



Sermon Notes | The Glory That Is to Be Revealed | Romans 8:18-22

INTRODUCTION

We return to the mountain top, the 'Everest' study of Romans 8.

This is a world where beauty fades and strength fails. Though we try to hold on, everything in this world decays over time. It is a 'dying' world. To the majority, this truth fuels a life driven by 'hopelessness'. This life is all there is, and it has a ceiling of decay, disease, disaster, and death. But in Christianity, this marks a life of 'hopeful expectation'. How can this be? While it is a death-ridden, stained and dying world now, it will be 'redeemed', and so the Christian looks forward to this 'renewal', to this transformation to 'glory'. Even while our bodies partake in this decay now, they too will be 'renewed' and transformed to 'glory'. So then, there will be 'renewed and glorified bodies' on a 'renewed and glorified earth'. That is the glory that will be revealed! And Romans reminds us of how this is possible.

One year ago we began the study of this Romans letter.

Romans 1 presented the 'righteousness of God' revealed, in the 'Gospel of God', which is the power of God for 'salvation' to everyone who 'believes', to the Jew first and then the Greek.

Romans 1:1

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God..."

Chapter 1 also covered 'need for salvation' for we are 'suppressors of the truth' by nature. That's who we are in our DNA, given over to ourselves, all humanity hell-bound and incapable of self-salvation. We are 'naturally' hopeless.

Romans 1:18

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."

Chapter 2 establishes that some of humanity are 'fake and feign', and are decent actors, in their roles as 'moralists', while others are 'legalists', doing law-works, as does the Jew, however, neither of these groups will be okay.

Chapter 3 of the letter teaches us that 'none are right' for/to God. In our natural state, we are all unfit, all 'unrighteous' before God.

Romans 3:10

"As it is written: None is righteous, no, not one."

Romans 3:23

"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

All humanity has fallen short and is totally depraved and thus is in need of 'salvation'. This was the bad news. But chapter 4 showed us good news.

Chapter 4 establishes that one can be 'made right' with God, not by works, or decency, or by self, but by 'faith', faith like Abraham, faith in the Word, faith in the Work of God, faith that was 'counted' to Abraham as 'righteousness'.

Romans 4:20-22

"No unbelief made him [Abraham] waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was counted to him as righteousness."

It cannot be just a 'token' belief such as many possess; it's more than just saying, 'Oh, yes, I believe in God.' It must be 'convicting faith', convicting belief that we can do nothing, and that we are nothing without Christ. It is belief in Jesus Christ, who did everything!

Chapter 5 presented the 'new Adam', Jesus Christ, in His 'new humanity'.

Romans 5:1

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Christ we have peace with God. In Christ we have 'new representation'. In Christ we have a 'New Head'. Christ took on our sin, and imputeth 'righteousness' to us. It is 'faith' in this that saves. Believe this!

Romans 5:19

"For as by the one man's disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience [Jesus] the many will be made righteous."

This is 'the Great Exchange', the basis of our 'salvation', and our great 'salvation' gives way to the great 'sanctification'.

In chapter 6 Paul establishes our new position in Christ and our 'sanctification', that position of being progressively 'set-apart'. (In chapters 1-5 Paul outlines justification's need, and justification's source, in Christ, 'justification's need' due to our lacking, and

'justification's source' in Christ, and then he steers us to matters of our 'new position' in Christ, and how that is then 'lived out'. This 'living out' is the process of 'sanctification'.)

In Christ we are 'positionally placed', but this is then 'lived out', from 'sin to righteousness', from slave to sin, to 'slave to righteousness'. We remain a slave, but now to a new master, that being to Christ.

Chapter 7 declares that we are out of Adam, but still have a piece of Adam.

In chapter 8 we studied the three foundations of our 'sanctification': Life in Christ, Life in the Spirit, and Life with the Father.

1. Life in Christ:

Christ took our condemnation. Christ took on what we were due. Sin needed to be dealt with and Christ took that debt and responsibility upon Himself.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

2. Life in the Spirit:

Our minds are set right, in Christ, by the Spirit.

Romans 8:5-11

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

3. Life with the Father:

All led by the Spirit are 'sons of God'. And to be 'sanctified' is to be a 'child of God'.

Romans 8:8-14

"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who

dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Romans 8:16-17

"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."

This is our compass point in the Christian life, that being, that the path to glory is through 'suffering'. There is no shortcut. It is never easy, and never glorious. There is only 'suffering'. As it was for Christ, so also for you. But the Christian knows that 'suffering' is not the ceiling, and so we have hope. The 'suffering' is only a leg of a 'greater glory' yet to be revealed.

Romans 8:18-30

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 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. 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. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. 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. 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 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."

We are thus embarking on one of the richest portions of Scripture, a sweet and rich passage, the pinnacle of chapter 8, and the heart of Paul's message of truth in this Roman letter.

Father, take this text that we might see it rightly, thoroughly, and clearly, and understand it and receive it. Plant it deeply, so that we would live it out for our good and Your glory. Amen.

We live with much suffering, and yet Christian, we also have hope. And this is our reminder of that hope, which is also the thesis statement of the next section.

Romans 8:18

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Paul contrasts the 'suffering' and the 'glory'. The causes of the sufferings and the ails of this present time, the evil, disease and decay, illness and death, make people ask how this suffering is different from persecution? The answer is that this suffering is much broader than persecution, which is a part of suffering, but only a part. Persecution is 'specific evil' targeted at Christians. Overall suffering is a product of the curse, and Paul is speaking about 'suffering' in broad terms, the curse, resulting in the ails of the age. But 'suffering', he states, is nothing, compared to the 'glory' that will be revealed.

Does your coming 'glory' seem so small and of no account compared to your present 'suffering'?

'Suffering' consumes our consideration. It can even take over our existence. But if suffering is considered 'out of context', it will overcome everything else, and impair our sanctification and cause us to dwarf what is coming, that is, our glory, and lose sight of that glory to come. Let us give thanks then, for this text, and rejoice for its reminder. The glory to be revealed is greater than our 'suffering'. It stands alone, and beyond all comparison.

We are not downplaying our suffering. Our sufferings are unique, real, and hard, but they need to be considered in the context of 'the coming glory to be revealed'. The entity that is eagerly longing here is, as Paul says, 'the creation'. By that Paul refers to the subhuman creation, the creatures below, the animals, the mountains, stars, and such. We will consider the four ways that Paul describes this context of 'suffering' and 'glory'. Each one is critical for us if we have abandoned or neglected our consideration of glory.

I. THE CREATION'S LONGING: (v. 19)

Romans 8:19

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."

Paul begins the verse with the word 'for', connecting us back to verse 18, telling us 'why' the 'sufferings' of this present time are not worth comparing to the 'glory to be revealed'. Why do we have such hope? What could possibly overshadow our sufferings (no matter how great they are)? This is important! The creation waits with 'eager longing'. Creation is personified, treated as if human. This is not uncommon in Scripture. We read, for example:

Psalms 98:8

"Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together..."

Isaiah 55:12

"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

This is the personification of creation; it is not human, but it does contain life, and it is not languishing, but is longing, waiting with 'eager longing'. This is creation on its tip toes, its gaze fixed on the horizon, in anticipation. So what is creation longing and 'eager' for?

Romans 8:17-18

"... and if children [of God; v. 16], 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. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

And what is to be revealed?

Romans 8:19

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."

The revealing is of 'the sons of God', not the sons themselves, but the 'revealing' of them. So, who are the 'sons of God'? Are they the pre-flood creations in Genesis, or were they the occupants of the heavenly court as mentioned in Job?

Genesis 6:4

"The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown."

Job 1:6

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them."

No, neither of these references match with the 'revealing' being spoken of here in Romans. Romans 1 provides us with the correct Biblical context. The 'sons of God' are all those who are led by the Spirit, 'the brothers', those 'indwelt' by the Holy Spirit, those "who are called to belong to Jesus Christ," (Romans 1:6).

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:12-14

"So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Therefore, Christians are waiting for the Christians 'to be revealed'. Hey! Are they not known now already, you might ask? Is God not doing a work now? Is not Christian identity obvious? Are Christians not clearly identifiable now? NO! It is not evident to all. In fact, it is very confusing. Creation contains 'decent people', living and doing right, who know the correct lingo, who are moral and good people. (As seen in chapter 2, who believe themselves to be 'just fine'.) So who is really of the Lord? On the outside we all look the same. We all live, get sick, and die. So we can be fooled by the 'external' appearances. But on the 'coming day', our true status will be revealed. Many will have 'professed' sonship, but will have followed a 'different father'. Judgment Day will be a stark reveal!

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'."

Many will want to be assured by their works, but the Father says, 'I never knew you.' Thus is the 'narrow way' versus the 'wide way' scene. It will be a horrifying scene, this 'revealing' of the genuine saints, the real 'sons of God'.

Will I be one? Will I be one of the 'real sons'? Life causes us to question and examine our place before God. No proud confidence for you... No strutting assurance for you.... Just a hard and honest examination of one's own life! Am I His? Do you love your Lord? Are you quick to repent? Do you want to be holy?

Theologian, Charles Cranfield, comments on this:

"Believers are already sons of God in this life but their sonship is veiled and their disguise is impenetrable except to faith. Even they themselves have to believe in their sonship against the clamorous evidence of much in their circumstances and condition, which seems to be altogether inconsistent with the reality of it."

But be encouraged, Christian! The day is coming, and your identity will be revealed. No more wondering, no more doubt, no more waiting, no more suffering, no more 'eagerly' longing; only the 'revealing' of 'I am His'.

Isaiah 25:9

"It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God: we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"

Present suffering compared to this 'glorious revealing' is mine to endure. This is Creation's Longing.

II. THE CREATION'S SUBJECTION: (vv. 20-21)

Romans 8:20-21

"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."

Creation longs, but is 'subjected' to futility, though not willingly. So how then? And when? In Genesis 3, Adam failed his sonship, and guilt was acquired in him.

Genesis 3:17-19

"And to Adam he [God] said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"

And due to Adam's sin, all Creation was brought down in him. All sin in Adam. Our own guilt is acquired in him, because he was our head, the representative of our humanity. The curse upon mankind 'was because of you', Adam (Genesis 3:17).

Romans 5:12-14

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come."

And so, now the Creation will not do as it should do. Thus is the futility of the curse; it wants to do as it should do, but it cannot. It will try, but it won't succeed. The unmaintained gardens of pre-fall flourished, but now they will offer up thorns and thistles. The curse brings 'not willing subjection'. But Adam's subjection was willing; there is no 'passive' sin. Sin is active. Our sin is active. We cannot help our badness. Adam caused it, but the curse was not Adam's doing. It was God who applied the curse. It was God who subjected the Creation to the curse. And only God, in His Sovereignty, can work evil to good. Only Almighty God can curse the entire earth for the purpose of 'hope'.

Romans 8:20

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ..."

The path to 'glory' is through 'suffering' in God's program. God is not absent minded. He has 'purpose' for everything! How so, you ask? For the future end of 'renewal'. He subjected Creation, both man and the world, in order to 'set free' the whole

of earth. The passive Creation cannot free itself; only God can do this, only God can 'renew' and 'free' the Creation.

Romans 8:21

"... 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."

This is the hope and 'the glory' of the children of God: an earth 'renewed', and 'man renewed', no longer cursed, no longer under sin. This is the coming together of the two pieces, the perfect Creation, earth and humanity.

Isaiah 65:17

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."

Genesis 1:31a

"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

We hear the phrase, 'Saving the planet.' And there are new taxes, new laws. And indeed, we are called to be good stewards of the earth, and Christians should do that, should care for the health of this world. However, it was God who subjected the earth, who cursed the earth, and only God can reverse the curse and 'renew' the world. We cannot do the saving. The earth will continue to decay, and we are powerless to stop the earth's decay. He cursed it, but He subjected it in, and with, 'hope'.

Think critically. It is a biblically inaccurate to say that we can save the planet. Recycling is not always bad, but paper straws might be. We must think about what we are trying to accomplish. Natural resources are good; God created them for us to extract and use wisely. But we cannot save the globe. We need to be concerned for it, and to use it wisely, but more importantly, who will save the 'soul of the planet', the universal cosmos? Our call is not to recycle everything; our call is to 'repent'. Repentance comes before renewal!

Luke 13:1-5

"There were some present at that very time who told him (Jesus) about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who live in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish'."

Is your soul renewed? Is this true of you? There are lots of songs and words about renewal, but will you be there on that 'renewed' earth? Will you have stake in the 'new earth'?

III. THE CREATION'S GROANING: (v. 22)

Romans 8:22

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now."

No explanation is needed for the word 'groaning'... the word is understood, the sounds associated with 'groaning', known and understood: 'Ongoing angst' for something, internal longing that comes forth in an audible moan and groan, often most associated with the growth pains of childbirth, an enduring moan. The pains of childbirth, a motif that Scripture repeats.... a suffering that leads to something glorious; just as the groans of childbirth give way to a birthed child, difficult birth pains of suffering, giving way to glory. This is the picture woven into the Creation: a storm before the calm of salvation, salvation through judgment, suffering leading to joy.

Deuteronomy 4:30

"When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice."

Micah 4:10

"Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies."

Mark 13:8

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains."

This is the consistent picture in Scripture. Creation's groaning; an enduring picture of 'waiting in hope', not only God's places, but also God's people.

John 16:16-22

"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.' So some of his disciples said to one another, 'What is this that he says to us, "A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me"; and, "because I am going to the Father"? So they were saying, 'What does he mean by a little while?' 'We do not know what he is talking about.' Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, 'Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'a little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see?' Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."

It is true. You will weep. You will lament. But one day the temporal suffering will turn to joy. Your sorrow will be turned to joy, your groans will give way to glory, and no one will be able to take away your joy.

John 17:1-5, 8-9, 14-22 (from the words of Christ's High Priestly Prayer)

"When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. ... For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ... I have given to them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one..."

One day your hearts will rejoice. The longing will be over. Temporal suffering will be gone forever. And there will be 'glory'. We wait for that day in eager hope.