

WE HAVE THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Scriptures: Romans 8:18-30; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Revelation 21:4;
Philippians 3:14

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

Pastor Sam Pepper

New Day Christian Church, Port Charlotte, FL

May 18-19, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

One thing I love about the Bible is that not only does it talk about the Good News – the Gospel – the Hope we have in Jesus. It also talks about the bad news, the suffering, the pain we endure while alive on this earth. And it doesn’t sugarcoat any of it. Which I appreciate, as someone living through it.

Paul wrote these words in Romans 8:18. This is the first verse in our section of Scripture today. And, really, it’s the main theme, the big idea, of what we’re going to talk about. In fact, you could say, it conveys the main theme for our lives. Paul wrote,

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings...

The afflictions, hardships, and pains we are currently going through. Right now. 2024. The thing you can’t get your mind off of. The problem you still have to solve. The health deficiency you took your meds for today. The generational sin you’re still carrying the burden of. Your present sufferings. He says...

...are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

All these terrible things that keep us up at night, that cause emotional, physical, and spiritual suffering, are nothing compared to the glory that God’s going to reveal in us one day.

We’re not home yet. This life, this earth, is not the “glory” God promises us. No matter how good your life is here on earth – or how bad, turbulent, difficult – be assured it’s nothing compared to the glory that awaits us.

You’re in the waiting room of life. Waiting for this life to end and your future glory to be revealed.

Passage breakdown:

The Big Idea: Current Suffering VS Future Glory (verse 18)

(Everything is framed in this context)

Everything Groans as it Awaits Future Glory (verses 19-26)

- a. *Creation* Groans (verses 19-22)
- b. *We* Groan (23-25)
- c. The Holy Spirit Groans (26)

And then wraps it all up...

The Father Works for Our Good and Glory (27-30)

II. SCRIPTURE (Romans 8:18-30)

A. THE BIG IDEA (18)

Romans 8:18 says,

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

B. EVERYTHING GROANS (19-26)

1. CREATION GROANS (19-22)

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

The *creation* Paul is referring to is the created world. The universe. The earth. Nature – plants and animals. And he says that creation waits in *eager expectation*, which means to strain to see or look forward.

20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, [Frustration here means to be devoid or deficient of vigour] not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 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.

When Adam sinned, it brought about a curse. God said in Genesis 3:17, “Cursed is the ground because of you”. Right now, everything is under the curse of sin. It’s like a virus that spreads everywhere.

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

2. WE GROAN (23-25)

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. 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.

Two effects of sin that we experience:

- **First, is our own personal sin.**

If I go rob a bank, there's going to be a direct consequence. I'm going to get arrested, tried, and jailed. My record will be forever blemished. My marriage and family will suffer. And getting a job when I get out will be much more difficult.

- **But, the other effect of sin we experience includes the ramifications of living in a fallen and imperfect world.**

Because people have stolen from a bank, the tellers are behind glass or at minimum a large counter. Money is in a steel safe. Security cameras watch every square inch of the building. Because of fraud you have to provide ID and they put a wait on transfers to another bank account.

Paul writes we groan inwardly! You feel the guilt and consequence of your own sin. You feel the stress and additional burdens from the sins of others!

We have the firstfruits of the Spirit to help us as we deal with all of this. If you hop over to 2 Corinthians 5:5, Paul also wrote,

"...God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

This is just the downpayment!

Side Road: Paul uses several phrases that all point to the same thing: glory, redemption of our bodies; hope. And here's what that involves. The Bible says this inheritance will make everything perfect again. In the book of Revelation, we're promised a new heaven and new earth. Revelation 21:4 says,

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

In Philippians 3:21 it says that in heaven,

"He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own..." [NLT]

Theologian Jack Cottrell described the redemption of our bodies this way. It means,

"Totally cleansed not just from the effects of sin, but from sin itself, from its evil desires, its sinful passions, its indwelling sin, and the law of sin. It will no longer be a body of sin, body of death, or sinful flesh."

One day, all of this suffering, imperfection, sin and even sinful desires will be completely gone. And a new creation and new body will await us. Pure. Perfect. And in the full presence of God.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT GROANS (26)

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 [the Father] 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.

The Spirit intercedes for us through wordless groans. There's a little bit of varying thought of what is meant by this. But, the most common consensus among theologians is that the Holy Spirit, who resides in a believer, prays for them on their behalf. When you don't know what to pray for. When you struggle to put your emotions into words, when your situation leaves you feeling like you're without answers or clear direction, the Spirit intercedes.

C. THE FATHER WORKS FOR OUR GOOD AND GLORY (27-30)

The Spirit of God is a gift to help us in our suffering.

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.

God doesn't just call us to his purpose and leave us to figure it out alone. He gives us the firstfruits of the Spirit, who intercedes on our behalf, and works for our good – in all things. Not just *some* things. Not just simple things. Or *painless* things. Not just on good days or easy days. But, in *all* things.

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 works in all things. God foreknew all. God controls all. But God allows free will. 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 Son Jesus. And those who received the pardon he predestined to be conformed into his image and glorified in heaven. And he planned this before the beginning of time.

III. APPLICATION

1. While you suffer...wait eagerly.

Jesus followers should have an anticipation of what's next for us. We should be excited. This excitement is driven largely by perspective.

Think back a moment with me to the Israelites. God took them out of slavery – an amazing achievement that gave them an even better life to look forward to! But, it wasn't long before they grumbled and complained on their way to the Promised Land – and it caused them greater suffering! They had to wait 40 extra years, a whole generation of them died off, and even Moses never got to enter the Promised Land. They lost their perspective because they focused more on the suffering and less on where they were heading. They focused on pain over promise.

2. While you suffer...hope patiently.

Day to day suffering isn't easy. The word *patience*, that Paul uses, means to have perseverance. This is somebody who is unswerved from their purpose and loyalty to Jesus. We're in this for the long-haul.

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Our hope lies in Jesus and nothing else. It takes patience, grit, a lot of energy, strength, and endurance.

3. While you suffer...trust confidently.

Verse 28 says,

And we know [That means we trust! When you know something, you don't doubt! You don't question! Because you know!] **that in all things** [even broken things, even painful things, even things that don't make sense, even in *your* thing – in your suffering you have a thing? What's your thing? Your issue? Your problem? Your brokenness? Whatever it is...your thing] **God works for the good** [Not your definition of good, but God's definition of good] **of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

You've been called according to his purpose! His purpose is now your purpose. Which means his definition of good is meant to be your definition of what is good.

One of the ways God works for your good is to make you more like Jesus. The very next verse talks about *being conformed to the image of his son*.

Let God use your thing, Paul says all things, for your good, for his purpose, to make you more like Jesus, as you get closer to the glory that God is going to reveal in you.