



# BETTER THAN I BEGAN

HOW THE GOSPEL IN ROMANS 8 CHANGES EVERYTHING



**Natalie Alonso**

Admin 15h · 🗨️



In the end Pedro & the guys were able to buy 4 Volkswagen vans! These vans will be used to transport refugees and much needed relief aid. Pedro and 4 other drivers leave from Krakow, Poland tomorrow morning (3 am) to Lviv, Ukraine to drop the vans and relief materials at the Ukraine church there. They will leave same day to come back to Poland. Please pray that they will have favor and smooth crossing at the borders.







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<sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. <sup>31</sup> What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

**Romans 8:28-32**



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# “Survey: American Happiness Reaches 50-Year Low”

***University of Chicago***

# American Happiness Hits Record Lows

***Gallup***

“In 2020, before the pandemic began, an average of 48% of Americans said they were satisfied. There was a big drop in 2021, when 41% indicated they were happy...And this year...just 38% of Americans say they're satisfied.

The General Social Survey has been asking Americans since 1972 whether, all things considered, they're very happy, pretty happy or not too happy. The percentage who said very happy outran the percentage who said not too happy in every poll taken before the pandemic.

[Now there is] a record low...right now, these numbers are just downright depressing.”

**Gallup**



“I have come that your joy  
may be made full.”

**JOHN 15:11**



“You will rejoice, and no one  
will take away your joy.”

**JOHN 16:22**

**1) Your Bad Things Will Turn  
Out for Good**



A photograph of a forest floor. In the foreground, there is a tree trunk on the right side, with several green ferns growing at its base. The ground is covered in brown pine needles and some small twigs. In the background, there are more trees and a soft, out-of-focus light filtering through the canopy.

**1) Your Bad Things Will Turn  
Out for Good**

**2) Your Good Things Can Never  
Be Taken Away from You**

A background image of a forest scene. A dirt path leads through the woods, flanked by tree trunks and green ferns. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

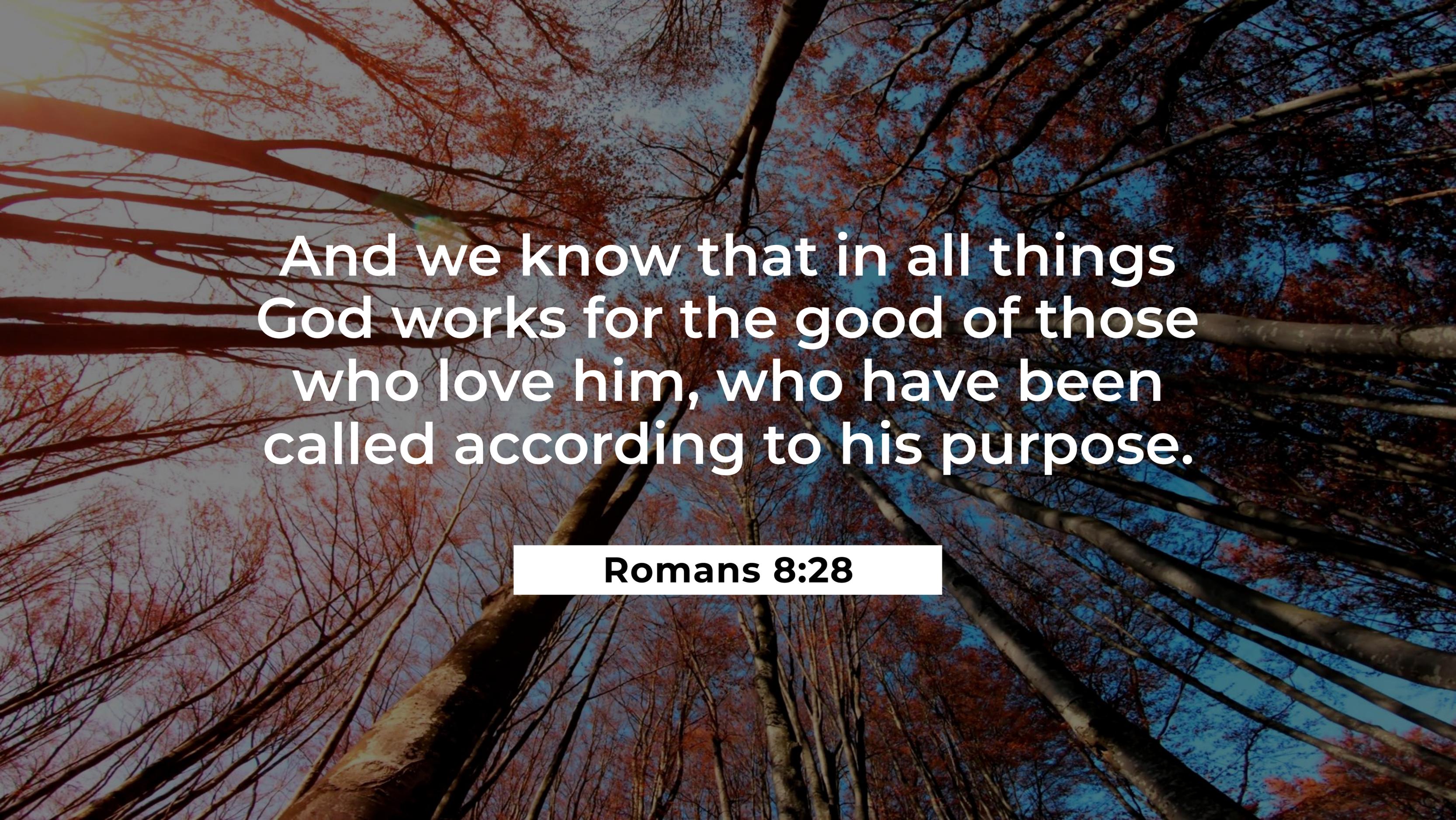
**1) Your Bad Things Will Turn  
Out for Good**

**2) Your Good Things Can Never  
Be Taken Away from You**

**3) Your Best Things Are Yet to Come**

**1) Your Bad Things Will Turn  
Out for Good**





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.

**Romans 8:28**

An open wooden door stands in the center of the frame, leading to a bright sunset over a beach. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow across the sky and the sand. The door is slightly ajar, and the light from the sunset is streaming through the opening, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with a few wispy clouds. The beach is visible in the foreground, with the sand leading up to the water's edge.

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When pain jerks me awake at night, I first glance up. If the digital display on the ceiling says only the second watch of the night, I push through the pain and try to breathe my way back to sleep. But if the clock says 4:00 a.m., I smile. Jesus has awakened me to enjoy communion with him, even though it'll be hours before I sit up in my wheelchair. ...

**Joni Eareckson Tada**

***Paralyzed and Blessed: My Unlikely Path to Happiness***

Do I need more sleep? Of course. Will my pain subside? Unlikely. But at four in the morning, there is a more necessary thing, and it makes me happy to think that long before dawn, I am among the early ones who are blessing Jesus.

Filling my chest with Jesus. Rehearsing his Scriptures, murmuring his names, and whisper-singing hymns that cascade one into another, all filled with adoration. ...

**Joni Eareckson Tada**

***Paralyzed and Blessed: My Unlikely Path to Happiness***

It's hard to do that when you're wearing an external ventilator. And so I wordlessly plead that he unearth my sin, fill all my cavernous, empty places, and show me more of his splendor. He always responds with tenderness. He sees me lying in bed paralyzed and propped with pillows, encumbered by a lymphatic sleeve, wheezing air-tubes, a urine bag, and hospital railings that "hold it all together." ...

**Joni Eareckson Tada**

***Paralyzed and Blessed: My Unlikely Path to Happiness***

One of my helpers knows all about these nighttime rendezvous with Jesus, and so one night after she tucked me in, she stood over my paralyzed frame with an open Bible. “This is you,” she said, and then read Psalm 119:147–148: “I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise.” ...

**Joni Eareckson Tada**

***Paralyzed and Blessed: My Unlikely Path to Happiness***

That pretty much describes it. In the morning when a different helper draws the drapes, unhooks my ventilator, drops the guard rails, removes the lymph-sleeve, and pulls out my many pillows, she'll usually ask, "Sleep well?"

"Not the best, but I am so happy."

**Joni Eareckson Tada**

*Paralyzed and Blessed: My Unlikely Path to Happiness*



For those God foreknew he also  
predestined to be conformed to  
the image of his Son,

**Romans 8:29**

An aerial photograph of a vast, rolling green agricultural landscape. The foreground is dominated by a dense field of green crops, likely corn, with some golden-brown patches. The middle ground shows a mix of green and yellow fields, with a line of trees and a small cluster of buildings in the distance. The background features rolling green hills under a clear, light blue sky. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the word "Conformed" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.

**Conformed**

***morpha***



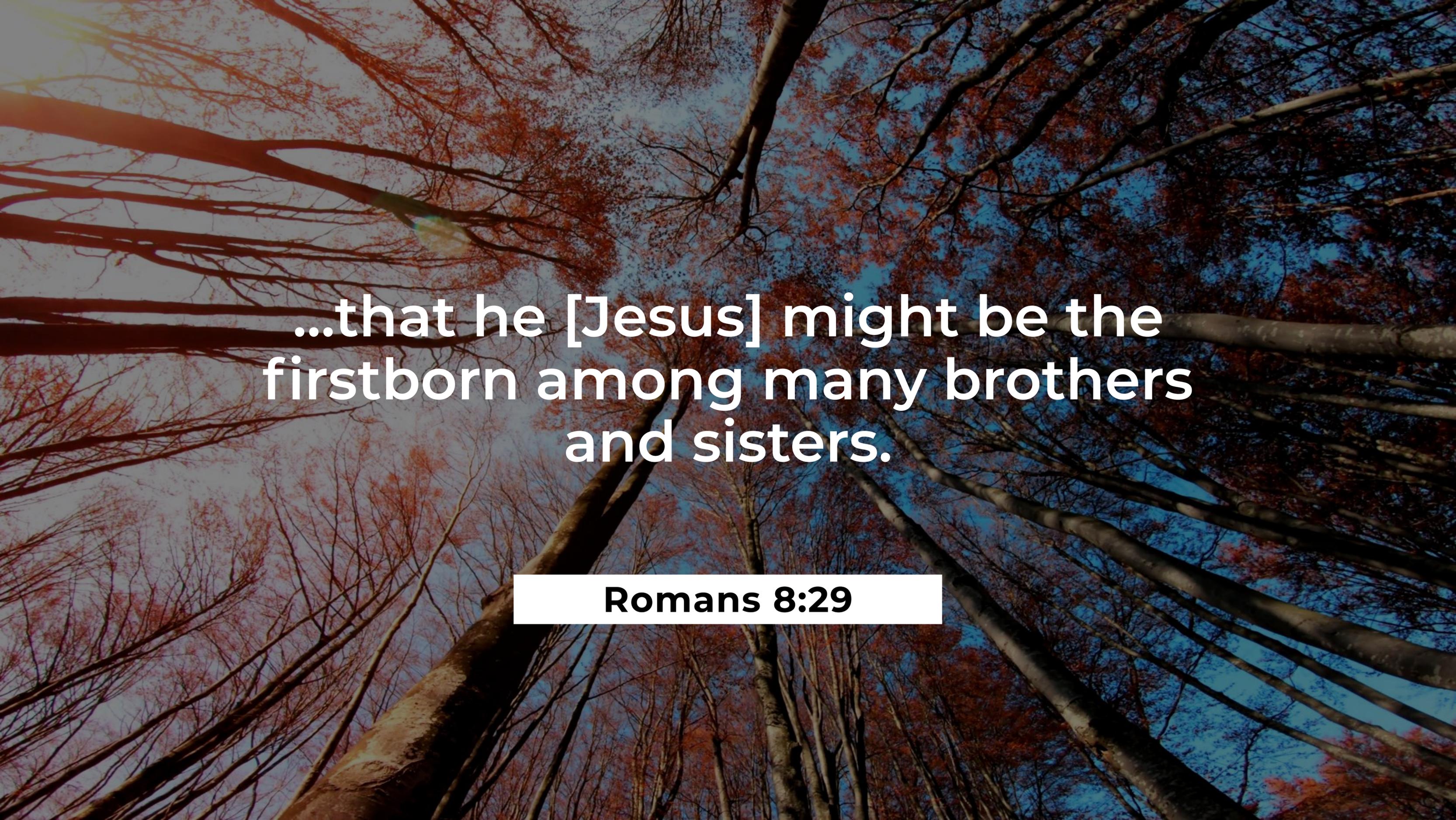
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1) Your Bad Things Will Turn  
Out for Good

**2) Your Good Things Can Never  
Be Taken Away from You**



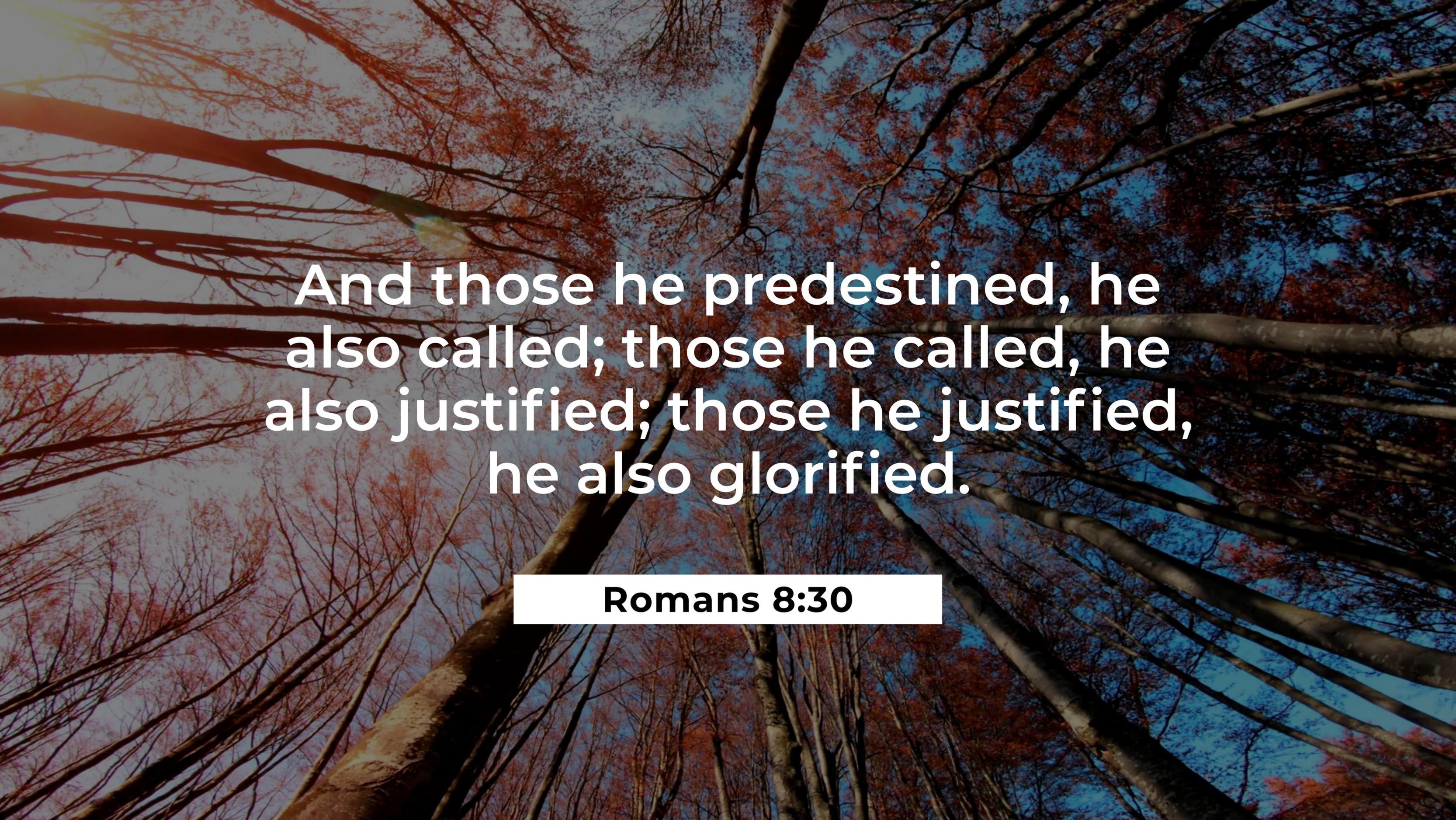
...that he [Jesus] might be the  
firstborn among many brothers  
and sisters.

**Romans 8:29**



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And those he predestined, he  
also called; those he called, he  
also justified; those he justified,  
he also glorified.

**Romans 8:30**



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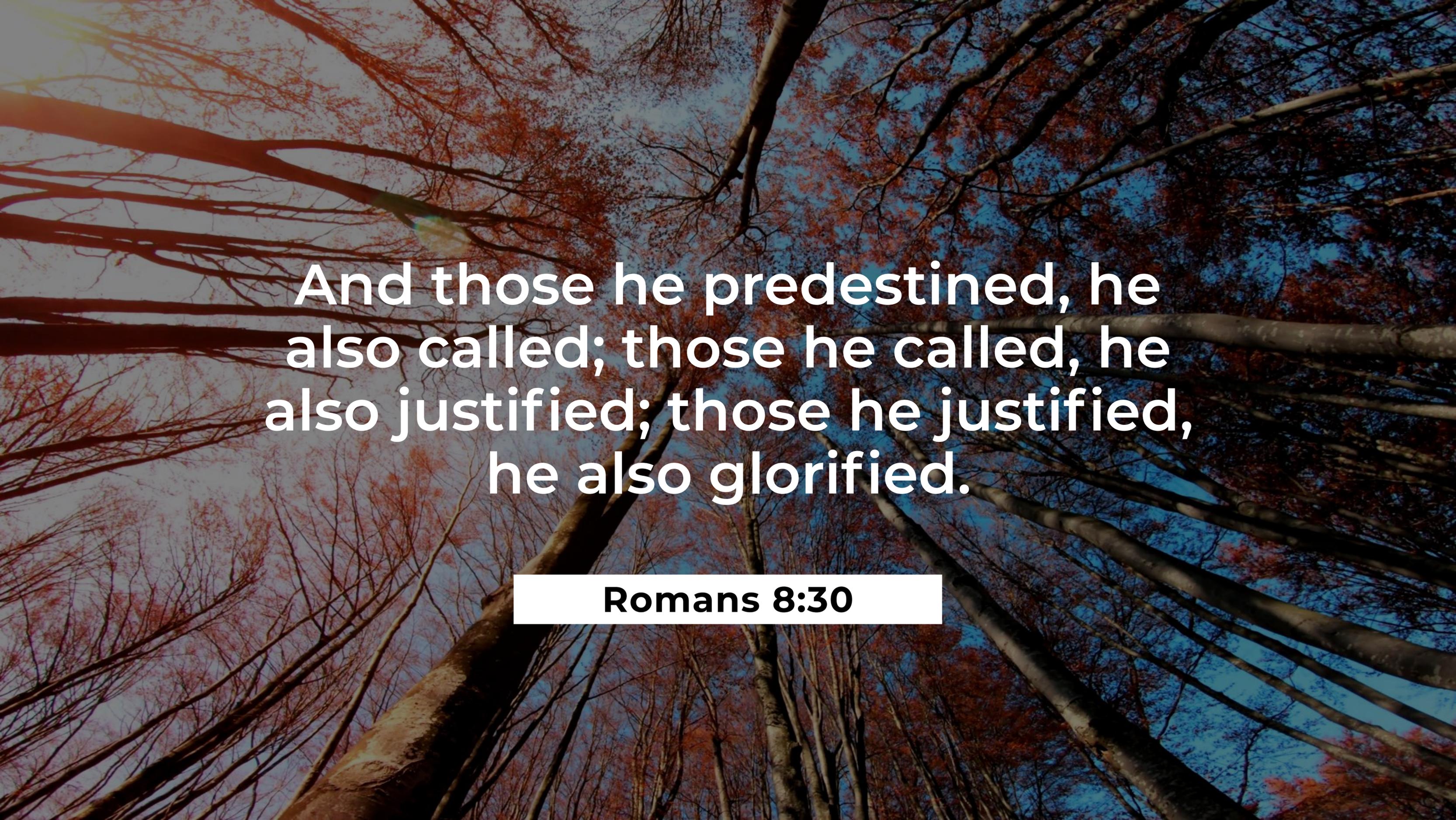
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A background image of a forest scene. A dirt path leads through the woods, flanked by tree trunks and green ferns. The lighting is soft, suggesting a dappled sunlight effect.

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**3) Your Best Things Are Yet to Come**



And those he predestined, he  
also called; those he called, he  
also justified; those he justified,  
he also glorified.

**Romans 8:30**



**Glorified**



**“to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged”**



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I believe that suffering will be healed and made up for, that in the world's finality, at the moment of eternal harmony, something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atonement of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood that's been shed, that it will make it not just possible to forgive, but to justify all that's happened.

**Fyodor Dostoevsky**  
*The Brothers Karamazov*



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