

WE HAVE THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Scriptures: Romans 8:18-30 NIV

Series: "Good News Changes Everything! A Study of the Book of Romans"

Pastor Chris Mason

New Day Christian Church, Sarasota, FL

May 19, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION:

God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light for our path. It gives us encouragement and hope, even while we experience suffering in this life.

I want you to listen to how the Apostle Paul frames our present suffering in Romans 8:18

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

This is the theme of our passage this morning.

What is Paul saying? WE ARE NOT HOME YET! This is not the glory. In fact, Paul says, this isn't even worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us! We have present suffering, but it is leading to future glory.

ROMANS 8:18-30

EVERYTHING IS "GROANING"

- 19-22 The Creation Groans
- 23-25 The Christian Groans
- 26-27 The Comforter Groans

THE FATHER WORK ALL THINGS OUT

- 28 For Our Good
- 29-30 For Our Glory

II. SCRIPTURE

A. EVERYTHING IS "GROANING"

1. THE CREATION GROANS

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

19. All of creation is waiting in eager expectation. Have you ever waited in eager expectation? My son Merrit is looking forward to June 25 with eager expectation! Why? Because that is the day he will turn 9 years old. There will a great celebration...a party with pizza, cake, ice cream, and presents!

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

20. When was creation subjected to frustration? When sin entered the world.

²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

21. All of creation now waits in eager expectation for a future time, when God restores all that has been broken!

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

22. We don't know when the baby is coming, but we know the baby is coming soon! The contractions have started!

Jesus said it this way in Matthew 24...

⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of birth pains.

2. THE CHRISTIAN GROANS

²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

23 What are the firstfruits? Imagine that you plant a garden and the time comes and you harvest that first tomato. It's the firstfruits! It's not the only fruit. You anticipate harvesting more tomatoes in the future. When you trusted in Jesus, you received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit isn't everything, but He is the firstfruits of what is to come. One day you will receive a new body, an eternal inheritance, a home in heaven, but until that time we groan inwardly, as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies.

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

24 It is true that in this hope of we were saved, but we still live in the sin, suffering and struggle of this broken world. In spite of this suffering, we have hope. We look forward to what is to come!

Philippians 1:6 ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

3. THE COMFORTER GROANS

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

26-27 The strong believer realizes just how weak they really are. We are so weak, that we don't even know how to pray! Listen to how the Apostle Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 12:10...¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

How is this possible? Because in our weakness, the Spirit intercedes for us in accordance with the will of God! What is the result?

B. THE FATHER WORKS ALL THINGS OUT

1. FOR OUR GOOD

²⁸ 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.

28 There is a play on words. In verse 26 it says, WE DO NOT KNOW even how to pray. Now, in verse 28 WE KNOW that in all things God works for our good. What made the difference? Verse 27 tells us, the Spirit intercedes for us in accordance with the will of God. Because of that, WE KNOW that God in all things works for our good, because we have been called according to his purpose!

2. FOR OUR GLORY

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Here's what the Bible says is true:

- God foreknew all

- God controls all
- But God also allows free will.
- If you are looking for a simple answer, you're not going to get one from me. I don't have a clue how that works!

God somehow in his power created a world where he knew exactly what would happen every second of this world's existence, and he was ultimately in control of everything that happened, but he allowed free will. He allowed us to receive or reject his offer of forgiveness.

And those who received the pardon he predestined to be conformed into his image and to be glorified in heaven. He planned this before the beginning of time.

So, what does this all mean? WE ARE NOT HOME YET! This world is broken and coming to an end. It is full of sin and suffering. So, while we live this life, while we suffer, what should we do?

III. APPLICATION

1. While You Suffer, Can You Wait With Eager Expectation?

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation...

Eager Expectation points to the future! This is about your perspective. How you view this life. Someone once said, "Your perspective is either your prison or your power".

Each day we have a choice. It is the choice of perspective. Will we live in eager expectation?

Later in the book of Romans, Paul reminds us...

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

How do you change your perspective? Through the renewing of your mind!

Listen to what Paul tells the Philippian believers in Philippians 4:8 ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Don't get sucked into what therapist's call "stinking thinking". Renew your mind with the truth of God's word!

2. While You Suffer, Can You Hold On To Hope (And Do It Patiently)

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

This hope is not wishful thinking. It is confident assurance! We believe that Jesus lived, died, and was raised again. We wait with eager expectation for the day when God will redeem and restore all that has been broken in this world! And this hope that we have, we wait for it patiently!

Some of you are in a season of waiting. Waiting for a test result. Waiting for a reunion with a loved one who has passed. Waiting for a better job with more money. Waiting for the aches and pains of this life to subside.

In 2 Corinthians 4:17 we are reminded ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

During the suffering of this life, our troubles seem neither light nor momentary. However, when they are laid against the backdrop of eternity, they fail in comparison to what God has in store for us!

3. While You Suffer, Can You Allow The Spirit To Help In Your Weakness

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Sometimes the most honest response is: I don't know. We don't know the secret will of God. We don't know if we should pray for healing or for strength to endure.

But what we do know is that we desire to pray with great faith. We groan because we don't know how God will answer the suffering in our lives. We just don't know.

Look at an example from Paul's life. In 2 Corinthians 12 we read about Paul's thorn in the flesh. 3 times, Paul prays for it to be removed. And finally God reveals to him that his will was not to take it away.

You don't have to figure it all out. Can you trust that the comforter, the Spirit of God is interceding on your behalf!

4. While You Suffer, Can You Trust That In All Things God Works For Your Good

²⁸ 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.

Paul says, and we know. We don't know it in our head, but we know it in our heart!

Here's what I also know, when we hear that in "all things" God works for the good, I know this is a hard pill to swallow! I read your prayer requests each week. My heart aches as I see the suffering of God's people. Marriages suffering, financial hardships, sickness, anxiety, worry, stress, and fear.

The confusion is that many times, when we hear that in ALL things God works for our good, we equate good with easy. We equate good with stress free. We equate good with comfort.

But listen again to this verse...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.

God working all things for good, is connected to his purpose for our lives!

What is God's purpose for us? He tells us in the middle of verse 29...

29 ...to be conformed to the image of his Son...

Let me say it this way: While you suffer, can you trust that in all things God is conforming you to the image of his son?

- Maybe, you have been following Christ, but the cancer returned.
- Maybe, you have been praying for your wayward grown children, but still they remain far from God.
- Maybe, you have been kind and compassionate to your difficult boss, but that kindness is constantly met with contempt.
- Maybe, you have been serving God faithfully, but His voice remains silent in your life. He's not showing up the way you thought He would. Can you trust that even while you suffer, in ALL things God is working for your good!

Can I tell you this morning: You're not home yet, but you're almost there! Don't give up! Keep your eye fixed on the prize! The hope of Heaven! Hope in a God who is working all things for your good! The enemy will try to discourage and defeat you, but don't you dare believe the lies! For I can tell you, these present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us!