

Sermon Title: The Holy Spirit Assures the Believer of Future Glory, Part 1 (Creation)

Sermon Text: Romans 8:18-22

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to view life in light of future glory, rather than present distress.

Sermon Proposition: There are five aspects of future glory in light of present distress in creation.

Introduction: In addition to freeing believers from sin and death (Romans 8:2-3), enabling believers to fulfill God's law (v.4), changing believers nature (vv.5-11), empowering believers for victory over sin (vv. 12-13), and confirming their adoption as God's children (vv.14-16), the Holy Spirit guarantees believers ultimate glory.

Romans 8:38-39; John 6:37, 39-40; Romans 3:23; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 5:9; 2 Corinthians 1:6-7; Hebrews 2:10

The Holy Spirit is worthy of worship, due to His fulfilling the role of preparing and preserving the believer in the present and for future glory. The work of the Holy Spirit is guaranteeing our future eternal glory. He is responsible in moving believer's from Grace to Glory. The Father provides the plan for salvation, the Son makes the plan a reality, and the Holy Spirit makes the plan work for and in the life of the believer.

This passage develops the reference to the suffering and glory in v.17b, and continues the overall theme of assurance that dominates Chapter 8, and brings us full circle to the opening of the section in (Romans 5:1-11) of the major section of the letter. Paul wants Christians to realize that they, along with subhuman creation are in the position of waiting and hoping with certainty the culmination of God's plan and purposes.

"All is trouble, adversity, and suffering!" cries Sue Fawly, of the Obscure" [New York: New American Library, 1961 (=1895), p.327].

Example: Solomon Ecclesiastes; Job, mankind throughout history.

This section basically falls into two outlines: 1) creation groans vv.18-22; 2) believers groan vv.23-25; 3) The Holy Spirit groans vv. 26-30. The second outline is based on literary breaks vv. 18-25; vv. 26-27; vv. 28-30.

I. The weight of suffering compared to the weight of glory. V.18

II. The yearning desire of creation. V.19-22

III. The subjugation of creation. V.20

IV. The anticipated liberation of creation. V.21

V. The current status of creation. V.22

I. The weight of suffering compared to the weight of glory. V.18

A Christian worldview of suffering must be developed, massaged, and nurtured so that the suffering of this life is present world-transcending, while it does not diminish the present reality or intensity of suffering, a biblical worldview transcends suffering with the confident assurance of an understood expectation that suffering is not the final word. Leenhurdt states, "The present and visible can only be understood only in the light of the future and invisible." Therefore, Paul and all true believers faith in God determines reality, not circumstances as a result, the mindset of the believer "considers that the suffering of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that shall be revealed to us." Christians of every age must weigh suffering in the scales with the glory that is the final state of every believer; and so heavy or "weighty" so transcendedly wonderful, is the glory that is to come as our relationship with Christ that present suffering is projected in air as if it has no weight at all. **2 Corinthians 4:17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

Douglas Moo points out, "These 'sufferings of the present time' are not only those 'trials' that are endured directly because of confession of Christ – for instance persecution – but also encompass the whole gamut of suffering, including things such as illness, bereavement, hunger, financial reserves, and death itself." Yet Paul in v.17 puts the suffering of this passage in a context of "suffering with Christ." Sin and its effects on creation, humanity, and communion with God are all found in this section. Nothing in creation is as it was originally intended to be before Genesis Chapter 3, the result of this effect of sin is "groaning, hope in the future restoration, and patient anticipation."

All of creation is subjected to the effects of the fall in Genesis Chapter 3. There is a sense in which all suffering, is a result of the overall sufferings of this world in rebellion against God.

The phrase “of the present time” ties those sufferings with the old age of salvation history, conquered in Christ but remaining as the arena in which the Christian must live out their new life in Christ, in the present evil age. (1 Peter 1:19-25)

1 Peter 1:4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The focus of the verses, is the longing anticipation of future transformation shared by both the creation and Christians. In these verses, therefore, Paul supports and develops “the to be revealed concept” in v.18 by showing two illustrations about creation and Christians.

II. The yearning desire of creation. V.19-22

- 1) suffer at present from a sense of incompleteness and even frustration.
- 2) eagerly yearn for a culminating transformation.

The word “eager expectation” suggests the picture of a person craning his or her neck to see what is coming. The eager expectation is the subject of creation. The object of this subject is the sub human creation.

Psalm 65:12 They drop *on* the pastures of the wilderness, And the little hills rejoice on every side. **13** The pastures are clothed with flocks; The valleys also are covered with grain; They shout for joy, they also sing.

Isaiah 24:4 The earth mourns *and* fades away, The world languishes *and* fades away; The haughty people of the earth languish.

Jeremiah 4:28 For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black, Because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it.

Jeremiah 12:4 How long will the land mourn, And the herbs of every field wither? The beasts and birds are consumed, For the wickedness of those who dwell there, Because they said, "He will not see our final end."

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Isaiah 55:12 "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

Paul personifies the subhuman creation in order to convey to his readers a sense of the cosmic significance of both humanities fall into sin and believers’ restoration to glory.

The “revelation of the sons of God” that creation equally anticipates is “the unveiling” of the true redeemed nature of Christians. Paul has made it clear in (vv 14-17) that Christians are already “sons and heirs of God and Christ.” Yet in this world experience suffering (v.18) and weakness (v.26) like all other people, Christians in this life do not always “appear” to be like or look like sons of God. But the future fulfillment of glory will publicly manifest the true status of believers.

The “revelation or revealing” of which Paul speaks is not only a disclosure of what we have always been but also a dynamic process by which the status we now have in preliminary form and in hiddenness.

III. The subjugation of creation. V.20

Why is the creation eagerly anticipating the revealing of the sons of God?

The reason: Paul says, is that the subhuman creation itself is not what it should be, or what God intended it to be. Creation has been subjected to futility unwillingly. (Genesis Chapter 3:17-18). Humanity’s fall into sin marred the “goodness” of God’s creation, and creation has ever since been in a state of frustration.

The identity: 1) The “one who subjected it” is Adam, whose act of disobedience in sin brought death and decay into the world (**Romans 5:12**). 2) Satan, whose temptation led to the Fall, and 3) God the Father, who decreed the curse as a judgment for sin (**Genesis 3:17**).

IV. The anticipated liberation of creation. V.21

There is always hope, found even in the judgment of God. In this verse Paul gets more specific on the content of the hope found at the end of verse 20. The hope that in the future glory the creation itself will be set free from the bondage of decay, death, and destruction, into the future glory of the children of God. The ultimate destiny of creation is not annihilation but transformation.

(Revelation 21:1-22:7)

V. The current status of creation. V.22

1) The whole of current creation groans from birth pangs until now.

Paul uses this thought and picture in 8:23 and

2 Corinthians 5:2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, **3** if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. **4** For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.,

to illustrate the eschatological anticipation. This depicts a time of distress preceding the end of times as we know it.

John 16:20b and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. **21** "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. **22** "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

2) The whole of current creation labors from birth pangs until now.

Conclusion: "As followers of Christ, our suffering comes from men, whereas our glory comes from God. Our suffering is earthly, whereas our glory is forever. Our suffering is trivial, whereas our glory is limitless. Our suffering is in our mortal and corrupted bodies, whereas our glory will be in our perfected and imperishable bodies." [John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary on Romans 1-8, p. 450]