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Sunday Church School

April 25, 2021

“Anticipating Redemption” – Romans 8:18-27

Golden Text: Romans 8:23

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Romans 8:18-27

¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope;

²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

²³Not only *that*, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

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²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to study Paul's teaching about Christians' suffering and future glory.

Principle: to understand that our suffering in the world does not compare to the glory that God will reveal.

Application: to live in hope of our redemption and glory with God.

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The Bible does not deny the existence of evil and suffering; as it is replete with instances of almost every type.

The problem most people have with evil, and suffering is contrasted to the power and presence of a Holy God Who is the antithesis of both

- People want to know God’s role in human suffering.
- If God is all-powerful and totally good, then why does He allow evil?
- Why does He allow so much suffering, pain, hunger, tragedy, and natural disasters?

Some think there are only two possible answers: either God is not all-powerful and therefore cannot prevent evil, or He is not good.

What does the bible say about this? Well, the best place to start is the beginning; for since the Fall, humanity has been subject to suffering and death (Gen 3:17-19).

The biblical solution is found in the person of Jesus Christ.; for it is through Christ, human suffering has meaning, and there is hope for redemption and future glory.

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LESSON OUTLINE:

I. SUFFERING EXPERIENCED —Rom. 8:18-21

II. SALVATION EXPLAINED —Rom. 8:22-25

III. SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT —Rom. 8:26-27

I. SUFFERING EXPERIENCED —Rom. 8:18-21

- Paul’s challenge in Romans was to speak to both Jews (who tended toward **legalism**) and Gentiles (who tended to use grace a **license** to sin).
- He attempts to resolve this tension in order to dissolve barriers between these groups before his discussion of future glory in today’s text.
- Last week, we learned that believers have been:
 - “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3) and have been raised to
 - “walk in newness of life” (V 4).
- Although we are not under the law, we are not to abuse God’s grace by leading disorderly, lawless lives.

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- The Greco-Roman world dreaded “corruption” (NASB) or “decay” (NIV); only the eternal, unchanging things in the heavens would last—the human body and everything else on earth would decompose.
- Although believers endure suffering now, they will enjoy glory when Christ returns.
- In fact, we are told that the whole creation (“creature” in V 19–21) is groaning under the bondage of sin, thanks to Adam’s disobedience.
- When Christ finally imprisons Satan, He will deliver the entire creation from this bondage, and all nature will enjoy with us “the glorious liberty of the children of God” (v. 21).
- What a thrilling salvation we have:
 - a) free from the **penalty of sin** because Christ died for us (5)
 - b) free from the **power of sin** because we died with Christ to the flesh (C. 6) and to the Law (chap. 7); and
 - c) someday we shall be free from the very **presence of sin** when nature is delivered from bondage.

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- In the latter part of Romans 7, Paul expounds on the battle between the Spirit and the flesh.
- He reminds his readers that the purpose of the law is to reveal sin and he further reminds his audience that Christ alone can rescue us from sin.
- In worldly matters, it is easy to put up barriers if someone does not understand the world in the same way you do.
- But all believers are promised the hope of salvation, and we should treasure our unity in Christ.
- Paul now turns his attention to the suffering experienced by God’s people; for Paul knew firsthand what it meant to suffer as a Christian.
- When we talk of suffering, we usually blame aging, poor life choices, or simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time.
- But Paul likely had something else in mind. In the ancient world, suffering was part and parcel of the decision to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- The source of Paul’s suffering was often his own Jewish countrymen who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah and at other times, it was Roman authorities

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- In short, the infinite, eternal blessings of the future far outweigh the fleeting pains and persecutions of either the past or the present.
- Whatever the source of our sufferings, believers can be confident of a glorious future free from pain and suffering (Rev. 21:1-4).
- We do not know exactly what the world was like prior to the Fall, but nature was cursed after human sin entered the world (Gen. 3:17-19).
- But we do know the word “creature” in Romans 8:19-21 would be better translated “creation.”
- The term includes both the creatures (animals) and the rest of creation (plants and the overall environment itself).
- In other words, everything was affected by the entrance of sin into the world, not just human beings, we are able to personalize the effects.
- There are varied opinions on when the time of restoration will occur; some thinking this will occur during the millennium (Rev. 20:6), while others point to the New Jerusalem as the time of fulfillment (21:1-5).

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II. SALVATION EXPLAINED —Rom. 8:22-25

- In V 21, Paul reminds us that just as the sons and daughters of God await the redemption of their fallen bodies, so too does all of creation await its restoration to God’s plan.
- If we look around, we see that the death and decay we experience, as a consequence of sin, affects everything around us.
- God never intended for creation—or us—to suffer, so another aspect of condemning and removing sin involves removing it from the world.
- In fact, Paul says creation itself groans with longing for that day of redemption—perhaps even more than we do.
- Rather than whining about our suffering, we should anticipate the glory that lies ahead (8:22)
- From the time of the Fall, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain” and continues to do so to this day.
- But “these groans and travails are not death pangs but birth pangs” (Murray); anticipating a time of future deliverance for both God’s children and creation

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- As believers, we have the “first-fruits of the Spirit,” a concept similar to the Holy Spirit being our “**earnest**” (Eph. 1:14; II Cor. 5:5), or guarantee, of future glory
 - **Earnest** – arrabōn [ar-hrab-ohn] – a pledge; a security deposit given in advance
 - **Earnest expectation** – apokaradokia [ap-ok-ar-ad-ok-ee-ah] = A watching with the head erect or outstretched -- hence a **waiting in suspense**.
- Since it was the Spirit’s power that raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 8:11), this same Holy Spirit will cause our bodies to be raised.
- This will signify the physical reality and completion of our adoption. “In this respect ‘adoption’ is used like the terms ‘salvation’ and ‘redemption’.
- We have the *Spirit of adoption*, but we are “**waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body**” (v. 23).
- The soul has been redeemed, but not the body; so we wait in hope, however, because the indwelling Spirit is given as “the firstfruits” of the deliverance God has for us in the future.
- The great news is that even if we die, the Spirit who has sealed us unto the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13–14) will raise our body to life (v. 11).

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III. SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT —Rom. 8:26-27

- In V 24-25 Paul introduces the catalyst and clarification of the anticipation: “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?” But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.
 - Expectation and anticipation are the hope engendered by our salvation.
 - This hope means that we must trust and wait for what is still unseen.
 - For why would we need to hope for something we already have?
 - Because our hope is set on what is yet to be seen, we patiently keep on waiting for its fulfillment.
- Notice there are three “groans” in V. 22–26:
 - (1) all creation groans, v. 22;
 - (2) the believer groans awaiting Christ’s coming, v. 23; and
 - (3) the indwelling Spirit groans as He intercedes for us, v. 26.

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- Recall in John 11 where Jesus “groaned within Himself” as He visited the grave of Lazarus.
- How the heart of God is burdened because of the bondage of creation. What a price Christ paid to deliver us.
- Paul points out that while we endure this suffering in hope, we have the privilege of praying in the Spirit.
- Perhaps too much of our praying is of the flesh—long, beautiful, “pious” prayers that glorify man and nauseate God (Isa. 1:11–18).
- Paul indicates that the most spiritual prayer could be a wordless groan that comes from the heart! “Sighs too deep for words” is the way one translation renders v. 26.
- The Spirit makes intercession for us, the Father searches our hearts and knows what the Spirit desires, and this He grants to us.
- The Spirit always prays in the will of God. What is the will of God? That believers might be conformed to the image of Christ (v. 29).

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DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- 1. Redemption and glory (Rom. 8:18-25).** Suffering is common to both Christians and non-Christians alike. Our earthly bodies are subject to sickness, pain, disability, and death. So, what happens when we become redeemed?

- 2. The intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27).** Earlier in Romans 8:9 , Paul began discussing the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Thus, it is essential we understand how the Spirit will be instrumental works in and with our redeemed and resurrected bodies. Is His prayer the same as ours?



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“ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”



1. What kind of sufferings did Paul likely have in mind in Romans 8:18?
2. How might “creature” be better translated in verses 19-21? Why was the creation subjected to “the bondage of corruption” (vs. 21)?
3. What does “the adoption” refer to in verse 23?
4. What does the “redemption of our body” direct us to look forward to?
5. Why is hope inherently connected with the future? What kind of “patience” is Paul referring to in verse 25?
6. How does the Spirit help us in our infirmities? Since the Holy Spirit has a mind, what does this say about His nature?
7. How can we know God’s will for our lives? How does the Holy Spirit help us in this regard?

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