

Title: Groaning for Glory
Scripture: Romans 8:18-27
Series: God's Saving Grace

1. Introduction:

- a. Romans 8 begins by showing the freedom the Holy Spirit brings. It explains that through Christ, the Holy Spirit sets us free (verses 2-4). Then verses (5-17) describe the gifts the Holy Spirit gives us as he liberates us. The passage concludes that because the Spirit of adoption has brought us to the Father as His children, we can now call God "**Abba, Father.**"
- b. In verses 17 and 18, Paul compares our hope to the unavoidable human suffering we encounter in this life. He says that our suffering **is not worthy of comparison with the coming glory.**
 - i. Paul acknowledges the reality of present suffering but emphasizes that it cannot be compared to the future glory awaiting believers.
- c. This statement is amazing, especially considering that Paul applied it to himself. The apostle Paul was one of the most persecuted and afflicted men ever to live. Despite facing so many hardships, such as his ship sinking, being stoned, robbed, and whipped severely, Paul thought of these terrible suffering times as **not worthy of comparison with the coming glory.**
 - i. **Galatians 6:17** From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

- d. Paul begins verse 18 by saying, "I consider," meaning, "I have thought it over carefully, have weighed the evidence, and have come to this conclusion."
- i. Even with the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Paul struggles to express the immense difference between the present reality of suffering and the future realities of incomparable glories.
 - ii. He says the same thing in **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, (18) 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.
 - iii. Here, we learn a valuable lesson. No matter what we have gone through, are presently going through, or will go through, it is not worth comparing with the glory that awaits us.
 1. Consider the following: We can compare a thimble of water with the sea, but we cannot compare our sufferings with the coming glory.
- e. What, then, must this glory be like?
- i. We know that the universe will be transformed.
 1. **Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
 - ii. We also know that we will have bodies like Christ's glorified body.

1. **Philippians 3:21** who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
- iii. We know that we shall be with Christ forever.
 1. **1 Thessalonians 4:17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.
- iv. We know that we shall be like him.
 1. **1 John 3:2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.
- v. We know we shall feast with God.
 1. **Revelation 19:9** And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."
- vi. We know we shall have some official position in the universe.
 1. **2 Timothy 2:12** if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;
- vii. We know we will shine like the sun.
 1. **Matthew 13:43** Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

- f. Beloved, belief in the Scriptures will change our lives. Some of us need to lift our eyes from this world's dirt toward heaven's glories. There is no comparison of our pleasure or pain with the glory yet to be revealed.
- g. As we continue, Paul presents the hope as so real that creation groans for it, believers groan for it, and even the Holy Spirit helps believers with His own groans.

2. Verses 19-22: Creation's Groan and Hope: For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (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. (22) For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

- a. Paul pictures animate and inanimate creation, the animals, and the earth itself as an audience eagerly waiting for the **sons of God** to come into their true glory.
- b. In verse 19, the phrase "**waits with eager longing**" comes from words that suggest craning the neck or stretching forward—creation strains for the day of liberation.
 - i. Paul gives the reason for the creation's longing: "**For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope** " (v. 20). Paul is referring to the curse that came upon creation when mankind sinned.

1. **Genesis 3:17-19** And to Adam he 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; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) 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.”
 - ii. Because of the fall, creation was filled with suffering, decay, and death. Sometimes, nature seems to work against itself and humanity.
 - iii. Fear and violence invaded the animal world. Even the most beautiful scenes in nature witness bloody horrors. Floods, hurricanes, droughts, tornadoes, blights, avalanches, and earthquakes plague the earth.
- c. Paul says in verse 22, "**For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.**" The earth groans like a woman in labor. It wants desperately to be delivered.
- d. Sometimes there appears to be no hope. But there is! Verse 21 states, "**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.**"
 - i. Imagine what will happen when nature can produce as it was designed to, free from disease and danger.

ii. The finished work of Christ aims to save all of creation, ending the land's mourning and the animals' fear. Though nature can be violent now, in the new heaven and earth, violence will cease, and predators will live peacefully with prey. Paul says creation will be freed from decay to glorious freedom.

1. Oh, Beloved, the day is coming! We will see that day! We read in **Isaiah 11:6** The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

3. Verses 23-25: The Church's Groan and Hope: 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. (24) For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

a. Paul now applies this to individuals. Just as creation groans, Christians also groan.

i. The thing we groan for is our adoption as sons, which the redemption of the body will complete.

1. We are already God's children, but we won't be fully complete until we receive our new bodies for eternity.

- a. **2 Corinthians 5:2** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,
- b. We also groan because of the misery of living in our fallen bodies.
 - i. **Ray Stedman wrote**: It is recorded that, as he drew near the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus groaned in his spirit because he was so burdened by the ravages that sin had made in a believing family. He groaned, even though he knew he would soon raise Lazarus from the dead. So we groan in our spirits—in disappointment, in bereavement, in sorrow. We groan physically in our pain and our limitations. Life consists of a great deal of groaning.
- c. We also groan, but for a good reason—we have "**the first fruits of the Spirit**" (v. 23). We have the first part of the amazing inheritance God has prepared for us.
 - i. That indescribable peace we knew when we first experienced the forgiveness of our sins, the power of God that calms our heart despite circumstances, the joy that floods our souls—these are mere foretastes of what is yet to come!
 - ii. We are described as waiting "**eagerly**" (v. 23). This same strong word is used for creation's waiting (v. 19). We are both straining for that glorious day.
 - iii. Life may be hard now, but in the future, there will be immense joy. Let's eagerly anticipate being

freed from our sinful bodies, experiencing indescribable glory, seeing Christ face to face, and fully exploring the endless joys of knowing him.

- d. Today, we long for something we can't fully grasp. Someday, we will experience the fullness of our salvation.

4. Verses: 26-27: The Holy Spirit's Groan and Hope:

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. (27) 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.

- a. Creation groans, we groan, and even the Holy Spirit groans.
- b. If we are honest with ourselves, we must all admit there are times when we cannot pray. We are caught up in a situation so unfamiliar and disorientating that we cannot find the words to commune with God. What a joy to know that in those times, **the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.**
 - i. The Holy Spirit says those things we want to say but cannot find the words to express. What a blessed people we are! Our hearts should overflow with gratitude.
 - ii. The Spirit steps in and assists us with our weaknesses. That is divine help, and it is ours!

iii. It's truly amazing! Consider it, Beloved! We have two intercessors: Jesus in Heaven, who intercedes for our sins (v. 34), and the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We are deeply loved!

1. So, we pray in Jesus' name because He is our high priest in heaven, interceding for us daily. When we pray, we do so in Christ's righteousness, not our own. Jesus is praying for us, so prayer involves all three persons of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit helps us pray, ensuring our prayers align with God's will.

a. How beautiful are the words of Jesus in **John 14:13-17** Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (15) “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (16) And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, (17) even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

c. Because of the amazing glory to come and our weaknesses, we groan. But we are not alone; creation and even the Holy Spirit groan with us. One day, our groans will turn into glory!

i. **Psalms 30:11-12** You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my

sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, (12)
that my glory may sing your praise and not be
silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to
you forever!

5. Benediction:

- a. **2 Corinthians 4:14** knowing that he who raised the
Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us
with you into his presence.

Public Reading of Scripture
2 Corinthians 4:7-18