

Suffering Ends-
Glory Doesn't!

Romans 8:18-25

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

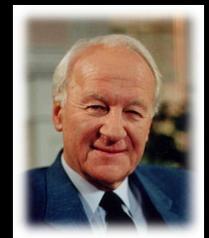
Romans 8:18

For I consider that the
sufferings of this present
time...

In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time, after a while I have had to look away. And in imagination I have turned instead to the lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross,

nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside His immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of His. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we stamp another mark, the cross, which symbolizes divine suffering.

– John Stott



Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Heirs of God...heirs with Christ-

All the Christ inherits--
heaven, the earth,
the universe, glory--
we inherit!

Suffer with him-

The glories of the
inheritance
are given to those
who suffer.

For I consider that the sufferings of
this present time are ***not worth
comparing with the glory*** that is
to be revealed to us

2 Corinthians 4:17

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison

For the creation waits with *eager longing* for the revealing of the sons of God.

The whole creation is on tiptoe to see
the wonderful sight of the sons of God
coming into their own.

Phillips paraphrase

For we know that the whole
creation has been *groaning*
together in the pains of childbirth
until now.

For the creation ***was subjected to futility***, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it.

Genesis 3:17-19

...***cursed is the ground*** because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of
your life; ***thorns and thistles it shall
bring forth for you;***

and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread,

till you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken; for you are
dust,

and to dust you shall return.”

The life of a man is a long march through the night surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach and where none tarry long. One by one, as we march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent death. Brief and powerless is man's life; on him all his

race, the slow, sure doom falls pitiless
and dark. Blind to good and evil,
reckless of destruction, omnipotent
matter rolls on its relentless way; for
man, condemned today to lose his
dearest, tomorrow himself to pass
through the gate of darkness, it
remains only to cherish, ere yet the
blow falls, the lofty thoughts that
ennoble his little day.

– Bertrand Russell, atheistic philosopher

Creation glows with a thousand beauties, even in its present fallen condition; yet clearly enough it is not as when it came from the Maker's hand—the slime of the serpent is on it all—this is not the world which God pronounced to be "very good." We hear of tornadoes, of earthquakes, of tempests, of volcanoes, of avalanches, and of the sea which devoureth its

thousands: there is sorrow on the sea,
and there is misery on the land; and
into the highest palaces as well as the
poorest cottages, death, the
insatiable, is shooting his arrows,
while his quiver is still full to bursting
with future woes. It is a sad, sad
world.

– Charles Spurgeon



For the creation waits with eager longing for
the ***revealing of the sons of God***

that the creation itself will be set free from its
bondage to decay and obtain the ***freedom of
the glory of the children of God.***

And not only the creation, ***but we ourselves,***
who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan
inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as
sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 8:23

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies

Adoption as sons -

Christians have already been adopted into God's family (*Romans 8:15* but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"), but they have not yet experienced the fullness of that adoption, which is...

Redemption of bodies-body

The Christian will one day have a that is perfectly fit for a perfect universe!

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now,
and what we will be has not yet
appeared; but we know that when he
appears we shall be like him, because
we shall see him as he is

Romans 8:24-25

For in this ***hope*** we were saved. Now ***hope*** that is seen is not ***hope***. For who ***hopes*** for what he sees? But if we ***hope*** for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Romans 8:11

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead ***will also give life to your mortal bodies*** through his Spirit who dwells in you.

I wonder whether the phenomenon of the Spring supplies us with a part answer. Nature every year, as it were, makes an effort to renew itself, to produce something permanent; it has come out of the death and the darkness of all that is so true of the Winter. In the Spring it seems to be trying to produce a perfect creation, to be going through some kind of birth-pangs year by year. But unfortunately it does not succeed, for Spring leads only to Summer, whereas Summer leads to Autumn, and Autumn to Winter.

Poor old nature tries every year to defeat the "vanity" of the principle of death and decay and disintegration that is in it. But it cannot do so. It fails every time. It still goes on trying, as if it feels things should be different and better; but it never succeeds. So it goes on "groaning and travailing in pain together until now." It has been doing so for a very long time.... but nature still repeats the effort annually. But, it will be set free one day from this corruption "into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

– Martyn Lloyd Jones

