

CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, 2026
ROMANS 8:18-30

PASTOR DUANE MILLER

SECURE, BUT EAGERLY WAITING



Start with **Romans 8:18-25**.

When you were a kid, waiting was hard, wasn't it? Sometimes it still is.

In the spring of 1984, I was fourteen, and I could hardly wait for my family to fly home to Pennsylvania after four years living in western Brazil.

It had been four years since I'd seen my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. No FaceTime, no phone calls, just ham radio – where every sentence had to end with “over.” “Hi Grandma – I miss you – over”. “I can't wait to go fishing with you Pap Pap - over”. On a good day, they heard me and I heard them. Sometimes all we heard was static.

Four long years without McDonald's fries, Honeycomb cereal, root beer, Dr Pepper, Pizza Hut, and Grandma's pies.

But that spring I had to wait – our travel date wasn't until July. And when you are “eagerly waiting,” waiting is hard. Key words: Eagerly waiting.

What things are you eagerly waiting for?

In the eighth chapter of Paul's first-century letter to the Roman Christians, Paul describes the Christian life as “secure, but eagerly waiting”. Secure in Christ, eagerly waiting for Christ. And during this time of eagerly waiting, life is hard.

Let me explain. We've been learning about the “secure in Christ” part. Our relationship with God is secure because it rests on faith – trust – in Jesus' completed work for us on the cross, which gives us “right standing with God”. Secure in Christ.

To see how Paul frames this, look at the first and last verses of **chapter 8**, where he emphasizes our security in Christ. **Romans 8:1 NASB** and **Romans 8:38-39 NASB**.

“In Christ” “there is no condemnation”. That’s good. And “in Christ” “there is nothing that can separate us from the Love of God.” That’s also good! No condemnation from God, no separation from God. That’s security. And how is that security possible? Paul tells us: “In Christ Jesus”! These two verses are the bookends of this chapter.

But between those two bookends of security is the reality that we are in a time of waiting – “eagerly waiting” – and waiting is hard.

But God did not leave us unequipped for this hard season of waiting. He gave us what we need. Some of you may call this situational readiness.

Think of it like this. If you’re heading out on a long hike through rough country, you don’t go unprepared or unequipped. You get mentally and physically prepared, and you take the right equipment. Water, a map, a first-aid kit, the right weather gear. The trail is not easy, but you are prepared and equipped for it.

This season of eagerly waiting here on earth is a tough trail. And God the Father, who loves His children, prepares and equips us for that tough trail. How? He prepares us with His truth – His Word, the Bible – that’s mental preparation. And He equips us with His Spirit.

To see this in context, let’s go back to **verses 15-18**. As we read, notice that both are here: truth – the preparing part, and the Spirit – the equipping part.

How does God equip us with His Spirit? Back in Rom 6 we learned that when you and I put our faith in Jesus for right standing with God, we were baptized into His death, burial, resurrection, and new life. That new life comes from God’s Spirit, who – now that our sin is paid for – can live inside us. This is the Hebrew “Ruach”, the breath of God, the Spirit of God in us. **Romans 8:11**. “The Spirit of God who raised...” That’s real power. And that power produces in us the supernatural fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience.... Does that remind you of a song?

Tell me, when you’re eagerly waiting and things are hard, do you need the supernatural fruit of the Spirit? Yes!

In **verses 16-17** Paul says that same Spirit affirms that we are God’s children and heirs of God’s glory. But as we share in His glory, we also share in Christ’s suffering.

I don’t like suffering. I am a wimp when it comes to suffering. Knock me out and wake me up when it is over. Suffering is pain, suffering is humbling, suffering is challenging, suffering stretches me and makes me grow even when I don’t want to grow. Suffering makes me long for the day it ends – it makes me “eagerly wait” for relief.

So since the suffering is real, how are we prepared and equipped to handle it? Let me say it again: it’s God’s truth that prepares us and God’s Spirit that equips us.

Look how Paul in **verse 18** challenges the Roman Christians’ thinking to mentally prepare them for suffering. Other translations say “I consider the suffering of this present time not worthy to be compared...”. This is not just casual thinking. Paul uses the same Greek word, translated as “count,” that he used in **Romans 6:11**: “count” yourself dead to sin... It’s a legal term of accounting. It’s the same word in **Romans 4:3**, where Paul quotes **Genesis 15:6** – the case law establishing that all people are counted righteous through faith alone!

Paul uses that same word “count” with the same power and seriousness in **verse 18 NASB**. This is about perspective. When you have an itchy-bitsy rock in your shoe, it hurts and becomes your only focus. Get it out. Now! But can the little rock in your shoe compare to the rock that sank into Goliath’s forehead, or the rocks that stoned Stephen?

Paul says, “Yes, your suffering is real, but let’s keep a biblical perspective.” It’s a little rock in your shoe. Our present suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. This is mental preparedness for suffering based on the truth of God’s word.

OK, Duane, but what is this glory that will be revealed to us later? **Verse 19.**

God will reveal who His children really are. “Reveal” is the Greek word apokalypsis – an unveiling.

It’s like going to an art unveiling where the artist dramatically pulls the cover off a finished piece and everyone gasps. The work was already done – now everyone sees it. It’s unveiled. It’s revealed.



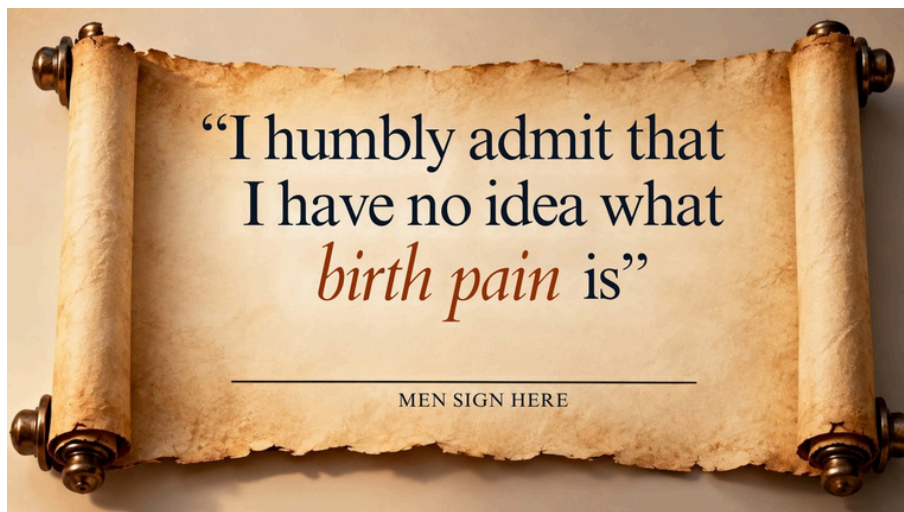
Right now, here on earth, God’s children have been made new through Christ Jesus. But because we are still eagerly waiting, there is still suffering, sin, and death – so in that way we look like everyone else.

But when Jesus comes back, the whole world will see – it will be revealed “who God’s children really are!” **Colossians 3:3-4** describes that same event this way. Instantly: no more suffering, pain, or sin – and forever with God the Father. That’s my family! Amen?

In **verses 20-22** Paul says this suffering isn’t just for people, but for all creation. All of creation has been subjected to death and decay, just like mankind.

So, creation, too, looks forward with “eager hope” to being set free from “death and decay.” Creation expresses that hope by groaning, as in the pains of childbirth.

Kudos to Paul for not comparing it to the death pangs of a man with a common cold, rather he uses the visual image of labor pains. Men, say this with me “I humbly admit that I have no idea what birth pain is”.



In **verse 23** Paul says that even though we have the Spirit's equipping power now, we still groan, "longing for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering."

Paul continues, "We too, wait, with eager hope...". Full rights as adopted children – not unwanted stepchildren – full rights that include new bodies. Anyone in?

In all these verses, Paul is "normalizing" how hard this season of eagerly waiting is. In **verse 24** Paul gives us one more thing to help during this season of eagerly waiting: hope. Hope means waiting with confidence and patience. And confidence and patience produces perseverance. And what do we all need when things are tough? Perseverance.

In **verses 26-27** Paul gives us a little more detail on how the Holy Spirit helps us. When you're in a situation so bad that you don't even know how to pray, it's unsettling. But that's never the case with the Holy Spirit – not ever! The Holy Spirit knows God's will and prays for us in line with it. These prayers are customized specifically for you, because the Holy Spirit lives within you and knows your specific needs.

Paul says the Spirit prays with groanings too deep for words, but the Father knows what the Spirit is saying. That gives me confidence in God and lets me rest, even while I'm eagerly waiting and things are hard.

Now you may have noticed that there's a lot of groaning going on here. We saw creation groaning in **verse 22**. In **verse 23**, believers groan during this hard season of eagerly waiting. And now in **verse 26** the Holy Spirit is also groaning. That's a lot of groaning. I've got nothing to add to all that, so let's move on to the next verse – it's a fun one.



Verse 28 is very well-known, but before we read it, let me say this: **verse 28** should never be separated from its context – especially **verse 29**. Otherwise, it creates a false theology. Let's read **verses 28-29**.

Sometimes this verse is used in an unhealthy way – to make Christians feel better about hard things by rationalizing away evil or tragedy. People say things like "everything works for good". No, it doesn't. Since Adam and Eve sinned, all of creation, including mankind, has been on a collision course with destruction. Everything works for good? No.

In context, this verse means that in this age of evil and suffering, death and decay, while we eagerly wait for it to end, God wants to repurpose the tragedy, and brokenness and hurt in our lives for His good. Repurposed as in repurposed wood!

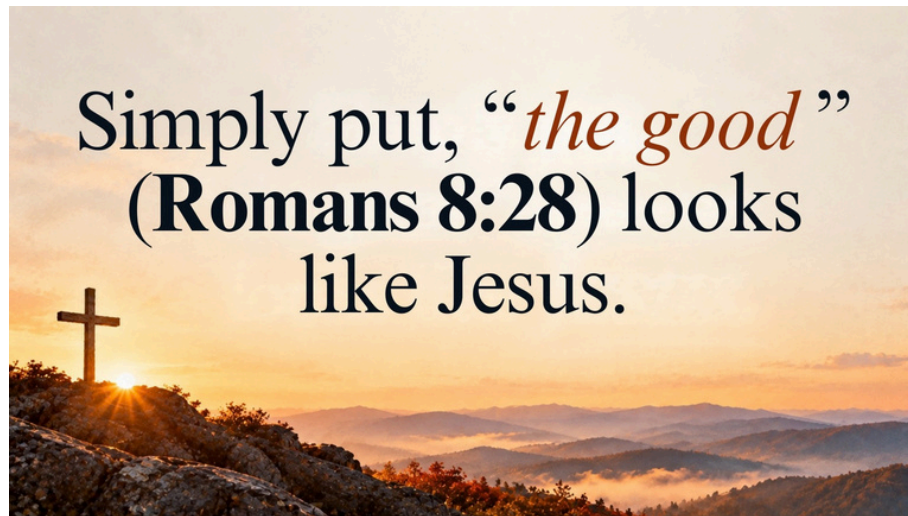
And thankfully, in **verse 29**, Paul defines exactly what His "good" is... to become like His Son.

Whatever you may have done to yourself or others, whatever hard or hurtful thing you've experienced, God can repurpose it to help you become like His Son. And as we are shaped into His image, we will have a positive impact for the Kingdom – what Paul defines as "good".

For example, abuse is awful and deeply destructive. It creates fear, anxiety, and distrust. It creates distorted perceptions of reality – making it easy to believe lies about self, others, and God.

But when it is surrendered to God, and He is allowed to work in it – healing through forgiveness and more – God repurposes that evil or hardship to create beauty – what He calls “good.”

Sometimes the repurposing looks like kindness, compassion, or empathy where there was none before. Sometimes it’s a willingness to walk alongside others who have experienced the same hard thing. Sometimes it’s supernatural forgiveness replacing bitterness, resulting in a supernatural capacity to love.



What does it take to become like his Son? For most of us, the struggle is trusting God with the repurposing process. Paul Tripp says in his poem “Weak,” “When the soil is resistant, the molding is violent.” So, if “good” is what God wants to create in you, for the benefit of others and His kingdom, why resist the repurposing process?

Here’s what’s interesting: everything God needs for repurposing is already present in this season of eagerly waiting.

Think of it like baking. The ingredients for God’s repurposing are: 1. One measure of suffering and hardship – there’s plenty to pick from. 2. One measure of the power of the Holy Spirit – that’s the baking soda that activates the recipe. Boom! As believers we have that. 3. And the third ingredient is the hard one – one measure of surrender to the repurposing process. God puts it all together and creates “good”. You and I looking more like Jesus!



You see, this is God’s plan for all his children. **Verses 29-30.** Notice the last word – “glorified”... He glorified them. God simply wants to share his glory with us.

Now let's wrap this up.

First, note that I intentionally did not dig into foreknowledge and predestination in **verses 29-30**. These words have been land mines that have divided and derailed many churches. I don't want that for our church.

Many people focus only on those words and completely miss the context of the passage - which is what we covered today.

Want to study predestination further? See the bonus content in the sermon notes.

But now let's focus on what you can take with you today that furthers God's kingdom.

The big picture of this chapter is that we are secure in Christ - no condemnation, no separation from the love of God. But we are in a season of eagerly waiting, and there is suffering.

So let's put it all together.

Truth prepares us. Keep a biblical perspective - the suffering now is a little rock in your shoe compared to the glory that will be revealed. (**verse 18**)

The Spirit equips us. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you - producing supernatural fruit, and praying for you when you don't have the words. (**verse 11, verses 26-27**)

Hope sustains us. Waiting with confidence and patience produces perseverance. (**verses 24-25**)

God repurposes our suffering. When we surrender it to Him, He uses it to shape us into the image of His Son. (**verses 28-29**)



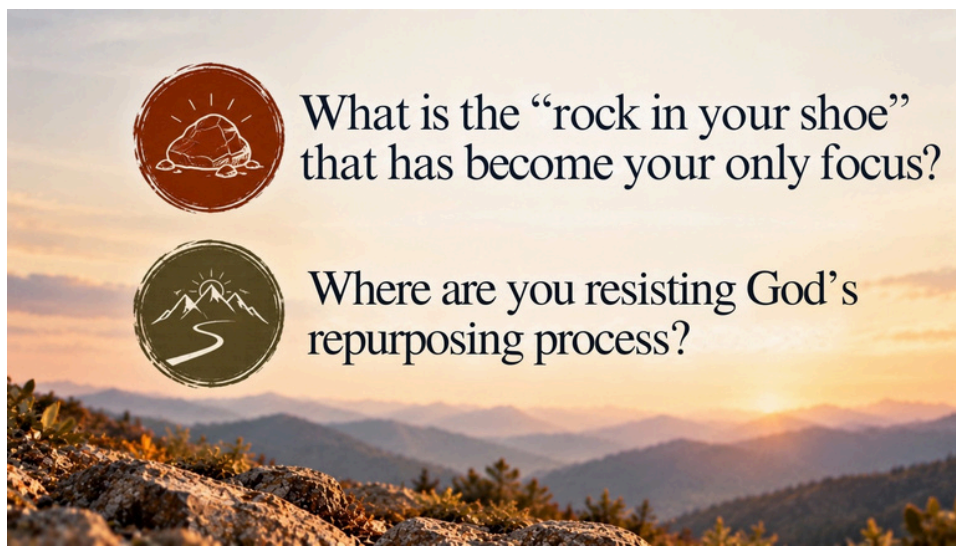
Remember me as that fourteen-year-old boy eagerly waiting to fly home from Brazil? July finally came. We made it back to Pennsylvania. I got a hug from Grandma - and pie. I went fishing with Pap-Pap, and I had McDonald's fries.

In that moment, the months of eagerly waiting disappeared. All the pain of separation and the static on the Ham radio, forgotten. I was home. Face to face.

Paul says that's what it will be like for God's children when Jesus comes back - only infinitely better. No more suffering, no more static. Face to face - the waiting will be worth it.

So let me leave you with two questions to think about this week. What is the "rock in your shoe" that has become your only focus? Ask God for His perspective on it.

Where are you resisting God's repurposing process? What would it look like to surrender that hard thing to Him?



Maybe you need to say, “Holy Spirit, I don’t know how to pray. Pray for me.” You can be assured He already is.

Friends, as you leave today, remember where Paul started and ended this chapter: **Secure in Christ, eagerly waiting for Christ.**

BONUS

CONTENT:

A Note on Election, Predestination, and Human Responsibility

As a Calvary Chapel fellowship, our approach is shaped first by Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel Distinctives, especially chapter 11, "Striking the Balance." Smith writes, "When the Bible speaks clearly, we must as well," while also urging believers not to divide over non-essential issues where there is genuine biblical argument on more than one side. Our aim, therefore, is not to make Scripture fit a theological system, but to let Scripture say what it says, even when that leaves truths in tension. That approach also reflects the pastoral emphasis that has shaped Calvary Chapel Lebanon from its beginning. We have repeatedly stressed that our salvation rests outside ourselves—on what Jesus has accomplished for us, not on something we have achieved or must somehow earn.

That is especially important in **Romans 8:29-30**. These verses are often brought into discussions of predestination and the *ordo salutis*, but predestination is not the main subject of **Romans 8**. The big picture of the chapter is that those who are in Christ are secure in Christ: there is no condemnation and there will be no separation from the love of God. Yet we are still living in a season of suffering, groaning, eagerly waiting, and hoping for the glory to come. Moo cautions that **Romans 8:29-30** should not be treated as though Paul were giving a complete system of salvation; the verses serve the chapter's larger purpose of assurance and future glory. His NIV Application Commentary similarly stresses that, despite the later debates surrounding these verses, Paul's main point is that God has a purpose that provides fully for the believer's future glory.

That Calvary Chapel distinctive is especially important as we move through **Romans 8** and into Romans 9, because Paul gives us language that has become central to later debates: Paul speaks of Jacob and Esau, Pharaoh, mercy, hardening, the potter and the clay, and vessels of mercy and wrath. These texts must not be softened simply because they are difficult: God is sovereign, His saving purpose does not depend upon human merit, and His mercy remains His to give. At the same time, reputable interpreters represented in our study resources disagree about exactly how far Paul intends these examples to establish an individual doctrine of predestination to salvation or condemnation. Dunn, for example, explicitly warns against allowing Romans 9 to be sidetracked into a later debate over predestination and free will, emphasizing instead Paul's argument about Israel, election, judgment, and God's covenant purposes.

For further study, begin with Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel Distinctives, chapter 11, "Striking the Balance." Also, David Guzik, "Thoughts on Reformed Theology and Calvinism":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEYOAxobl3c> is a helpful treatment of the subject.

Douglas J. Moo's Romans in the NIV Application Commentary is especially useful because Moo presents the Calvinist and Arminian readings of **Romans 8:29-30** side by side, explains the major exegetical questions, states his own conclusion, and then carries the same discussion into **Romans 9**. Also helpful are F. F. Bruce, Romans: An Introduction and Commentary, particularly on conformity to Christ and the goal of predestination; James D. G. Dunn, **Romans 1-8**, **Romans 9-16**, and The Theology of Paul the Apostle; Ben Witherington III, Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary; and George Bryson, The Five Points of Calvinism: "Weighed and Found Wanting" which contains sustained critique of the five-point Calvinist system from the perspective of another Calvary Chapel pastor.