

Romans 8:18–26 NKJV

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Holy Spirit through Paul left off in the previous verse telling us that one of the evidences of our future glorification with Christ is our present _____ with Him. He then holds both our present suffering with and for the Lord up for examination alongside our future _____.

¹⁸ For I consider
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This is quite a statement from the apostle who by this time in his life had known more suffering for Christ than most of us could ever imagine. He had been hunted, driven away, _____, beaten, stoned and left for dead – all for Christ. Yet Paul says, “That is _____ by comparison to the wondrous things that await me and you when we are glorified with Christ.” And remember, Paul knew, because he was caught up to the third _____ and undoubtedly saw and heard things more marvelous than he was allowed to describe. (2 Cor. 12:2-4) He previously had written those same believers, **1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV** *But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

The expectation and hope of this future glory is the subject of the next eight verses. Paul says this expectation produces something we may find strange: _____ . In fact, it produces three of them.

Before we seek to enumerate the three, let us be sure to understand what Paul is speaking of when he says “groaning”, because the root word for each is identical, the only difference being that in two cases the word used is a _____ and in one case a _____. However, the basic meaning in each case is the same. The Greek root is *stenazo*, and it means to groan or to _____ strongly. It is translated as groan, grumble, grief, and sigh. It often refers to the cries of a person who is _____ for deliverance, and that is exactly the meaning here.

Three cries are going up for deliverance. What deliverance? The deliverance of the _____ man from being held captive in the old body of the _____, where the saved spirit of the man who wants to do good, who wants to honor the Lord is at _____ with the old man of the flesh which wants to restrict him to old sinful ways. The saved man, the new man wants to be _____, to be glorified, to be made like Christ so that the battle ends and he is free to be fully all that Christ through salvation has made him to be. Three entities cry out desperately for this glorification. One we might expect, and that is the man himself. The other two who groan for the completion of this glorification may surprise us.

The first the Spirit tells us about is **the _____** itself. The created universe, and all that is in it, has an **earnest expectation** for this coming glorification. The word translated earnest expectation means “watching with an _____ neck.” It gives the picture of one standing on a road, standing on tip toe, stretching his body to look as far toward the horizon as possible to see the approach of a long awaited guest. The mountains and seas, the birds and the beasts, the sun, the moon, the stars, all **eagerly wait** for “**the revealing**” of the sons of God. “The revealing” is the Greek word *apokalupsis* (_____), from which we get the title of the last book of the Bible: Revelation. It means an _____. And what shall be revealed about the **sons of God**? That those who are made sons through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12) shall be _____ and made fully in the likeness of their Savior.

¹⁹ For

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²⁰ For the creation
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 but because of Him
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 in hope;

Now why does the creation so eagerly long for the glorification of people who are saved? Because the creation itself was **subjected**, _____, **to futility**, ineffectiveness, **not willingly**, not because it wanted to be that way or was designed to be that way; but because _____ decreed it so. Paul is here describing the effects of Adam's sin upon all of the rest of creation. God declared,

Genesis 3:17–19 NKJV ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return."

Before sin entered the world, all of the created order functioned with _____. The plants God made produced all the food man and animals would need according to the design of their Maker. All men and animals had to do was _____ the crop. Tilling, cultivating, watering, nurturing were not required.

But when sin entered the world, God put a _____ upon the creation itself. He **subjected it to futility**. It would no longer be _____ and productive as He had created it to be. The curse of God upon creation is what scientists today call the _____ Law of Thermodynamics or the Law of Increasing Entropy. Entropy, simply put, is a measure of disorder. God's pronouncement caused disorder to always _____ in any system, physical or biological. So after God cursed the ground, it would no longer produce without the labor of cultivation; and fields left to themselves would produce _____ and thistles rather than crops.

However, the same One who subjected the creation to futility ultimately gives it **hope** of renewal.

²¹ because

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²² For we know
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together
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²³ Not only *that*, but
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who have the firstfruits
of the Spirit,
even we ourselves
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This hope comes because when the **children of God** come into their **glorious liberty** through the glorification of their bodies, the creation itself will be delivered from the **bondage of corruption** that traps it in futility and ineffectiveness. This hope is the promise of new _____ and a new _____.

Isaiah 65:17 NKJV “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

Since we have the blessing of the _____ Bible, which the church in Rome did not have when they received this letter, we are privileged to understand this more fully than they. The Apostle John reveals in the Revelation that after the Millennial Kingdom and the Great White Throne Judgment that this hope shall be fulfilled and this promise kept.

Revelation 21:1 NKJV Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

That is the promise; that is the hope. But it is future and for now, **the whole creation** _____, cries out in desperation for that day. It is in pain as one in _____ trying to give birth to that new beginning. And the new beginning for the creation comes when all the saved men, women, boys, and girls are _____ and made to be like their dear Savior, the One and Only Lord Jesus Christ!

The second groaning for the day of our glorification is the one we might expect. That cry of desperation comes from us, the _____, our salvation evidenced because we have the _____ of the Spirit already with us. What are those **firstfruits** of the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22–23 NKJV ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

These things the Spirit begins developing in us once we are saved. They are not fully completed until our glorification.

²⁴ For
 we were saved
 in this hope,
 but hope that is seen
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 for what he sees?

²⁵ But if we hope
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²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also
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 For we do not know
 what we should pray for
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Paul emphasizes that we groan for this glorification because it is still _____. It is our **hope**, and hope implies we do not have it yet. So, as much as we have received from the Lord already as a part of our salvation, we do not have it all. There remains for us the hope, the future promise of delivering us, saved people, from our battle with the _____ when we are set free from our mortal bodies and glorified with Christ.

Right now, while we remain in the body and at war with our sinful flesh, we **wait with perseverance**, patient _____, for the fulfillment of that hope that awaits us. We labor with our ears “cocked,” listening for that certain sound,

1 Corinthians 15:51–54 NKJV ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *“Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

Finally, Paul tells us of the third entity groaning for our glorification: the _____. The Holy Spirit is aware of our struggle between our spirit and the flesh. He knows the inner man has been redeemed but still must fight the inclination to sin in the outer man, and He helps us in our _____. While we still live in the flesh, we cannot do anything perfectly. In fact, the only thing we even do well is that which we do in the power of the Spirit.

We do not even _____ **as we ought**. This is an interesting observation when you note that Paul is including himself in this comment. Do you mean that even Paul, that great man of magnificent faith, that stalwart follower of Christ, the evangelizer and church planter – he did not know how to pray as he ought to pray?

That is what Paul himself says. Do we have an example? Possibly. Consider

2 Corinthians 12:7–9 NKJV ⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Three times Paul prayed for something that was ____ God’s will, so you might say that he did not pray as he ought.

But the point here is not to find fault with Paul or with ourselves. The point is that Paul did not pray as he ought because he did not _____. He was not being rebellious or even stubborn. He simply did not know, so therefore he could not pray as he ought. And the same for us. Many times we do not know specifically how we ought to pray.

So the Holy Spirit within us prays for us. He makes _____ for us according to the Father’s will and the believer’s need. But He does so not with spoken words or pen and ink. He intercedes for us in _____, desperate cries for our glorification to be made complete, giving us the victory over our sinful humanness.

Our Charismatic and Pentecostal brothers and sisters use this passage as a proof text of the legitimacy of speaking in _____ tongues or ecstatic speech. However, the text itself rules this out. These groaning cannot be reduced to _____, known or unknown. They cannot be _____. This is communication between the Father and the Spirit, and no language is needed: not a known language, not an unknown language, not a _____ language. No language is used; just groaning which intercedes for us here and now and looks eagerly, longingly, and expectantly to the future glorification of all God’s children.

Romans 8:27–28 NKJV

²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*.

²⁷ Now

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Paul has just told us in the previous verse that the Holy Spirit, who lives inside the life of the believer, prays to the Father for the believer in _____ that cannot be uttered. Now Paul tells us about this activity from God the _____ perspective. He refers to “**He who searches the hearts.**” Who is that?

1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*”

It is _____ Himself!

Acts 1:24 NKJV And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen

God the Father, knows the hearts of men and He also knows the _____ of the Holy Spirit living in the saved man. There is perfect _____ within the Trinity for while the Trinity exists in three persons, those three persons are three in _____. Just as our bodies are a trinity or tri-unity of body, _____, and spirit, so God is a Trinity of Father, _____, and Holy Spirit.

The Father knows the mind of the Holy Spirit who is making intercession for the _____. And this intercession that He makes is in perfect accord with the _____ of God the Father. Consequently, what the Spirit prays for us as He intercedes, will be _____, because it is always according to the will of God; and the Father perfectly _____ the request.

How awesome is that?

God with the same kind of love with which God loves us? Only the _____.

1 John 4:19 NKJV We love Him because He first loved us.

In 1 John, both our love and His love are again the Greek word for _____ love. We have a God-like love for the Lord because He loved us that way first!

So, for whom does this promise work? For those who love God, not just as a friendly acquaintance (the other option for the Greek word for love), but those who love God back in the same kind of self-sacrificing way that He loves us. Those are saved people!

Interestingly, Paul answers this question _____. For whom does this promise work?

A. For those who love God

B. For those who are the called according to His purpose.

Who are the called according to God's purpose? They are the _____ ones, the saved. Each one who has been saved was called by God into this relationship as the _____ drew them through the convicting of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

This promise is for _____ who is saved, but _____ for the saved. All things do not work together for good for the unsaved. They end up in the lake of fire, and there is nothing good about that! Other things also do not necessarily work together for good for the _____ either. This is a promise for God's children through faith in Christ, who have received God's love and who love Him back. And while this promise works for all who have been saved, the more we love the Lord and walk faithfully in fellowship with Him, the more we _____ the visible working of this promise. I am not saying that it works more for the faithful, just that we see more from God's perspective, so we observe the working of the promise more _____ and more _____.

The second question:

2. WHAT IS REALLY PROMISED?

A. What is _____ promised: That all things will be good.

This is obvious to us. Not everything that happens in the life of the believer is good. As we have seen, even sin still occasionally surfaces in the life of the believer, and certainly sin is not good. But the promise is not that _____ good things happen. Unfortunately, sometimes when bad things happen in the life of the believer, the believer says, "What happened to Romans 8:28? Why did God not keep His promise?"

God always keeps His promises, but God did not promise that all things will be _____.

B. What is promised: God makes all things work together so that the end result is good.

What better example of this can we have than the biblical story of _____? Certainly not everything that happened in his life was good. Much of what happened was not only caused by sin but was done with evil _____. His brothers were sinfully jealous. They planned his _____, but relented to sell him as a slave instead. They _____ to their aged father.

Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph and got him thrown in prison. His fellow prisoner, Pharaoh's butler, failed to keep his _____ to Joseph for two whole years. A lot of bad happened to Joseph. But listen to what Joseph says about it all after the fact.

Genesis 50:20 NKJV But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

Joseph saw this promise fulfilled in his life. Many things had happened across the years, good and bad. But God had caused ____ of them to work together for the good of Joseph and of his family. Furthermore, God worked the good of His own _____ plan, using the sojourn of Jacob's family in Goshen to transform them from a large family into a nation, the nation of Israel. Through that nation, God sent the Messiah, the fulfillment of the _____ Covenant, to be a blessing to all the families of the earth by providing God's gift of salvation through Jesus. So God not only caused all things to work together for good for Joseph and his family but for ____ and ____ as well!

And our gracious Lord continues to do so. A few years ago, one of our members, Alan Culshaw was telling me how he hurt his right leg on a ladder. It created an open wound that was not awful, but was not healing as it ought. His wife urged him to go to the doctor, but in typical male fashion, Alan refused. Then Alan stumbled on a step and hurt his left leg. It really ached, so he went to the doctor to see about it. The doctor examined the recently injured leg and said, "It is just a deep bruise; it will be fine." Alan said, "Great. While I am here take a glance at this other leg I hurt because it does not seem to be healing like it should." The doctor took one look and nearly went ballistic. He said, "Man you are near getting gangrene in this leg. If you do not get that treated, you could lose this leg." Needless to say, Alan got it treated and is now doing well.

But why did he trip and fall? Why did he have to hurt the left leg when the right one was already injured? Gee Lord, couldn't you keep me from falling until my other leg was well? But God was working all things together for his good, and for Janie's good, and for the church's good, and for His purpose. That is God's glorious promise to _____ of His children.

3. WHICH THINGS?

A. _____ things!

B. Even _____ in our lives.

This is not to suggest in any way that sin is good, acceptable or excusable. Nor is it to say that in the life of the Christian it does not bring the _____ hand of God in loving discipline. It is to be honest with the text that nothing is _____ from God's providential sovereignty. Sodium and chlorine are both poisons. But when God works them together with His wondrous laws of chemistry, they become table salt. For the believer, nothing can _____ the pot. Whatever is thrown in, God will ultimately work the end result to be good!

C. Even sin in the lives of others that affect us.

We have already observed the example of Joseph, but the greatest example of all is the _____. The sin of unbelieving Jews, ungodly religious leaders, politic playing officials put Jesus on the cross. But not just their sin, _____ sin, put Jesus on the cross. But on the cross, God worked the greatest good of all. Without the cross, there would be no _____, no eternal life. But God can and does take the very _____ things that can happen and by His great power and with His great love works them together for good for those who love God and who are the called according to His purpose.

D. Even things we do not know have happened or are happening.

God is keeping this promise in the lives of all of His children _____ in a way that only God is able to do. Ages ago, pagan Jebusites dug a shaft from the top of Mt. Zion to tunnels of the Gihon Spring down below. They even planned this as part of their _____ against those YHWH worshippers moving into their land. But it all worked for good because before David went to attack Jerusalem, he found out and had his men enter the spring and climb the _____ to invade and take the city. God works good even when we are _____ of His working.

4. WHY DOES THIS WORK?

A. Because God knows all things.

Past, present, _____. God knows it all.

Isaiah 46:9–10 NKJV ⁹ Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is no other; I am* God, and *there is none like Me*, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things that are not yet done*, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

Do not be led astray by the contemporary heresy called _____ Theism which teaches that because the future has not happened, no one can know it, not even God. Not only in the passage above, but in many places in Scripture, God _____ what He will cause to happen in the future. We live in an age in which we can objectively observe that these things indeed did occur. God knows all things: past, present, future.

B. Because God is in ultimate control.

This does not mean that God _____ where every leaf will fall. He knows where every leaf will fall, and if the place it will land influences one of the things God has already determined will happen, He will cause it to land where He pleases. God in His sovereignty has made man in His own image. God chooses, so He has made man to have _____ will to choose as well. Man's choices cannot thwart the will of God, but God has allowed man to choose certain things that determine man's own _____, temporal and eternal, to his Creator. We shall see the working of this more fully in the passages to come. But ultimately, God is in _____. That is why *we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*