

THE CURSE WILL SOME DAY BE REMOVED

TEXT: ROMANS 8:17-25

INTRODUCTION:

1. The apostle Paul contrasts our present state with our future glory (8:17, 18). "If so be that we suffer with him (now), that we may be also glorified together (in the future)" (8:17b).
2. To properly understand these verses, we need to understand the doctrine of the fall of man (cf. Romans 5:12). Originally God's creation was good. Five times in Genesis 1 we read, "and God saw that it was good" (1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25).
3. Then in Genesis 1:31 we read, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."
4. But things changed when man fell. The *Scofield Bible* says, "The first sin wrought the moral ruin of the race" (p. 1197).
5. Genesis 3 records Adam's fall.
6. The LORD said to Adam, "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17).
7. In Genesis 3 we read of the curse, and we see similar words -- enmity, sorrow, thorns and thistles, sweat of thy face, etc.
8. When Adam sinned, God cursed the earth and that curse has not yet been lifted. The good news is that some day this curse will be lifted (cf. Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-3).
9. The prophet Isaiah said, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" (Isa. 11:6; cf. 65:25).

I. THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

II. THE POWER OF HOPE

III. THE PROSPECT OF GLORY

I. THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

1. This world is full of suffering people -- because sin produces suffering. Godly people often suffer because of the sins of wicked people.
2. We know godly Christians killed by drunk drivers. Their family members grieve and suffer because of the drunk driver's sin.
3. Some people lose arms and legs and eyes, etc. because of sin (either their sin or the sins of others), and now they are suffering.
4. Christians are often persecuted for their faith (8:17b).

5. People in San Bernardino, California and Paris, France (and all over the world) are suffering because of the violence of Muslim terrorists.
6. Trials and troubles, suffering, sorrow, pain, and death are to be expected in this sin-cursed world. Our Lord said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).
7. Even nature itself is said to be suffering and "groaning" (8:22). The words "travaileth in pain" picture the pains of childbirth.
8. Albert Barnes says this is "a melancholy description," and says that the Christian is not delivered from it at this time.
9. Barnes says, "*It is just the condition of everything.* It is the manifest principle on which God governs the world. The whole creation is in just this condition; and we are not to be surprised, therefore, if it is the condition of the believer. It is a part of the universal system of things; it accords with everything we see; and we are not to be surprised that the church exists on the same principle of administration -- in a state of bondage, imperfection, sorrow, and sighing for deliverance."
10. J. Vernon McGee said, "Some have called our attention to the fact that nature sings in minor key. The wind blowing through the pine trees on a mountainside and the breaking of the surf on some lonely shore -- both emit the same sob. The music of trees has been recorded, and it is doleful. The startled cry of some frightened animal or bird pierces the night air and chills the blood. Surely nature bears audible testimony to the accuracy of Scripture" (*Thru the Bible*).
11. The same Greek word is translated both "creature" (8:19, 20, 21) and "creation" (8:22), and in verse 22 refers to the visible heavens and earth as distinct from man.
12. The context determines whether the word refers to people or God's creation.
13. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This refers to people.
14. Romans 1:25 says, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." This can refer to either people or animals or the earth or the universe, etc.
15. "For the creature (creation) was made subject to vanity" (8:20). The word "vanity" means, "frailty, want of vigour." Some versions translate this word "futility."
16. Paul is saying that the creation "was made subject to vanity, not willingly" (8:20). It was done not by God's perfect will, but done in response to man's sin.

10. God cursed the earth but the good news is the curse will some day be removed (Romans 8:21).
17. Man's suffering ("groan within ourselves") is referred to in verse 23. Our suffering will end when we receive our resurrection bodies.
18. These past few weeks we have been marking the many contrasts in this epistle -- law and grace, liberty and bondage, the Spirit and the flesh, etc.
19. Here we have another contrast -- "the sufferings of this present time" and "the glory which shall be revealed" (8:18).
20. But before the crown, there is the cross.
21. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Paul had been doing some spiritual arithmetic, and, as it were, had put down in two columns the suffering and the glory, with the result that there was no comparison between them (II Cor. 4:17, 18)" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
22. The words "joint-heirs with Christ" (8:17) refer to this future glory. This is the final stage of our salvation.
- we have been saved from the penalty of sin
 - we are being saved from the power of sin
 - we shall be saved from the presence of sin (8:23)
23. We were sanctified positionally when we were saved. And we are growing in sanctification day by day -- this is progressive sanctification.
24. Some day we will be in heaven. This is ultimate sanctification, or "glorification" (cf. Romans 8:28-30). We will have immortal, incorruptible, resurrection bodies and there will be no more suffering.
25. Some day there will be no more sin, and no more suffering (cf. Revelation 21:3-5).
26. *There'll be no sorrow there, no more burdens to bear,
No more sickness, no pain, no more parting over there;
And forever I will be with the One who died for me,
What a day, glorious day that will be.* -- Jim Hill

II. THE POWER OF HOPE

1. The word "hope" is found six times in verses 20, 24, and 25. The Biblical definition of hope is different from the way it is used in the world. The world typically defines hope as a desire for some future occurrence of which one is not assured of attaining (success in some endeavor or a new job or promotion, etc.).
2. According to Scripture, hope is confident expectancy, not wishful thinking.

3. Someone said, "Faith looks backward and upward; hope looks onward. Faith accepts; but hope expects. Faith is concerned with Him who promises; but hope is occupied with the good things promised. Faith appropriates; but hope anticipates" (W.H. Griffith Thomas, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
4. "Earnest expectation" (8:19) speaks of the power of hope. Hope is always centered on the coming of the Lord.
5. W.H. Griffith Thomas says, "The suggestion of creation waiting (verse 19) is that of someone with outstretched neck looking eagerly and constantly for what is earnestly expected" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
6. The hymnwriter said: "This world's a wilderness of woe," and she was right. Thank God the Lord is coming back. This is our "blessed hope."
7. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13; cf. Romans 8:18-23).

III. THE PROSPECT OF GLORY

1. We have been saved from the penalty of sin (cf. Romans 10:13). And we have been saved from the power of sin (8:2; cf. 6:14).
2. Therefore, our salvation is present. Paul said in I Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
3. So our salvation is something present and complete in regard to deliverance from the guilt and condemnation of sin, but it is still future in regard to deliverance from the presence of sin (8:23-25).
4. Romans 8:19 says the whole creation is earnestly and eagerly waiting for the time when we (those of us who are saved) will be "manifested" (revealed) as "the sons of God."
5. Presently we already are the sons of God (Romans 8:16; cf. John 1:12; I John 3:2). But the world does not recognize this. But when Christ returns, this will be manifested or revealed (Romans 8:19).

CONCLUSION:

*No tranquil joys on earth I know,
 No peaceful, shelt'ring dome;
 This world's a wilderness of woe,
 This world is not my home.*

*We'll work till Jesus comes,
We'll work till Jesus comes,
We'll work till Jesus comes,
And we'll be gathered home.* -- Elizabeth K. Mills