

Study # 2

Cruciformity — the Father’s Ultimate Intention

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. (Rom. 8:29)

This verse is a clear declaration of God’s ultimate intention from eternity past to conform us to the nature of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. As shown in Table I, the chief emphasis regarding Jesus’ nature in the New Testament is His cruciformity; thus, it is evident that God’s purpose is that we be conformed to the paradigm of the Cross. DeVern Fromke, in *The Ultimate Intention* uses the term “Cross-principle” to mean essentially the same as the “paradigm of the Cross” or “cruciformity”:

It may come as a surprise to some when we suggest that the Cross has always been an eternal principle in God. It is not an after thought or accident in the universe, nor is it a principle read into things by loving hearts. It is inherent in God. **This Cross-principle which seems woven into the very bosom of the Father** is demonstrated by the Son and interpreted by the Spirit. It has ever been the principle of action by which the Godhead would surely bring to pass the divine intention.

We see then that **the Cross** is far more than an act in history. **It expresses the very qualities and manner of life of the triune God.** It is the life-giving, light-sharing, and love-bestowing principle by which God has dealt with man from the beginning . . .

In thinking of the Cross only as a redemptive measure, we have missed God’s larger intention. Yet the whole inference of Scripture is that from the beginning the Father longed for a family of sons who would embrace the same Cross-principle that has ever governed His own heart. **It was His intention that the Cross might be so inwrought in these sons as to become their manner and purpose of life.** (emphases mine)¹

We realize as long as man is still interpreting the Cross as it benefits him, as it works for his own safety, security, and victory, he is wearing a pair of colored glasses . . . But as the believer begins to interpret the Cross as an eternal principle which God intends to be operative in him, then he

¹DeVern F. Fromke, *The Ultimate Intention* (Indianapolis, IN: Sure Foundation, 1963), 56.

sees the Cross in a new light . . . We may speak of entering *the way of the Cross* when the Cross . . . becomes operative within the believer.²

Fromke's teaching might well help us understand better the following scripture: “. . . the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8)

Paul expresses in the following two passages this Cross-principle or paradigm of the Cross working in him:

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. (2 Cor. 4:10-12)

Now I rejoice for your sakes in sufferings, and I would fill up in my body the extreme of Christ's affliction, for the sake of His body—the church; . . . **to accomplish the Divine intention** . . . which we proclaim; warning every man, and teaching every person in a perfect philosophy, so that we may present each one perfect in Christ [i.e., totally conformed to His death, cruciform]; to which object I vigorously strive with His mighty energy working in us. (Col. 1:25-29, F. Fenton)³

Most Christians know well the words in Romans 8:28 “that all things work together for good”, but few seem to link its meaning with this profound declaration in the next verse: “[God] predestined us to be conformed to the likeness of His Son” We see then that **all things that happen to us have been planned by God with the specific purpose to conform us to the nature of Christ, and thus to His cruciformity**. Knowing this, we thank God for all things, however difficult or painful; and we can yield ourselves daily to His working through these things or people in order to accomplish His ultimate intention for us—that we become cruciform in all our attitudes, motives, and actions.

²Fromke, *The Ultimate Intention*, 88.

³Ferrar Fenton, *The Holy Bible in Modern English* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1944), 1219.

Following is a song that grew out of a revelation about the connection between these two verses, Romans 8:28 and 29. God gave this revelation to the author during his grief over the death of a young son. Over the years, the truth of these words has helped to assimilate and apply the connection between God's ultimate intention of conforming us to the cruciform likeness of Christ and His using all the circumstances of life to accomplish this "good".⁴

My Glorious Destiny

Lord, come and touch afresh my eyes that I more clearly see,
In ev'rything that comes my way, Your perfect love for me.
That I may know no bitterness, nor ever complain,
But, always full of thankfulness, Your goodness I'll proclaim.

Chorus:

I praise You, Lord, You've planned ev'rything
To make a wonderful change in me.
Lord Jesus Christ, to become like You –
O, what a glorious destiny!

Lord, come and touch afresh my eyes to see at Calvary
The Father's glorious love shine forth as, Jesus, You die for me.
Lord Jesus, as I behold Your love, Let Your glory transform me;
May I into Your image come – O, what a glorious destiny!

[*Chorus*]

Ron Wilson

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⁴For copies of the details of this experience and further discussion of the words of this song, please contact the author: crossourparadigm@yahoo.ca.