

Rom. 8:18-39

- I. We are assured of a glorious future which our present sufferings cannot change or hinder (18-30)
- A. The Fact. (18-27)
1. Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (18)
 2. Four reasons we know that to be true (19-27)
 - a. The creation points ahead to our glory (19-22)
 - 1) Creation is looking ahead for redemption (19-21)
 - a) The eager expectation of creation waits for the revelation of the sons of God (19)
 - (1) Creation is broken
 - (2) It points ahead to wholeness
 - b) The reason it is in a waiting posture (20-21)
 - (1) Creation was subjected to futility¹(20a)
Ecclesiastes – ‘vanity’
 - (2) Explanation showing how specifically it was subjected (20b-21)
 - (a) Negatively – it was not subjected willingly (20b)
 - (b) Positively – it was subjected for a reason (20c-21)
 - (i) It was subjected in hope by the one who subjected it (in hope)² (20c)
 - (ii) The reason³– because it will be set free from the bondage of decay into the freedom of the glory of the children of God⁴ (21)
 - 2) The proof that Paul gives – all creation has been groaning and in labor pains until now. (Where there are labor pains, there is sure to be a birth to follow). (22)
 - a) The broken, weak, decaying state of nature points to the perfect standard which nature once was. Corruption implies corrupted from something.

¹ “It is not by accident that Paul draws in again the idea of ‘futility’ ...since it is precisely his object to show how God’s work in and through Christ reverses the plight of man so vividly depicted in 1:18ff...[the word ‘futility’ is used] in the sense of the futility of an object which does not function as it was designed to do...or, more precisely, which has been given a role for which it was not designed and which is unreal of illusory.” WBC p. 470.

² “Creation’s present condition is not the result of chance or fate but deliberately so ordered by God...precisely because it is not an end of God’s dealings but a stage in His purpose, the means by which the self-destructiveness of sin can be drawn out and destroyed, and creation restored to its proper function as the environment for God’s restored children.” WBC p. 471.

³ “in hope” could be taken with v. 21 and ‘oti as “that” so that this verse would be the content of the “hope” in which God has subjected the creation.

⁴ “For the last time ‘glory’ appears, emphasizing that God’s dealings but a stage in His purpose is incomplete until he has completed his original creative purpose in crowning man with glory. (Ps 8:5)” WBC p. 472.

- b) The whole of creation has been effected by the fall; the whole creation eagerly looks forward to redemption and sharing in glory.
- b. Not just creation, but we ourselves point ahead to our glory. (23-25)
 - 1) We who have the first fruit of the Spirit⁵ are groaning⁶ in ourselves as we wait for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (23)
 - a) Not just the creation (23a)
 - b) But we also (23b-d)
 - (1) We have the firstfruit which is the Spirit (23b)
 - Firstfruit – partial harvest, heaven now, Pentecost, feast of weeks
 - Cf. ἀρραβων down-payment – Eph 1:14, 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5
 - (2) The ramifications of this (23c-d)
 - (a) We also groan within ourselves. (23c)
 - Cf. 7:17, 20
 - (b) Because we are eagerly looking forward to adoption, the redemption of our bodies (23d)
 - On adoption cf. v. 15
 - Our salvation is not yet complete – past, present, future salvation – unredeemed bodies, weak & mortal – indwelling sin, physical frailty and fallen nature.
 - Human heart’s cry – “There has got to be more to life” is accurate and points to more – cf. Lewis quote
 - 2) The reason this is true (24-25)
 - a) The nature of our salvation points to the future (24)
 - Our salvation is not yet complete
 - (1) We are saved in hope (24a)
 - (2) Interpretation of what this means (24b-c)
 - (a) Hope that is seen is not hope (24b)
 - (b) Reason- no one hopes for what he sees (24c)
 - b) The nature of our hope makes us wait patiently⁷ (25)
 - (1) If we hope for what we do not see. (25a)
 - (2) The we wait for it patiently.⁸ (25b)

⁵ “The metaphor carries several implication. (1) The firstfruits are the first sheaves of the harvest...so the harvest has begun. (2) The harvest is the whole of which the firstfruits are a first small part; in this case the whole is the resurrection body, the harvest of dead men and women resurrected. (3) The firstfruits are of a piece with the whole; hence the continuity between the gift of the Spirit, his work in the believer, and the final product of resurrection...(4) the final harvest initiated by Christ’s resurrection is already under way.” WBC pp. 473-4.

⁶ “The second use of the ‘groaning’ motif of course is deliberately intended to recall creation’s groaning in v.22, and to emphasize believer’s involvement in the...travail of creation. Once again, the point needs to be emphasized that the Spirit does not free from such tension, but actually creates or at least heightens that tension and brings it to more anguished expression.” WBC p. 474.

⁷ “The complete redemption (v23) hoped for is still outstanding. So far as hope is concerned we are already saved, but hope itself is not the completion of salvation.” WBC p. 475.

⁸ “The reference to patience confirms that Paul’s thought is moving along the same lines as in 5:3-5 (suffering, hope, Spirit)...[patience] appears for the third time in seven verses (vv 19,23,25); it

- c. In the same way, the Spirit also points ahead to our glory (26-27)
 - 1) The Spirit helps us (26)
 - The presence of God's Spirit is a sign that we are God's, cf. vv. 9,11,14,16
 - If God is helping, we will win
 - Cf. character of God
 - Heb. 10:23 He is trustworthy and faithful
 - Phil. 1:6 He is good at what He does. He will complete what He starts
 - a) The Spirit helps us in our weakness⁹ (26a)
 - b) Reason (26b-d)
 - (1) Negatively (26b-c)
 - (a) We don't know how to pray¹⁰ (26b)
 - (b) As we ought [to pray]¹¹ (26c)
 - (2) Positively – The Spirit intercedes for us with unutterable groans¹² (26d)
 - 2) Explanation specifically what this means. (27)
 - a) The One Who searches the hearts¹³ knows the mind of the Spirit¹⁴. (27a)
 - b) Reason – He intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (27b)

characterizes the in-between times as...eager waiting; patience with a vibrant quality. The Christian perspective is determined not by the frustration of the present, but by its future hope; by this it can be seen that the groaning of v. 23 is of frustration and not despair." WBC p. 476.

⁹ "As with 8:3 the concept [weakness] denotes the condition of man in this age, indeed in his creatureliness, as creature and not creator, with all that that implies for man's need of transcendent support. Paul has in view not merely the believer's exposure to external temptations or his inability in prayer as such, but the totality of the human condition (the corruptibility of the body, the subvertedness of the flesh) which the believer is still part of and which comes to expression in prayer inability." WBC p. 477.

¹⁰ "It is not simply that words fail believers who know all along what they want to pray for but cannot express it. The measure of their confusion and frustration as belonging to both epochs is that they do not know what God's will for them and their social context is." WBC p. 477.

¹¹ "The statement [as we ought/is necessary] stands within the context of Paul's powerful conviction that God has a purpose for his creation, that it is drawing forward steadily to its climax, and that believer's aspirations in prayer should be to fit their lives into that ongoing purpose. That ['is necessary'] here is more or less equivalent to ['as God will'] in v. 27 is generally recognized." WBC p. 477.

¹² "Paul clearly intends with [groans] to link the thought back to vv 22 and 23." WBC p. 478.

¹³ "Ps 44:21 may have been particularly in Paul's mind, since he goes on to cite the next verse (44:22) in v. 36." WBC p. 479.

¹⁴ "The allusion to v 6 is obvious." WBC p. 479.

- C. The ramification of this fact. (28-30)
1. We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose. (28)
 2. The reasons (the “Golden Chain” which cannot be broken). (29-30)
 - a. Those He foreknew, He also predestined. (29)
 - 1) He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. (29a)
 - 2) The purpose – So that He could be the firstborn among many brothers. (29b)
 - b. Those He predestined, He also called (30a)
 - c. Those He called, He also justified. (30b)
 - d. Those He justified, He also glorified. (30c)

II. Because of the preceding, the following things are true. (31-39)

- A. Rhetorical Question – “What then shall we say?” (31a)
- B. Answer – We are secure in our assurance of glory. (31b-39)
1. Series of rhetorical questions stating that God is on our side and nothing can take our assurance. (31b-34)
 - a. Nothing can stand against us. (31b-c)
 - 1) God is for us (31b)
 - 2) Therefore, nothing can be against us. (31c)
 - b. God will give us all things (32)
 - 1) What God has done. (32a-b)
 - a) Negatively – He did not withhold His own Son. (32a)
 - b) Positively – He gave Him for us all. (32b)
 - 2) Implication (from greater to lesser)- Therefore He will give us all things with Him. (32c)
 - c. No one can accuse us (33)
 - 1) No one can bring accusation against us whom God has chosen. (33a)
 - 2) Reason – God is the One who justifies (There is no higher court of appeal). (33b)
 - d. No one can condemn us (34)
 - 1) No one can condemn us (34a)
 - 2) Reasons – What Christ has done. (34b-e)
 - a) Christ died (34b)
 - b) He also rose from the dead (34c)
 - c) He is at the right hand of God¹⁵. (34d)
 - d) He is interceding for us¹⁶. (34e)

¹⁵ The place of power and authority. i.e., no one can overrule Him.

¹⁶ Cf. Heb. 7:25.

3. The bottom line – What this means for us and our assurance. (35-39)
 - a. Question stating the bottom line issue. (35-36)
 - 1) The question – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (35a)
 - 2) The question is made more specific. (35b-36)
 - a) Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (35b)
 - b) These are the kind of things comparable with what Scripture told us to expect. (36)
 - (1) Disclosure formula introducing a Scripture quote – “It is written...” (36a)
 - (2) Content of the quote. (36b-c)
 - (a) For your sake we face death all day long. (36b)
 - (b) We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. (36c)
 - b. Answer to the bottom line question. (37-39)
 - 1) In all things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. (37)
 - 2) Reason – Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor demons, nor the present, nor the future, nor any powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (38-39)