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ROMANS 8:28

Romans Series: How God Changes People

[PRAYER] Lord, I just want to thank you for speaking to me this week. I pray that you'd give me wisdom right now as I communicate this, that your Holy Spirit would speak through this process of preaching and that the listeners would hear what you want, not necessarily what I want, but that they'd hear what is best for them in their own lives. Lord, we want to be people who are valuing the authority of your word and living according to the authority of your word. We live in an upside-down world and good is bad, bad is good; it's just a crazy place of chaos that we live in. But we know that we can live with the security of who you are. So we ask now that you would enlighten us, convict us, assure us. Do what you do inside of our hearts during this teaching time. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Do you know how you know when you have to get your car wheels aligned? The way that you tell that your car needs an alignment is because it starts to pull to the left or it starts to pull to the right. So if you're driving along and you release the steering wheel a little bit, it may automatically start pulling one direction or the other. And when it does that you know your wheels need to be aligned.

Maybe it happened because you went over a bump in the road or over a pothole, some dramatic thing that may have happened in the midst of your driving experience. Or maybe it happened just out of wear on the wheels after a while, and so they start to move in a different direction.

I think the same thing happens in our Christian experience. Our heart has the tendency to veer off to the left or veer off to the right. We need to have a spiritual alignment to align our wheels, align our heart to what God wants for us. See, what I think what happens is our hearts start to wander off to one side and then we have to kind of wrestle with our emotions, wrestle inside to keep things going in the right direction and we get tired.

If a car's alignment isn't correct, then you're always having to wrestle with that and it puts wear on the whole car. In the same way I think it puts wear on the person whose heart isn't right with the Lord, isn't on track. I'm not just talking about big things like potholes in the road or bumps in the road. I'm talking about the daily interactions, the daily just living life where we have challenges. We must align our hearts back with the Lord or we experience emotions like disappointment or anger or anxiety that our heart starts pulling toward.

So if you find yourself experiencing those emotions more than you think is helpful, then you're going to want to listen today and look at this particular passage in Romans 8:28. I'm going to take one verse today, one verse that's a promise. Because I believe that the way we align our

spiritual heart is by getting in touch with the promises of God and tying that heart back to those promises. When we do that, we get our heart lined up again with the promises of God, then we're able to go straight. We're not wearied by life's challenges because we've got the promises of God laid out in front of us.

That's why we're going to look at today Romans 8:28, just one verse, because I think this is probably the most often quoted Bible verse or most often quoted promise in the Bible. So I want to spend some time here.

If you think about it, you often hear people quoting this verse when somebody's experienced some problem in their life, some bump in the road, some pothole in their life, or things aren't going very well, they're upset about something, they're experiencing disappointment or anxiety or frustration or anger in their lives. So someone will come along and they'll say, "Remember Romans 8:28," which says, *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.*

We're talking here about the person who loves God. There's a promise here for the person who loves God. Notice that promise, something we can be assured of, is that *God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Now what I'm going to do today is I'm going to take this Bible verse apart for us and I want to look at the words like we often do. Because I want the scriptures to be able to speak to you. So I'm going to take the words. If you have a Bible you can write it and jot some of the notes just right around the words themselves in the passage so that you'll be able to read them and remember them.

Let's start with the first word, it's the word *know*. The passage says *and we know*. But here's the interesting thing about this word *know* (and you might jot this down somewhere because you'll use this over and over again as you go through the Bible) because the word *know* in English has at least two different Greek words that are feeding it. You don't know which one it is.

Sometimes it's the word *oida*, which means facts or learning. You learn by instruction. You learn your math facts. These are facts that are set. This is a learning kind of knowledge. I know it because I've learned it.

The other kind of knowledge is the *ginosko* one which is the one that has to do with experiencing something. I know that person. Often having to do with relationships.

So look at Ephesians 1. I'm going to take you to a different passage just because I want you to see these two words used really close together in the same passage. In Ephesians 1:17-18 it reads this way. *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know (ginosko).* In other words so you can experience. This is experiential knowledge *so that you will know him better.* Verse 18: *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know (this is oida here – the fact, know the fact of) the hope to which he has called you.*

Now if you look at the passage we're looking at in Romans 8:28 – *and we know* – I want you to see up there that that word *know* is the word *oida*. It is a fact. It is not based on someone's experience. It's based on a reality. Like a math fact it's just one of those things that's true. So this whole promise is based on a fact, something that's true, that we know.

What do we know? *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* So the first word you've got to get here is *know*. It's a fact.

The second group of words we want to look at are the words *all things*. That means everything, in case you were wondering. That means all kinds of stuff are in the set. If we take a math term we take a set of all the things in life. This is all of the things.

Now I think what we do in our lives is we say, "You know, I think there are some things that are outside of that set. They're in a different set. That's when we mess up. When I really mess up bad, does God use those things or does God work those things for good?" The answer is yes. All things work together. Okay. So even the times we mess up are part of the set of all things. They're not separated, although I think sometimes we feel like they are. "I've really messed up. God can't use this." But we need to realize this is *all things*, including the times when we mess up God uses them in some great way.

Another example of something that we sometimes put outside the set is when bad people do bad things to us. When they harm us we feel like "oh God can't be using this. This is so unfair. This is so wrong what they're doing." But I want you to know this is *all things*. Everything is there. These are things you don't even realize sometimes, but all these things are in the set that we're talking about. This is everything inside of this set.

It would, I imagine, be very difficult to be sold by your brothers into slavery as Joseph was in the Old Testament. How painful that would've been. And for him to have said, "Ah, God isn't in this," would've caused him a lot of problems. But he didn't do that. Joseph somehow realized God was in control. He kept his alignment, his heart in the right place, and continued to do what's right and continued to serve God. He was then unjustly treated and mistreated and thrown into prison for something he didn't even do. Of all the unfair things you might imagine, unfairness abounds here.

We know in this story because in this particular story we get to see how God works for the good. We always get to see how God works for the good. But in this story we get to see how God works these things out for the good and Joseph becomes a leader in Egypt.

So his brothers who sold him into slavery have to come to Egypt, as the circumstances are dictating, have to come to Egypt to get grain from their brother. They don't even know it's their brother, but as it is all revealed and they find out it's their brother they are shocked and at one point they are afraid. Well I think justifiably so. They think their brother Joseph is now going to get revenge on them and kill them. But that isn't what happens.

What Joseph does is he reveals this principles of Romans 8:28 even before it was written in Romans 8:28. He reveals it in the Old Testament when he says these words. He says, *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.*

This isn't just a New Testament concept and it isn't just an Old Testament concept. This is a fact about life that we need to understand. *All things work for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

In the early church the church is just growing. It's really fun. The Bible says they're all connected, they're one in heart, their fellowshiping together. All things are great, but then Saul comes on the picture and he starts persecuting the church and he drags people into prison. Terrible things happen. You imagine the early Christians saying, "This is terrible. Where is God in this?" They needed the promise.

If we go to this passage where we're talking about the *all things*, we see in Acts 8:3-4 what it says about this. The text shows us about God working things out. *But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Verse 4: Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.*

It so happens that the persecution of that early church resulted in people having to leave their homes. Terrible thing. People being taken to jail. Terrible thing. People having to go and set up their homes in different parts of the world now to get away from Israel where they were being persecuted. And what happened? They took their faith with them and churches were started all over the world. God did some amazing things in the midst of that. Wow. That is really something. It's powerful.

Go back to Romans 8:28 there at the top. What he doesn't say is that there are a few things or that there are several things or that there are many things or even most things. He says there are *all things*. There's absolutely nothing that escapes His attention or comes without His divine care.

How many times have you seen a hopeless situation and it's just terrible and sometimes God then reveals the solution or reveals how He's working and you go, "Wow. God is amazing" in the midst of that situation.

I've been reading a book this week given to me by Lorraine Brosious who attends our church here. The title of the book is *365 Days of a Journey Through Loss and Pain*. She lost her husband suddenly in 1984 and then she's the mother-in-law of Todd Beamer who was killed on September 11th. So I came to this chapter and I thought it was appropriate and fit with what we're talking about. The title of the chapter is "What Good?"

"It is not easy in the midst of a September 11th to see the good. We know the pain very well, but at the time of a calamity the good may be elusive. In the days following September 11th, however, while the grief and confusion in our country were seen at every turn, there was also a coming together of our people. The support to those who had lost loved ones was remarkable.

The heroic actions of the first responders to the Trade Center showed what many of our people were made of. The resolve to never let this kind of thing happen again wildly prevailed among us. And it was inspiring. Of course the climate that we experienced then has strongly faded. Life went on and most people returned to their familiar ways, albeit with more vigilance and caution.

However, in the lives of those who sought God, He was able to show Himself. As He promised in Psalm 50:15, he delivered them and He was honored. Many came to know Him for the first time and others rededicated themselves to Him as they saw that life without Him didn't work very well.

As Psalm 51 and 52 says, they took refuge in the shadow of His wings until the disaster passed. They saw Him. I know I did. Our family received many accounts of these things occurring in the lives of people. God was honored. In those days there was an openness for sharing the things of the Lord. It was an opportunity to see the big picture. This is not all there is. Eternity awaits us and we need to be prepared for it. In the now, however, God desires relationship with the ones He created.

At the time of September 11th there was a renewed sense among Christians to tell others what we know of Christ. We were forced into a position of appreciating what we had left one another while continuing to mourn what we had lost. Yes, God brought much good from September 11th. The main thing is what is always the thing. We were given the opportunity to see Him as He is in ourselves as we are. We saw our need for Him." *All things*.

Well let's go to the next word. I don't want to miss this word. I don't want to assume that it's there. I want you to see that the word *God* is there. It's a very important word because I think some people view this promise as some kind of a principle of the universe. It's all going to work out in the end! That's not what this says. This describes the fact that there is a loving God who works in a broken world in the larger scheme of things to orchestrate good out of evil and suffering and harm. He's engineering things to make things work.

Life on earth has purpose and we fit into that purpose. All we have to do is go back and look at the very first story in the Bible. God created this beautiful place for Adam and Eve to live and yet Adam messed it all up when he sinned, affecting all of the world. Not just then, but even now affecting so many things. Yet God had a plan in the midst of that.

He described the plan just a little bit to Adam and Eve when He said to them someday *the seed of a woman* (the seed that will come from the woman, which would be Jesus, although it's not said there) *will crush the serpent's head*.

The idea is the serpent's going to bite the heel of the seed and in the same process is going to get crushed, which is, of course, a picture of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. That Satan thought he had it all together. He was going to get rid of this Son of God by crucifying Him. He thought he had won by converting Judas over and by getting the Roman Empire on his side. And Jesus was crucified. The serpent bit the heel of Jesus, the seed that was yet to come. But what happened in that very instance is that the heel crushed the serpent's head. God had it all worked out. God had a plan for redemption and that plan is the cross.

When we start to realize how big God is and how God is orchestrating all of these things, it's really amazing in our lives. God is behind all of this. We don't just hope and hope. "Oh I'm just hoping for something." No. That's not what we're doing. We don't just have faith in faith. "Well I have a lot of faith that this is going to happen." No. We have hope and faith in God. It is God who is behind all of this and He's working this out.

See, I don't believe in karma. Karma is an eastern religious idea from Hinduism and Buddhism that says basically that your future life and the things that are going to happen to you are determined by how much you put in or what you did in the past. That good karma means you've had a lot of karma in the past and you can expect some good things, or had a lot of bad karma and you're going to experience some bad things. I don't believe in that because I'm a Christian and I look at this passage and it has God is the one who is in control here. God is the one who is working out all things for good. God is behind this.

I don't believe in luck. I don't say to someone, "good luck." Now I know there are some Christians who say that and what they mean is, "I wish the best for you," or something like that. That's fine if that's what they're saying. But I don't even like to use the word 'luck' myself because I don't believe in luck that implies chance. When something happens I don't say, "Wow, you were sure lucky." I like to say, "You're blessed," because it implies that there's somebody behind it doing the blessing, and that is God. That's what's described in this passage here that God is in control.

Let's go to the next word in the passage as we're trying to work through the passage here. The next word is the word *works* or orchestrates or causes, determines. Does God cause evil? No. We live in a broken world because of sin. God, though, is working in the midst of that broken world to bring about good out of all the stuff that's messed up. God does these amazing things.

I came across this word this week that I'd never heard before. It's the word *chaordic*. It was made up. It's a made-up word coined by Dee Hock, the person who created the Visa company. He wrote a book called *Birth of the Chaordic Age*. When I look at what he has to say, what he says is the *chaordic* is made up of two words – chaos and order – and we all live with both of them.

Now as a Christian I look at what he's teaching and what he's saying and it really makes a lot of sense for me as a Christian. Because I realize we live in a chaotic world and if we're always trying to organize and order it, we're going to get frustrated. But if we can trust in the God who is above our picture of chaos and He has brought order, we can have peace in the midst of the chaos.

See, I think all of us experience chaos. If you're a part of a family you experience chaos in your life. If you've got kids, you know what I mean. Okay? If you're married to someone, you can't control everything they do. You have to live with a certain amount of chaos in that relationship. They don't fit exactly everything you want. You have to be okay with that, right? Or we go crazy and we get ourselves into all kinds of problems. So what we want to do is recognize that God wants us to be able to live within the chaos, recognizing that He's in control.

This brings us to the promise that we need. That *in all things God works for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose*. So we're taking ourselves out of the chaos a little bit and seeing what God is doing, even in things we don't understand or things that we can't experience or we don't get properly. God is working things out. Sometimes He changes the situation. Sometimes He changes me in the situation. And sometimes He works in me through the situation. We don't know exactly what good means there, but sometimes we find ourselves with a problem.

So let's go on to the next part, *for the good*, because I think that what happens is that people misunderstand this word *good* and they define it as "I get what I want." God will give me what I want because I'm following His call and I love Him. That that's what this promise means. That's not what it means.

The good can get us all tripped up here. We have to understand. If someone loses the job that they have, God might be going to give them a better job. But if someone says, "Well God's going to give me a better job because I lost this one because of this promise," I think they're missing something here. Because God doesn't always give us what we want. That's not what the passage is saying. It's saying He works it out for good. "The championship game is coming and I love God, so we're going to win the game." That would be an inappropriate application to this promise here.

We have to understand that if a person loses their job, maybe God will give them a better job. And if God gives them a better job, then, yes, this is a fulfillment of this promise. Or maybe what God is doing is in the midst of losing this job, He's doing something inside of me so I'm not dependent so much on this job or on this kind of job or something. He's doing something inside of me to do a work. Or maybe it's neither of those things. Or maybe it's that I don't have a job for a period of time and God wants me to glow with His grace so other people can see through my terrible situation that He's at work in my life and I have an opportunity to share Christ.

We don't know what the good means. Just be careful you don't force this into something that says He's going to give me what I want. Sometimes we don't even get to know what the good is. Occasionally we see what it is, but many times we don't even get to see what's down the path. We just trust that God is in control and He is at work in *all things, working them out for good for those who love and are called according to his purpose*. I don't know what good is, but I do know that God is in control.

For the Christian, I want you to get this and I hope this will sink in for you. For the Christian all the future alternatives are good. All of them. If we think of the ultimate thing that we fear, maybe it would be death. So I want to take you to a passage in Philippians 1 where Paul, the same writer that wrote Romans 8:28 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes Philippians 1. I want to read this to you because I want you to see how Paul is responding to this idea of even death and how he's in kind of this neutral place willing to go wherever.

So Philippians 1:12-14 starts this way: *Now I want you to know* (the word *know* there, remember I told you there's two kinds of know? This is the *ginosko*. I want you to experience this. *Now I*

want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.

See he's in prison in Rome. He had hoped that he would someday go to Rome as a missionary. That's what he writes in the book of Romans that we're studying now. But unfortunately he was taken as a prisoner, or fortunately, depending on how you look at it. He's now in prison in Rome and is probably going to get executed. And so he's wrestling with this. What's his life going to be like. He's at the end of his life, what's happening here. But the people in Philippi are upset about this. They don't know what to do.

So Paul is writing to them and he says, *I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. God has used this in a great way, he's saying. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.*

That's my prayer for this church, remember. In this four-month period of time that God will reveal His power in such a way that you won't be afraid to share it. I can tell you what God has done and He can do that for you too. That's what Paul is saying there.

Let me jump ahead then to verses 20-24. It says, *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

Do you see how he's wrestling with this? Wanting to be neutral and not having his heart set on one or the other. He wants God's purposes to be prevalent in his life. *If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.* So whether Caesar decides to kill me or not, I'm going to serve the Lord. That's where my heart is. I'm okay with all of that.

Imagine a movie where death is taken off of the options, off the table. In other words, nobody could die in the movie. Now if it's an adventure movie, like I like to watch action movies, and if you take death off the table then a lot of the anxiety is removed. Because you don't have this fear of death or this anxiety of death in the movie.

I think the same thing is true here as we're talking about the options as we look forward in our lives. We need to realize that whatever we're looking at (I'm not saying we're all looking at death dramatically right away), but whatever problem, whatever things are going on, for the Christian all the future alternatives are good. That's an amazing statement. I don't have to get upset because of my problems. But this promise is not for everyone. This promise is for a particular people group characterized by two things.

One is it's characterized by those who love God. That means they put God number one in their lives. They made a choice. It's a heart response. See, if you're in love with things, then you're going to have a hard time with this because all the things are not going to work out. But if you're

in love with God, then this makes more sense because now we're following Him and what He's doing. His promise is true for those who love God. Loving God is the most important thing.

In fact there was a time – this story is in Mark 12 – when Jesus... actually I've got it here for you. It's a story about a religious leader who got it. A lot of the religious leaders in those days didn't get the message. But here this guy did.

He says, *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (That's the shimah.) Then here's the answer. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." In other words, you're really close, man. You've got this. I want to suggest that we've got this. We've got this principle that God is giving to us.

When He talks about *those who love him*, we're talking about an *agapé* kind of love. This is *agapé* love as opposed to the other kinds of love, which is a sacrificial love, which says, "I love with all of my heart. You are the most important thing in my life." So the first characteristic of this people group is that they love God.

The second characteristic of these people is that they have been called. Called has this idea as they heard the call and they accept the call of God in their lives. And also they're called (finishing the phrase) *according to his purpose*. Purpose has this idea of focus. What am I doing? Where am I going? I'm going in this particular direction.

I think sometimes we have the illusion that we can somehow control our world. We can't control our world. There's only one person who can control our world and that's God. That's why we submit to God's leadership and we entrust ourselves to Him in this promise. Recognizing that it is God who in all things works for good. Only when we submit to the purposes of God are we successful.

I like the story about the businessman who is invited to go to the dude ranch and hang out on the farm – or not a farm, but a ranch. This ranch where they're doing all kinds of things where they're dealing with horses, riding with horses, dealing with cattle, and so on.

He was there for two weeks and after one particularly challenging day where they had been working with the cows and so on, the rancher stops and he says, “Whoa, there is nothing like this. This makes it all happen,” he says. “Beautiful mountains, beautiful sky. There’s nothing like herding all the cattle on a day.”

And the businessman says, “You know, there’s something really valuable here. Boy, I really like what you’re doing. This is great. It all fits together here.”

The rancher says, “How old are you? Thirty-nine?”

He says, “No, I’m thirty-eight.”

He says, “Well, you know, all you city folk are alike. You come out here about the same age with the same set of problems. Your rope has been tied in knots and tangled up for the last fifty weeks and you expect to come here in two weeks and untangle it. I can tell you the secret to life. Would you like to know that?”

The businessman said, “Sure.”

The rancher said, “This is the secret to life.”

“Your finger.”

“No. One thing is the secret to life. You need to know what that one thing is and nothing else is so important. You just have to understand that one thing and that is going to help you get through.”

The guy says, “That is so great. That’s what I need because my life is crammed with all kinds of busyness and I’ve got so many things it’s crazy. What’s the one thing?”

And the rancher said, “That, my friend, is what you’ve got to figure out.”

Now I don’t have to figure it out because I know what the one thing is. That one thing is the purposes of God. The focus on His purposes. Once I’ve got that, all the other things start fitting into where they need to be. One thing is important.

The Bible story about Jesus eating over at Mary and Martha’s house and He’s there to enjoy them. Mary’s sitting by His feet and Martha’s in the other room and she’s getting everything ready for the meal. There were probably other guests that were there as well.

Martha calls out to Jesus because she’s a little irritated with Jesus and says, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” I really like Jesus’ answer. He says, “*Martha, Martha. You are troubled about many things. But only one thing is needful.*” Obviously Mary was doing that one thing involved in relationship with Jesus.

Something very important that we must understand because it gives us purpose, it helps us know where we’re going. We have this promise. The promise is we put it all together says this – *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.*

In your Bible look at the next two verses because it’s rooted in the plan of God and who He is. The certainty of God.

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

All of those words refer to a certainty of God's plan. That we have someone we can rely on, we can trust in, that God wants to do some amazing things in our lives.

Maybe this is the idea that Jesus had in mind when He was working with His disciples. He brought a little boy and stood the child in their midst. And He said, *"The kingdom of heaven is for such as these."* There's a simpleness of a child's faith as they come before God that I think is appropriate for all of us. That we have a simpleness. We know exactly where we're going and God wants to do something in our lives.

I think every Christian should start the morning with the words "once upon a time," describing wonder and excitement, the adventure. I think the Christian life is an adventure. It's an adventure because we never know what's going to happen.

Now I think sometimes we pray, "Lord, give me this and solve this problem." I think those kind of prayers are okay. But I think if you really want to see God at work in your life, you want to pray this prayer: "Lord, how can I fit into your purposes today? Lord, make me aware of what's going on today that you're doing. I want to fit into that." As we do, amazing things happen in our lives.

I think sometimes we can miss it. We can schedule our lives full of all kinds of things that prevent us from seeing what God wants us to see and from intentionally being tied in to His purposes. The promise is an important one. It helps us understand that God is doing something significant. Where are we going to tie our future thoughts and where we're going?

I like this statement which says, "I will not be dominated by what is unknown, but instead I will make the theological truths and facts the main contributing factor for my forward thinking." As I start to think about what's coming and what's coming down the pike and what's going to happen, what's going to determine that thinking for me? I want it to be the theological truths, the facts, the promises of God.

If you're a person that feels dominated by worry or fear, you want to allow these truths, these promises to be something that you can rely on, something that you can anchor your soul in, your heart in, so that you're not easily misaligned.

See, when you're going along with that vehicle and you hit the pothole in the road, it messes with the wheels, the wheels then become unaligned, and then it causes stress on the car as you have to keep it in balance, and it causes more wear and tear until you get it realigned. I would suggest the same thing's true in our hearts. We want to allow God to work deeply in our lives. We want to call on the promises of God and rely on those. We want to make those be the most important thing for us as we're driving forward and looking forward to what God is going to do.

Obviously the most important thing here is that we love God and we're called according to His purposes. Because that's the people group that this is for. So if you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I want to invite you to do that. As we sing this next song, come on down here. There will be prayer counselors at the bottom here of the stairs and you can pray with them and ask Jesus Christ to come into your life.

Would you stand with me? Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, I ask that you would please align us to your heart. Make our hearts beat with your heart so that we can have a focus and a purpose that is directed by you. Lord, use the signals that take place in our lives, the emotions that get out of whack or the frustrations that we experience to be indicators of what you want to do deeper inside of our hearts. Align us with you. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.