

Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

Romans 8:18–30

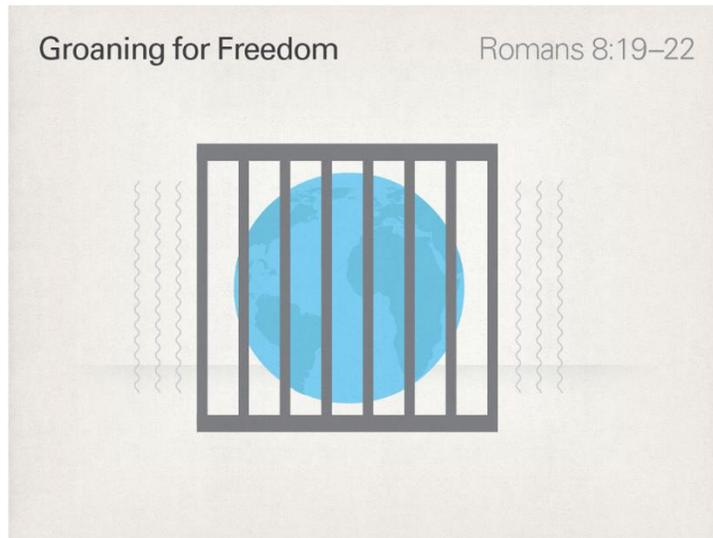
In this next section, verses [8:18–30](#), Paul strengthens his preceding argument without introducing a new point. He'll pick things up again in verse [31](#). He has just introduced the idea of looking forward to being glorified like Christ, anticipating the day when the power and consequences of sin are voided by a return to the way God intended things to be. We often tend to think only of ourselves without considering God's much larger plan. Paul now connects the notion of our flesh needing final redemption to the broader idea of *all* creation sharing this need.

Going back to verse [17](#), Paul mentioned the inevitability of suffering with Christ as part of our identification with Him. Knowing what Christ went through, we might be tempted to question whether the suffering is worth it. Maybe serving the flesh is the better route after all. Paul quashes this idea by stating that our present battle against our sinful flesh is nothing in comparison to the glory that awaits us. Suffering sounds so ominous from our perspective, and it is. But if we exchange our short-sighted view for a long-range perspective, we'll see that what lies in store for us—and we will have no doubt that what we endure in this lifetime will be worth it in the long run.

On that fateful day in Eden ([Gen 3:1–19](#)), all of creation was corrupted along with Adam and Eve, and it continues to be subjected to the same futility we face as human beings. If we focus only on the present, everything can seem meaningless. But creation was subjected to sin in *hope*, in anticipation of something more to come ([Rom 8:20](#)). In verse [21](#), Paul reminds us that just as the sons and daughters of God await the redemption of their fallen bodies, so too does all of creation await its restoration to God's plan. If we look around, we see that the death and decay we experience as a consequence of sin affects everything around us. God never intended for creation—or us—to suffer. The effects we see in our lives and throughout the world have been brought about by sin. So another aspect of condemning and removing sin involves removing it from the world. In fact, Paul says creation itself groans with longing for that day of redemption—perhaps even more than we do. Rather than whining about our suffering, we should anticipate the glory that lies ahead ([8:22](#)).



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "



Groaning for Freedom: Humanity is not alone in waiting to be redeemed from the consequences of sin. All of creation waits, groaning in anticipation.

Paul transitions from creation’s longing to our own, a longing for the day when the battle with our sinful flesh will finally end. In that day, our redeemed inner person will have a redeemed and glorified body as well. The indwelling of God’s Spirit is a preview of what lies ahead for us. We, too, should be groaning in anticipation, not grumbling about the suffering that lies between now and eternity.



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

Groaning for Freedom: Just as creation eagerly awaits final redemption, believers also await the renewal of our bodies. No longer will there be the war between our flesh pursuing sin and our inner person pursuing God.

In that day God's adoption of us will be complete—He will restore our relationship to what He originally intended it to be. Paul describes this complete adoption in verse 23 as the redemption of our bodies, an act that will complete the process initiated when God sent His Son to bring about our redemption and righteous standing before God by faith. For now, Paul says, our redemption lies in hope rather than completeness (8:24). Hope by definition includes a not-yet component. Paul circles back in verse 25 to the relationship between our present suffering and our future hope. **We must exercise patient endurance in our present trials, grounded in faith as we eagerly await that completeness.**

Paul began this section by stating that creation, too, is eagerly awaiting redemption. He adds us to this equation using a "not only this, but also ..." transition in verse 23. But Paul looks to factor in one more element—especially in light of the sufferings and adversity we face while we are waiting. He returns to the firstfruit of adoption that we received: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The trials and suffering that stem from sin may be inconsequential in light of eternity, but they nevertheless can have devastating effects in our lives. God's Spirit not only indwells us; He plays an intercessory role. So although Paul downplays our present hardships, he does not ignore our struggles to endure and overcome them. God's indwelling Spirit comes in and leads our spirit. In those times when discouragement and pain defy description, it turns out that there really isn't even a need for words when we pray. Rather, God, who searches our hearts, knows the mindset of His Spirit within us. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf based on His perfect knowledge of God's will (8:27).

Extra A New Life: Based on The Promises of God (8:18– 25)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *The believer's new life as a child of God has a firm foundation in God's promises and plans for his children.*

3



Pastor Maurice Anderson

13, 2016

Wednesday, January

Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

Paul's whole premise in chapters 6–8 of Romans is that the "new way of the Spirit" (Rom. 7:6) results in a new life for the believer. The old life was a life of slavery and servitude to sin, law, and death. Now, having died with Christ and been given the Holy Spirit, believers have a new life. We are free "to serve" not in the "old way of the written code" (Rom. 7:6) but in freedom and liberty. We are able to fulfill the requirements of the law through the power of the Spirit, not through the powerlessness of the law itself.

The new life we have been given in the Spirit is based on three things: the promises of God (Rom. 8:18–25), the purposes of God (Rom. 8:26–30), and the protection of God (Rom. 8:31–39).

8:18–21. The first promise is that of future glory. Perhaps no truth is so glaringly absent from the understanding of most Christians than the truth, and the implications thereof, that this world is not our home. When it finally settles into the heart and mind of the believer that we are "aliens and strangers in the world" (1 Pet. 2:11; cf. also Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:1), many things change

The curse to which the Creator subjected his creation (Gen. 3:14, 17) will finally be lifted when the coheirs inhabit the glorious new heavens and new earth (Rev. 22:3). When the curse is lifted, the creation will once again be an Edenic environment suitable for the image-bearers of God to inhabit and to reflect the Creator's glory. At present, the creation reflects the curse of sin; when sin is finally removed from the children of God, the creation will spring forth in glory.

8:22–23. The future will be glorious for the believer because of the full realization of what we have only a taste of at present—our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. The firstfruits of the Spirit (cf. Exod. 23:19; Lev. 23:9–14; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30) is the down payment, the certainty, we have from God that one day we will enter into our full inheritance as children of God. But now we, and the earth with us, groan painfully until that day

We, even the church, have so effectively distanced ourselves from the **groaning** of the **creation** that we forget that we live in the midst of a curse

Any believer who does not groan inwardly and wait eagerly for his or her adoption has a shallow understanding of the present condition and future hope God has provided for his children.

Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

The firstfruits of the Spirit makes it possible for us to be "hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8–9). "We do not lose heart ... for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Cor. 4:16–17). "We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:14)—coheirs receive the same resurrection as the heir—the redemption of our bodies.

Do we groan in the interim? Yes—we groan and are burdened! (2 Cor. 5:2, 4). But in our groanings we have the Spirit, "guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor. 5:5). One day, many believers who enter into the fullness of their adoption as children of God will look back and wonder how they could have felt so at home in a world so full of groaning.

We live in a cursed world; we groan; we are in labor pains; we long for the redemption of our bodies. The one thing that living in this world requires is patient hope. In fact, from the moment of our salvation, **hope** became our watchword because we were saved by faith (Eph. 2:8–9), and faith sees nothing. But "faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1)

Extra: A New Life: Based on the Purposes of God (8:26–30)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *As a child of God, the believer will ultimately realize God's purposes of conforming believers to the image of Jesus Christ.*

Hope sustains and helps the believer through the present times of suffering. In the same way, the Spirit helps and sustains the believer in weakness, specifically through the ministry of prayer. The advocacy role of the Spirit was promised by Jesus, and this is part of the fulfillment of those promises (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). Paul's description of the Spirit's role in prayer is one of the most intimate glimpses we have in all of Scripture of the inner workings of the Godhead. When we are weak and trembling, confused about



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

the purposes of God in our sufferings or our confusion, the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express

Our new life in the Spirit is based on God's good purposes for our lives, and that includes suffering. The suffering (v. 17) and groaning (v. 23) that Paul has been discussing is what is in view in verse 28. When we find ourselves in trying circumstances in life, we can **know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose**

1. Foreknowledge: God's setting his love upon (choosing) those who would be conformed to his Son's image (Amos 3:2 [cf. KJV "known" with NIV "chosen"]; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9).
2. Predestination: God's determining the destiny of those upon whom he has set his love.
3. Calling: God's effectual call from death to life those upon whom he has set his love (cf. the calling forth of Lazarus in John 11).
4. Regeneration: God's quickening, making alive, the spirit of those who are called so that they can believe.
5. Faith: God's gift of faith (Eph. 2:8-9) exercised by the regenerate.
6. Repentance: The turning from sin of those who have believed (this step is often combined with faith into a step of faith-repentance, or repentance and faith).
7. Justification: God's declaring as righteous those who have repented and believed.
8. Adoption: God's inclusion of the justified in the family of God.
9. Sanctification: God's work through the Holy Spirit to conform those in the family of God into the image of his Son.
10. Perseverance: God's insuring that those who are effectively called complete their pilgrimage of faith.
11. Glorification: God's fulfillment of his purposes—the making of fallen sinners into the image of his Son, Jesus Christ, for eternity.



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

While these passages have generated much heated discussion over the years (primarily concerning the meaning of foreknew and predestined), there is one key element which, if overlooked, gives rise to confusion, but if observed, gives focus to the passage. That key element is God himself: God has a "purpose" (v. 28), God foreknew, God predestined, God called, God justified, and God glorified (though future, glorification is written here in a "prophetic past tense"). This passage is all about God, not man! God is the adopter, humans are the adoptees. God is designing, engineering, and accomplishing his salvific purpose in the earth, quite apart from the interference and influence of men and women (as hard as that is for Type-A moderns to accept).



Help in Our Weakness: As we await complete adoption—the redemption of our bodies—we are not alone in our struggle with the flesh. God’s Spirit helps us in our weakness, interceding on our behalf.

Since [Romans 8:28](#) is a familiar verse, we should slow down and examine the detail it contains. Paul does not claim that all things work together for good for everyone; he has a specific subset of people in mind. He first describes this group as those who love God, and then recharacterizes them as those who are called according to His purpose. This recharacterization specifies how we should understand “working together for good.” It is not our definition of what good looks like—rather, God’s purposes determine the good.

Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

He calls us with a specific purpose in mind, and we can have the utmost confidence that all these things we face—including our present suffering—are working together as part of a larger plan that God has ordained. Paul goes on to describe this scenario in more detail.

Verses [29–30](#) are full of theologically loaded terms; I am not going to try to unpack them all. The way Paul phrases them in Greek tells us he is more interested in our understanding of the intentionality of God’s redemptive plan than in helping us fully understand each of these steps. The phrasing in Greek is slow and drawn out, allowing us to think about each new topic before Paul comments on it. By using “also” in each of the statements, he creates a closer connection between each one, constraining us to add the new phrase to what precedes.

Paul begins this sequence with the assumption that God foreknew us, not unlike the intimate knowledge described in [Psalm 139](#). These people whom God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus. It may come as a surprise that being conformed to Jesus’ image is not for our benefit: God’s desire is for Jesus to be glorified as the firstborn of all creation and to hold this preeminent position over creation. Once again we are reminded that although God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives, this plan is more about Him and His bigger purpose than about our happiness. Whatever benefit we gain in being conformed to God’s image is ancillary to **His greater purpose in seeing His Son properly honored.**

In [8:30](#), Paul builds on the notion of God’s foreknowledge and introduces a new topic. The ones God foreknew, He also called. And the ones He called, He also justified. And the ones He justified, He also glorified. These statements give us the grander picture of God’s plan. **Paul has already covered the concepts of our call and justification, and he has explained God’s desire for Jesus’ glory. His statement about glorification describes that final redemption, when our sinful flesh will be done away with. In this sense, [8:29–30](#) describe the whole process even though we are still awaiting the last step (see [8:18, 23](#)). Paul’s claim in verse [28](#) that all things work together for the good of those who love God is bolstered by the bigger picture—God’s plan as outlined in [8:29–30](#). The final step of glorification is when all things will be set aright, when the longing and groaning will finally end.**

Verses [18–30](#) serve to strengthen Paul’s claim in verse [17](#) that we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, even though that honor comes with the caveat: Suffering together



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

with Christ is part of being glorified together with Him, and Paul builds the case that the glory that awaits us makes whatever suffering we might experience now more than worth it in the long run. All of creation longs for the final redemption when it, too, will be made new. God's long-range plan, Paul says, is what enables all things to work together for our good (verse 28). It doesn't mean current suffering will end; instead, we need to rest in the assurance and anticipation of God's ultimate plan for us and for all His creation.

Romans 8:31-38

In this section, Paul returns to the big ideas he introduced in verses 16-17 before putting them aside to address the issue of suffering in verses 17-30. We now understand that we will face suffering and hardship in the short term, but that all things will be restored as part of God's larger plan. Most of us in North America live a pretty tame existence compared to Paul and the other first-century Christians. In 2 Corinthians 11:24-28, Paul provides a lengthy list of the perils he faced. Even so, he remained confident of God's continuing presence and guidance in his life. Rather than viewing these trials as signs of abandonment, Paul attributes them to life in a fallen creation that awaits final redemption. He makes this point in Romans 8:31-36.

His rhetorical question in verse 31 introduces the big idea for this section. "These things" refers back to sufferings addressed in the preceding section. The rhetorical question "what" points forward to the claim in the second half of the verse. Note that Paul is not claiming that we won't face opposition, instead he almost assumes it. The more important question is what will happen to that opposition since God is for us.

It is natural to be anxious in the face of trials, tribulations, and opposition. Despite our fear and anxiety, we need to rest in what we *know*. God is for us. He knew us before we even came into existence. He predestined and called us. He has justified us and will finish the job of glorifying us. God has a larger plan of seeing His Son glorified, part of which depends on us being conformed to His image (8:29). Based on these truths, why would God ever leave us? His plan depends on *staying* with us, on working all things together for the good of those who love Him (8:28). We cannot allow the opposition we might face to make us doubt or forget how committed God is to His plan for us. Paul drives this point home by recharacterizing God as "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us" (8:32 LEB).



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

Paul lists a number of things that could cause us to fear that we might lose or be excluded from God's protective care. But if God was willing to give His own Son to die for us, why would He scrimp on providing things we need (8:32)? **Although we continue to struggle with the presence of sin in our lives, we must remember that we have peace with God as a result of justification by faith (5:1). Who could bring a charge against God's elect and make it stick? No one. The accuser does not have the power to judge or justify; God alone has that authority (8:33).** The same holds true for condemnation (8:34). The penalty has been paid; sin and death have been conquered through Christ's resurrection from the dead. Nothing can undo His sacrifice or reinstate the death sentence we once faced.



Separation Anxiety: Can anything separate us from the love of God? Paul lists potential barriers before triumphantly declaring that nothing can separate us from God.

Affliction, distress, persecution, hunger and need, danger: All of these are natural consequences of life in a yet-to-be-fully-redeemed world, but they have no bearing whatsoever on God's favor and love for us. No matter the circumstances, despite how we might feel, we must steadfastly rest in the truth that God is with us and for us. Nothing can separate us from His love.

In fact, rather than the trials and opposition overcoming us or separating us from the love of Christ, the opposite is true. In 8:37 Paul makes the audacious claim that we prevail—that we are more than conquerors. How can this be? It is not because the trials and suffering disappear in the short term; they don't and won't. Rather, Paul's claim is based

Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

on the bigger picture outlined in Romans 8. All things work together for good—not by avoiding the hardships—but by God guiding all things to accomplish His purposes. Since nothing can separate us from the love of God, and since no one can make an accusation stick against one of God’s elect, the short term doesn’t matter. We may suffer, be imprisoned, even be killed. But the God who was faithful enough to us to send His only Son will remain committed to finishing the job. Present battles indicate nothing about the overall war. God has already won—it is simply a matter of faithfully following Him as He does what He has promised—working all things together for good according to His larger plan. So when you feel tempted to be anxious about your status with God, instead remember the bigger picture.

A New Life: Based on the Protection of God (8:31–39)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *As a child of God, the believer is secure that nothing in the universe can separate him or her from the love of God.*

There are three bases for the protection that the believer can depend on from God—protection based on precedent (8:31–32), based on legal standing (8:33–34), and based on the love of God (8:35–39).

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? This question is raised as a defense of what Paul taught in Romans 3:21–5:21 concerning justification—the legal position of believers before God. All have sinned, all fall short of the glory of God, but all (who believe) are justified freely by God’s grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. As the judge, God was perfectly just in paying the penalty for and declaring “free to go” the unjust (Rom. 3:23–26). As a result, no charge can be brought against **those whom God has chosen** (foreknown, predestined, called, *justified*, and glorified).

God has already brought all the charges which could possibly be brought against the believer to the bar of justice and declared them erased: “Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He



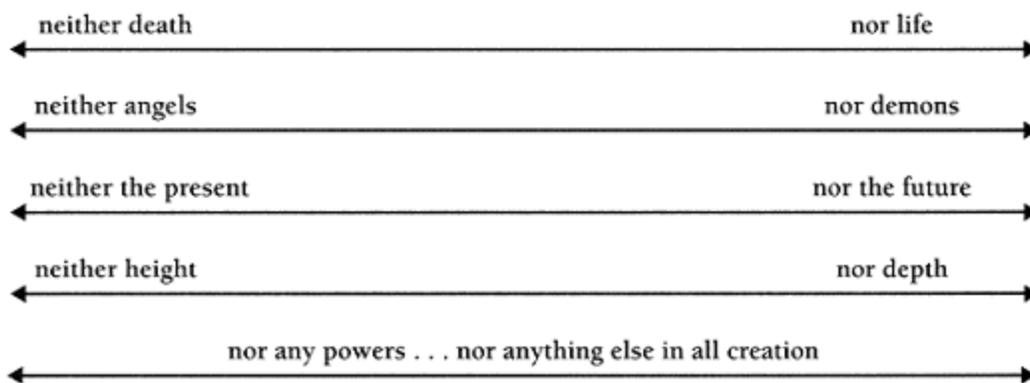
Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14, NASB). Therefore, **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?** (for the Old Testament background on God's defense of his chosen, cf. Isa. 50:8-9; 52:13-53:12; Zech. 3:1-5).

Who is he that condemns? If no charge can be brought against the elect of God, then certainly no condemnation can be brought against them either. Again, Paul is summarizing what he has taught previously: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" because of having been set free through Jesus Christ from the law which condemns us from our sin (Rom. 8:1-2). Isaiah spoke prophetically of a day when God's elect would condemn those who accused them: " 'No weapon that is formed against you will prosper, and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their vindication is from Me,' declares the LORD" (Isa. 54:17, NASB).

Psalm 44:22 to demonstrate that there will always be opposition to God's people and the work of God in the world. The world is cursed; it is an antagonistic environment; it is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19). There will be many natural and supernatural attempts made to convince the believer that he or she has been separated from the love of God. (Paul knows that nothing can separate us from the love of God, but he also knows that it can *appear* that we have been separated from the love of God. He wants to dispel both notions.)

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Rather, let us consider the giant spectrums of impediments to our remaining in God's loving care:



Notes: Remember To Ask Yourself "Who Said It " "Why They Said It " " What Can I Learn From It" and How To apply It "

Paul was a man of unshakeable confidence in the love of God. He feared neither the tangible hardships of life (see his experiences in 2 Cor. 6:3–10; 11:16–33) nor the intangible fears that creep into the consciousness of any normal person

MAIN IDEA REVIEW: *The gospel of Jesus Christ makes possible a brand new way of life for the believer—life lived abundantly in and through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

