

ROMANS 8

GOD JUST KEEPS ON GIVING AND GIVING AND GIVING

Did you, or do you, still daydream about having so much money and freedom that you could buy anything you want, and do anything you want? Lots of people do, and we could call that day dreaming, or we might call it hoping. You're about to see that the hope that awaits you, if you're a Christian, could make such a daydream a reality and even give you much more than you ever dreamed of. Last time we ended with Romans 8:19:

*19 For all **creation is waiting** eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.*

We saw that what we have waiting here is the entire created universe with the exclusion of human beings and angels. Paul is referring to the material earth, sky, land, water, grass, flowers, animals, etc. And just what is it that creation is waiting to see? Just look at the end of verse 19: *the revealing of the children of God*. That is when all sin will be gone, our sinful human nature will be gone, and we'll be standing in blazing holy pureness before our Lord and Savior, Jesus. So creation is looking and waiting and anticipating that full glory, when the saints (believers) will shine as stars forever.

Now just why is it that the creation is waiting with an eager longing as we read in verse 19? We see the answer in verse 20, Romans 8:20 (RSV):

*20 for the creation was subjected to **futility**, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope.*

Futility means aimlessness or the inability to reach a goal, an inability to achieve a desired result. In other words **nature cannot be what it was meant to be**. It cannot fulfill its reason for existing. Do you remember back in *Genesis* when God originally created everything? He looked at it and said that **it was good** (Genesis 1). There were no weeds in the Garden of Eden. There was no sin. There was no curse. Adam did not have to toil. He simply enjoyed all that God created. So did Eve. The earth was perfect. But then it was made subject to futility because Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, and now it can no longer achieve its original purposes. In Genesis 3:16-19, God said to Adam and Eve, who had had sinned and disobeyed Him:

16 You will bear children with intense pain and suffering. And though your desire will be for your husband, he will be your master."

*17 And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, **I have placed a curse on the ground**. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.*

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

19 All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return.”

Because of sin, creation became the victim of decay, corruption, frustration, and futility and it can no longer achieve its purpose. So we have smog, garbage, pollution, and environmental problems. This condition was not something the creation caused itself. Creation was a victim of the sin of humanity. Then verse 20 tells us that this has happened because of the One who has caused it to be subjected to futility, and that someone was God. God cursed the earth as we just read in Genesis 3. When God pronounced a curse on mankind, He pronounced a curse on the very same environment that He created. Why did He do that? **He did that so that we might very clearly understand the tremendous effect and evil of sin.** He did it so that we could see that sin doesn't just pollute the one who sins, but the effect of one's sins are endless. The sin of one man and one woman polluted an entire universe. So we learn here that nature's destiny is inseparably linked to the destiny of mankind. When mankind is restored to the glorious place that God has for His children, creation will be restored with them.

Now there is an excellent chance, according to the Bible, that Heaven is going to be right here on this earth and it is going to be remade in pretty much the same way God originally created things. Nature or creation is *waiting with an eager longing* because then it too will be freed from the bondage of corruption. There is an intimate connection between mankind's sin and the decaying universe. You might remember studying the law of **entropy** in science class. That law states that there is disintegration everywhere. That law is the result of the curse God placed on mankind and the earth in Genesis 3. The theory of evolution, in our humble opinion, is a gross distortion of the truth. We are not on an upward trend and never have been. We are on a downward trend, and that truth can be seen all around us. We are on a trip from absolute perfection to total disaster, and the whole thing is going to end when God knows that the last person who is willing to commit to Christ has done so. And according to the Bible it will not be pretty for those who have chosen to reject Jesus.

So creation is longingly awaiting this time, *in hope*. Creation has hope because of the promise in the Word of God that there will be a new Heaven and a new earth. Revelation 21:1 tells us:

*1 Then I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared.*

And what a day that will be for those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

As Paul continues in Romans 8:21, he writes:

21 All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in

glorious freedom from death and decay.

That's what creation is looking for, a time when it is restored and renewed. We are told exactly what is going to happen in 2 Peter 3:10 (NAS):

*10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which **the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.***

Intense heat could be created by the sun just rising twenty or thirty degrees from its normal life sustaining temperature. Intense heat could be created by the earth varying just slightly in its orbit around the sun. Intense heat could be produced by an atomic explosion. Intense heat could be produced by a large meteorite slamming into the earth. Intense heat could be produced in a variety of ways resulting simply from minor changes in the mathematical perfection of the universe. And if you believe that the entire universe can maintain this mathematical perfection without the hand of a Creator at the controls, you have some vivid imagination. Would you like some additional evidence? Let's go to 2 Peter 3:11,12:

*11 Since everything around us is going to **melt away**, what holy, godly lives you should be living!*

*12 You should look forward to that day and hurry it along—the day when **God will set the heavens on fire and the elements will melt away in the flames.***

What's going to happen then? Peter tells us in the next verse, 2 Peter 3:13:

*13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for **new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.***

What do you think would happen if I called all the major television networks, newspapers, and magazines and told them they should report these last few verses to the general public? They'd probably hang up on me. Why do you think they'd do that? Because the message comes from the Bible. And how many people today believe the Bible to be the true Word of the one and only God? Very, very few. But wouldn't you think people would recognize that it's a little strange to report on all the other nonsense that goes on in the world and to report on all the foolishness that comes from people who are constantly disagreeing and fighting with one another, and not report on what God says we should be doing to solve all our problems? Apparently not. Doesn't it just seem like common sense that if there is a God, He would give us some concrete instructions about how He wanted us to live our lives rather than just let everyone decide for themselves just what they think God wants them to do? That kind of thinking is ridiculous and people embrace it simply because it allows them to create their own kind of God, a God that makes them feel comfortable with themselves and doesn't hold them to a higher standard than the way they are living at the present time. The Bible is God's way of communicating with us and if we ignore His instructions, if we treat the Bible as a

fairy tale, we'll be devastated by what happens the instant we die.

I see people struggling every day with life and relationships that they simply are unable to cope with. They clear the bookstore shelves of self-help books, turn on Oprah every day, watch Doctor Phil, and ask their neighbors and relatives for advice. But if you walked up to them and told them, "*I guarantee you'll find an answer to your problem if you just read this one book, the Bible, and do what it says,*" they'd look at you as if you were crazy. Why? Because you're telling them that God will help them if they only seek Him out in the Bible. They may smile at you, turn and walk away, or perhaps give you a strange kind of look and turn and walk away. Most people have come to feel that human beings don't need God because they can figure everything out by themselves. And do you know what happens? They all keep going through life searching for answers and making the same mistakes because you don't find the concrete solutions you need in self-help books, from Oprah, or from Doctor Phil. You don't find God's wisdom from your friends and relatives who don't believe in God. You find the kind of help that will last a lifetime in the Bible and you will also find help from people who are believers in God and who live according to His Word. That can include psychologists, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and many others in all lines of work. God works with a person individually through His Holy Spirit and He also works through people who are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit. If you place your reliance on anyone who is not guided by the Word of God, by the Holy Spirit of God, you're not going to find lasting solutions.

Then if you were to tell these same people that they will spend their eternity in a place called the *Lake of Fire*, a place of constant torment that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 19:20;20:10,14), they'd tell you to "*get lost,*" or "*Mind your own business.*" It makes absolutely no difference to them that these statements come directly from the throne of God. The leaders of this age have taught the great majority of people in this world that the Bible is a book written by mere men and full of errors and inconsistencies. In other words, it cannot be believed.

The truth is that the Bible is perfect in every way and we would not hesitate to debate its total accuracy. The truth and the single main theme of the Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible is a book written over a span of 1500 years and dictated by God to some forty different prophets and apostles over that period of time. There is no imaginable way that all of these authors could have maintained that same theme which included the prediction of the coming of Christ, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life as a free gift of God's grace through the faith of a believer. And it went even further to predict in the books of the New Testament what will occur as we approach the second coming of Christ and His establishment of the Millennial Kingdom and the Final Kingdom of God in Heaven. What a tragedy that the great majority of the people of the world cannot understand and accept this truth.

For those, however, who have received the precious gift of grace through faith in Christ's atoning death on the cross, they have eternal riches and joy beyond their ability to comprehend. We're not going to be equal to Christ in His position as God, but we are going to be equal to Him in the sense of **inheriting all that He possesses**. You're not

going to find any *No Trespassing* or *Do Not Touch* signs in Heaven. Listen to what John writes in John 17:13-26:

- 13 *“And now I (Jesus) am coming to you (God). I have told them many things while I was with them so **they would be filled with my joy.***
- 14 *I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not.*
- 15 *I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to **keep them safe from the evil one** (Satan).*
- 16 *They are not part of this world any more than I am.*
- 17 ***Make them pure and holy by teaching them your words of truth.***
- 18 *As you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.*
- 19 *And I give myself entirely to you so they also might be entirely yours.*
- 20 *“I am praying not only for these disciples but also **for all who will ever believe in me** because of their testimony.*
- 21 *My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that **just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us**, and the world will believe you sent me.*
- 22 *“**I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are—***
- 23 ***I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one.** Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as **much as you love me.***
- 24 *Father, **I want these whom you’ve given me to be with me**, so they can see my glory. You gave me the glory because you loved me even before the world began!*
- 25 *“O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me.*
- 26 *And I have revealed you to them and will keep on revealing you. I will do this so that **your love for me may be in them and I in them.**”*

Jesus is saying that this is what He wants for believers. It’s His will that we be with Him where He is and that we behold all the glory that there is to behold. He doesn’t just want it all for Himself. This is pretty staggering to comprehend. We really need to understand this because we get so bogged down concerning what is going on down here on earth. Whatever that may be, it pales into insignificance compared with what we’re promised for eternity. The next time problems are weighing you down, just think about the inheritance you have if you’re a believer. And the real beauty of all this is that **we don’t have to do a single thing to earn it.** All we have to do is accept the free gift by believing it. Let’s look at some wonderful verses that confirm these wonderful promises of Jesus. First, Titus 3:5-11:

- 5 ***He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy.** He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit.*
- 6 *He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus*

Christ our Savior did.

7 He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now **we know that we will inherit eternal life.**

8 *These things I have told you are all true. I want you to insist on them so that everyone who trusts in God will be careful to **do good deeds all the time**. These things are good and beneficial for everyone.*

9 *Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual pedigrees or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws. These kinds of things are useless and a waste of time.*

10 *If anyone is causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with that person.*

11 *For people like that have turned away from the truth. They are sinning, and **THEY CONDEMN THEMSELVES.***

Now Hebrews 9:15:

15 *For this reason Christ brings a new agreement from God to his people. Those who are called by God can now receive the blessings he has promised, **blessings that will last forever.***

And Philippians 3:8-13, and 21:

8 *Yes, **everything else is worthless** when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ*

9 *and become one with him. **I no longer count on my own goodness** or my ability to obey God's law, but **I trust Christ to save me.** For God's way of making us right with himself **depends on faith.***

10 *As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death,*

11 *so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!*

12 *I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But **I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be.***

13 *No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: **Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,***

21 ***He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own,** using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.*

And finally 1 John 3:1-3, 9-11, 17, 18, 21-24:

1 ***See how very much our heavenly Father loves us,** for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are! But the people who belong to this world don't know God, so they don't understand that we are his children.*

2 *Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and we can't even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But **we do know that when he comes we will be like him**, for we will see him as he really is.*
 3 *And all who believe this will keep themselves pure, just as Christ is pure.*

9 *Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So **THEY CAN'T KEEP ON SINNING**, because they have been born of God.*

10 *So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the Devil. **Anyone who does not obey God's commands and does not love other Christians does not belong to God.***

11 *This is the message we have heard from the beginning: **We should love one another.***

17 *But if anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can God's love be in that person?*

18 DEAR CHILDREN, LET US STOP JUST SAYING WE LOVE EACH OTHER; LET US REALLY SHOW IT BY OUR ACTIONS.

21 *Dear friends, if our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence.*

22 *And we will receive whatever we request because we obey him and do the things that please him.*

23 AND THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT: WE MUST BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS HE COMMANDED US.

24 *Those who obey God's commandments live in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us.*

When you see clearly what you're heading for, you begin to want to clean up your act. You can't help but feeling that you should be the kind of person that a glory inheritor ought to be.

Now let's continue in Romans 8 with verse 22:

22 *For we know that **all creation has been groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

What was it that God said to Adam and Eve after they had sinned in Genesis 3:16? "*You will bear children with intense pain and suffering.*"

The word *groaning* in Romans 8:22 literally means to *groan together*. It is as if all the elements are in some kind of symphonic harmony; moaning, lamenting, and groaning

over their cursed state. We see here that sin has polluted the universe. The *pain* referred to in verse 22 is not necessarily a bad pain because it's a pain that leads to something good. It's the kind of pain we can look forward to because it brings something good. All this groaning, moaning, and pain of the earth in its anticipation will ultimately terminate at the reign of Jesus Christ during the Millennial Kingdom. The Millennial Kingdom will be a period of a thousand years when Christ will reign upon the earth after His return. This is when the lion will lie down with the lamb, when the desert will bloom like a rose, and we will finally live in relative harmony with one another. At the end of the Millennium God will create a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21). This is when all believers throughout history will find themselves in Heaven and when all those who have rejected Christ will find themselves in what the Bible refers to as the *Lake of Fire* (Revelation 20:14,15).

Then we're told in Romans 8:23:

23 And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

Here Paul is telling us that it is not only creation that groans, but that we groan also. Believers lament their cursed condition. We also groan under the pain of the curse of sin, over the evil in our lives. Paul gives us further insight into this feeling in 2 Corinthians 5:4:

4 Our dying bodies make us groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and have no bodies at all. We want to slip into our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by everlasting life.

Wouldn't we all like to be rid of the pain that our sinfulness causes us? We all know the pain of groaning for a better life, don't we? We are waiting, longing for the redemption of our bodies. For more on this you might want to read 1 Corinthians 15. Then in the next two verses, Romans 8:24,25 we discover:

*24 Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to this freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it.
25 But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.*

Hope that is seen is not hope, but rather it is reality. If you see something it's right there, you're not hoping for it, you have it. When we were saved there was something we did not have in our hand. There was something we lived to hope for, and that hope is the redemption of our bodies when these decaying bodies will be made perfect and made fit to live forever. The only way you can labor in love and pour out your life in the service of Christ is when you have the hope that in the end you will be glorified with Him. There is such a sense of peace in knowing that you don't have to satisfy all your wants and desires before you die. That creates a tremendous amount of stress on a person. In contrast, we

can find a sense of peace in knowing that the best is yet to come after we die and it will then last forever.

A relationship with Jesus Christ brings peace and assurance. If you don't have it, you can get it the moment you ask for Christ to be your Savior, and then continually ask Him to guide your steps through each day and night. If anyone would like any help in taking the first step, we'd welcome the opportunity to help you do that. We could do it right here and now before our Church family, or you could see us privately after the service. May all of us here be the adopted children of God, brothers and sisters in the family of God, royalty, by the time the sun goes down today.