**A Special Promise for Those That Love God**

God’s Rewards for a Hot Heart

Romans 8

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1. **Introduction (Revelation 3:14-16)**
   1. Here is a Warning about having a lukewarm heart
      1. It is easy to become “lukewarm” – room temperature
         1. Letting a cup of coffee go to room temperature
         2. Like letting a fire go out
         3. Luke warm means being just like everyone else around you!
      2. But as natural as that may be, it is a very dangerous thing for a Christian to experience
         1. Same as with a marriage – don’t let your heart cool off!
         2. And in a church – people, and even leaders cooling off… don’t let it happen!
         3. Ends only in disaster - Cold and spiritually dead
      3. Worst of all, lukewarm Christians will miss the very PURPOSE of the trouble in their lives, and waste YEARS of their lives
      4. All because of one single cause – lack of love for God
      5. Remember our theme we are focusing on this year… Whatever Happened to Love?
   2. You see, God has a special promise for those that love Him. And only for those that love Him. And only those that stay in love with Him
      1. We know He loves us
      2. He loves the whole world, even though wicked and far from Him
      3. But what benefit is there in getting our hearts focused and fixed on loving God?
2. **Background (Romans 8:28)**
   1. **Listen to the Promises for those that love God…**
      1. Deut 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations*;
      2. Jdg 5:31 *So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might*.
      3. Psalm 145:20 *The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy*.
      4. 1Cor 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*.
      5. James 1:12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*.
      6. James 2:5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*
      7. Pretty good promises to those who **LOVE** Him!
   2. **Well, BEHOLD, the GREATEST PROMISE of all the promises in the Bible for the believer (Romans 8:28) – that all things work together for good!**
   3. **No one else can say such a thing!**
      1. Stephen Fry only sees frustration at how messed up the world is, and he wants to blame God
      2. People more and more believe in evolution, and the “survival of the fittest”
      3. No wonder most people are pessimistic about everything – everything is terrible, awful, horrible
      4. By the way, Stephen Fry just married his second male partner, who is 32 years younger!
      5. Even Christians go around depressed, defeated, disappointed – all for good reasons!
   4. **But God hasn’t quit on us. THANK GOD He is still quite alive!**
      1. He is active, and working everything together for good
      2. Actually holding everything together with an end in mind
   5. **But the only ones who will see any good out of their lives, will be those that love God**
   6. **This then is a message to provoke us to love God**
      1. Not to live sinlessly
      2. Not to never fail, or fall
      3. But to simply keep our heart, with all diligence (Prov 4:23 *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life*.)
         1. Keeping your heart in love with God
         2. You see, if we focus on fuelling our hearts to love God, and staying in love with God, there are special benefits for us
         3. But if you and I blow our tops, and constantly quit, and murmur and complain, then all the work that God is investing in us, will be for nothing!
      4. Seriously! Listen to…
         1. John 15:1,2 *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit*.
         2. Php 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*
         3. Pslm 138:8 *The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands*.
      5. If you want to live your life miserable, go ahead! Do nothing different.
      6. BUT if you want your life to have made a difference, and to have had real purpose, then from this day forward, love God, and let Him be in charge of how everything is going to work out in and through your life! He will do a great job – even when it looks like nothing is working out like it should!
   7. **The Five Truths That Hold Us Together When Everything is Falling Apart**
      1. And if things right AREN’T falling apart right now…
      2. They will!
      3. So grab your Bible, and a marker or pen or highlighter and get ready to make this verse THE Scripture you hold onto all the way home to heaven!
3. **Message**
   1. **Read Romans 8:28… We HAVE a Great Confidence - “*And we know*…”**
      1. It is something we KNOW – not a guess, or just a hope, but know
      2. Something we know FOR SURE – with certainty
      3. This promise is for ‘WE’ – believers – not for everyone
      4. So, What do YOU know for certain? Think about it - Very few things
         1. You know you are living and breathing right now – for the minute
         2. You know you have an address where you live
         3. Maybe a family?
         4. You know 2 + 2 = 4
         5. But that is about it
      5. People who don’t know the Bible, and simply blindly trust “science”, or trust their religion, or their priest or even their pastor, aren’t sure of much
         1. Don’t know what is beyond the grave – terrifies them
         2. Unsure if God is really there, or cares about anything going on “down here”
         3. Don’t know WHY everything is happening in the world
      6. But the Bible believing Christian, well, we KNOW a whole lot more! We know more than all our teachers the Psalmist says in Psalm 119! Not arrogance, just assurance!!!
         1. I KNOW I am saved – I possess eternal life (1John 5:11-13) – some of you don’t know!
         2. I know God! I know who He is, and I know WHAT He is!
         3. I know God’s SON!
         4. And best of all, I know God is working all things together for good!!!
   2. **Read Romans 8:28… We Have Great Coverage - “*that all things*…”**
      1. Loads of insurance programs have so many “exceptions” to what they will “cover”
         1. Not as much “coverage” as we all would like – READ THE FINE PRINT
         2. Car insurance often only covers you if you drive safely, and are not going through war zones, or experiencing acts of terrorism!
         3. It won’t cover you if there is an earthquake, or a riot
      2. But with this scripture, is found TOTAL COVERAGE for the believer
      3. When God says, “All things” He means EVERY thing
         1. Look at verse 35. How is THAT for a list?
         2. All the Good AND bad; all the easy AND the hard
      4. This is why we can praise God even when absolutely nothing is going right! (Philp 4:6; 1Thes 5:18)
      5. Name me ONE thing that God’s promise here won’t cover?
         1. Sickness?
         2. Divorce?
         3. Untimely death?
         4. Financial ruin?
         5. Abandonment?
         6. Torture?
         7. Driven from your home?
         8. The good, the bad, and even the ugly!
      6. It is ALL covered by an Almighty, All wise God! He can handle ALL things
      7. God promises to make it have purpose! To NOT let it go to waste, if we would just love Him!!!
   3. **Read Romans 8:28… We are Part of Something VERY BIG - “*all things* *work together*…”**
      1. Something BIGGER than just ourselves
         1. There is something going on bigger than our lives, and our little world that we are caught in
         2. Something Bigger than our problems
         3. Bigger than our successes
         4. Bigger than our burdens and heartaches
      2. EVERYTHING in your and my life is part of a Specially Designed Process – it’s time to admit it
         1. Different cogs and wheels and gears, and springs, all working together – no accidents!
         2. Pulling, and driving forward
         3. Twisting, shifting, always moving
      3. Our problem, is that WE FIGHT the process, the forging, the heat, even the potter’s hand
         1. We HATE the process – think it is of no use
         2. We TRY to understand everything going on around us and TO us… and FAIL
            1. But it is just not possible - Too many things going on
            2. Sin affects absolutely everything

Like rust

Like ants in the picnic

* + - 1. But just because things going on in your life, or someone else’s don’t make sense to YOU and to your counsellor, and to your friends… doesn’t mean it is not turning out for good!
    1. Think about it… everything, all things, all working together
       1. Like a well designed clock! Loads of parts, big and small, all working HOW? Together!!!
       2. Like a finely tuned engine! Incredible
       3. If you were the gear, or the piston, or the air filter, it would seem like there was no good coming from your life, until you step back and see how everything, when worked together, makes something beautiful
    2. For a bible believing Christian, life should be “a work of beauty”! (Eccl 3:11)
  1. **Read Romans 8:28… We WILL BE Blessed - “*for good*…”**
     1. Listen to the words again…
        1. And we KNOW
        2. That all things
        3. Work together
        4. FOR GOOD!
        5. Whew! Thank God! What an amazing statement that only God could say!
     2. Nothing is working for our ruin anymore, but for our good
     3. And not just for OUR good, but for good overall
     4. You see, we have a funny way of twisting what good is:
        1. We think only sunny days are good
        2. Well, that’s bad – no rain, and no clouds, equals dead grass and dead crops!
        3. We need to have GOD’S idea of what is good
     5. Two Examples (Gen 45:7; 50:20; Job 2:9,10)
        1. Joseph’s rejection by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused… worked out for good. The small family of Israelites were saved from the famine, as was the rest of the middle eastern nations
        2. How about JOB?
           1. So many terrible things happened – he lost his wealth, his family, his health
           2. What was happening? NOT GOOD in Job’s eyes!
           3. But it sure was good in God’s mind! And it SURE has helped countless millions!
        3. Principle… A simple rhyme…  
           When things don’t seem to go as they should… Know that God is busy making them all turn out for good!
     6. Listen to the blessings only a Christian can know…
        1. The Holy Spirit interceding (8:26,27) for us – we are not on our own
        2. Perfect Assurance, and Rest (8:28) to the lover of Christ
        3. God’s Perfect Work in us (8:29-34)
           1. He knows you – knew you before you were born, and knows you now foreknew!
           2. Predestinates you – to become more and more like His Son
           3. Calls you – out of this world, away from sin, to follow His Son, and to really LIVE
           4. Justifies you – perfect forgiveness!
           5. Ultimately glorifies you – takes us all the way home to heaven!
        4. All because God is FOR us – He even Sacrificed His own Son
        5. No wonder the Psalmist calls for everyone to love such a Lord (Psalm 31:23)
     7. The truth is, We ARE blessed. But even though you may not feel like it is true, it IS and believe me, if right now you can’t feel blessed, one day you WILL BE!
     8. Here is the issue:
        1. It is not the pain, the sorrows, the hardships, the troubles that really bother people
        2. It is the concern whether any of those hardships are working together for any good?
        3. I am here to tell you unless your own heart gets right, all that you go through could end up being for nothing! Could be one big huge waste!
        4. I choose to make sure that everything actually is allowed to work out for good – by keeping my heart right and fixed on God! THAT’S ALL I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT!
  2. **Read Romans 8:28… We are a Minority – *only* “*to them*…”**
     1. All things DON’T work out good for everybody!
     2. This promise and assurance is only for those who… love God
     3. Romans 8:28 is NOT for:
        1. The unbelieving
        2. It is NOT for the lukewarm, nor the cold, nor the apathetic
        3. And it is definitely NOT for the spectator – the Sunday morning only person
     4. But only for those that actually, with a whole heart, love God
     5. You see, people want God to make everything wonderful for them without THEM wanting anything to do with God!
     6. The person whose heart is hard and unrepentance, is only accumulating WRATH (Romans 2:4-6)
        1. All the pleasant things that a person refuses to thank God for
        2. All the business, and lack of worship, will condemn them someday.
        3. All the painful things that a person walks through, without trusting God’s help, will actually store up wrath against them.
        4. A person may look poor; or he may look prosperous in this world. But if he does not love God and is not called according to God’s purpose, then ALL his experiences are not leading to any lasting good, but to eternal misery.
        5. Does anyone understand that???
     7. Whew! That changes everything!
  3. **According to Romans 8:28, We Have Two Tasks**
     1. To Love God – full stop.
     2. And Yield to His Call and Purpose Whatever it May be
     3. What it means:
        1. If you don’t love God, you can’t claim this promise
        2. And, If you are not yielded to His purpose in your life, you can’t claim this promise
        3. To Love God
           1. Doesn’t mean to love Him because of great benefits – even though there are some
           2. Doesn’t mean to do, do, and do in order to prove your love
           3. It means to just love Him – for WHO He is. For WHAT He is. He is God, the faithful God!
           4. It means to think about Him. To have HIM on your heart!
           5. To spend time with Him in prayer, talking with Him, listening to Him, sacrificing your time, just to spend it in worship of Him
           6. It means to be glad at whatever He does
           7. And rejoice at whatever he doesn’t do!
        4. And Yield to His Call and Purpose
           1. Many people wonder if they are “called” to do something – a vocation
           2. Well, you are
           3. But not really to be a pastor, or a pastor’s wife, or a missionary
           4. The truth is, you and I are called to follow Christ, and to do as He leads us
           5. Yes, God calls every Christian to do something, but to discover that requires you and I to just already be yielded and surrendered to whatever God is asking of us NOW
     4. Test your love for God (1John 4:20,12)
        1. Hey, Don’t just say you love God - And don’t just THINK you love God
        2. Test it. See if it is true and real!
        3. The devil will test it! It is not easy to pass it!
           1. Do you get excited about Jesus coming back? (2Timothy 4:8)
           2. Do you serve others even though it is a personal sacrifice? Simply because you love Christ?
           3. Do you put up with hard things? OR are you constantly complaining and fighting against the hand of God on your life?
           4. Do you LOVE this Book?
           5. Do you MISS being with believers?
           6. Do you find it EASY to stay away and stay cold or lukewarm spiritually?
           7. Do you TEARN for some soul to get saved like YOU did???
     5. Test your calling
        1. So many are waiting on a “call” when they don’t have the HEART to do it anyway!
        2. Are you willing to actually DO whatever He says do? Give up whatever HE says give up?
        3. Have you answered God’s call to come away from your sinful attitudes and actions?
        4. Have you answered God’s call to be different, and to seek God’s

1. **Conclusion (Romans 8:35-39)**
   1. **No one can separate us from the love of CHRIST for us**
      1. Constant, unchanging, absolute, and extreme
      2. God loved us when we were unlovely, when we were ungodly, when we were uninterested!
      3. Once anyone just TASTES of that love, and receives it, it never dims, or shrinks, or changes!
   2. **What will separate OUR love *FOR* Christ?**
      1. Troubles? Hardships? Loss? Pain? Disappointments?
      2. Discouragements? Failure? Disaster?
      3. Unfortunately it usually is
         1. A stupid TV show on Sunday evening, or Wednesday evening!
            1. The Simpsons
            2. X-Factor
            3. Britain’s Got Talent
         2. Usually it is some supposedly “important” match on TV
         3. Or being too busy
         4. Or staying in bed too long
         5. Or Just plain old apathy – not caring about keeping your heart hot and right
   3. **One Final Example of Romans 8:28 is found in Acts 4:27,28**
      1. God sent His Son into the world, and ONTO THE CROSS for good – to save us
      2. Visually, publically, it looked like only evil
         1. Betrayed by His friend Judas
         2. Jesus openly mocked and brutally treated by Herod, and the Pharisees..
         3. Everyone turning their back on the only Friend this world has ever had
         4. Pilate authorising Jesus’ unjust murder
      3. But behind it all, was an all wise, almighty God, working EVERYTHING together for what…? FOR GOOD! For OUR good especially!