

**Not Ashamed
(Week 21)
Romans 8:16-27
“The Glory To Come”**

Introduction

“The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God’s children, and if children, also heirs — heirs of God and coheirs with Christ — if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” **Romans 8:16-17**

There are three things that every truly born-again Christian is assured of in his walk with God. They are as follows: *Justification*, *Sanctification*, and ultimately *Glorification*. Justification has often been described as “just as if I never sinned”. This means that a person who has been baptized in Christ is washed clean and has been given “righteous credit” simply by believing Christ. It is the very same thing that happened to Abraham, when he trusted in God’s promises, even though he could not see them at the time.

“Abram believed The LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.”
Genesis 15:6

Now, we know that Abraham was far from perfection, but, because he trusted in God’s promise, he was given “righteous credit” for it. This is exactly what happens when a person places their faith in Jesus. They are declared righteous in the sight of heaven. Even though, if we are truly honest, we know that we, like Abraham, are far from perfection.

The next “phase”, if you will, is sanctification. The Holy Spirit places within us a new nature upon salvation, and then, He begins to change us from the inside out. Jesus called this process “pruning” in **John Chapter 15**. Last week, we discussed how The Spirit works within us to bring about this change. We used four “C’s” to describe how The Spirit speaks to our hearts: **Connection**, **Conviction**, **Correction**, and finally, **Comfort**. As we pray and study The Word, The Spirit uses the Word to show us our faults, he shows us the right way to live, and then, comforts us with peace when we follow His leading. This is how we know that The Spirit of God is within us. He is actively engaged in the work of Sanctification in every believer.

So, if *Justification* is our “**position**” in Christ, and *Sanctification* is our “**process**” in Christ, then, our ultimate reality, or the final “**product**” as it were, is *Glorification*. This simply means that when The Spirit has finished His work in us, we will be “glorified” into the very image of Christ Himself. We will be remade as His refection, sinless in flawless perfection. Now, all of us realize that we have a long way to go before we get there, but God’s Word assures us that He will finish the work that He began in us (**Philippians 1:6**). His Spirit within us will see to it.

It is this Glorification that Paul is speaking of in **Romans 8:17-27**; the glorification that will ultimately be revealed in us when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom. He will bring about a new heaven and a new earth, where there is no more sin and death, no more disease or decay, and no more suffering. Every believer eagerly awaits this day, but as we wait, we must realize that a very large part of the sanctification process requires our suffering here in this sinful world. For you see, it is in the crucible of fire that precious metals are refined. In order to inherit the glory of Christ, we must also share in the suffering of Christ. It is not a desirable reality, but it is a necessary one. To be conformed into His image, we must suffer as He did. Sanctification is painful, but the ultimate glorification will be worth it all. Let us take this into account today as Paul soberly reminds each one of us what it will be like as we await our final redemption. We eagerly await the **Glory**, with **Groaning**, and the **Guidance** of the Spirit.

The Glory (vs.17-18)

“...and if children, also heirs — heirs of God and coheirs with Christ — if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.”
Romans 8:17-18

Paul begins this passage by reminding us that if we are in Christ, then we also share in His inheritance. This means that all that Christ possesses, we possess in Him. We are not mere servants, but adopted children of The Living God, and as such, all the riches of The Father are ours in Christ Jesus! Is it any wonder John The Apostle wrote:

“See what great love The Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”
1 John 3:1a (NIV)

But there is a condition placed upon this inheritance. We are indeed co-heirs with Christ, but as such, we are required to share in His sufferings. Jesus warned any who would follow Him, that because the world has hated Him, it would hate us as well.

“Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But they will do all these things to you on account of My Name, because they don’t know The One Who sent Me.”
John 15:20-21

The phrase that Paul uses, translated **“if indeed we suffer with Him (vs. 17)”**, would actually be better translated, “since we suffer with Him”. The message here is clear. If you are in Christ, suffering is part of the package. It is not an “if” we suffer, but rather a “when”. This world despises Christ AND His followers. If you are in Christ, then you should expect to be persecuted for it. Simple as that. That persecution is actually proof that you are an heir. In fact, God uses suffering in order to produce the results in us that He desires. Our suffering is part of the sanctification process. Without suffering, there can be no Glorification. If you want to read a passage of scripture that is on parallel with what Paul is teaching here, then look no further than **1 Peter Chapter One:**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ. Because of His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. You are being guarded by God’s power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials so that the proven character of your faith — more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire — may result in praise, GLORY, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”
1 Peter 1:3-9 (emphasis added)

So you see, suffering produces character, and The Holy Spirit will allow you to suffer, so that you can be refined into the very image of Christ. This is an inescapable reality of being in Christ; we must suffer with Him, in order to become like Him. But, just as a woman suffers during the pangs of childbirth, the end result is far greater than the suffering. The glory to be revealed is worth all of the pain!

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.”
Romans 8:18

The Groaning (vs. 19-25)

“For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God’s sons to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of Him Who subjected it — in the hope that creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. Not only that, but we ourselves who have The Spirit as the firstfruits — we also groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.”
Romans 8:19-25

Paul continues by saying that all of creation longs for the great day of redemption, just as we believers do. The world has been suffering under the curse of sin for thousands of years. It longs to be free from it. The word that Paul uses to describe creation’s anticipation actually means, “to stand on tiptoe with your neck stretched out”. Have you ever looked for someone in a large crowd and done just that? You stretch yourself up as tall as you can to overlook all that is going on around you in order to see the one you are looking for. That is exactly the kind of anticipation that creation itself is straining with in order to see the second coming of The LORD Jesus Christ! Creation longs for the day that the curse is lifted, and the world is made new.

One theologian described it this way. Every springtime, the earth strains to renew itself. It is resurrected from the death of winter, so that trees and flowers may live again. The birds sing for joy, and the animals produce their offspring. For a short time, it seems that all is well again, but the rejoicing is short lived as summer gives way to fall, and fall to winter, and death returns to nature. The creation longs for the day when Christ is revealed, and the sons of God are glorified. It will be a day of eternal “spring”. There will be no more sorrow, suffering, and death. And when that day comes, it will be worth it all! In the meantime, creation groans for the day that it shall be set free and made new.

As believers, we can sympathize. Every time we stand over the grave of a loved one, or as our old fleshly bodies begin to age and break down, we long for the time when Christ will return to make all things new. We groan for it. But, thanks be to God, we do not groan as those who have no hope. We know that Christ will keep his promises. Just as He has proven to us thus far, He is with us through the suffering. We know that suffering and death shall one day cease. Therefore, we can say as Paul says in **1 Thessalonians** :

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.”
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Yes, we have grief. In fact, we groan with it, but we do not grieve as those who have no hope. We know that Christ will return, and we wait for this day as Paul says, “eagerly with patience”. And while we wait, we have the guidance and comfort of The Holy Spirit to see us through until the day that glory shall be revealed.

The Guidance (vs. 26-27)

“In the same way The Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And He Who searches our hearts knows the mind of The Spirit, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”
Romans 8:26-27

There is some great news for the adopted child of God. We do NOT have to face the trials of this fallen world alone. We do not have to somehow navigate our way through the persecutions and heartaches of life and find our own way to the glorification that God has promised. The Spirit is guiding us and will see to it that we get exactly what we need. Truth be told, we haven't the first clue what it would take in order to produce the Christ-likeness that God desires for each of us. In fact, we wouldn't even know where to begin. But The Spirit knows exactly what is needed. And He prays earnestly for it. He knows exactly where I need to go and exactly the type of suffering that I must endure in order to be conformed into the image of Christ. And what I require, may be completely different from what you might need.

Think about that for a moment. The spirit of God is imminently more qualified to give us exactly what we need in order to prepare and complete us for the day that the glory is revealed in us. Have you ever considered that everything that you have been allowed to go through in your life, every time of difficulty, every heartbreak, every type of persecution that you have had to endure, was directed by The Spirit of God, because He loves you and wants the best for you? It isn't God's anger that brings sorrow into a believers life, its His LOVE.

"for The LORD disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He receives."

Hebrew 12:6

God knows what it takes to perfect us, and He has committed to do everything that is necessary to see us all the way to our glorification. And quite frankly, it is often painful. But there is one thing about faith, you never know if it is genuine until it is tested. A friend of mine used to say, "If you go around saying you love Jesus, then sooner or later, you will get the chance to prove it." Now, there is some truth for you. I am reminded here of Simon Peter. Anyone who has a speck of discernment can clearly see that Christ loved that old cantankerous fisherman. It is beyond obvious. But listen to what Christ told him:

"... 'Feed my sheep', Jesus said. 'Truly I tell you, when you were younger, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don't want to go.' He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God..."

John 21:17b-19a

You see, Peter was to be led away as a martyr for the cause of Christ, and yet Jesus loved him dearly. Peter would have never chosen that route for himself, but The Spirit knew exactly what was needed in order to bring glory to God. Peter accepted this calling and even acknowledged it in his own writings:

"I think it is right, as long as I am in this bodily tent, to wake you up with a reminder, since I know that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our LORD Jesus Christ has indeed made clear to me."

2 Peter 1:13-14

So, there you have it. What the Spirit prays for us may certainly not be what we want, but it is most definitely what we need. It is He that has guaranteed to guide us until we reach our final destination. And the final destination is worth any road we must travel to get there. In Christ, we are Justified, Sanctified, and shall ultimately be Glorified, thanks to the Guiding prayers of The Holy Spirit. Are you up for the journey? To be in Christ, is to suffer alongside of Him, so that we may share in all of His glory and majesty. We have been wondrously saved so that we may bring glory to God, and that is why we are here. Let's we ever forget:

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

And let the co-heirs with Christ Jesus say... TRUTH!!!