

New Year's Groanings

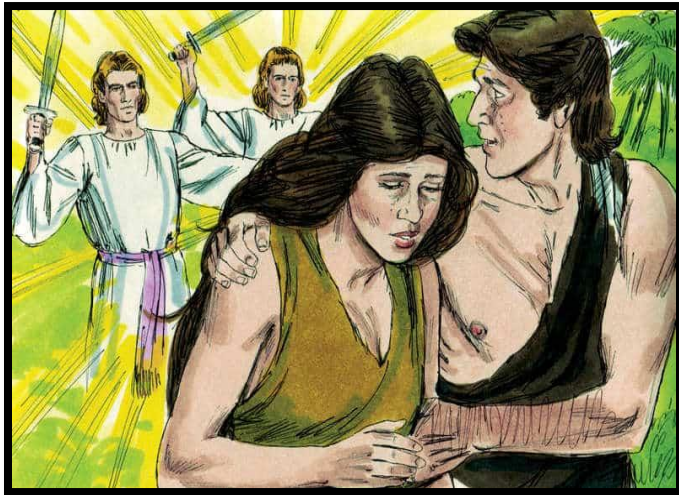
Romans 8:18-27

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Ever since God announced a curse upon this world it has been incredibly difficult to survive and thrive amongst the “thorns” of life. Living through the pain of violence, disease, starvation, neglect, discrimination, losing loved ones and watching one’s body break down in old age one can’t help but cry out “Abba, Father please save me!” While one might think that this kind of prayer would always be answered with healing and comfortable living, God not only refuses to remove the curse until the appointed time but promises that those who participate in His death will suffer and be persecuted for righteousness sake (Philippians 3:10; John 15:18-25). Even though “creation glows with thousands of beauties”¹ earth often seems like a penal colony in which its thorns and thistles can fracture the body and mind so severely that life at best appears to be meaningless and at worst torturous! While this world is no longer the one that “God pronounced very good,”² Romans 8:18-27 states we as Christians can experience unspeakable joy while living on this earth when we allow our groaning to focus not on our current suffering but on the glory we are about to receive!

Our Sin Lead to the Curse

It took God a mere six days to create paradise but just a few moments for humanity to



place it under the curse of decay and death. One can’t help but wonder how those living in paradise could ever want more and yet we learn that Adam and Eve willingly partook of the fruit merely based on Satan’s promise they would become like God (Genesis 3:6-7). While we could blame their foolish disobedience as being the reason for the pain we have living in this fallen world, we cannot escape the fact that our black hearts also “readily echoes the voice of Satan.”³ Even with the Holy Spirit living inside of us and seeing God as our portion forever (1 Corinthians 6:19;

Psalms 73:25-26), our indulgences in evil words, thoughts and deeds prove we are just as guilty

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 1.

² Ibid.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 486.

for the curse as Adam and Eve (Romans 3:23, 6:23, chapter 7)! The thorns of sorrow and pain are not mere products of injustice, but we have outright purchased them by not hating evil enough to embrace the command to be holy as God is holy (Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 1:15). And yet despite our wretchedness and filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) Paul tells us that in our groanings we can find incredible hope!

Hope in Groanings (verses 19-23, 26-27)

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

First, one finds incredible hope in the groanings of creation. Ever since “Adam abdicated his role as God’s vizier and caretaker (cf. 8:20; Gen 1:26–28),”⁴ the curse that fell on



a “guilty” humanity also fell on the “guiltless” creation.⁵ Like humanity the physical world of matter, plants and animals⁶ have been subject to decay and death⁷ and is subsequently frustrated due to its incompleteness.⁸ Paul says creation groans with intense interest and desire⁹ with pangs of childbirth for the age of renewal,¹⁰ the day when it will be brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.¹¹ When Jesus comes again He will

⁴ Craig S. Keener, [Romans](#), New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 105.

⁵ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 213.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 871.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 873.

⁸ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 211.

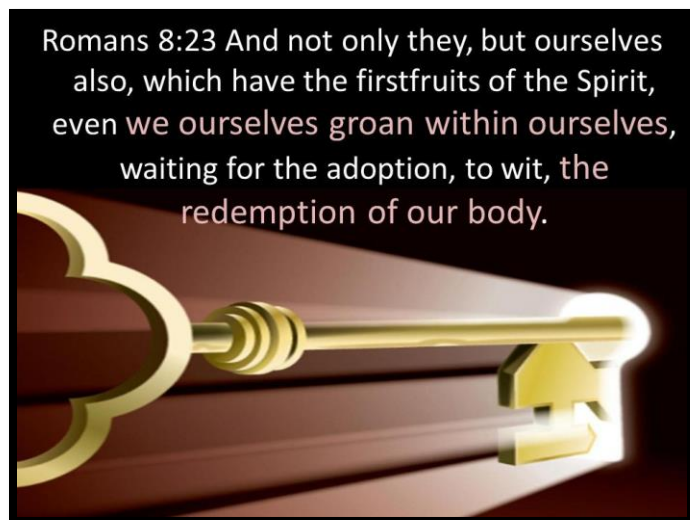
⁹ Everett F. Harrison, [“Romans.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 94.

¹⁰ Everett F. Harrison, [“Romans.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 94.

¹¹ Everett F. Harrison, [“Romans.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 94.

undo Satan's destructive works¹² and all of creation will receive unspeakable joy¹³ of a new heaven and new earth where human or beast will not harm one another and the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:6-9)! It will be in this restored Garden of Eden that God will dwell with His people, wipe the tears from their eyes and their curse of decay and death (Revelation 21). We have great hope in knowing that all of creation not only testifies to God's eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:20) but also His desire to come good on His promise of restoring a home where we can walk and talk with Him in His garden!

Second, one finds incredible hope in the groanings for our new bodies. Having been sown perishable, in dishonor and ravaged with the weaknesses of aches, pains, weariness, exhausting toil, sickness and eventual death (1 Corinthians 15:42);¹⁴ we long for the day when



Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

the Spirit will resurrect (Romans 8:11–13)¹⁵ and transform our physical to a spiritual body that is sown in power, sinless, eternal, glorious¹⁶ and like the resurrection body of the glorified Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20, 21).¹⁷ Even though our physical bodies are the seat of the weakness and our sinful nature,¹⁸ they are not to be seen as evil for they are not only fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalms 139)¹⁹ but are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and as such are to be offered as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) so that “Christ might

be magnified and God might be glorified in them.”²⁰ Even though our physical bodies make “obedience and worship visible and touchable”²¹ while living in this fallen world, since flesh and

¹² James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 875.

¹³ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 141.

¹⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 487.

¹⁵ Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 105.

¹⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 881.

¹⁷ Everett F. Harrison, “[Romans.](#)” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 95.

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 874.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 487.

²⁰ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²¹ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

blood cannot enter the kingdom of God²² and our salvation is not complete without the redemption of “our bodies as well as our spirits and souls;”²³ Apostle Paul says we are to place our hope in God²⁴ to give us the highest nature of humanity,²⁵ an eternal, incorruptible, honorable spiritual body fit for heaven!²⁶

Third, one finds incredible hope in groaning for our adoption into God’s family to be revealed. Even though we are called to be lights unto the nations (Matthew 5:14-16) not always are our attempts at holiness pure nor is the sinful world able to identify us as saints of the Lord



Jesus Christ.²⁷ How we long for the day when the Lord returns and our name having been found in the Lamb’s book of life will receive royal robes,²⁸ crowns of righteousness,²⁹ rest “in the Father’s bosom and will be “filled with the fullness of God!”³⁰ Paul states that even though a believer is already adopted into God’s family we are to eagerly await this “second adoption”³¹ in which the partakers of the divine nature we will be fully conformed to the likeness of God’s son (1 John 3:2) and enjoy all the privileges³² of being

present and reigning with the Lamb that was slain forever (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 13:8)!³³ All the riches, merriment and dancing on this earth³⁴ will not come even close to comparing to

²² C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saved in Hope.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 487.

²³ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 880.

²⁴ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saved in Hope.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 489.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 6.

²⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 7.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 7.

²⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 7.

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 8.

³¹ Everett F. Harrison, [“Romans.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 95.

³² James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 881.

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 9.

³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 10.

the unspeakable joy that believers will feel when they join the “marvelous procession”³⁵ of the fully sanctified³⁶ arriving at the throne of God and of the Lamb³⁷ to forever bow in His presence!

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

The final groanings that believers are to find hope in comes from the intercessory prayers of the Holy Spirit. Shortly after Jesus ascended into heaven the Father sent us the His Spirit to



help us in our human weakness.³⁸ The Spirit not only reveals the truth (John 14:15-21) but also helps believers to properly communicate with the Father. Being tainted by the Fall we do not always know how to present “our adoration, confessions, thanksgivings and supplications”³⁹ to a sovereign God who answers prayers in accordance with His saving purpose in history. Since only the Spirit knows God’s and our heart (1 Corinthians 2:11)⁴⁰ the prayers the righteous are only powerful and effective (James

5:16)⁴¹ when supplemented with groanings from the Spirit who knows the right topics⁴² and phrases to use in addressing a holy God.⁴³ Even though our true longings cannot be fully

³⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 9.

³⁶ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 880.

³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 492–493.

³⁸ James R. Edwards, [Romans](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 216.

³⁹ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 891.

⁴⁰ Craig S. Keener, [Romans](#), New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 108.

⁴¹ James Montgomery Boice, [Romans: The Reign of Grace](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 891–892.

⁴² Everett F. Harrison, “[Romans.](#)” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 96.

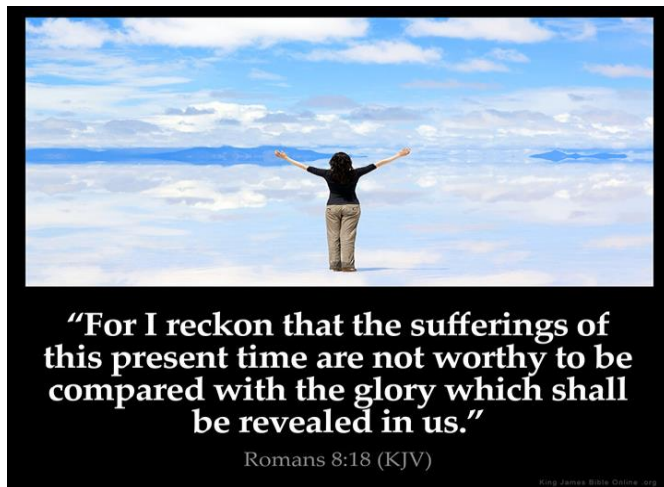
⁴³ Everett F. Harrison, “[Romans.](#)” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans through Galatians*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 95.

“imprisoned within the confines of everyday words,”⁴⁴ we are to pray continuously (1 Thessalonians 5:17) for the more we pray in the Spirit⁴⁵ the greater the comfort and likelihood that we will receive what we need to be like Jesus!

Present Suffering and Future Glory (verses 18, 24-25)

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Christians can experience unspeakable joy while living on this Fallen world by allowing their groaning to focus not on current suffering but on the glory, they are about to receive! You



can judge a person by the groanings of their heart. While one could constantly groan because one’s suffering is so intense that one “screams with terror or cries out with pain” Abba Father please save me,⁴⁶ Paul tells the believer to groan patiently, “hunger and thirst after righteousness”⁴⁷ for the day when one will receive the glory and full harvest of the Spirit.⁴⁸ Paul in saying this is not minimizing suffering but wants the believer to always feel the overwhelming joy that only comes when one maximizes the value he/she places on the future, eternal glory⁴⁹ of being raised

immortal, imperishable⁵⁰ and forever in the presence of a holy God.⁵¹ Through the power of the Holy Spirit believers can endure any level of suffering when they know the day is vastly

⁴⁴ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 175.

⁴⁵ R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 145.

⁴⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 865–866.

⁴⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 486.

⁴⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Creation’s Groans and the Saints’ Sighs.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 14 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868), 12.

⁴⁹ James R. Edwards, *Romans*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 212.

⁵⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 490.

⁵¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saved in Hope.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 490.

approaching when sin will be utterly destroyed and execrated from their lives⁵² and in their new spiritual bodies dressed in white, royal robes they will get the privilege to bow, serve and talk with God the restored Garden of Eden!

⁵² C. H. Spurgeon, "[Saved in Hope.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 27 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1881), 488.