

POWERLIFTING
Romans 8:18-30
Waiting on Glory

-In my early 20's I decided I wanted to climb the ten highest mountains in Oregon.

-I recruited my friend Joel and we decided that our first target was going to be Aneroid Mtn which is in the Wallawas.

-Our plan was to summit Mount Howard, then hike across the saddle to the top of Anderoid Mtn, and then drop down and camp overnight...and then climb Pete's Point.

-That would check 2 mountains off the top 10 list.

-Sounds simple, what could go wrong?

- First of all, I was in horrible shape.
- We started dealing with the elevation around 9000ft.
- The sun was hot and I was getting dehydrated.
- Our ingenious plan included carrying all of our camping gear to the top of Aneroid
- And the word got out in the mosquito community about the slow-moving hikers and they were all over us.

-It was one of those occasions where I actually started wondering if we were going to make it.

-If you've ever been in a physically exhausting situation you know how you start to battle the temptation of quitting in your mind.

-Everything in you is saying "Give up" and all the pain will stop.

-Take the path of least resistance. Quit. Go home. Call it a day.

-People with the best intentions, who are committed to a goal...can feel tempted to quit when the suffering starts.

-Our passage today discusses the suffering we face in life and touches on what lies ahead.

-This is week 3 of our Powerlifting series, and we are going to be looking at another heavy portion of Scripture.

18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19 For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.

20 Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, 21 the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.

22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

23 And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering.

We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

24 We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. 25 But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

-There is a ton of stuff in here, but let's summarize by saying first:

WE'RE WAITING FOR GLORY:

-Glory is not a word we use very often, and it's almost exclusively used to describe God or heaven; which is the place God lives.

-The Greek word glory is *doxa* which means splendor, brightness, exalted, grandeur...and this word is used in verse 18.

18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the **GLORY** he will reveal to us later.

-Verse 18 describe our future home as place of "GLORY"

- When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, part of the appeal is the promise of eternal life in the glorious home of God!
- When we get to heaven ***it will be*** “glorious!”
- But verse 18 brings another important contrast to light.
- We’re promised glory, but there is suffering along the way.
- We’re headed for heaven but there’ll be some hell along the way.
- We all know that suffering is part of life.
- No one goes through life without some loss, heartache, sickness, setbacks, failures, or pain.
- We all know that is true...but when we’re suffering we sometimes ask “why God?” Why is there suffering in my life?
- We have to go back to Eden to understand.
- At creation God made the world in glorious perfection.
- The world we live in today is so far from perfect that it’s hard for us to even imagine what Eden was like.
- In simple terms...people were perfect and the world was perfect.
- We can’t even imagine that; ***it only lasted two chapters!***
- And then sin entered the equation.
- And since that day, no one and no thing have ever been the same
- The corrupting influence of sin caused “suffering” to become a reality for all people in the world.
- And even the creation suffered the corrupting influence of sin.
- In fact let’s start there:**

THE SUFFERING OF CREATION

- We don’t usually think of the planet when we think about the consequences of sin.
- But in the garden of Eden things were perfect. It was a place that reflected God’s glory. It was heaven on earth.
- What did perfection look like in nature? I’d love to know!
 - Did all the rivers have crystal blue water?
 - Were all the mountain tops pointy?
 - Did roses have thorns in paradise?
 - Were their mosquitoes...in Eden?
- The truth is we don’t know. But...we know what it’s like NOW.
- I saw the truth of fallen creation playing out in my neighborhood last week.**

- There were these birds sitting on the neighbor's arbor.
 - And I watch this Calico cat walk along the fence the whole time spying on those birds.
 - He sat there on the fence trying to figure out how to get them.
 - His tail was swinging as he plotted their destruction.
 - You don't have to look far to see trouble in paradise!
 - Earthquakes, tornadoes, droughts, volcanoes, flooding.
 - All these have natural explanations but also spiritual overtones.
 - They are powerful reminders that something is wrong.
 - There are several statements in Romans 8 which describe nature almost like a person.
- 19 For all **creation** is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.

waiting eagerly. (vs 19)

- He's saying creation is anticipating a change.
 - Creation waits for the day when what is wrong will be made right
 - Creation isn't a person. The planet doesn't have feelings.
 - But there is a sense that, even in the natural world, something is out of whack. Nature testifies to what is wrong in the world.
- 20 Against its will, all **creation** was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, 21 the **creation** looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.

subjected to God's curse. (vs 20)

- When Adam and Eve sinned, paradise was corrupted.
- They fell under the curse and their sin corrupted paradise.
- It can't be paradise with sin present.
- Sin changes things. Sin corrupts things.
- This is important for all of us to understand; sin brings death.
- Sin brings trouble. Sin brings heartache. Sin brings destruction.
- If you are playing around with sin in your life, it will catch up with you. You'll be found out. You will suffer for it.
- Don't believe the lie that sin won't affect you, that a little sin won't hurt you.
- Don't believe that you can sin and it won't affect the people around you.
- Adam and Even thought that! How bad could it be?

-It hurt them individually. Hurt their relationship with each other, their relationship with God, their kids, grandkids and basically the entire human race and the whole planet.

-If they could have only known the chaos and havoc they would bring into this world...it's easy to pick on those guys.

-But what about us? Their story is essentially our story.

Study Question 1: How has my sin affected my life and the lives of those around me?

-Now, vs 21 should ignite our imaginations. It says creation is...

looking forward to freedom from death and decay (vs 21)

-This is where things get interesting. Creation is anticipating a time when there will no longer be death and decay.

-What does that mean? When will that be? How will it happen.

-2 Peter 3:10 says the earth and everything in it will be destroyed

-There will be an end to the death and decay on planet earth.

-Rev 21 tells us about the coming of a new heaven & a new earth

-The Bible teaches that this world will one day be made over and will once again be made glorious!

-And creation is longing for the day when it is restored to its former...glory! What will that be like?

-Isaiah the prophet caught a glimpse of that day.

Isa 11:6-9 "In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all. 7 The cow will graze near the bear.

The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. 8 The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra.

Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.

-And...the neighbor's cat won't try to eat the birds. LISTEN:

9 Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord.

-I love that line. **Nothing will hurt or destroy.** (x 2) Glorious!

-And who will inhabit that glorious new earth?

-Did you catch it? People who know the Lord.

-This raises an obvious question. Is he **YOUR** Lord?
22 For we know that all **creation** has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

groaning. (vs 22)

-Before our glorious little babies arrive...there is pain in childbirth.
-Before the glory of creation is restored...there will be some pain.
-Some groaning some suffering in this world. And if the planet feels it, you know that the people will. ***We live here!***

-And there is **THE SUFFERING OF GOD'S CHILDREN**

-Human suffering is part of daily life.
-We see so much brokenness and heartache and misery that we're almost numb to it.
-We hear about the latest tragedy and shake our heads for a moment and then carry on.

-Ripped from the headlines just this week:

- 2 people stabbed to death riding the Max in Portland.
- Bomb in Kabul, Afghanistan kills 80, wounds 100s
- Factory explosion in Madison, WI one dead 12 wounded
- Isis bombs families having breakfast in Baghdad. 17 dead
- Terrorist attacks yesterday in London.

-That's why I don't watch the evening news. They ought to call it the "bad news". Everywhere we look we see human suffering.
-We see women, children, elderly, disabled people...suffering.
-Mental illness, addiction, poverty, homelessness, abuse, dysfunction, disease, violence...all around.

-One of the reasons we do Project 327...

-Chance for us to do something positive in our world.

-Are believers exempted from suffering? No!

23 And we **BELIEVERS** also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering.

We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

-Just like creation is longing for an end to suffering, so are Xians:

“believers also groan” (vs 23)

- Sometimes Christians wonder why God doesn't spare us from the heartache and suffering?
- After all, we're the good guys, right?
- We live in the fallen world, and feel the effects of it just like everyone else.

“long...to be released from sin and suffering”

- The creation is anticipating an eventual end to death and decay, and Christians long to be released from our sin and suffering.
- The creation is waiting for the day to be made over...and we are

wait for God to give us “full rights”

- In the ancient Roman world, it was not uncommon for wealthy people without children to adopt.
- And those adopted sons would legally inherit all the possessions of their parents, but also the standing of their parents.
- Even though they weren't born of noble blood, the adoption gave them the full status of their parents.
- And that's what Paul is alluding to here.
- We are fallen people in a fallen world, but because of Jesus we have been adopted into the family of a King!
- Paul says, The Holy Spirit is a foretaste. A sample. A deposit guaranteeing what's coming.
- When we finally get out of this place...we'll receive all the full rights and benefits of God...but until then...we wait.
- And it's not just to receive our full rights, but also...

wait for the “new bodies he promised us”

- Oh man. What will those new bodies be like?
- Some of you just immediately thought...skinny.
- Some thought...pain free.
- Some thought...taller. (Ok, that was me)
- Some might think...stronger, faster.
- Some of us would love to be more smarter.
- But listen, whatever silly notions we have about those new glorious new bodies...think again. Think bigger!

-It's going to be better than you can even imagine, and some of us have great imaginations.

1 Cor 2:9 "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

-Romans 8 tells us something glorious is coming.

-Creation knows it, we know it, there is a day coming when all that God has intended for us will finally be revealed.

-The suffering will be over!

-We'll finally shed all of that baggage!

-We'll be rid of these old breaking down bodies!

-We'll be forever free from temptation and sin!

-I can't wait! You can't wait! But what do we do until then?

WHAT DO WE DO WHILE WE WAIT?

-Have you ever had to wait for something good?

-That vacation that circled on the calendar?

-Kids waiting to open the presents underneath the tree?

-Mother's waiting for that baby to be born?

-High School graduation! (Next weekend)

-Waiting for that wound to heal, that trial to end?

-To a lesser degree, those things mirror the anticipation we all have of our glorious future with God.

-It's hard to wait when we know what's coming.

24 We were given this hope when we were saved.

(If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. 25 But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

-Cling to our hope. (vs 24-25)

-On November 21, 1943, pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a letter to his fiancée while he was in a Nazi prison.

-In the letter, he talked about a spiritual lesson he was learning from his life in prison.

-He wrote: "A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes, does various unessential things, and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside..."

-We may feel stuck, helpless and hopeless in our current situation

-But we believe in the God who is one day going to open the door and usher us into a newfound freedom.

- That is our hope. And it isn't hoping in vain for a fairy tale ending.
- We aren't crossing our fingers and hoping it all works out.
- God has not left us alone.
- We aren't waiting alone, struggling alone, suffering alone.
- 26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.
- 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.
- Find strength in the Spirit. (vs 26-27)
- Jesus left earth, but he didn't leave us alone.
- We walk with the Holy Spirit inside us.
- He guides, corrects, comforts and keeps pointing us to Jesus.
- Paul says there are times when we are so weak we don't know what to pray for. Not sure where to even begin!
- We don't even know what to say to the Father.
- In those moments, the Holy Spirit says..."I'll tell him for you."
- The Holy Spirit takes the deepest desires and pleas and the very cries of our hearts and pleads God on our behalf.
- We have a strength in the Spirit that we don't even realize.

Study Question 2: How do we find strength in the Holy Spirit?

- I have to share with you that a few months back we got a letter in the mail from a close family member who was writing to let us know that they were no longer a Christian.
- The painful words in that letter said the very thing that erases all doubt about a person's soul. Jesus is not my Lord or Savior.
- That same day I was supposed to pray as part of the 24-Prayer chain and the words just wouldn't come.
- I wept. I was angry. I felt betrayed. I was shocked. I was broken for my nephews who will not be raised in a Christian home.
- I had an hour designated to pray and the words wouldn't come.
- And yet I felt the powerful presence of God that day.
- Romans 8 explains why. The Spirit was my mediator that day.
- And this next verse is a verse that Christians everywhere have turned to in the face of crisis and suffering of all kinds.

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (*Memorize*)

- Some people think God causes bad things to happen.
- Others think he simply allows them to happen. But either way, God causes **EVERYTHING** to work together for good.
- That's part of how we endure suffering on the way to glory. trust in God's plan for those who love him. (vs 28)
- We trust that he's working things for our ultimate good.
- We trust that even bad things can be used for our ultimate good.
- We trust that God is working good things together, for those who love him.
- This is not a promise for the non-believer, this is for us.
- We see this life through a different lens.
- We believe that God's ultimate plan...which includes us...is being worked out day by day in the lives of people just like us.
- Even when we suffer, we believe God is working good for us.
- You may not feel like that's true...but he sees from a different vantage point.

29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

- God knows the ending. He knew which ones will follow Jesus and which ones won't...and he knew before he created the world.
- And as we go through life with all its ups and downs we trust that it ends in glory! (vs 29-30)

-I started the message talking about the arduous climb up Aneroid Mnt. Truly one of the worst days hiking I've ever had.

-But when we got to the top...and saw the Wallows. (describe)

-Mountain after mountain neatly layered and framed by the fading sun...it was "glory".

-The suffering was worth it in the end. And it will be for us too