

• LESSON 14 (July 20) •

Romans 8:18-39

## The Glory That Is To Be Revealed To Us

**A**s Christians, we are being called to walk a difficult walk. It is a walk that is Father-defined, Christ-centered, Spirit-led, gospel-empowered, faith-fueled, and glory-focused. It *will* lead us, at times, down pathways of suffering.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom 8:16-17)

Will it be worth it? The Spirit's answer throughout the rest of Romans 8 represents some of the most encouraging God-breathed words in all of Scripture.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (8:18)

Life in this sin-darkened world will involve suffering. Since Genesis 3 when sin came into the world, suffering of a terrible variety has been a reality. But Paul encourages Christians to trust God enough to compare the present reality with the future glory that is going to be revealed.

Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18:

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.



How would you describe “the sufferings of this present time”? When you think of suffering, what comes to mind?

Why is it frequently worthwhile to compare what we presently have with what we *could* have in the future? What we presently are with what we *will* be?

**This present, transient time is a time of groaning.**

- **CREATION is groaning.**

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. (8:19-22)

- **CHILDREN OF GOD are groaning.**

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (8:23-25)

- **THE SPIRIT OF GOD is groaning.**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (8:26-27)

Mention of the will of God naturally leads Paul to express and encourage great confidence in the sovereign providence of God.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For... (8:28-29a)

“For” serves as a connective link between the confidence expressed in Romans 8:28 and the reasons that undergird the confidence Paul is encouraging in the lives of his fellow believers. *Why* should we be confident?

Why is creation presently groaning? How does humanity experience creation’s groaning?

Why are the children of God groaning? To what are the children of God looking forward?

What difference should it make in the lives of children of God to know that the Spirit of God is also groaning?

What should we make of Romans 8:28?

...those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (8:29b-30)

Think carefully through what is being revealed about God in these verses. Based on Romans 8, as well as your understanding of the larger New Testament revelation, how would you encapsulate the meaning of these phrases? Ephesians 1:3-23 might be an additional help.

- ❖ God foreknew –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ God predestined those whom he foreknew to be conformed to the image of his Son –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ The aim of the Father's plan was that his Son might be the firstborn among many brothers –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Those whom the Father predestined he also called –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Those whom the Father called he also justified –
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Those whom the Father justified he also glorified –

In the midst of a sin-darkened world, the Spirit of God is providing anchor points that we desperately need in order to maintain God-shaped perspective. The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that our sovereign God has promised to reveal.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (8:31-32)

Take the time to appreciate the give-and-take in Romans 8:33-37.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Remember how Paul introduced himself in Romans 1:1.

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle...

As a recipient and messenger of divine revelation (1 Cor 2:10-16; 14:37; Gal 1:11-12; Eph 3:1-5; 1 Thes 2:13; 4:8, 15) Paul is able and willing to now say:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (8:38-39)

**CLOSING THOUGHT:** Our heavenly Father does not in any way minimize or sugarcoat the reality of suffering in this present time. Our post-Genesis 3 world is a world of immeasurable heartache. Christians will suffer right along with the rest of humanity. But Satan will not have the last word. Suffering will not define eternity for those whom God has justified. The glory that will be revealed to us is beyond all human comparison or imagination.

Who are “God’s elect”?

In what way is Jesus “interceding” for us? Hebrews 7:23-25 and 1 John 2:1 might prove to be helpful.

How could Paul possibly affirm that “we are more than conquerors” in the midst of such terrible suffering?

What might we be forced into separation from in this life? At the same time, why does not being separated from the love of God in Christ make all the difference?