

Finding Purpose in Pain

The Truth of Romans 8:28

~~Everything happens for a reason!~~

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
(Romans 8:28)

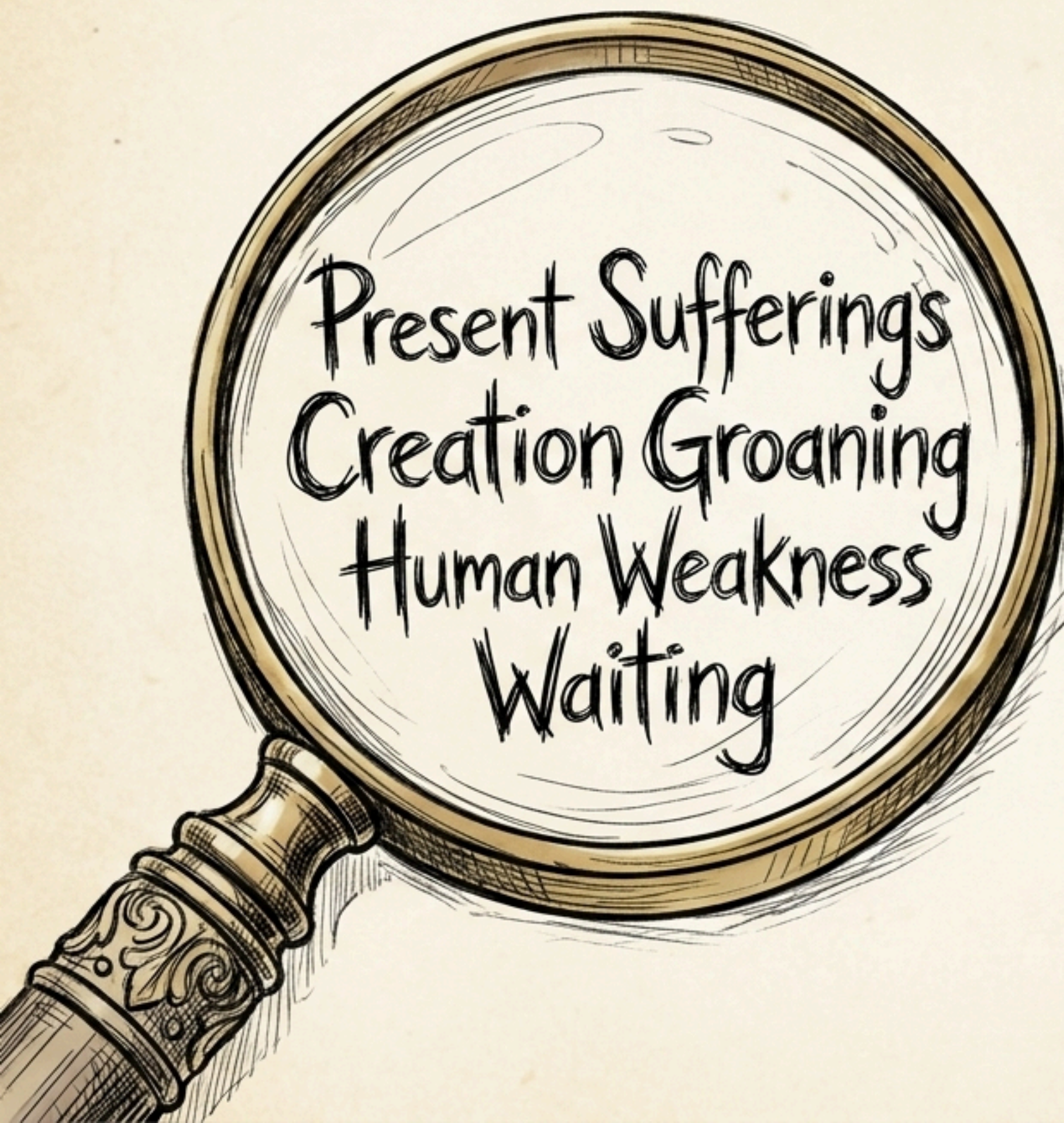
~~Everything will turn out fine in the end.~~

~~If something bad happens, it must secretly be a blessing.~~



The most quoted, yet most deeply misunderstood promise.

A Promise Given in the Middle of Suffering



Present Sufferings
Creation Groaning
Human Weakness
Waiting

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
(Romans 8:18)



Romans 8 is not about success, wealth, or getting what you want. It is an encouragement for Christians who are struggling, hurting, and confused.

What Goes Into the Mix?

View 1: Literally All Things

Success, failure, joy, grief, health, sickness, blessings, persecution, mistakes, tragedies.

Nothing is outside God's ability to use.



View 2: All Things Related to Suffering

Affliction, weakness, persecution, trials (the direct context of Romans 8).

Regardless of the view, the conclusion is identical: God uses everything, including profound suffering, for His purposes.

The Joseph Precedent



As for you,
you meant evil
against me...

...but God
meant it
for good.



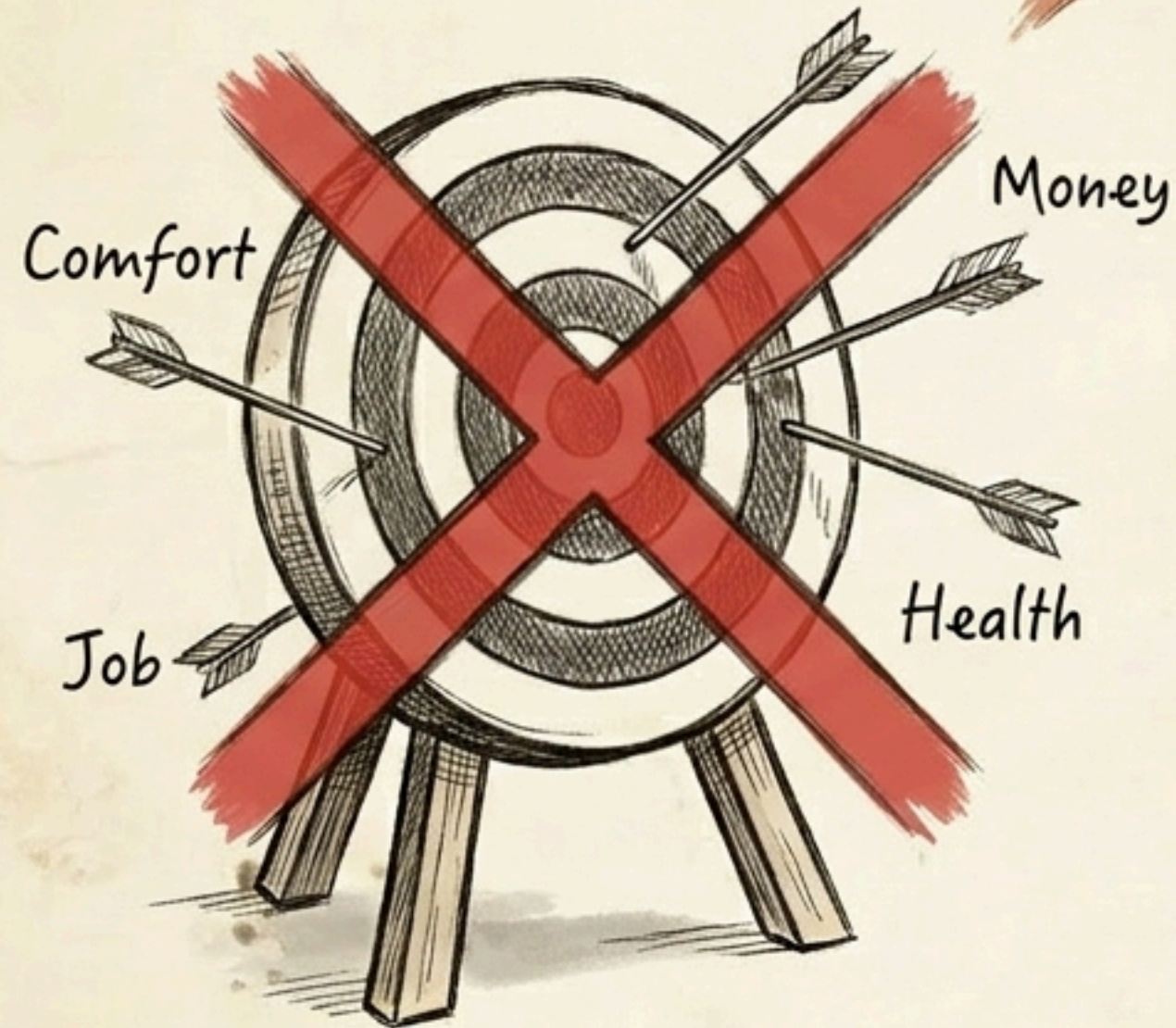
(Genesis 50:20)



Joseph does not call the evil good. His brothers committed actual evil. Yet God worked through that evil to save many lives.

Redefining the Good

The Earthly Target



The Heavenly Target



Good

image of his Son
(Romans 8:29)

[The Good is not a favorable circumstance; it is a person.
The ultimate goal is becoming like Jesus.]

The Anatomy of Christlikeness

The Good
(Christlikeness)

Holiness

Trust in
God

Preparation for
Eternal Glory

James 1:2-3:
Testing of your
faith produces
steadfastness.

Spiritual
Maturity

Romans 5:3-4:
Suffering produces
endurance...
character... hope.

Perseverance

Guardrails: What This Verse Does NOT Mean

- God owes believers an easy life.
- Every painful event will make sense in this life.
- Christians will avoid suffering.
- Every tragedy is secretly a blessing.

**Cancer is not good. Abuse is not good.
Betrayal is not good. Death is not good.**

*The verse does not call evil good;
it says God brings good out of evil.*

The Ultimate Proof

**God's Greatest
Good**

**Humanity's
Greatest Evil**



This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (Acts 2:23)

The crucifixion was humanity's greatest act of wickedness.
Yet, God used that exact wickedness to accomplish ultimate redemption.

Baseline Agreement: God does not cause evil (1 John 1:5, James 1:13).

Reformed (Calvinist)

Complete Sovereignty. God actively governs history; nothing is outside His ultimate control (Eph 1:11).

Arminian / Wesleyan

Human Freedom. Humans genuinely choose evil, but God's wisdom and power redeem it without causing it.

Catholic

Providence & Cooperation. God remains sovereign but permits human freedom, calling believers to cooperate with His grace.

Eastern Orthodox

Spiritual Transformation. Focuses less on predestination debates and heavily on suffering as a catalyst for deep union with Christ.

Who is this Promise For?



Theological Note

Note on Calling:

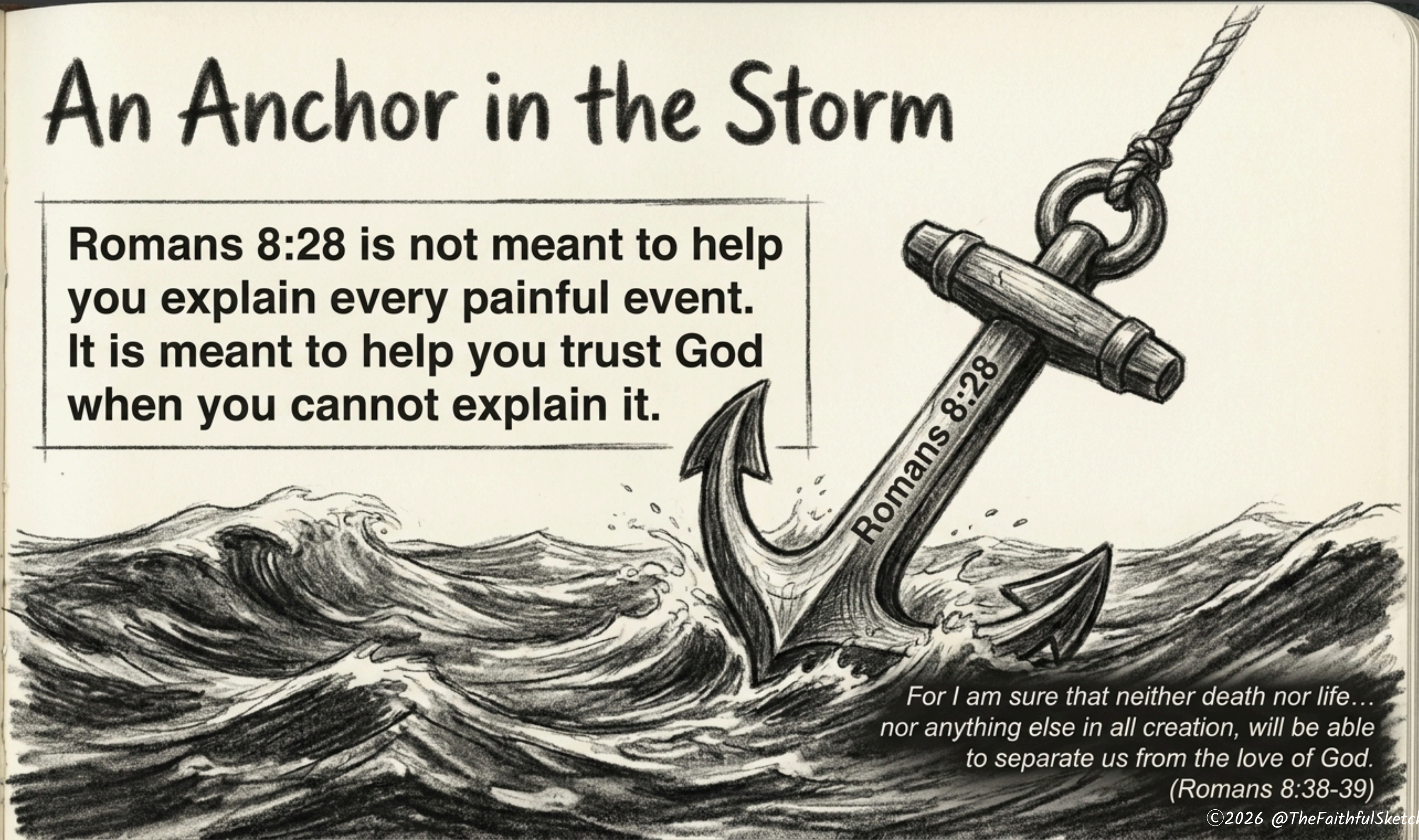
Reformed View: God's effective call that certainly results in salvation.

Arminian View: God's invitation, which a person has the freedom to resist.

* This is a specific promise addressed to believers, not a general statement that things universally work out for everyone.

An Anchor in the Storm

Romans 8:28 is not meant to help you explain every painful event. It is meant to help you trust God when you cannot explain it.



*For I am sure that neither death nor life...
nor anything else in all creation, will be able
to separate us from the love of God.
(Romans 8:38-39)*

The Truth of Romans 8:28



No matter what happens, God is able to work through it for the ultimate good of His people, conforming them to the image of Christ and accomplishing His purposes.

A promise of hope in suffering, confidence in sovereignty, and trust in faithfulness when life does not make sense.