Because this is the wonderful, glorious God. How we need to worship him. This is our God.

This is our Christ. And this is the glorious salvation of God. Thank God.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, before thee we do sin. How small.

God has such wonderful, glorious plan for us. And yet we are so easily contented. And coming short of your glory.

O Lord, have mercy upon us. Will you by your Spirit turn astir our hearts. That we will never be satisfied with anything less thy satisfaction.

We thank thee that thou hast not only justified us. Thou hast also glorified us. Glory.

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