

We Wait
Romans 8:18-27
5-10-2026

In the account of creation at the beginning of Genesis, it says that God placed Adam and Even in the garden paradise of Eden in a world without sin where they walked in fellowship with God, one another, and creation itself.

But when they disobeyed that fellowship was broken.

3:7 speaks to their broken fellowship with one another when it says “their eyes were opened and they realized they were naked so they began covering up and trying to hide who they really were from one another.”

:8 speaks to their broken fellowship with God when it says they tried to hide from God when they heard him walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And verses 17-24 speaks to their broken fellowship with creation as it says God cursed the ground because of them and then banished them from the garden.

In our broken world’s too often ongoing effort to minimalize, excuse and redefine sin, something which is often not understood that its primary damage is relational.

It breaks our relationship with God who is the source of life, with others and with creation itself.

Everything Paul had written up to this point in Romans about justification and sanctification deals with what God has done and is doing to fix what was broken at the fall

putting an end to the damage and separation sin has caused and to set things right

That is the work of Jesus on the cross

in Christ our situation with God may have changed and our relationship with him restored, but nothing yet has changed with our relationship with others and with the world we live in.

We are still living under the curse and we still remain outside of the garden

We see the evidence of this every single day in the way people and nations treat each other, and the way we treat the world around us, poisoning and destroying our environment around us.

Romans 8:18 begins,

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 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 with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Romans 8:18–27)

The fact that Paul says it was man’s sin in the garden that subjected creation to frustration and subjected it to the bondage to decay, is a very clear indication that our actions can affect our environment and the world around us.

Our ongoing abuse and misuse of it and its resources is a continuation of the curse which causes all creation to groan in longing for the day when all will be made right again.

As New Zealand apologist Edward Blaiklock wrote 50 years ago, “man has become a devouring force before whose onslaught nature has wilted...greedy farming and selfish exploitation have taken no thought for the morrow. Hence bared hills, choked streams, dust-bowl famine,

disasters, polluted air, fouled rivers and dead lakes, as nature answers back. The whole creation has been groaning in travail because of man...Why? We need seek no further than the penetrating explanation behind the Genesis story. Man fell, and from his fall came his pain, his toil, and his exile.”

verses 20-21 state that while man sinned intentionally, too often it has been creation itself which has paid the price, being subjected to the curse and in bondage to decay as a result.

Yet in the midst of a fallen and broken world filled with suffering and pain, Paul express his confidence for the future that in spite of it all, none of it will ever come close to comparing with the glory yet to be revealed when God sets all things right, both in heaven and on earth.

Until that day comes, he says, WE WAIT

Creation is waiting on us, waiting in eager expectation and anticipation for Gods promise for redemption to be fully revealed, and the brokenness of the Garden to be fully made whole again and the curse lifted

And :23 says we are waiting right alongside of it, for God to finish the work he already began at the cross.

Waiting for Him to finish restoring and redeeming and fixing what was broken at the fall

Waiting which is something many just don't want to do

Instead, their impatience is seen by those who would quickly pass over Jesus, over forgiveness, over His mercy and love, over His salvation and eternal life, and instead blame God for what we have made of his good creation.

Asking what's taking him so long?

Thinking, if God is love, why do the innocent still suffer?

Why does he allow terrorists and nations to kill so many children, women, and elderly in far flung wars like Ukraine and Iran and Gaza?

Why does he allow civil war to kill and displace millions in places like Sudan and Myanmar?

Why does God allow communities to be poisoned by toxic waste in their drinking supply like what happened in Red Hill?

What's he waiting for?

why hasn't he lifted the curse and fixed our mess yet.

Mankind has made a mess of the world He declared very good, then expect God to clean it up for us and do it on our time schedule because we don't want to wait

Gary Thomas writes; "You're in a hurry as usual. You jump into the elevator and feel the sweat trickling down the back of your neck. You punch a button for your floor, but the elevator stays open. You look at your watch. The elevator door is still open, so you furiously press the close door button several times. Finally, the door closes. Surprise! You've been had. It's a little-known secret that many close door elevator buttons are merely mechanical placebos, put there to pacify impatient people by making them think they can speed up the elevators programmed functions. We are not a world that is ready to wait; we are a people who pride ourselves on how fast we move."

There is even a restaurant in Tokyo, Japan, without any prices on the menu. Why? Because the owners don't charge you by what you eat—they charge you by how long you stay in the restaurant. And at lunchtime, there's actually a line to get in.

In his book, Faster: The Acceleration of Just About Everything, James Gleick writes about one minute bedtime stories, condensed so they can be read by busy parents in one minute. He writes about an 8-year, \$364 million construction project in Springfield, Virginia which is causing a 30-minute delay each way in rush hour. After suffering through 8 years of this one hour a day delay, commuters will save somewhere between 90 seconds and 2 minutes in the daily drive. Salt Lake City Utah spent \$1.6 billion over 4 years to reconstruct the I-15 so that drivers will be able to travel one mile per hour faster when it is done.

We don't like to wait.

Even in the church we are not immune to it with the publication of things like the one-minute Bible and assorted 1-minute devotionals for those who are too busy to spend time in prayer and God's word. The publisher of one of these stated, "It walks new believers through the early stages of spiritual development, giving them a solid base for further growth."

I'm sorry, but what kind of foundation can anyone get in 60 seconds a day?
God gave us his son, are we too busy and our time too important to give him more than a minute or two a day.

We may not like to wait, but how we wait is crucial

The waiting Paul is talking about is not waiting which is indifferent to what we and creation are going through

Nor is it merely passive acceptance towards what we cannot do anything about

In verse 19 Paul says creation itself is waiting in eager expectation for God's people to be fully revealed

JB Philips translated this, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own."

Not only creation, but verse 23 says we ourselves wait eagerly for our salvation to be complete

For as someone said, "waiting characterizes the Christian life as one of expectation of the great climax which gives not only this life, but also the whole creation meaning."

The implication of this is that therefore time and circumstances do not control us! We may struggle, may face hardship and suffering, but in the midst of it all, we wait with eager expectation, even longing, for what is yet to come
Waiting for the curse to be lifted and a return to paradise.

It is such waiting which keeps us from despair and hopelessness

From giving up to the forces of evil and chaos around us

Because it is based on the realization that our present suffering cannot be compared to our future glory

In our waiting we are looking past the present circumstances in full awareness that there is something far greater which lies ahead of us.

As Paul told the Philippians, we are to forget what is behind and strain towards what is ahead as we press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Our waiting in eager expectation is waiting based on hope

Hope in liberation he says in :21

Hope in salvation, he says in :24

Hope for what is yet to come he says in :25

We have to get past this idea of hope as mere wishful thinking and hoping for the best

Biblical hope is an integral part of the Christian life, tied closely with faith and trust because it is focused on God himself as the source not our circumstances and it is sustained by His Spirit

Creation has the hope and full expectation for its liberation from the bondage of decay

We have the hope and expectation of our salvation and our future

It is with that expectation that we see beyond whatever may be happening right now and see tomorrow and wait in hope because ultimately, as Paul told the Corinthians, we know that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has even conceived what God has prepared for us who are in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, our present sufferings are not even worth comparing with the glory that is to come

There is a story which came out of a German prison camp at the very end of WW2. Unbeknownst to the German guards, the American POWs were able to build a makeshift radio. One day news came that the German high command had surrendered, ending the war. But there was a

communications breakdown and word had not yet reached the guards. But among the American prisoners, word spread and a loud celebration broke out. they now had hope, the confident expectation that the day of their rescue was near.

For three days the prisoners were hardly recognizable and the guards were completely clueless. The prisoners sang, they waved at the guards, laughed at the German shepherd dogs, and shared jokes over meals. They were still prisoners but could now wait in hope knowing what was to come.

Finally on the 4th day, they awoke to find that all the German guards had fled, leaving the gates unlocked. The time of waiting had come to an end.

That is what Paul says as we face life and all the crisis that comes with it. We are waiting in hope for the day when our redemption is complete.

And until that day comes, he says, both creation and us are groaning, longing for it, verse 22 says as if in childbirth

The groaning which comes from the pain of knowing this is not how it's supposed to be, that it's not how it will be and once that great and glorious day comes, all the pain will be forgotten.

We even have a taste of what is to come, the first fruits that come from the Spirit within us

In the midst of our waiting, our eager expectation, and hope for the glory which words just cannot describe, Paul says we groan

We groan because our words are totally inadequate to express the burden of Gods heart created by our separation and brokenness and so Paul says the Spirit now intercedes for us through wordless groans

Warren Wiersbe said, When God finished his creation it was a good creation; but today it has become a groaning creation. There is suffering and death. There is pain...One day creation will be delivered, and the groaning creation will become a glorious creation! The believer does not focus on today's sufferings;

he looks forward to tomorrow's glory. Today's groaning bondage will be exchanged for tomorrow's glorious liberty.

Let me close with the words of another seeking to provide a little insight into the confidence which comes from knowing that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory yet to be revealed.

Take a moment to imagine. Your world is dark, safe, and secure. You are bathed in warm liquid, cushioned from shock. You do nothing for yourself; you are fed automatically, and a murmuring heartbeat assured you that someone larger than you fills all your needs. Your life consists of simple waiting—you're not sure what to wait for, but any change seems very far away and scary. You meet no sharp objects, no pain, no threatening adventures. A fine existence.

Then one day you feel a tug. The walls are falling on you. Those soft cushions are now pulsing and beating against you, crushing you downwards. Your body is bent double, your limbs twisted and wrenched. You're falling, upside down. For the first time in your life, you feel pain. You're in a sea of roiling matter. there is more pressure, almost too intense to bear. Your head is squeezed flat, and you are pushed harder, harder into a dark tunnel. Oh, the pain. Noise. More pressure.

You hurt all over. You hear a groaning sound and an awful sudden fear rushes in on you. It is happening—your world is collapsing. You're sure it's the end. You see a piercing, blinding light. Cold rough hands pull at you. A painful slap.

Congratulations, you've just been born.

He then says, death is like that. On this end of the birth canal, it seems fearsome, portentous, and full of pain. Death is a scary tunnel and we are being sucked toward it by a powerful force. None of us looks forward to it. We're afraid. It's full of pressure, pain, darkness...the unknown. But beyond the darkness and the pain in that bright new world, our tears and hurts will be mere memories. And though the new world is so much better than this one, we have no categories to really understand what it

will be like. The best the Bible writers can tell us is that then, instead of the silence of God, we will have the presence of God And see him face to face. At that time we will be given a new stone, and upon it will be written a new name, which no one else knows. Our birth into new creatures will be complete.

Do you sometimes think God does not hear? That your cries of pain fade into nothing? God is not deaf. He is as grieved by the worlds trauma as you are. His only son died here. But he has promised to set things right. Nothing simply disappears.

So let history finish. Let the symphony scratch out its last mournful note of discord before it bursts into song. As Paul said, in quoting JB Philips paraphrase of our passage,

In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own...it is plain to anyone with eyes to see that the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for the redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in Him.

But until that day comes, we wait

And as we wait, we remember just as God's word tells us to do when it says,

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)