

Living the Future Life!

Romans 8:18–25

- Living the Free Life
- Living the Peace-Filled Life
- Living the Spirit-Filled Life
- Living the Family Life

Today we are talking about

- Living the Future Life!

“Back to the Future” predicted a lot of things. Some of those predictions came true! Many did not. I’m very disappointed that we do not have hoverboards that actually hover off the ground. And Where in the world are the flying cars and sky highways that the movie predicted? I’m super bummed out that these things have yet to come to fruition.

I mean, to be fair to Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale are not prophets by any means. They were giving their best guess of what life would be like 30 years into the future from 1985! And they did get some things right, talking to each other on the TV screen. They nailed that one!

But, unless one is a prophet of God, getting the future right is next to impossible. We might get bits and pieces right, but never 100%.

But what if we could get it right? What if we could know the future? What would our attitudes be if we could know, beyond a shadow of a doubt what the future will be like?

I think above all else, we would have an attitude of confidence. I know what is going to happen, I can be confident.

And if you are lacking confidence in in this life and you are a Christian, I’m so glad you are here! Because I’m going to give you a secret found in Romans 8:18-25 that will revolutionize your life and attitude.

Are you ready?

Main Idea - Have A Confident Life Now by Focusing on the Future!

I have three areas for you to focus on regarding the future.

1. Are You Suffering Today? Focus on Tomorrow’s Glory ! (vs. 18-21)

I don’t need to tell you this, but suffering is a part of life for everyone because of sin. Because of the enemy / devil in the world and because of the insidious enemy within each of us.

The truth is suffering is our past experience and our current reality.

Suffering is Real but Just You Wait ! (vs. 18)

I want you to sense the hope in this verse...

Romans 8:18 ESV

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Paul knew about suffering.

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 ESV

²³ Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴ Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶ on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷ in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. ²⁸ And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

One who suffers much hopes much. Paul had great suffering and Paul had great hopes.

This is important - Paul's "hope" was rooted in a God who can't lie and who promised He would make all things new!

Can you imagine what it will be like?

From Paul's perspective, there is simply no comparison.

Here, the present sufferings may refer to more than persecution and encompass the full range of human experience: sickness, injury, natural disaster, financial loss, poverty, hunger, and death. - *Faithlife Study Bible Chapter 8*

Think of the worst day of suffering you have endured. Or better yet, imagine how bad your suffering could get in this life and then realize your absolute most horrific day here CAN'T even compare to what God has planned for you.

Paul says specifically here *"the glory that is to be revealed to us."*

Folks, our suffering as believers is temporary and because we are believers, the glory we receive is forever.

Eternal - non-suffering - glory!!

God will reveal something amazing to all those who believe!

But notice this, we are not the only ones who suffer...

Even Creation Suffers (vs. 19-20)

Creation? This includes everything in the physical universe except human beings, whom he contrasts with this term - *John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1708.*

Romans 8:19–20 ESV

¹⁹ 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

Paul gives human characteristics to all of creation when he describes what it is like for creation to be under the curse of sin - “eager longing” “not willingly” = having a will...

Yes, the creation is cursed as well.

Remember the curse found in [Genesis 3](#)?

Genesis 3:17–19 ESV

¹⁷ 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.”

And so too the creation longs for the “revealing of the sons of God” What does this mean?

John A. Witmer says, The verb for “eagerly waits” (apekdechomai) is used seven times in the New Testament, each time to refer to Christ’s return (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28). The revealing of the sons of God will occur when Christ returns for His own. They will share His glory (Rom. 8:18; Col. 1:27; 3:4; Heb. 2:10), and will be transformed (Rom. 8:23). All of nature (inanimate and animate) is personified as waiting eagerly for that time. - John A. Witmer, “Romans,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 472.

Because Adam sinned, God subjected His creation to the curse!

Paul says that creation was subjected to futility - *The Greek word mataiotēti (“futility, frailty, purposelessness”); describes the change and “decay” that prevails in all created things. - John A. Witmer, “Romans,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 472.*

And until Christ returns and makes all things right, recreating the heavens and the earth, this earth will be cursed.

However!

Freedom is Coming and it is Glorious! (vs. 21)

Romans 8:21 ESV

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.

Freedom! Freedom from what? Freedom from slavery to decay!

Sorry to break it to you folks but because of Satan and sin, you and I are on an irrevocable path of corruption and decay - our bodies are dying.

But we shall be SET FREE from this in the

Pastor Tim suffered through not having all the food he wants to enjoy a 76 pound weight loss!

How can you apply this into your life?

Meditate on the new heavens and the new earth. This practice will help you endure the inevitable suffering you will face.

To help you with this, read **"Heaven"** by Randy Alcorn

Also...

From his website, Eternal Perspective Ministries - *Fold a paper in half. Then write on the top half the worst things that have happened to you and on the bottom half the best.*

Invariably, if you've lived long enough, if enough time has passed since some of those "worst things" happened to you, then you'll almost certainly find an overlap. Experiences labeled as the worst things that ever happened, over time become some of the best. That's because God uses the painful, difficult experiences of life for our ultimate good.

How is this possible? Because God is both loving and sovereign. Our lists provide persuasive proof that while evil and suffering are not good, God can use them to accomplish immeasurable good. This knowledge should give us great confidence that even when we don't see any redemptive meaning in our suffering, God can see it—and one day we will too. Therefore, we need not run from suffering or lose hope if God doesn't remove it. We can trust that God has a purpose for whatever He permits.

Review - Have A Confident Life Now by Focusing on the Future!

Are You Suffering Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Glory!

Transition -

2. Are You Groaning Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Plan ! (vs. 22-23)

Sometimes when I get out of my chair I groan!

Of course, Paul isn't just talking about making old people noises. Groaning is the result of carrying the burden of sin all our days.

Creation is Groaning ! (vs. 22)

Romans 8:22 ESV

²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Here is more of the personification that we have already seen. The “WHOLE CREATION” is “GROANING TOGETHER.”

It is a chorus of groaning because the creation is still under the curse of sin.

Don't miss the imagery Paul uses - a woman giving birth.

Why does he use this imagery?

Because since the fall of man, this creation has been pregnant with sin. As time goes on, the birth-pangs grow more frequent and intense. The time is coming when the Lord will return and set all things right. We don't know when this will take place, but we do know that things will have more and more frequent seasons of difficulty. And this difficulty will become worse and worse.

Luke 21:11 ESV

¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Luke 21:25–26 ESV

²⁵ “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Matthew 24:7–8 ESV

⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

And not only is the creation groaning, but...

Christians are Groaning (vs. 23a)

Romans 8:23 ESV

²³ 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.

Everyone is groaning, but in this passage, Paul makes it clear that “*we ourselves*” we believers in Christ are groaning as well.

Why are we groaning? Because we carry the weight of the curse of sin. We still have the insidious enemy within. We still do battle with Satan and his minion; we still have the world either tempting us with its delights or mocking us because of our faith.

This is NOT our BEST LIFE NOW! That is yet to come.

Today we are in a war!

We cannot keep acting like we are living on a cruise ship when we need to realize we are on a battleship.

What are we fighting for? God left us here to fight for souls not have our Heaven here on earth.
However, there is still hope!

Groan No More! God's Plan is Worth the Wait (vs. 23b)

Romans 8:23 ESV

²³ 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.

My dear friends are you eager for what is to come? Then THINK ABOUT IT!

Colossians 3:1-4 ESV

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

You, if you are in Christ have the FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT! The down payment has been made! You are sealed in the Holy Spirit. The earnest money has been paid by the blood of Jesus Christ and you are headed to heaven!

So, stop your groaning about this life and start praising the Lord because of the next!

There are two specific things we are waiting eagerly for. Do you see them in the text?

1. Adoption as sons and daughters -
2. The redemption of our bodies -

These two specific things will be worth the wait, won't they? I think so!

Are your groans starting to drown out your praise? Maybe it is time for you to focus on God's plan for the future!

We as a church have lived in many different places! But we are focused on the plans of our new building!

Okay, here is a simple thing that you can do to tone down your groan.

Get out a nice clean sheet of paper or open a new word document and start to write down what God has said about your eternal life.

Let me help you get started!

Romans 6:8-9 ESV

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

2 Timothy 2:11 ESV

¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

Spend your time going through His precious Word and find the promise He has for you and all believers in Christ about His eternal glory!

This will give you a confidence that will make you bolder than you thought possible.

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Are You Suffering Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Glory!

Are You Groaning Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Plan!

Transition -

3. Are You Discouraged Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Hope ! (vs. 24-25)

Discouragement, depression, melancholy - whatever you'd like to call it, is real and it can get our focus off the Lord and onto our circumstances. Ugh.

Psalm 43:5 ESV

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

So the first thing we must do is figure out our focus...

Where is Your Focus ? (vs. 24-25)

Romans 8:24 ESV

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

In what "hope" are we saved?

The truths found in verse 23...

Because of the ministry of the Spirit, we will have the full adoption as son and daughters as well as the redemption of our bodies!

The problem is, we can't see this yet! We will see it, but we can't see it now. So, what can we do? We can HOPE!

When a child waits for Christmas morning, he hopes his Christmas dreams will come true.

After Christmas morning, he sees everything that he was given and his HOPE is satisfied. In a sense, his hope is gone because he no longer needs it.

So it is with us! And when we FOCUS our gaze on what God has promised for us, we are to do this with patience...

Romans 8:25 ESV

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Ladies and gentlemen! Let me be perfectly clear. This world as we know it is coming to an end. This isn't just some subjective feeling I have.

This is a Biblical truth. Listen to the Apostle Peter in his second letter.

2 Peter 3:1–13 ESV

¹ This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

And with the destruction of the earth comes the promise of a new Heaven and a New Earth that you will enjoy for eternity if you are in Christ.

This is our HOPE! This is what we long for! This is our PROMISED Land!

What A Day That Will Be

*There is coming a day
When no heartaches shall come
No more clouds in the sky
No more tears to dim the eye
All is peace forevermore
On that happy golden shore
What a day glorious day that will be*

*What a day that will be
When my Jesus I shall see
And I look upon his face
The one who saved me by his grace*

*When he takes me by the hand
And leads me through the Promised Land
What a day, glorious day that will be*

*There'll be no sorrows there
No more burdens to bear
No more sickness and no more pain
No more parting over there
But forever I will be
With the one who died for me
What a day, glorious day that will be*

Are you looking forward to this day like a kid anticipating Christmas?

I'd like you to do an evaluation of your HOPE. What are you hoping for these days?

Are you hoping for becoming fabulously wealthy so you can live carefree?

Are you hoping to become famous so everyone knows your name and you are popular
maybe your hopes are simpler...

Are you hoping for a nice family life?

Are you hoping for a comfortable, worry-free retirement?

These kinds of hopes are not necessarily bad but these hopes fall way short of the ultimate hope. These hopes will burn up with the old heavens and earth.

Maybe you should set your HOPE on eternal things?

I will tell you that if you have a well-placed HOPE, you will live a confident and powerful life. If your hope is based on temporary things, you will live a life of perpetual disappointment! However, if you set your hope on the eternal promises of God, your disappointment in this life will diminish and your boldness and confidence will increase tremendously!

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Are You Groaning Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Plan!

Are You Discouraged Today? Focus on Tomorrow's Hope!

Transition -

Back to the Future...

Friends, you don't need a time machine to know what the future holds because our God, who never lies, has told us! And this is our HOPE!

Philippians 3:12–15 ESV

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Press on toward the mark - When I am running, my mind is constantly telling me to stop. What keeps me going?

The HOPE of the FINISH line...

We have a Savior that hung on a cross and declared **"it is finished"** so we could cross the ultimate finish line – the entrance into eternal life with the one "who died for me!" "What a day, glorious day, that will be!"

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. How can knowing the future help our confidence. Do you believe the future God has for His children?
2. Suffering for the believer is a reality. How can our focus on tomorrow's glory help with our suffering today?
3. Why do you think Paul talks so much about creations groaning?
4. How can focusing on our position with God (adoption) and the promise of redeemed bodies tone down our groan?
5. What discourages you right now? What gives you hope?