

Adult Bible Discovery- July 26, 2020

This study has been designed for you to do on your own or with the members of your family.

For Starters:

*What are some things that you look forward to in this life?
What are some things that you look forward to in the life to come?
When have you had to intercede in the life of someone else?
Why did you do it?*

Read Romans 8:18-21

Last week we took a look at Romans 8:18 but this verse helps set the context for today's lesson.

The glory awaiting us in heaven is something that "will be revealed in us." As such, it lies off in the future. It is, to a great extent, an unknown quantity to Paul and us. We can't know or comprehend it fully. And it can't be adequately described for us, because we have not experience with anything like it. Notice that Paul doesn't try to describe it here either. Rather, he gives us a feel for the greatness and glory of heaven by showing the keen anticipation and eager expectation it causes not only in the children of God but in all creation, animate and inanimate alike.

Creation is described as being frustrated or groaning because its original goodness and bounty became diminished by humanity's fall into sin. Ever since that time, there has been a constant deterioration. A further frustration is that creation didn't really have this coming. It did not happen by its own choice or willingly. It was God's will to curse the earth and have it produce thorns and thistles and served as a constant reminder to Adam and his descendants of the seriousness of their sin (See Genesis 3:17-19).

Paul then gives a little glimpse into what the future holds for creation. Soon enough, "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21)

- *How does this image of creation's freedom foreshadow the freedom that will come for all humanity?*

Read Romans 8:22-23

Without going into additional details, Paul asserts that the whole creation has been groaning in eager anticipation for things to be set right. When Paul uses the phrase, "Not only so,..." he shifts the focus from the groaning of creation to the groaning of humanity in eager expectation.

What the Romans were eagerly waiting for, and what God promised to give them, was their "adoption" as beloved children and the redemption of our bodies in Christ for eternity. This gives all believers hope which is an integral part of God's plan of salvation. Faith alone saves, but faith which is essentially trust and confidence in God's promises, also gives a basis for sure, confident hope.

Read Romans 8:24-25

Faith and hope combine to work patience in Christians as they wait for God's good time to come. But faith often wavers, and hope tends all too easily to wane, as the time gets long, particularly in suffering. Aware of this, the apostle introduces a second, and infinitely greater, defense against weariness.

Read Romans 8:26-27

Just as hope proves to be a buffer against weariness and discouragement in times of suffering, so the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness when we don't know what we ought to pray for. Time and again Christians find themselves at their wits' end, wondering what the will of God is for them in this or that situation. They find themselves lamenting, "If only I knew what the Lord wanted me to do; if only I knew what to pray for." At such times the Holy Spirit steps in and does for us what we're at a loss to do for ourselves.

In verse 22 it was creation groaning. In verse 23 it was the children of God who were groaning; here in verse 26 it is the Holy Spirit who does the groaning.

The "saints" for whom the Holy Spirit intercedes are not some especially pious and good Christians but are those who are holy by their faith in Christ—in other words, all believers. Therefore, help in prayer is a service the Holy Spirit renders to all Christians. That does not release us from God's command and encouragement to pray, but it does cover for us when we do it poorly or too little. And unlike many of our bumbling prayers, the Holy Spirit's prayer are always on target and in accordance with the will of God.

As we heard in worship last week, let's end with some things to ponder and meditate on this week.

- First, if all you feel like doing is groaning, go into your room, close the doors, and groan away. As you groan know that you are being grown into the person God wants you to be. And he has invited you to groan. It is not a nightmare, but a challenge that he has set before us and in this process we can share the love of God.
- Second, make a list of those people and situations you want to bring to God in prayer. When you groan in prayer look over the list and know that God will hear your groaning.
- And third, when your present sufferings get you down, stand with Paul and confess, "***I consider our present sufferings insignificant compared to the glory that will soon be revealed to us.***" (Romans 8:18)