

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

May 3, 2023

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

Text – Romans 8:18 - 30 – *The Work of the Holy Spirit – Part Two*

### Introduction

In the first part of chapter eight, we were introduced to the work of the Holy Spirit who is mentioned 19 times in this chapter. We saw that the Holy Spirit gives life, which begins with our birth into the family of God giving us eternal life, and goes further to include an abundant, Spirit-filled life of service and worship here on the earth.

In this second section of chapter eight, Paul will explain the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives here on the earth. It is the Holy Spirit's job here on the earth to help us fulfill God's will for our lives.

### II. The Spirit Gives Us Hope (vs. 18 – 30)

#### A. The Hope of a Future Perfection (vs. 18 – 25)

***"For I reckon (λογίζομαι – logizomai) that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)***

"For I reckon" – this does not mean that Paul was from the south, it meant that he was counting on something. "Reckon" means to count or to impute. Paul was saying that he was counting on the fact that the suffering that he had experienced in this life was nothing compared to the reward that he would receive for it.

This life may be a life of temporal suffering. You may experience physical problems, family problems, or financial problems, or all of them together, but the negative experiences of this life are nothing in comparison to the glory and bliss that we will experience in Heaven. If you are a Christian, this life is as close to Hell as you will ever get, but if you are lost, this life is as close to Heaven as you will ever get.

Notice the words that Paul uses in this section to describe our earthly existence: sufferings (v. 18); vanity (v. 20); bondage (v. 21); decay (v. 21); groaneth (v. 22); and pain (v. 22).

Trials are a part of the Christian life:

*"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4)*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:3-9)*

***"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19)***

The phrase "earnest expectation" is a great definition for hope.

The idea is that we "creatures" are trapped in these temporal bodies, which are subject to vanity (corruptible, of no eternal value). We are looking forward to our new bodies.

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:52-54)*

***"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope," (Romans 8:20)***

Even though we are saved, it is the will of God for us to sojourn for a little while on the earth in these earthly bodies. He could have given us a glorified body right away, and He could have taken us immediately to Heaven; but He subjected us to this new nature dwelling in an earthly body side-by-side with our sinful flesh.

***"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21)***

Someday, we will be free (released - delivered) from these earthly bodies.

***"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22)***

*"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we*

*groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:" (2 Corinthians 5:1-2)*

*"I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." (Psalms 6:6)*

As long as we are in these bodies, and on this earth, we will do a little groaning.

The whole earth was negatively impacted by the fall of man. There is death, disease, and decay all around us. This is the exact opposite of what evolution teaches, which is that everything is gradually getting better. God's Word says that this whole creation is in decay, getting worse, and someday will have to be completely re-created:

*"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Revelation 21:1)*

The environmentalists all talk about the beauty that exists in nature, and to some degree even the fallen creation retains some of the splendor that it had before the fall; but this earth is not really a beautiful place. There is evidence of death and decay everywhere. The animals are not living a blissful existence here on earth; they are fighting every moment for their lives. Some animals are eaten by larger animals, some are killed by disease, and many starve to death. This is not Heaven.

Godet quotes Schelling in this connection, "Nature, with its melancholy chorus, resembles a bride who, at the very moment when she is fully attired for the marriage, saw the bridegroom die. She still stands with her fresh crown and in her bridal dress but her eyes are full of tears."<sup>1</sup>

*"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:23)*

We have the down payment of the Holy Spirit in our lives, which is a little taste of what Heaven will be like, but we yearn for the redemption of our bodies. The Holy Spirit within us gives us assurance that there is a better, eternal future for us.

*"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Romans 8:24)*

Hope means expectation in the Bible. It does not refer to something that is possible or even probable, but rather something that we are sure to receive, but have not yet received it. It has the idea of anticipation for that which we trust to receive.

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<sup>1</sup> McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 1-8)* (electronic ed., Vol. 42, p. 154). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

***"But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8:25)***

*"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."  
(Hebrews 11:1)*

Illustration - In 1954, William Golding published his Nobel prize-winning novel *Lord of the Flies*, which tells the story of British schoolboys shipwrecked and stranded on a small island. They began well, creating an ad hoc society that provided food, shelter, and safety for all, and even maintained a signal fire to attract passing ships. Before long, however, most of the boys abandoned their society for savagery, even to the point of killing some of the weaker boys to get what they wanted. A small minority chose to remain civilized. One crucial factor divided the savage boys from the civil: hope of rescue. Those who expected to be found and subsequently held accountable for their actions behaved well. Those who abandoned that hope saw no reason to keep their natures in check, and their depravity found complete expression (Repeated from Lecture Seven).<sup>2</sup>

The ministry of the Holy Spirit reminds us of the wonderful hope that we have for the future, which enables us to faithfully endure painful trials here on the earth. Hope can get you through a lot of things.

Illustrate - Hope of a future ministry can cause you to endure the sacrifices required to get you through Bible College.

### **B. The Help of a Fervent Prayer Partner (vs. 26 – 27)**

The Holy Spirit not only gives us hope, He gives us help. He helps our prayer life.

***"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26)***

We saw in the last point that the Creation is groaning, but now Paul tells us that the Spirit groans as well. He groans in prayer for us, interceding for us. We can't even pray right. We need the Spirit to help us. Sometimes we are in such a mess emotionally and spiritually that we have a tough time putting words to our prayers, but the Spirit is interceding for us.

***"And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8:27)***

"he that searcheth the hearts" refers to the Lord. He listens to the voice of the Spirit within our hearts and then also intercedes to the Father on our behalf.

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<sup>2</sup> Swindoll, Charles R. (2010-03-24). *Insights on Romans* (Swindoll's New Testament Insights) (p. 55). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

### C. The Honor of a Foreknown Purpose (vs. 28 – 30)

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)*

The called refers to those who are saved. All that we go through here on this earth is part of God's bigger purpose. God is working out his will in and through our lives. Our individual lives are part of a bigger purpose. God is doing things, and allowing things in and through us that will ultimately glorify Him and advance His kingdom.

R. A. Torrey called this verse a soft pillow for a tired head.

Joseph is a perfect example of this verse. He had many horrible things happen to him, but they ultimately all brought him to the place where God wanted him to be. Job would also concur with Joseph. There are many things in our lives that make little sense while we are experiencing them, but we will someday look back on them and see the work of God's hand.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)*

*"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)*

"whom he did foreknow" – God knows everything, the beginning from the end. He knew that you would get saved, but He did not force you to get saved against your will. He is willing to save anyone that calls upon Him, but those that call upon Him have to be willing to trust Him.

*"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." (1 Peter 1:2)*

Those that He knew would get saved, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his son**. God predetermined that those who get saved would be transformed into the image of Christ.

*"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:30)*

Those whom He knew would receive Christ, He called, and those He called received, and because they received Him (John 1:12), He justified; and finally, all those that are justified (saved) will be glorified someday. We will be given a glorified, eternal, incorruptible, and sinless body. God will see all the saved through until the end. He won't lose a one of us.

Frankly, I do not see an absence of free will in this passage at all. We are not robots, and

though God could force us to do anything He wants us to do, He chooses to allow us to choose Him. I know that I as a parent would rather that my children voluntarily love me. I see all true worship as a voluntary expression of the love that we have for God, as imperfect as that may be because of the flesh.

Henry Ward Beecher said, “the elect includes the whosoever wills, and the non-elect are the whosoever won’t’s”. I thank God that I became a “whosoever will” as a 25-year-old man.

J. Vernon McGee gives this illustration:

Let me go back to my illustration of the turtles. Suppose you go down to a swamp, and there are ten turtles. You say to the turtles, “I’d like to teach you to fly.” Nine of them say, “We’re not interested. We like it down here; we feel comfortable in this environment.” One turtle says, “Yes, I’d like to fly.” *That* is the one which is called, and that is the one which is taught to fly. Now that doesn’t have anything in the world to do with the other turtles. They are turtles because they are turtles. My friend, the lost are *lost* because they want it that way. There is not a person on top side of this world that is being forced to be lost. They are lost because they have chosen to be lost.<sup>3</sup>

Notice what Wiersbe states regarding this passage:

The believer never need faint in times of suffering and trial because he knows that God is at work in the world (Romans 8:28), and that He has a perfect plan (Rom. 8:29). God has two purposes in that plan: our good and His glory. Ultimately, He will make us like Jesus Christ! Best of all, God’s plan is going to succeed! It started in eternity past when He chose us in Christ (Ephesians 1:4–5). He predetermined that one-day we would be like His Son. Predestination applies only to saved people. Nowhere are we taught that God predestines people to be eternally condemned. If they are condemned, it is because of their refusal to trust Christ (John 3:18–21). Those whom He chose, He called (see 2 Thessalonians 2:13–14); when they responded to His call, He justified them, and He also glorified them. This means that the believer has already been glorified in Christ (John 17:22); the revelation of this glory awaits the coming of the Lord (Romans 8:21–23).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. V. (pp. 158 – 159)

<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 541). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.