

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 8:23-27 - "Groaning for Glory (Pt. 2)"

At the end of verse 17, Paul pointed out that even though we are the Children of God – heirs of God – and joint heirs with Christ, there is suffering with Him before we are glorified together with Him.

The theme of our text is 'suffering and glory' (vs. 18)

1st – The suffering and glory of God's creation

2nd – The suffering and glory of God's children

Last week we looked at the suffering and glory of God's creation (vs. 18-22)

We learned that:

1. In the past, creation was subjected to vanity or frustration (vs. 20)
2. In the future, creation will be liberated (vs. 21)
3. In the present, creation groans (vs. 22)

Romans 8:23-27, " And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Notice:

- not only does creation groan (vs. 22)
- the creation groans (vs. 23)
- The Holy Spirit groans (vs. 26)

Let's begin by looking first, at the groaning Christians (vs. 23-25)

I. The Christian Groans (vs. 23-25)

Romans 8:23-25, " *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*"

Notice two important truths to remember in interpreting these verses:

1. The groaning mentioned in the text is that of believers in Jesus Christ, and not that of all people generally.
2. The groaning is expectant; it's a groaning for glory.

We as God's children groan, but we do so in expectation of a future glory,

Paul makes five (5) affirmations:

1. We have the first fruits of the Spirit (vs. 23a)
 - a. It's taken from Leviticus 23 – wherein the first fruits were given to the Priest and as a wave offering to the Lord.
 - b. It was both the beginning of the harvest and the pledge of the full harvest that was to come.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is the first installment, deposit, down payment, or pledge which guarantees the future completion of our Salvation.
 - d. We are not in glory yet but we have a foretaste and guarantee of our coming glory.
2. We groan inwardly (vs. 23b)

We have the Holy Spirit indwelling us yet we groan inwardly.

The Holy Spirit's presence is a constant reminder of the incompleteness of our salvation.

- a. We groan inwardly because of our physical frailty and mortality.

II Corinthians 5:1-4, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

- b. We groan because of our sinful fallen nature

Romans 7:17-18, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth

no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

c. We groan because we live in a fallen world.

Romans 8:20, "For *the creature was made subject to vanity* (Frustration) ..."

Our groans express both present pain and future longing.

It's evidence of having the Holy Spirit.

3. We wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (vs. 23c)

a. Just as the groaning creation waits eagerly for God's sons to be revealed (vs. 19), so we groaning Christians wait eagerly for our adoption as sons even the redemption of our bodies.

b. But you say, 'I thought we were already adopted as sons (vs.15) so why are we waiting for it in verse 23?

Answer: Our adoption is not complete until the redemption of our bodies (vs. 23)

We have been redeemed, but we are not yet completely redeemed.

What does Paul mean by the redemption of our bodies?

The resurrection or the rapture - it's the future hope of the Christian.

Remember that Paul is talking about our present suffering which chiefly takes place in our bodies.

- sickness

- sorrow

all because our bodies are not yet redeemed.

- sin

- suffering

James Montgomery Boice – "We are our bodies, as well as our spirits and souls. Therefore, salvation must include our bodies if it is to be complete.

Why did Paul use the word 'redemption' of our bodies and not 'resurrection' of our bodies?

Robert Haldane - When this term is ... used, it commonly denotes two things - the one, that the deliverance spoken of is effective in a manner glorious and conspicuous, exhibiting the greatest effort of power; the other, that it is a complete deliverance, placing us beyond all danger. On this ground, then, it is evident that no work is better entitled to the appellation of redemption than that of the reestablishment of our bodies, which will be an illustrious effort of the infinite power of God. It is the work of the Lord of nature-of him who holds in his hands the keys of life and death. His light alone can dispel the darkness of the tomb. It is only his hand that can break its seal and its silence. On this account the apostle appeals, with an accumulation of terms, to the exceeding greatness of the power of God. To us-ward who believe, according to the raised him from he dead (Eph. 1:19-20.)

Illustration: Israel's redemption from Egypt.

Our resurrection redemption will be an exhibition of God's great power in manner that will be glorious and conspicuous.

Like a Christian, so also like the Christian

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - The righteous are put into their graves all weary and worn; but such they will not rise. They go there with the furrowed brow, the hollowed cheek, the wrinkled skin: they shall wake up in beauty and glory. The old man totters thither, leaning on his staff. The halt, the lame, the withered, the blind, journey in doleful pilgrimage to the common dormitory. But they shall not rise decrepit, deformed, or diseased, but strong, vigorous, active, glorious, immortal. The winter of the grave shall soon give way to the spring of resurrection and the summer of glory. Blessed is death, since it answers all the ends of medicine to this mortal frame, and through the divine power disrobes us of the leprous rags of flesh, to clothe us with the wedding garment of incorruption!

4. We were saved for hope (vs. 24)

"We were given this hope when we were saved..." New Living Translation

Groaning is not the only thing Christians do, Paul says that we also hope (vs. 24)

Hope is one of the great words in the Christian vocabulary.

Titus 2:13 - "*blessed hope*"

Col. 1:27 - "*the hope of glory*"

I Cor. 13:3 - " *these three remain: faith, hope, and love*"

Romans 5:2 - " *... and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"

The Christians hope is not mere 'wishful thinking' but 'sure and steadfast!

It's based upon 1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ and 2) the promises in God's Word.

Not only do we hope, we also wait

We groan, but we groan in hope! (vs. 24-25)

5. We wait patiently (vs. 25)

In verse 19, the creation is waiting in earnest expectation.

In verse 25, the Christian is waiting patiently.

Also (vs. 23) 'waiting' – its eagerly waiting

This is what we are to do now (between suffering and glory) – eagerly, patiently wait in hope that the first fruits will be followed by the harvest, bondage by freedom, and decay by incorruption.

Patience is not passivity!

Patience is active; its perseverance expressing itself in vigorous service.

Jesus said, "*Occupy till I come!*" (Luke 19:13)

Between our present difficulty and future destiny we are to actively serve Him till He comes!

2 Corinthians 5:1-10, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one

may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Here is how D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones puts it:

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Hope is the measure of true Christianity, which is through and through other-worldly. Pseudo-Christianity always looks chiefly at this world. Popular Christianity is entirely this -worldly and is not interested in the other world. But true Christianity has its eye mainly on the world which is to come. It is not primarily concerned even with deliverance from hell, and punishment, and all the things that trouble us and weary us. That really belongs to the past. True Christianity "sets its affection on things which are above, not on things which are on the earth." It is that which says, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:17, 18).

II. The Holy Spirit Groans (vs. 26-27)

Romans 8:26-27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

As we wait in hope, we have help – The Holy Spirit (vs. 14-16)

1. We have weakness (vs. 26) 'infirmities'
2. We don't know how to pray (vs. 26)
3. The Holy Spirit helps (vs. 26)

How?

4. He groans for God's will (vs. 27)

How to Pray - 2 Corinthians 12 – Paul's Thorn

1. escape
2. endure
3. enlist