

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 22

I. Exposition of Chapter Eight. (Continued)

A. Verse 17b – “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” (cf. Galatians 3:26-29; 4:1-7)

1. The latter part of this verse introduces us to the idea of suffering. The way in which this is stated sounds like suffering is a condition for being glorified with Christ. **The NIV Study Bible** clarifies this well: “**The Greek construction used here does not set forth a condition but states a fact. The meaning, then, is not that there is some doubt about sharing Christ’s glory. Rather, despite the fact that Christians presently suffer, they are assured a future entrance into their inheritance.**”
2. It should be an understood fact that Christians are going to suffer.
 - a. The Bible indicates that true Christians are going to suffer persecution if they’re living godly lives – **II Timothy 3:12.**
 - b. Peter states that we shouldn’t consider it strange and realize that the “**Spirit of glory and of God**” rests upon us when we’re reproached for the name of Christ. – **I Peter 4:12-17.**
 - c. We’re told that Jesus left us an example to follow in terms of suffering – **I Peter 2:18-25.**
 - d. It’s important to distinguish that there is a difference between what Jesus suffered for us as an **example** and what He suffered for us as our **substitute** – **Isaiah 53:4-6; I Peter 3:18.**

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

1. Paul states plainly that the sufferings we face now, do not compare to the glory which is coming! By “**glory**” Paul means the glory that we will experience at our glorification (**verse 17**). Our glorification is the third and final aspect of our salvation in which God will deliver us from the presence of sin forever.
2. Paul, who knew great suffering, considered them “**light afflictions**” compared to the “**far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.**” – **II Corinthians 4:16-18.**
3. “**...revealed in us.**” - This coming glory will not only be revealed to us, but it will actually be revealed in us. (cf. **I John 3:1-3**).

C. Verses 19-22 - All of creation is awaiting and anticipating this coming Glory.

1. Verse 19 – “**For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.**”

- a. The word “**creation**” here is referring to all of nature.
- b. All of nature is waiting for the “**...revealing of the sons of God.**” – The Amplified Bible helps us here:

“**For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship].**” – **Romans 8:19 – Amplified Bible**

2. Verse 20-22 – Why is all of Creation eagerly waiting?

- a. “**For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;**” – **verse 20.** The word “**futility**” means; “**perverseness, depravity, frailty, want of vigour**”¹ When man fell, he took the whole of creation, which was under his dominion, down with him. (cf. **Genesis 3:17-19**).

“**The physical creation is personified as a person with an outstretched neck searching the horizon. Creation was negatively affected when Adam and Eve rebelled (cf. Gen. 3:17–19). All creation will ultimately be redeemed (except for rebellious angels, unbelieving humans, and their prepared place of isolation,**”²

- b. So there is hope: “**Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.**” – **verse 21.**

“**Nature will be a part of eternity (cf. Isa. 11:6–10). Heaven is coming back to a recreated earth (cf. Matt. 5:18; 24:35; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1). The future may well be a return to Eden’s bliss; fellowship between God and mankind, individual to individual, mankind to animals, and mankind to the earth! The Bible begins with God, mankind, and the animals in fellowship and harmony in a garden setting (cf. Gen. 1–2) and the Bible ends in a similar way (cf. Rev. 21–22).**”³

¹Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

²Robert James Utley, *The Gospel according to Paul: Romans*, vol. Volume 5, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 1998), Ro 8:19.

³Ibid.

- c. **“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” – verse 22.** – The word **“groans”** means; **“to groan or sigh together”** and is indicative of the burden of its fallen state. Paul then compares the groanings to the labor of child birth in order to convey the idea that there is a **“birth”** coming where all things will become new!

NOTE: This is the first of three “groans” in Romans 8.

D. Verses 23-25 – The Believer also “groans.”

1. **Verse 23** - We Christians are linked with the **“groaning creation,”** insofar as our bodies are concerned. Our spirits have already been saved, but our bodies have not yet received their total redemption, and won't until Jesus comes back.
 - a. **“...the firstfruits of the Spirit...”** – (cf. **Ephesians 1:13-14**) We have been given a taste of that glory to come and we long for the fulfillment and completion of our redemption.
 - b. **“...eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”** This is the second time we encounter this word **“adoption”** in this chapter (**verse 15**). The first **“adoption”** involves the placing us as sons, spiritually, this **“adoption”** involves the full consummation of everything including, as it states, the **“redemption of our body.”**

“They have already received adoption, and as led by the Spirit are sons of God; but only when their mortal bodies have been quickened, and the corruptible has put on incorruption, will they possess all that sonship involves.”⁴

2. **Verses 24-25** – It seems that **“hope”** is imperative in order for us to be empowered to eagerly wait for it with perseverance. The fulfillment of our redemption is something still distant, yet we hope for it in faith and perseverance, trusting that God is faithful to His word and the promised glory will be a reality.

E. Verses 26-27 – The Holy Spirit “groans.”

1. **Verse 26** - **“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought...”** - The word **“likewise”** means; **“in the same way”**. This seems to be pointing back to **“hope”** and saying that in addition to it, the Holy Spirit also helps us.
 - a. The **“weaknesses”** could be taken in two ways. First, in the context, this could be referring to any weaknesses of the flesh (the fallen nature) and stating that the Holy Spirit helps us to know how to pray concerning these. Secondly, it could be solely referring to the weakness of not knowing how to pray. I believe it includes both!
 - b. The word **“helps”** literally means; **“to take hold with another.”⁵** This infers that there is a part the Holy Spirit plays and there is the part we play.
 - c. **“...but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”**

1) **“Intercession”** – means, **“to plead on behalf of another.”**

2) **“...groanings which cannot be uttered.”** – The Amplified Bible states:

“So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance.” – Romans 8:26.

“It is a picturesque word of rescue by one who ‘happens on’ (*entugchanō* (ἐντυγχάνω)) one who is in trouble, and ‘in his behalf’ (*huper* (ὕπερ)) pleads ‘with unuttered groanings’⁶

- 3) The help that the Holy Spirit brings to express our **“groanings which cannot be uttered”** may include praying in the spirit (tongues) (**I Corinthians 14:2, 14-15**), but it certainly would not be limited to this. This, of course, is the purpose of tongues - to enable us to communicate with God in a manner that is not limited to our own knowledge or ability.

2. **Verse 27** - The Holy Spirit's help in intercession is perfect, because He searches the hearts of those whom He helps, and He is able to guide our prayers according to the will of God.

⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 139. (Quoting Denney)

⁵Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

⁶Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 141. (Quoting A.T. Robertson)