

Romans 8:26-34

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

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 delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Conformed to Christ

My son and I sat down to plan the careful carving up of a small block of wood that hopefully would resemble a race car to be entered in the AWANA children's club grand-prix. My son came to me with his favourite micro racer and asked if we could use it as a model, all we had to do is remove all the wood in the block that didn't look like the prototype. That thought reminded me of what the Lord's intention within the life of those who have come to know Jesus as saviour. God, in desiring to "bring many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10), is daily moulding His children "to be conformed to the image of His son" (Romans 8:29).

God's process of chipping away all that is in a believer that does not resemble Christ may involve hardship, loss, sorrow or stress. However, for those Believers who turn all life's choices over to the Lord there is the wonderful promise that "all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28). In this past year of economic woe, it has been a privilege to witness many of God's children rise above the stressful circumstances which often brought loss, by drawing closer to the Lord in earnest faith to be more made like the Son who suffered for us. In such lives there has been an increased tenderness for the suffering people of the world, there has been a deepening awareness of the terrible circumstances of all who are outside the family of God through unbelief, there has been, by necessity, movement toward a total walk of faith resulting in living evidence of the grace of God. All of this, "being made like Jesus", has turned some sceptical eyes heavenward in search of what these believers have found: "the peace that passes understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

With God accomplishing so much in that process of "chipping away", is it any wonder that James calls the believer to "consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2). To each Believer who has by faith, welcomed these trials of loss and hardship in joy, God shares this promise: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the victor's crown of life which God has promised those who love him" (James 1:12).

What is my response:
