

Book Study #14 ROMANS

Rom. 8:18-27 Future Glory

Before We Begin...

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

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 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 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, 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 he already has? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what (or how) a we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.



Have you ever been present (in the room...) at the birth of a child? What do you remember most about it?

Exploration... Discovery... Revelation...

1. What kind of “present sufferings” does Paul have in mind here? (v.18; See Rom. 8:35)



2. What “glory” is he talking about? (1 Corinthians 15:42-43; 1 John 3-2)

3. What are the “sons of God?” How will they be revealed? (see 1 Corinthians 15:49-54)

4. Paul pictures "the creation" looking forward with anticipation to the return of Christ and the revelation of the sons of God. What images does the Psalmist use to describe this time? (Psalm 96:11-13; 98:7-9)

5. What effect will the revelation of the sons of God have on creation? (v.212) What will this look like? (see Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:1-2, 6-7)

6. How is the creation now subject to “frustration” and in bondage to “decay?” (vv. 20-21) Give examples.

7. How did this happen? (see Genesis 1:26-28; 3:17-19)

8. Paul mentions three kinds of “groaning” in this passage. For each one, identify (1)the cause of the groaning, (2)the one doing the groaning, and (3)the hoped-for outcome.

Cause	Who or What	Hope
v.22		
v.23		
v.26		

9. How does the Holy Spirit help us in prayer? (vv. 26-27)

As we end this part of the Journey...

Pray for one another. Pray that we would each live the "Holy Life." A life filled with the desire to do the Will of God and follow Christ and the Holy Spirit. *"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires."* (The Apostle Paul in Romans 8:5)

Commentary

Although Christians do suffer, that is not the end of the story. We will someday share in Christ's glory. And when we do, all of creation will share in that glory as well.

v. 18 ***Our present sufferings are not worth comparing*** . . . Paul does not say merely that the glory to be revealed is superior to our sufferings, but that it is *incomparably greater* than them. This is even more amazing when we think of the kind of sufferings Paul has in mind: persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and death (8:35; see 1 Cor. 11:23-29). In 2 Cor. 4:17, Paul refers to our present suffering as "light and momentary troubles" that will result in "an eternal glory that far outweighs them all". He is not minimizing the severity of our sufferings, but instead emphasizing the incredible glory that is to come.

the glory that will be revealed in us . . . This is the glory of Christ which will transform us (see 1 John 3:2; also the Commentary on Rom. 5:2). v. 19 Paul pictures the whole cosmos as waiting in eager anticipation for the consummation of history and the revealing of the sons of God. (see Psalm 96:11-13, 98:7-9; Isaiah 35:1-2, 55:12).

v. 20-21 ***For the creation was subjected to frustration*** . . . Man's sin affects not only himself, but all of creation as well, since God made man ruler over the earth and all living creatures (Gen. 1:26-28). One example of this is the curse God put on the ground (Gen. 1:17).

the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay . . . Paul looks forward to the time after Christ's return when the earth and all its creatures will finally fulfill the purpose for which they were created. (See Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:1-2, 6-7).

v. 22 ***the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth*** . . . Christ identifies these things as "birth pangs" which signal the end of the age: "wars and rumors of wars....Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places." (Matt. 24:6-8). Since Adam's sin in the garden, the earth has been experiencing labor pains, and these will continue to intensify until Christ's return.

v. 23 ***we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit*** . . . The gift of the Holy Spirit which we now possess is evidence of the rich blessings of God still in store for us (2 Cor. 5:5). And we, too, look forward eagerly to Christ's return, the end of the age, and ***our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies***. For those who have died, this will be resurrection; for those who are still alive, it will be transformation (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

vv. 24-25 ***Who hopes for what he already has?*** It is possible that some at Rome shared the skepticism about bodily resurrection which Paul dealt with in 1 Corinthians 15. Some at Corinth apparently considered themselves to have been "raised from the dead" already, interpreting this in a spiritual sense. But Paul emphasizes here that the resurrection is both physical and future.

vv. 26-27 ***the Spirit helps us in our weakness*** This chapter deals with the Holy Spirit several times. He provides guidance and power for us to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" (v. 13), he testifies to our spirits that we are children of God (v. 16), and he helps us in prayer (v. 26).

the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express . . . Some interpret this as speaking in tongues, but Paul states that it is the Spirit who groans, not the believer. Further, these "groans" are like the "groans" of creation (v. 22) and the inward "groaning" of the believer (v. 23), neither of which are audible sounds. Paul is speaking of the communication within the Trinity. As we pray, the Holy Spirit prays to God on our behalf in a way that is perfectly consistent with God's will.