

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Sermon Title: Future Glory, Romans 8:18-27

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**INTRODUCTION:** Last week, we talked about what it means to live a life through the Holy Spirit. Today, we continue with what that means. Another part of living a life in the Holy Spirit is our hope of future glory and knowing about it.

I have three points to my message today, and here they are:

1. The future glory is worth more than our present sufferings.
2. The future glory will be revealed in us.
3. The future glory will involve freedom in creation.

Sometimes people say, “*What is the purpose of life? Why are we really here? Does my life have a purpose? Will I make any difference in this life? Some day when I am gone, will people miss me? Will I have left behind enough of a legacy to be remembered?*” Well, what is the purpose of life? It’s to glorify God—to bring glory to God. What is this glory? It is mentioned all throughout scripture. We know God is a God of glory. His glory is seen in all creation. And, we are to glorify God with our lives. But, what is glory in the first place?

**BACKGROUND:** The word “glory” in the Hebrew, *kabod*, originally means “weight” or “heaviness.” It also means “importance, honor, and majesty.” In the New Testament, the word is used again in the Greek. And, the Greek word is *doxa*, translated as “honor, renown, glory, splendor” and also a “judgment on worth in a positive sense.”

St. Augustine thought about glory too, and he defined it as, *clara notitia cum laude* meaning “brilliant celebrity with praise.”

**EXPLANATION:** God’s glory is his “weighty importance,” “fame,” “honor and majesty.” They are displayed in so many ways. We see God’s glory in creation. We see God’s glory in the skies, the sunsets, the oceans. We see God’s glory in all the

creatures and in his creation of man. We see God's glory in all of our God-given abilities and characteristics.

I seem to be the most fascinated with God's glory revealed through creation. And, with social media today, it's interesting how people will, around the evening time on a pretty day, start posting pictures of the sunset in their area.

I remember one day, I saw several people from Tennessee and from East Tennessee post pictures of the sunset. And, these people, as the sun set across the state, posted different photos of the beautiful sunset that evening. We're really without excuse when it comes to God revealing his glory through creation.

We also see God's glory in his mighty acts written throughout scripture—acts of his glory. His glory has been associated with very bright light (when the angels appeared to the shepherds) and with fire (when he appeared to Moses).

Paul writes about the future glory when he wrote to the Roman Christians. They were suffering. They were being persecuted and killed in Rome. Tacitus, a Roman senator and historian wrote about the suffering of the early Christians.

*To quell this rumor Nero falsely accused others—"Christians," as they were commonly called, already hated for their scandalous conduct—and he subjected them to the most elaborate tortures. (Their founder was a man named Christ, who was executed in Tiberius's reign by the orders of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. The deadly cult [that's how he referred to Christians...] was thus suppressed for the moment, but then burst forth anew, not only in Judaea, the source of this evil, but throughout Rome as well, where all things shocking and disgraceful gravitate and thrive.)*

*First some Christians were arrested who confessed to the crime, and by their evidence a host of others were convicted, not so much for the crime of arson as for their hatred of humankind. Mockery attended their death: dressed in the hides of animals they were torn apart by dogs, nailed on crosses, or were themselves set on fire after dark and used as torches. Nero opened his gardens to this spectacle and made a show of their executions in his circus, dressed as a charioteer and mingling with the people, or riding on a chariot. As a result of his behavior, people felt pity for these Christians, not because they didn't think them guilty and deserving of novel*

*punishments, but because it seemed that they were being slaughtered not for the public welfare but to satisfy the savagery of one man.*

So, you see how important Paul's letter was to the Romans. Many Romans actually thought the Christians deserved this treatment. There were lots of rumors about who Christians were, what Christians believed, and what Christians did. Had they really known the truth, they would have realized Jesus' teachings—the epistles that were being circulated around that time—told people to submit to the government and told people to help those around them. There was no type of Christian teaching to undermine or overthrow the government, but there were rumors being spread—false accusations against Christians. They were hated for following Christ.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:18 [Paul said this,] <sup>18</sup> *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.* <sup>19</sup> *For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.* <sup>20</sup> *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope* <sup>21</sup> *that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

<sup>22</sup> *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.* <sup>23</sup> *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.* <sup>24</sup> *For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?* <sup>25</sup> *But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

<sup>26</sup> *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.* <sup>27</sup> *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.*

Now, based on what I told you was happening to the Christians in Rome, perhaps that scripture comes to life in a way you've never known it before.

**First, THE FUTURE GLORY IS WORTH MORE THAN OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS.**

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, says that our current sufferings and our future glory are not comparable. He says they are not even worth comparing. Remember the original Hebrew usage of glory—“weight.” This glory—what we will experience in our glorification—the glory revealed in us—outweighs what we experience now. It’s worth much more.

**ILLUSTRATION:** And, Paul uses the illustration of childbirth to explain what he meant here. [I haven’t experienced the birth of a child, but I have been present when three children were born.] But, as you know, the pain of childbirth is quite extraordinary. But, the joy of gaining a son or a daughter far outweighs the pain of labor. So, Paul compares the sufferings of this life to that of labor pains, and when we experience the joy of future glory, it will make all of the past worth it.

**SCRIPTURE:** He said (verse 22): ... *the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

**ILLUSTRATION:** In 1999, my father-in-law was suffering through cancer. We had just bought a home, and I was busy readying it to move in. Susan’s dad was in the hospital in Knoxville. Susan was about 8 months pregnant with Matt, and she had gone to Knoxville to be with her father-in-law. I painted the inside of our home all day long, and that night, I went to get something to eat. And, while I was there, I felt compelled late that night to drive to Knoxville. So, I went by and got some clothes for overnight, and I started driving to Knoxville. When I got sleepy and turned on the radio – as soon as I turned it on, the voice of Adrian Rogers quoted this verse: <sup>18</sup> *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.* <sup>19</sup> *For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed* (Romans 8:18-19).

When I say, “at that moment, I turned on the radio”—I mean literally, at that moment, I heard the verses. Those verses gave me hope because I knew God would call him home that night. And, he did within seconds of my going in the hospital room. Cancer...disease, misery, undiagnosed illnesses... all of it is nothing compared to the glory before us.

## **Second, THE FUTURE GLORY WILL BE REVEALED IN US.**

Verse 18 said we await the glory that will be revealed in us. Paul continues—

Verse 19: <sup>19</sup> *For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.*

**EXPLANATION:** The children of God will be revealed. God's glory—which we see revealed in Christ—will be revealed in us in a new way.

We know the glory of God is revealed in creation. In the Old Testament, the glory of God was revealed in mysterious ways—the Ark of the Covenant, a burning bush, a cloud by day and fire by night, a great light—

Paul, understood, though, Jesus was the fullness of the Word of God. He was the Word of God made flesh—the Word of God revealed in human flesh. Now, through Christ, we are revealed children of God. This is the great mystery—Christ in us. This is what Paul said we are to proclaim:

**SCRIPTURE:** Colossians 1:25-27 <sup>25</sup>*I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--<sup>26</sup>the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. <sup>27</sup>To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

The hope of glory is in us when we have the Spirit of Christ in us.

### **Third, THE FUTURE GLORY WILL INVOLVE FREEDOM IN CREATION.**

Creation is not yet in a state of ultimate freedom. I'm sure the early Christians who were being set on fire by night and seeing their loved ones set on fire by night, understood their bondage to this world. But, they had this promise—the promise of freedom in Christ.

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 8:20-21 <sup>20</sup>*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

Verse 20 says, “Creation was subjected to frustration.” In the Greek, the word “frustration” is also translated as “vanity, emptiness, unreality, purposelessness, ineffectiveness.” Creation is subjected to this.

And, it all started in Genesis. In Genesis it says, <sup>22</sup> *And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”*<sup>23</sup> *So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken (Genesis 3).*

**EXPLANATION:** The curse—because of Adam and Eve’s sin, God cursed the earth. So, he allowed him to experience death and decay. But, he did so, why? According to Romans 8:21—*so creation would be liberated from bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

God allows us to experience death so one day, we can experience life.

This old man, the Adam—where we get the word “Adamic”—the Adamic nature we all have—forced God to curse the earth. And, God cursed man in that mankind would not be able to live the life we were originally intended to live. God created man sinless, but Adam and Eve chose to sin. And, the creation is frustrated because of it.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Yesterday, Susan and I helped our daughter move across town in Chattanooga. It was the perfect day. A couple of times I said, “I want to live where the weather is like this every day.” As beautiful of a day it was, the day was subjected to frustration. It was not as beautiful as it could be.

**APPLICATION:** Where is the most beautiful place you’ve ever been? Even that place is subject to the curse and nowhere close to what it was originally created to look like.

The earth has been cursed, so to us, it’s beautiful. But, we don’t know earth outside of the curse. Think of the most wonderful person you know—probably a person who has been saved and lives a life of Christ. The hope of Christ in us is the hint. It’s a glimmer of the future. But, even the person you know who is the most wonderful person you’ve ever met—the most beautiful person you’ve ever seen or known—is subject to the curse because of the Adamic nature.

**CONCLUSION:** So, one day, what we have to look forward to—with this living in the Spirit of Christ—is the hope of future glory—where the creation is no longer subject to frustration—where the creation is will no longer be under the curse. Why? Because Jesus has paid the price on the cross for the curse, and we are just living out the rest of this existence as God has created it to be up to this point. And, then one day, the earth as we know it will be different. People, as we know each other, will be different because of Christ.

So, the next time, you go to the lake and you see this beautiful sunset, you might hear a person say, “This is the most beautiful sunset I’ve ever seen.” Keep this in mind, it’s still subject to the curse, but we can’t think outside of the curse because we’ve never experienced it.

Romans 8 gives a glimpse into the future—the hope of the glory of Christ. I hope this hope of the future glory will give you a revival this afternoon as you think about it.

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