

Romans 8:18-27 “A Great Groaning”

We are here in the midst of perhaps one of the greatest chapters of the Bible as Paul is writing to the church in Rome about the wonderful indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and last week we talked about how the Spirit of God dwells within us as a deposit and this deposit that we have is what guarantees that we have a place waiting for us one day in eternity with Jesus.

Over the last several weeks we have been watching as Paul has brought us through this amazing process that first showed you and I that we are no longer to live according to the flesh or what is called the old sinful nature or the Adamic nature but that instead we are to understand that if we are in Christ we have a new spiritual nature in our lives.

Paul has said that we are no longer dominated by the old ways of life, but instead we now have a new Master and that Master is the Lord Jesus Christ...He has set us free from the constant authority of the fleshly desires in our lives and now that we are in Christ we have the blessed opportunity to offer ourselves unto righteousness rather than offering ourselves to sinful behaviors.

In chapter 7 Paul gave us his personal account of the struggle of sin in his own life as he repeatedly said that he knew what the right thing to do was but found himself so often living for the things that he hated...He agreed with God's law that it was good and he wanted to keep it but found that in himself, in his own will power and abilities that he fell short...and then he came to the point of exasperation where he said “Who will save me from this wretched man that I am?”

and the answer to that question was found as he said it was through Jesus Christ.

And then last week we began to talk about the incredible work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and how in Christ there is therefore now no condemnation...and remember we said that the word condemnation carries with it the idea of eternal separation from God...and as you and I go through life sometimes when we make mistakes or we sin the enemy will come against us and try to deceive us into thinking that because of our failures that God no longer loves us and He is finished with us...Paul reminds us though that in Christ there is no condemnation as we look to live in the Spirit.

You and I are no longer under the condemnation of Satan but instead we get to walk in the newness of life that is found in Christ...and I don't know about you but I am so thankful that the forgiveness of God is always available as I simply come to Him seeking His work in my life.

We also discussed that because we have placed our faith in Jesus that we are to have minds that are no longer thinking on the things of the flesh but instead we are to train our minds to think on the things of the Spirit. If you remember we discussed the battlefield of the mind and how you and I who are in Christ now have authority by His Spirit to take thoughts captive and make them submissive to our Lord.

And then if you remember we talked about how you and I are adopted into the family of God when we come to Jesus...Now instead of being afraid of our Father in heaven, instead of hiding as Adam did in the garden...In Christ we have a new relationship with the Father...we can be near to our Father in heaven, we can spend time with Him, we can walk with Him.

If you remember last week I mentioned that the Roman people would have known exactly what Paul was saying when he spoke of adoption...When a Roman adopted someone it meant that the person adopted was saying good bye to the old life and all their old debts were then gone...and instead they had access to all the benefits their new master had to offer them...so it is for you and I as we find ourselves adopted into the family of God.

Now this week as we begin, I want to just point you over to Romans 8:17 which says this ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

I wanted to just point something out here in this verse and we are going to build on it this week in our study but notice that as we are in Christ we are heirs of the glory that will one day come but notice that we have some difficult words there in the text as well when it says **IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM.** Now that doesn't sound all that fun to me, I would rather just skip the suffering and move on into glory.

I am reminded though that as we go through life in this world there will be much suffering that we endure...the reason for this is that we live in a world that is tainted by the effects of sin and while we are renewed in our spirits as we come to Christ we still must pass through the difficulties of this world.

I am thankful though that the trials of this world are used for our good and we won't get to this verse this week but just listen to Romans 8:28 and I'm sure you are all familiar with this. It says ²⁸**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.** Though this

world will bring trials and tribulations even for the saints of God I am thankful the Lord uses the trials of this life to strengthen and help us.

We read this over in James 1:3-4 which says ²**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,** ³**knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.** ⁴**But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

As we go through life whether you believe in Jesus or not you will face difficulty...the question is would you rather go through difficulty without Jesus helping you and building you up or would you rather go through it by yourself...I have to say life without Jesus won't produce hope, you will find yourself wanting but if you are in Christ He will help you as you go through hard times.

Some of you may be saying that was a really long introduction but I think it's helpful as we roll into the text and this week we are going to see that there is an awful lot of groaning that happens as we go through life...Today we'll see there are three different things that are groaning as we will see that creation itself groans, that you and I groan and the Holy Spirit groans as He intercedes on our behalf.

I have to say just before we get started here, but if you look at these verses before us today there is one thing you definitely will not find...and that is the idea that if you are in Christ that all the Lord has for you is health, wealth and prosperity...we see none of that in these verses...but there is hope, there is a future glory we will enter into, the Lord will meet us and strengthen us even in the toughest of times.

Let's look at this if you look at verse 18 it says ¹⁸**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be**

compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. I think as we go through this world and we do face those times of great suffering that we need to be reminded that one day there is glory that is waiting for us.

We have this over in Acts 14:21-22 when the Word says this ²¹**And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,** ²²**strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

In 2 Tim 3:12 we are told that all those who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted...The fact is that if you want to live for Jesus you will go through trials and difficulties.

But I just remind you again that though you may suffer for 70-80 years here in this world that one day you will enter the eternal presence of Jesus...Heaven is a place without any trials or difficulties, a place that there are no more tears or sickness, a place of eternal rest and peace.

If you just look at the Bible you will find that those who served God went through much difficulty in their lives in this world. We might be reminded of Job in the Old Testament. This is a man that was seen to be doing the right thing in his life even interceding on behalf of his kids...and yet he went through tremendous difficulty as his wife even said he should curse God and die. His friends weren't much help either as they constantly told him he was a failure and a sinner.

Peter had this to say about the suffering of believers in 1 Peter 4:12-13 which says ¹²**Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery**

trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. Suffering for the kingdom of God produces glory as we move on into eternity...great gladness will be ours one day.

Paul suffered much in his life as well didn't he? For homework you might just go read 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 and you will see that everywhere Paul turned troubles and trials awaited him. He was beaten, shipwrecked on multiple occasions spending a day and a night in the sea, stoned, hungry, thirsty, cold and naked and the list goes on.

We might even think of the ultimate example Jesus, who suffered much on our behalf in this world and once He had suffered what did He do but He entered into glory. It's a strange thing that happens in the lives of believers as we face the troubles of this world...I believe trouble only makes us that much more ready for an eternity with Him.

Now I want you to tuck this away here for a few minutes and we are going to come back to talking about the glory that awaits us one day...But let's move forward here in our study and we'll see that not only do you and I have a hope of eternity in our lives but Creation itself is also looking forward to one day being redeemed.

Let's look at verses 19-21 which say¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits 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 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It's an interesting thing

to stop and think about creation itself...Creation is incredible isn't it? I mean think about the variety of plants and animals and the vastness of the oceans and the way that God has placed the sun and the moon and the stars.

Psalm 19:1 says this of creation when it says **The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.**

Creation screams that there is a Creator and that He is indeed glorious.

I am reminded that though creation is glorious it is still fallen. Can you imagine what the Garden of Eden would have been like? No thorns for sure, to be able to work the ground without sweating, it would seem as though in the garden the fruits and the plants grew without any difficulty at all.

I wonder how the lions and the animals of this world would have been in a perfect state. Have you ever thought about this world being without hurricanes and blizzards...what about this, have you ever thought about this world without the difficulties of mosquitos and the dreaded oak mites of Kansas?

It's amazing to think that at one time this world functioned as perfect, without flaw and without error...

We are told here in our text in Romans that Creation itself is eagerly awaiting the revealing of the Sons of God...and that one day the creation will be liberated right along side us.

One day the world will be redeemed...and we look forward to this taking place initially during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ which is that time that the Lord will descend from heaven and reign in

Jerusalem for 1,000 years and during this time we are told that the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and the children will play with snakes without fear, and the world will be healed of all the brokenness that sin has caused in it. Ultimately this will be completely fulfilled when the new heavens and the new earth are created.

I believe as we look at creation today that you and I can see that something dreadful has happened to it...For all the beauty of creation there is still much that takes place that lets us know that things are not ok...For instance we might just bring attention to the fact that Kansas is facing a drought and they have been pretty much the 4 years I have been living here...We might look at the animal kingdom and you will find real quick that things are not perfect at all...you might look at the devastation that a hurricane brings to an island or the destruction of an earthquake or even a tsunami that comes upon land...you might even look at the plants in this world and you realize real quick that while the good crops grow that the weeds are right there to cause havoc.

I think the question as we look at this world can become why would God allow this? Or why is everything so broken? And I think to just discuss that for a minute you might just look at verse 20 again which says this ²⁰ **For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;** now we might scratch our heads a bit at this and we might wonder what it means that creation was subjected to futility and then it says that it wasn't willingly done this way but because of HIM (and you might notice that HIM is capitalized which means it is referring to God) but then it says

He (speaking of God) subjected it in hope...Anyone confused? Not an easy verse to understand.

But I'll take a crack at it from my viewpoint...the way I look at this takes us back to the garden of Eden and how God created man and he took the man and placed him in the garden and then he gave authority or dominion of creation to Adam...and I believe God subjected creation to Adam in hope, hoping that Adam would do the right thing, enjoying walking in the garden with God Himself...but sadly Adam who was over creation submitted himself to Satan when he chose to sin and when he did that one of the consequences was that creation was subjected to sinfulness as well.

Hopefully that makes sense but let's move forward here before we run out of time...look at verse 22 which says ²²**For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.** We are told here that creation is groaning and that it's actually going through great labors and birth pangs. The earth greatly desires to be redeemed as it is seen here as if it was a woman that was in labor...and I know nothing about labor pains but I have seen and heard that they are incredibly painful indeed and when a woman is about to give birth those pains get more and more intense...but do you know what happens right after the intensity of labor pains? When that child is born what takes place? All the pains of labor go away and there is great rejoicing in the little life that has come into this world.

The suffering of labor brings about the glory of a newborn child...so it will be with creation as it struggles, as it groans, as it looks forward to one day being redeemed.

Jesus even spoke of the labor pains and the groanings of this world over in Matthew 24:7-8 when He said this of the signs of the end times **7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.** When it says beginning of sorrows there the actual word used means labor pains...this world is groaning for sure and is looking forward to the redemption that will one day come.

Look at verses 23-25 and we'll see our second groaning of the day when the Word says **23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

So not only does creation groan but we are told here that you and I who have the firstfruits of the Spirit within us are groaning as well, waiting with great anticipation for the redemption of our bodies.

Now I'm not all that old in my life, I am a young 44 years of age now but I will tell you that when I hit about 40 years old or so that my body began to groan about things it never thought about before...I began to have aches and pains and my eyes began to be a little weird in that I could not see the words when they were close to me...but my point is that my body and my life is in desperate need of an upgrade.

I am thankful and I know you are as well that one day we will receive that incredible upgrade we are all looking forward to and the Word of

God speaks often of the redemption of our bodies that will one day come. I want to just share some scriptures with you here.

Over in John 14:2-3 the Lord Jesus made a promise to the disciples when He said this ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. Isn't it amazing that Jesus is preparing a place for you and I? and that one day He will come again and receive us to Himself?

Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 says ⁵⁰Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

1 John 3:2-3 says the following ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

And then listen to 2 Corinthians 5:1-5 which really goes hand in hand with what we have in Romans 8 and it says the following For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed

with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴ For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

I don't know about you but I sure do look forward to knowing the Lord and His glory one day. I can't wait to throw off the shackles of this sinful body and embrace the new life that Jesus has for me.

Have you ever thought about what that might be like? I wonder how old I will be in my glorified body? I wonder how strong I will be? I wonder how it will be to eat food and see it have no effect on my physical frame...I think about how there won't be any sickness at all and there won't be tears at all in heaven, and there won't be heartache any longer...I imagine the great peace that will one day be ours as we get to physically see Jesus and rest in His great glory...I wonder how the trees of heaven will be and the glory that creation will display...I can't wait until the day that everything will come under the rule of Jesus Christ and there won't be a single sinful thing found anywhere that you look. No longer will anyone be hungry, no longer will there be ruling parties in the world, no longer will anyone do anything out of a selfish desire but all things will be subject to Jesus...I won't have to contend with the fleshly desires of my life any longer either...won't that be strange to have no more temptation?

I believe you and I can at times find our hope in the wrong place, we can begin to focus on the things of this world, we can lose sight of the glorious eternity that is awaiting us one day, we can focus on riches

and prosperity and all the goods of this world and we miss out on the hope of glory that is one day coming for those who believe in Jesus Christ.

We might notice one more thing here before we move on but at the end of verse 25 we are told that **we eagerly wait for it (being the redemption of the body) WITH PERSEVERANCE.** I hope that we can all hear this as we study what is before us this morning...The expectation that the Lord has for us as we suffer in this world and we await the glory that is one day ours is that we will persevere...

Now that word in the Greek is hypomone and I like how it is defined in what is called an Outline of Biblical Usage on Blue Letter Bible's Website...When it comes to hypomone it is defined in the following ways. Steadfastness, constancy and endurance and Thayer's Greek Lexicon says this of this word...in the New Testament it is the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith by even the greatest trials and sufferings.

There is much to be said about the believer and the need to persevere...we might think of a woman in labor and how she must persevere until she gives birth. We might think of the athlete and how they must persevere in the race that is before them.

Paul commended the church in Thessalonica for their perseverance or patience when he said this in 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 which says this

³We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, ⁴so that we ourselves

boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

And then over in Hebrews 10:35-37 we have the following which says

³⁵Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

**³⁷“For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.**

The sad tendency for so many who believe in Jesus is to lose their perseverance and patience for His kingdom. Often when the pressures of the world are pressing upon us we lose hope, we forget about our future glory with the Lord, we forget that in suffering great blessing and glory are produced.

To the saints in Christ I would simply ask today do you find yourself hoping and waiting and groaning for the kingdom that will one day be revealed in us who have been adopted into His kingdom? If not, I believe today the Lord would say to us that we are to have hearts for His kingdom and His glory and we ought not focus on this world but instead on the redemption that will one day be ours.

So we have the groaning of creation and we have the groaning of you and I who believe in Christ and then in verses 26-27 of Romans 8 we have a third groaning that takes place on our behalf and it says this if you look at it with me **²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the**

hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Here we are told that the Spirit of God helps us in our weaknesses and I want to just speak to that for a second or two...I want us to understand today that this is not saying the Spirit only helps when we are weak and overcome and broken but instead that the Spirit is ever present to help us in weakness...The idea here in my mind is that I am always in a state of being weak.

You know sometimes I think we can look at our lives and we can start to think “God I’ve got this, I can take care of this Lord, I don’t need your help” and I have to say the moment you find yourself in that place that you are in great trouble for God resists those who are proud but gives grace to the humble.

You and I should know that we are always in desperate need of the intervention of the Holy Spirit and I am thankful that God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us and encourage us and guide us and even convict us in our lives. In John 14:16-18 Jesus said the following of the Spirit’s work when He said ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Now as Paul is saying what we have in these verses in Romans he specifically speaks of one way the Holy Spirit helps us in that he says that you and I don’t know what we should pray for or how we ought to

pray and as such the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

How many of you have been through a time so tremendous and difficult in your life that you had no words as you came before God? You didn't know what to pray or what to say or what to think about the situation before you...I take comfort in the fact that the Spirit of God actually makes intercession on our behalf.

I suppose I would expand this intercession of the Spirit not just to those times of incredible difficulty but to every moment of our lives...I believe you and I have a hard time knowing how to pray many times in our lives, and our words can often fail us and you know the Bible is clear that we don't know our own hearts many times...and I think there are times you and I can have plans in our hearts and minds and they seem good to us but God has something very different in mind for us.

1 Corinthians 2:9 says ⁹**But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."** You and I often can't even fathom the plans and the works that God has for us.

And so when we pray I am thankful that it is almost like the Spirit of God grabs hold of those prayers and translates them before the Lord or He can add things to my prayers that I may not understand or be able to comprehend...The Spirit groans on our behalf.

Now there are some that look at this passage and they will come to the conclusion that this groaning that takes place is what we call speaking in tongues...I don't quite get that from the passage before us

here as it says the SPIRIT helps in weakness and the SPIRIT makes intercession with groans so I don't personally see a connection between those two things.

I love it that the Spirit makes intercession for us as we go through life...How amazing that we not only have the Holy Spirit living inside us but He also prays on our behalf...and I have to say that I can imagine the Spirit of God's prayers on my behalf are so much more incredible than I could ever think myself.

As we close today I want to just point out that within you and I there should be a great groaning in our hearts that looks forward to what will one day be ours in Christ as He redeems us and glorifies our bodies. Our hope is never to be found in this world but instead we should be focused on the things of eternity.

I also want to just speak to those of you that have not received Jesus Christ into your hearts for the forgiveness of your sins...I want to simply say that if you don't have Jesus then none of what we have talked about applies to you today...Without receiving Jesus in your heart the reality is that you have no hope for eternity, instead your future will be an eternity in hell, in a place that burns forever and the worm never dies...Perhaps today you realize you need to receive Jesus in your heart and if that's you I want to just encourage you during the time of worship to just join me up here in the front and I'll pray with you and you can come to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior and listen if you are here today and you just know in your heart that you need to be renewed in Jesus and that means you realize you are just not in the place the Lord wants you in life and you need to just come to the Lord and receive a fresh filling of His Spirit go ahead and come

forward during worship as I would love to pray with you and ask the Lord to minister to your heart.

Let's pray and we'll worship.

Romans 8:28 says ²⁸**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.**

Romans 8:18-27 “A Great Groaning”

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