

Epiphany 5 – Year B
Lutheran, Radcliff, KY
Romans 8:28-30
Pastor Paul Horn

February 8, 2009

Faith

Know that in all things God works for your good

- I. He foreknew you**
- II. He predestined you**
- III. He called you**
- IV. He justified you**
- V. He glorified you**

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.** ²⁹ **For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.** ³⁰ **And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**

Gong hei fat choi! Happy New Year! It's the year 4707 according to the Chinese Lunar New Year, and this year's zodiac sign is the Ox. If you were born in the years 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009, this is your year. Your animal "sign" will dramatically affect your life. Here are some of the good fortunes in store for you: *The Ox can do well this year through steady progress. There may be a number of experiences that will provide great joy for the Ox. One area, in particular, is the Ox's personal life. You may see an addition to the family. You will be surrounded by those who care. Look for the early summer months to attend many social occasions, providing many new faces in your social circle. One area of focus is to be open to the advice of others, as you tend to keep your issues to yourself. Overall, your own year can be one that you will look back on with pride and a genuine sense of achievement.* The Chinese New Year began January 26, 2009. January 26th... wasn't that the day before the freezing rain started falling? It doesn't sound like your year began well.

It's silly to think that the arrangement of the planets, stars and sun determines your life. As Christians you and I know better. We know with certainty that it is only God who knows our future, and we thank God for that. He says, **"I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11) "But," we ask, "why doesn't he do something when life goes wrong, when life is difficult?" There is much work to be done after this past storm; the loss of wages from no work, money spent on extra groceries, generators, chainsaws, batteries, and candles. On top of all this, the stock market still isn't helping the retired who rely on that income. Our own congregation is struggling with finances and we are unsure if we can get our loan approved for our new building. For whatever reason, we are seeing a trend of declining numbers in Sunday worship and Bible study.... and yet Paul says in our lesson, **"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** It is our sinful nature that doubts and questions and accuses God, "Really, God? In all things you make

it work for our good?" To which he lovingly replies, "Yes, my dear child.... in all things."

God works out all things for our good because we know that we are those who love him. And we know that we love him because he first loved us. (1John 4:19) God shows his love to us in our lesson this morning: **Those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified** (vs30). Your salvation is a golden chain of activity. It is God-initiated and God-completed and therefore we know it's done right. Your salvation begins with God's foreknowledge. In vs29 the apostle Paul says that **he foreknew you**. You've heard the expression, "Hindsight is 20/20." After an event takes place, you can look back on all the events that led up to that event and see clearly that it was bound to happen. With some events we wish we could have looked into the future and changed the things we did. God is omniscient. He is able to look into the future and know exactly every event that will take place. In his omniscience and love God looked into the future and saw you, even before the creation of the world, as the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 1:4. God knew you, not in the sense that he knew something would happen to you, but he knew you personally, by name, so that he might save you. God's foreknowledge is an act of his love. For example, when he spoke about his people Israel in the desert he said in Hosea 13:5, "**It was I who knew you in the wilderness.**" God knew that his people would be in the desert for 40 years, but he did something about it. He provided manna, quail, water and protection from their enemies. God's foreknowledge is more than knowing what's going to happen. It's an action of his heart. And when faith hears, "I knew you," faith says, "He has chosen me." Because God foreknew you, Paul says that **he predestined you**. (vs29,30)

The word "predestined" troubles some people, and has been the source of theological debate. Some protest that it makes us merely puppets, God pulls all the strings, controls all events, and that we are victims of divine fate. Some use it to blame God that some are not saved, but predestined to hell. That is not what Scripture says. In our lesson from Romans the apostle Paul very simply states that salvation is God's work from start to finish.

Predestination conjures up words like *destiny* and *fate*... General George Patton believed he was fulfilling his destiny to be a great soldier. In the movie *Star Wars*, Luke Skywalker hears a voice saying, "Luke, it is your destiny." He is to be a great Jedi knight. Many would like to know their destiny and so they resort to the Chinese lunar calendar which is nothing more than the devil's tool.

But such avenues will not reveal God's destiny for you. Your future is found in God's Word. In Scripture God clearly says to you personally, "I have predestined you. I have chosen you to be saved. I have elected you for salvation." Paul explains God's destiny for us by showing how it is carried out. Those he predestined, **he also called**. (vs28,30) This is not referring to some secret voice in the night that whispers in your ear or a great "religious experience." Later in Romans, Paul writes, "**Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard by the Word of God... How will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? ... How will they hear if no one preaches?**" (10:17ff) Before the beginning of time, God foreknew you, he predestined you, and

through the course of history he called you to be saved through the Means of Grace: the tools he uses to bring his blessings to individuals. One of the tools he used to call you was through your Baptism. Through your baptism God called you to be his own child. Through the cleansing waters of Baptism he changed your destiny from death to life! Through the washing with water and the Word, the Holy Spirit caused you to believe in Jesus as your Savior from sin. Perhaps for you it was much later in life that God called you. The Holy Spirit used someone to share God's Word with you. Through the Law, he led you to know your sins, and in the Gospel, caused you to believe the good news that you are saved from sin by the death and rising of Jesus. God called you to be saved.

But even so, being saved is not a gradual process that takes years, like the carving of Mount Rushmore. God does not take us through an initiation, until you finally get to the point where you are worthy enough to be saved. No, **those He called, He also justified.** (vs30) *To be justified* in the original Greek language is a forensic term. It means that in God's courtroom you have been declared not guilty of sin. The slamming of God's gavel and his declaration of innocence was a one time event.

It took countless hammer blows to carve Mount Rushmore. But we find salvation in the hammer blows which were delivered on Mount Calvary. There, the innocent hands of Christ were pierced and fastened to the cross. There, the Bible says, the judge's sentence of condemnation that hung over our head was put on His head and nailed to the tree. And with His death, our guilty conviction has been buried, too.

To be justified is an instantaneous work that is entirely God's doing. The Father accepts his Son's innocent life and perfect death as if they were done in the place of all people; innocence won for all by one death. The Father then applies this one time act to you personally through your baptism. You are justified because of Christ Jesus. But God is not finished with us once He has saved us. God also has your future in mind, "**Those he justified, he also glorified.**" (vs30)

Does that surprise you? It should. As dedicated students of the Scriptures you know who alone is to be glorified. Splashed all over the pages of the Bible you have read, "**Let the LORD be glorified.**" (Is 66:5) "**Fear God and give him glory.**" (Rev 14:7) "**My soul glorifies the Lord.**" (Lk 1:46) And yet, here, it reads that we are glorified? As students of God's Word we know that to interpret his Word we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Perhaps this passage from 2Thessalonians 1:10,12 will shed some light. The apostle Paul speaks about the Last Day, when Jesus will come to be "**glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.**" Jesus is glorified *in his holy people*. You are the reason Jesus came to earth. Because of what Jesus accomplished, you are innocent of sins. He is glorified for this accomplishment. Because of your innocent status you are glorified. You are Jesus' glory. Your status has been elevated from sinner to saint, from disobedient child to adopted heir, from hell-bent to heaven-bound. Right now you stand glorified in the Father's sight because of Christ. Your future glory in heaven is also certain. You and I will stand before the throne of the Lamb, shoulder-to-shoulder, with all believers. This future glory is crystallized in the past tense of each of these verbs (*which is reflected in the Greek verb tense*); God foreknew you, he predestined you, he called you, he glorified. The act is done.

Why has God done all this for you? God chose you, not because he saw something good in you, or that you would be a good person or that he knew you would believe. In his foreknowledge God saw that we are all, by nature, dead in sin, and therefore cannot do anything on our own regarding our salvation. God has done all this for you because you and I were powerless to do so. God has done all this for you because it was and is his divine purpose. (vs28) Because you have been justified and glorified, it is also his good purpose that he work all things out for your good. “All things? Even the bad things?” Yes, even the bad things. On this side of heaven we may not always see what good may come from our hardships and trials, but he promises that it will work out for our benefit. We wholeheartedly trust his promises. Christ foreknew us, he predestined us, he called us, he justified us, and he glorified us. This is why you and I will say with conviction, **“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** (vs28) Amen.



Keep in your prayers this week....

All the unchurched who do not know Jesus as their Savior that we may bring them the saving message of Jesus; **National Pastors Carlos Cajas, Mario Dominguez, Isreal Rodriguez, Esequiel Ellu Sanchez and Eduardo Vasquez** of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mexico) and their families; **Pastor Steve Lange** as he serves Hope Lutheran Church, in and around Louisville, KY; **Larry Hurley, Jared Sundahl, George Cushman and Michael Hefti** who are serving in the military overseas; **our members** who continue to invite their friends to our mission congregation to hear God’s saving Word; **Sherry Jensen** who is at Pewee Valley; that the Lord will bless **our outreach efforts** and lead many unchurched people to seek Him at this congregation; those who have not been with us for some time.

Thank you to.... our guests who came to worship the Lord Jesus with us (join us again soon!); our organist, Lynne Hogan; and all who served this week.

This Week at Faith...

Today	Church Council meeting
Monday	Bible Information Class.....6:30 pm
Tuesday	Building Committee Meeting.....5pm
Wed	

Women’s Bible Study:10am

Youth Catechism...5pm	Repeat
of Sunday's Bible Class.....7 pm	

Next Sunday	Worship10am
	Sunday School & Bible Study.....11:20 am

Last week’s numbers in response to God’s amazing grace
Sunday worship: 35

Serving our Lord next week (Feb 15)

Acolyte: Elizabeth Fullen

Usher/offering counters: E. Enevold and R. Fullen

Chili Cook off

Sunday, February 22nd after Bible Study -

Enter your hot or mild chili to take home the trophy!

Ash Wednesday Service

February 25th at 7pm

Soup and Sandwich supper from 6:15-7pm

Lenten Services

Every Wednesday at 7pm beginning Feb 25th. Soup and sandwich suppers will be from 6:15-7pm before the service.

Small Group Bible Study and fellowship

Friday, Feb 27, 7pm at Horn's

Saturday, Feb 28, 6:30pm at Hogan's

Outreach

Feb 21-22, we will hand-deliver a select amount of newsletters to our prospects' homes, if you would like to help, speak to Kay Reynolds, Julie Dvorak or Pastor Horn.

**“Parenting with Love and Logic”
Parenting Made FUN!**

Creating Happy Families and Responsible Kids

February 21, 2009 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Fee: \$20 per couple \$15 single parent

Includes: Lunch, child care and *Love and Logic* book
None will be turned away.

**Register at www.faithinradcliff.org
or call 270-352-4545**

Would you like to feel more relaxed at the end of the day?

Would you like to put a stop to arguing and whining?

**Would you like some tips for getting your kids to behave
without having to repeat yourself or raise your voice?**

- ♥ Practical tips for handling misbehavior in public
 - ♥ A proven plan for ending bedtime battles
- ♥ Techniques for avoiding power struggles over eating, picking up toys, etc.
 - ♥ Fun potty-training tips
 - ♥ How to discipline your kids without losing their love and respect
 - ♥ Up the odds that the teenage years will be happy rather than horrific
 - ♥ Techniques that will help you raise respectful and responsible kids
 - ♥ Ways to make parenting fun and rewarding!

Tree removal

As a congregation we would like to assist anyone who needs help cutting and removing tree branches. We would like to give first priority to our single members and elderly members and to our elderly prospects. Pat Hogan will be contacting these folks to let them know that we will help them, it may not be this week or next week, but, we'll get to their homes and help them in any way we can. If you would like to assist with clean up please contact Pat Hogan at pathogan@rocketmail.com or 502-543-6475. We all have yards that are a mess, but perhaps we could give first priority to those who may not be able to do this work by themselves.

Secondly, if you would like assistance with removing debris from your property, please speak to Pat Hogan and he will put you on the list, especially if you have limbs that are blocking driveways or walkways.

Thirdly, if you still do not have power or know of someone who still does not have power and they need assistance of any kind, please let us know so that we can coordinate help for them.

