

36:30

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Introduction

Last week we saw the glorious truth that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus". (Rom 8:1)

No one can be condemned because God does not condemn us. We are His, not because of anything that we have done, but because of what God has done in our hearts. What has He done? Well, we learned last week that He placed His spirit within us, that the Holy Spirit dwells within us at the moment of salvation. And therefore, since we belong to Him, we have the Spirit of God residing in us, dwelling within us, we have an obligation then to walk according to the Spirit, and not to fulfill the desires of the flesh.

We must walk in obedience to God as those who have been adopted by Him. We are adopted children of God. But Paul knows that tribulation doesn't go away in this lifetime. He knows that we will still have trouble, even though we are adopted children of God. And so, he comforts us then by giving us hope, he gives us hope.

And so tonight, we're going to look at three aspects of our future hope.

1. First, we're going to look at our hope in this present suffering, and how that compares with our future glory.
2. Second, we'll look at our hope in God's sovereignty, in our salvation, and how God works all things out for good.
3. And then third, we're going to look at our Hope in eternal security in Christ, and how God's love guarantees our future glory with Him.

And so that'll be our three points here, our hope in present suffering, our hope in God's sovereignty. And then point number three, our Hope in eternal security.

1. Our Hope in Present Suffering

So, let's look at our first point here tonight, Our Hope in Present Suffering. Look at what Paul says in verse 18. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom 8:18)

I love what Paul does here. I love how Paul compares the suffering that we are going through in this life to this future glory. Think about the suffering that you and I have gone through as believers. Last Sunday and equipping hour we studied the church at Smyrna. What kind of church were they? A suffering church. They went through trials and tribulations, they went through a lot of afflictions because of their devotion to Christ. But Paul wants us to consider -- notice that -- he says that "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time..." Paul wants us to consider just as he considers. That word "consider" in the Greek is the word "Logizomai" -- it means to calculate or determine by a mathematical process. And what Paul wants you and I to do, just as he has done, is to calculate out the sufferings that we go through in this life and compare them with the future glory that awaits us when our bodies are resurrected and glorified.

Now think about Paul's calculation, as Paul does his equation, addition equation and he adds up all of his suffering. Let me just give you a list of the things that Paul went through that he gives to us in 2 Corinthians 11. He says this,

- he labored as a servant of Christ. That word "labored" there means to be in a state of discomfort or distress. He was in distress as a servant of Christ.
- He was in prison for Christ.
- He was beaten times without number.
- He was in danger of death.
- Five times he received 39 lashes from the Jews.
- Three times he was beaten with rods.
- Once he was stoned.
- Three times he was shipwrecked spent a night in the day in the middle of the ocean.
- He's been in dangers from rivers, and robbers, from his own countrymen (that is the Jews and from gentiles.)
- He's had dangers in the city, and in the wilderness, and on the sea.
- Even dangers from false Christians, false believers who have come to attack Paul.
- He's had many sleepless nights hunger and thirst, often without food left in the cold to suffer.

Anyone have a list like that? Of suffering? And yet Paul has calculated out all of his suffering, and he's compared it to the glory that is to be revealed in the future. And what is the conclusion or the result of his calculation? He says the present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. What is he saying here? He's saying that the future glory that we have as believers completely outweighs whatever suffering we endure in this lifetime.

Jesus used an illustration of suffering versus joy in John chapter 16, before He went to the cross. And the illustration He used was a woman in labor. He says, the woman does not remember the pains of labor, because of the joy that her child brings her at the moment of that birth. What Paul is saying here is the future glory that we have completely outweighs the present sufferings that we go through in this life. It's as if we put our sufferings on one side of the scale and our future glory on the other side of the scale. And the sufferings would not even cause the scale to budge a millimeter off the ground. Because we're so excited about the glory, because the glory is so magnificent, and what we have to look forward to in the future.

The glory completely outweighs the suffering that we go through. And so, we should be encouraged to endure the suffering as we look to our future glorification. Paul gives us an illustration of this in verses 19 through 22. Like what he says in verse 19, "[For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.](#)" (Rom 8:19) He uses the illustration of creation that is groaning right now. Creation is groaning, but it anxiously awaits for glorification. Remember what God did back in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam and Eve sinned against God? God said to Adam this in [Genesis 3:17](#)

[Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.
18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
19 By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return."](#) (Genesis 3:17-19)

God in His sovereignty cursed the physical universe. This earth is cursed. His beautiful creation, although it is beautiful as you look out at creation right now, it is under a curse. It's as if it's in change right now to corruption and decay. Think about what happened to those beautiful flowers in your garden that are no longer there. They were there this summer. And they looked beautiful. But they decayed. They're dead. Or that pumpkin that you bought last month. It's sitting on your front porch decaying. That's why we don't get pumpkins anymore for Halloween. They just attract rodents as they sit on your front porch, and they decay. God's creation is under a curse, decay and death.

And Paul's point here is that the whole of creation is subject to decay and death. But what is creation waiting for? Look at verse 19, "[for the revealing of the sons of God.](#)" That is the second coming of Christ when we are all glorified with Christ together. We've been talking about this on Sunday mornings in Mark. Now notice this -- creation doesn't recognize who the sons of God are right now. Notice this. The universe is unable to distinguish between believers and unbelievers. And that is why it is waiting for believers to be revealed. It's a waiting for the glorification of believers. Because it can't distinguish between believers and non-believers right now.

Sadly, this is true of many professing Christians today who call themselves Christians, but who give little or no evidence that they are Christians. Many call themselves Christians, but they look no different

from unbelievers. The world wouldn't know. And that's the same thing with the universe today -- it doesn't know believers versus unbelievers. That's why it's waiting for this time where believers will be glorified. And here's the thing, in the end, God will reveal those who are His, and the creation is waiting for that time. God will glorify His elect -- those in whom are His.

And just as creation groans and eagerly awaits glorification, so do we, right? We do that as well. Look at what he says in verse 23. *"And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."* (Rom 8:23-25)

We as true believers, we groan at our sin, right? We groan at it. We are not excited about our sin. We hate it. We say (like Paul did back in chapter 8 in verse 15, "I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I'm doing the very thing that I hate." (Rom 7:15) Excuse me, chapter 7 verse 15. Because right now, while our spirit has been redeemed, our body is not -- our flesh is not redeemed.

I love how MacArthur describes this right now he says, *Christians are holy seeds, as it were enslaved in an unholy shell.* That's us. And that's why we have this battle then, we have a constant battle, because we long for our spirit and for our body to be redeemed, to be glorified. And that will happen when we are resurrected and given new bodies.

Now notice, Paul says that we are adopted by God back up in verse 15, chapter 8 in verse 15, which means that this is a present reality. It's a present reality, listen to Galatians 4:5-7, *so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Sound familiar? We just talked about that last week, right? Abba Father.) "Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."* (Gal 4:5-7)

So, we are currently a child of God, because God has adopted us. But there is still a future fulfillment of this. There's a future fulfillment of that adoption, when our bodies are then finally glorified. Just as at the moment of our salvation, we were sanctified in Christ (remember we talked about the three aspects of sanctification --we were sanctified at the moment of our salvation, but then there's progressive sanctification that is going on in us right now, until there is final sanctification at the moment that we are glorified.) And the same thing is with our adoption, that is we have been adopted. But there is still a final fulfillment of this adoption when our bodies are resurrected.

And here's the thing, we can't lose this place of being adopted as a child of God. Once you're adopted as a child of God, you can't lose that. God is not going to erase that certificate of adoption. He's not going to push you away. Once you are adopted as a child of God, you are always adopted as a child of God. And this is our hope, then, right? That's our hope. And "hope" here that Paul is talking about is not wishful thinking, like how we use it in the English language. Oh, I hope that happens. I really hope that that happens. That's all wishful thinking. Paul's not talking about wishful thinking. But this hope has the idea of a confident reality, although it has not been fully realized yet. But there is confidence that

you and I have we as believers have hope. We have hope. We have confidence in the future redemption of our bodies, although it has not been realized yet.

And as those who suffer in this lifetime, we need that hope, right? We need that hope. And we groan. And not only do we groan, but Paul says, "that the Spirit also groans." Look at what he says in verse 26. ["In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."](#) (Rom 8:26)

Notice Paul says at the beginning of verse 26 there ["in the same way."](#) In the same way as what, Paul? The same way as creation groans, and the same way as believers groan. That is just as creation groans, and we groan, as we both await the redemption of our bodies. The Holy Spirit also groans awaiting that day of restoration, and for righteousness to reign overall, the Holy Spirit is awaiting that day.

So not only does the Holy Spirit groan, but the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us because we do not know how to pray as we should, Now Paul is not talking here about how often we should pray. We know how often we should pray, pray without what? Ceasing. That's not what Paul is talking about here ... Paul's talking about the imperfections of our prayers. Oftentimes, we pray for things that are not in absolute agreement with God's will. Have you ever prayed that before? Have you ever prayed something before and then God did the total opposite of that? You went, "Oh ... God, that was your will!" But we do that. We pray in that way.

And we do this because we have finite minds. But we have the Spirit who intercedes for us. And it's that truth, then that should give us hope. The Spirit of God is interceding for you and I, and the Father knows exactly what the Spirit is thinking. Although they are two different persons, they are one God. There's the Trinity right there, right? Father, Son, Holy Spirit, three persons, one God. They're two different persons, the Father and the Spirit, but they are one God, and so they're always in agreement. And we have the Holy Spirit who prays for us, even when we don't know what God's will is for us, you realize that?

God, I don't know what your will is, but the Holy Spirit does, and He's interceding on my behalf. He's always doing that. That should amaze us. That God, God the Spirit intercedes for us. We have the Spirit on our side, because He lives in us, and He loves us. And He always wants the will of God done in our lives.

In the midst of this present suffering, our hope is that we have the Spirit who intercedes for us, and prays on our behalf. And He desires for us to be freed from this corrupt body and to be glorified with God forever. And because we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, this is a future reality that will happen. We can be confident that this will happen. It's our hope.

Listen, although we go through suffering here, in this earthly body, Paul says that we have a future glory that is going to be greater than anything that you and I could imagine. And the Spirit guarantees that this is going to happen. That's our future. That's our future hope. And the Spirit is the guarantee for us. How do we know this? Because God is sovereign.

2. Our Hope in God's Sovereignty

Because God is sovereign, which leads to our second point, Our Hope in God's Sovereignty, Our Hope in God's Sovereignty. Look at verse 28. “**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**” (Rom 8:28)

Paul gives us the most glorious promise perhaps in all of Scripture right here. Circle this, underline this, highlight this in your Bible, put a star at the top of your page there. Have this Bible verse memorized and ready to go to. Because we need this. God has saved us, and God works all things out in our lives for good. And notice who is the agent here, that is making all of this happen? God is the One who is doing all of this. God is the agent. He works it all out for good.

Now remember, Paul has just been talking about the sufferings of believers in comparison with the glory of believers. And as those who suffer and go through trials, Paul tells us that God works all of that out in our lives for good. Notice, Paul says God causes all things. All things that means even Paul's beatings, and his hunger, and his dangers, and his imprisonments, all things. All of that is worked for his good. Both the good things that happen and the bad things, all of it is ultimately turned into blessing, because God is working it all out for good. Everything.

Listen, do you realize that God has saved you, and now He allows you to go through trials? Do you realize that? He allows you to go through them. Oftentimes, you hear people say that if you come to Christ, all of your troubles are just going to disappear. Just come to Christ and no more troubles. It's some kind of Joel Osteen fairy tale gospel -- that we shouldn't listen to, because it's a false gospel. Sure, your future judgment will disappear. And you will have peace with God because you're no longer an enemy of God, but you're a child of God. But that doesn't mean that your life won't have tribulations. It will have tribulation, and it will have trial. As believers, we will have tribulations. Jesus did, right? Do we think we're better than Jesus? He had trials, He had tribulations. And although we don't always like the trials, God uses those trials in our life for our good as He works all things together for good.

But notice this, notice, who were the only ones that this applies to? Only who? Believers. This is only for believers. Only for those who love God, and have been called by God according to His purpose.

To which Paul then goes on, to show God's complete sovereignty in our salvation and what God's purpose is. In verses 29 through 30, Paul gives what is called the **Golden Chain of Salvation**, the golden chain of salvation. What is it?

- a. First, we see **God's foreknowledge**, God's foreknowledge. That is in eternity past, God pre-determined whom He would save. He predetermined whom He would put His love upon. That's God's election of us. That's the doctrine of election there. God has elected us. Now this is not talking about God's foreknowledge of knowing who would choose Him. He's not looking down the tunnel of time, and saying, Oh, I know who's going to choose me. That's not what He's doing there. Because if God did that, is He sovereign? No, then He's a

beggar. Please choose me, someone, Oh, I know who's going to choose me. No. God is sovereign overall. God has foreknowledge and that foreknowledge speaks of Him choosing as He wills. This is the beginning of God's act in salvation.

- b. And then second, Paul goes on and he tells us about **God's predestination**. That is, He has predestined the destiny of everyone who believes in Him. This looks to the end of God's act in salvation. The foreknowledge is the beginning of God's act in salvation. Predestination has to do with the end of God's act in salvation. That is, every one of us is destined for Heaven as believers. God pre-destined us for it. Your destiny is already determined in the mind of God as a believer. And what's the ultimate destiny of all of us as believers? Notice what he says there, "[to be conformed to the image of His Son.](#)" (Rom 8:29) We are destined to be Christ like. We are destined for perfection and complete righteousness. Do you realize that? That's our future. That's what we're destined for.
- c. Third is **God's calling**. This is the inward call of the believer, where the Holy Spirit regenerates a person's heart. The outward call of repentance and faith must be given, yes, it must be given. But no one can respond to the outward call of repentance and faith without the Spirit first regenerating that person's heart so that they can then place their faith in Christ. Do you realize, as a believer sitting here tonight, you heard the gospel call, "repent of your sin, and put your faith in Christ." But the only way that you were able to put your faith in Christ and repent of your sin is because God first changed your heart. And you were then able to respond to that call. Because God called you. God did a work in your heart.
- d. Forth is **God's justification**. This is God's act of declaring someone righteous, not because of our own righteous works, but because of the righteous work of Christ. And we have Christ's righteousness imputed to our account. That's the doctrine of justification.
- e. Then, finally, fifth, he talks about **glorification**. But notice how Paul puts it here. He doesn't say, and these whom He justified He will also glorify. But Paul uses the past tense here, glorified, that He has glorified us. Why does Paul use a past tense here? It's to show that it is already a done deal. Do you realize that? Your glorification is already a done deal. We have hope, because although we are not yet glorified in this body, it is certain that you and I will be glorified. We will be glorified. That is a reality. Therefore, we cannot lose our salvation. In God's eyes, it's already a done deal. You see that? It's already done. You can't lose it if it's already done for God. God is sovereign over us over our salvation. He's the sovereign God, and he has determined that we are His and we'll be with Him forever. God sovereignly determined that.

3. Our Hope in Eternal Security

Which leads to our third and final point - Our Hope in eternal security, our Hope in eternal security. Now Paul knows that some of his readers who are believers would be attacked by false teachers who would cause them to question their salvation. Are you sure you're really a Christian? Well, maybe you're not. And so he goes on with a sequence of questions, to answer any doubts that they might have, because

of what these false teachers are doing to them. Look what he says in verse 31. "What then shall we say to these things, if God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31)

Paul gives two questions here.

- First, "What then shall we say to these things?" What things Paul? Well, he's saying the truth about our salvation, and not in not just there in chapter 8, the few verses before, but in all of chapters 1-8, because what is Paul just been talking about? Salvation. It's all about salvation. This is how you are justified before God. What shall we say to these things about our salvation in God?
- Answer: Paul gives a second rhetorical question here. "If God is for us, who is against us?" That is, no one can take away our salvation. No one. No one can take our hope. No one can take away our future glorification. Not a single person can. Now are there people who are against us? Yes, of course there are, right? There are people who are God-haters that would love to see us taken out. There are people who are against us. But no matter what a person does, or any kind of circumstances that you and I go through, nothing can cause us to lose our salvation, because God is for us. God is for us -- He has secured our salvation.

Because as we just saw in the Golden Chain of Salvation, He is the Sovereign One who gave it to us, right? He gives it to us, He's not going to take it away. He gives it to us, and He secures us for all of eternity. And that gives us hope, right? That gives us hope.

Then Paul goes on in verses 32 through 35, to give more questions to confirm our security in Him. Look what he says in verse 32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32) That is, how do we know that God is for us? Because He gave us His best. He gave up His best for us. What's His best? Who is His best? His son. He gave His Son to save us. And He gave us what? Eternal life! He's given us eternal life. Which means if it's eternal, you can't lose it. It's forever.

He goes on in verse 33, "who will bring a charge against God's elect?" (Rom 8:33) Answer? No one. No one. Why? Because God is the one who justifies.

Verse 34, "Who is the one who condemns?" (Rom 8:34) Answer? No one. Why? Because Christ Jesus is He who died. Yes, rather who was raised, who was at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." If someone could condemn us, if we could lose our salvation and be condemned, then Christ's death and resurrection was not powerful enough to save us and give us eternal life...and to keep us... for all of eternity. But He does keep us, and Christ presently intercedes for us, just as the Spirit intercedes for us.

Look, watch this believer, the Trinity is on your side. Do you realize that? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are on your side, they're on our side. God is for us.

Look at what he says in verse 35. Another question, "[who will separate us from the love of Christ?](#)" ([Rom 8:35](#)) Answer? No one! Well, let's give it a test. What about tribulation? Or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness? Or peril or sword? Can't those separate us from the love of Christ? Nope, they can't. Not even death itself can separate us from the love of Christ. That's why he goes on and says, "[Just as it is written, FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.](#)" ([Rom 8:36](#))

But verse 37, "[but in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.](#)" ([Rom 8:37](#)) And notice this, we don't conquer because of our own willpower or own strength. But we conquer through Him who loved us. We conquer because He conquered, and we are in Him.

And then Paul ends with this glorious truth. That nothing in the world, not even the devil himself, can separate us from Christ. Look what he says in verse 38. "[For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.](#)" ([Rom 8:38](#)) And we should all say, Amen. What a glorious truth that is! That nothing in this world, not even you yourself can separate you from Christ. Nothing. Nothing can separate you from Christ.

Now, does this mean that we can live however we want to in our lives? No. This glorious truth should drive us to Christ, and cause our hearts to glory, so much in Him that we desire to obey Him, and that we trust Him each and every moment of our lives. May we be His children who do that, and live that way.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for this amazing, amazing truth. It overwhelms us to think after all the things that we have done to sin against You, God, you have called us, You have chosen us, You have redeemed us. You have given us eternal life, eternal life that cannot be lost. Wow. Help us to live in light of this truth. To live with hearts that are grateful. As we live in obedience, complete obedience, and walk in the Spirit so that we would not fulfill the desires of the flesh. And God in the end of all of this, You receive all of the glory, because that is what it's all about. That's what this life is all about. It's all about the glory of You. We thank You for being such a glorious and gracious and merciful God to us -- to save sinners and to keep sinners like us. We give you praise in Christ's name, Amen.