

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Paul Gunn, Pastor

Sermon Title: Future Glory (Part 2), Romans 8:23-27

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INTRODUCTION: Today, we are continuing last week's sermon on the future glory we have in Jesus Christ. In this series in Romans, we see Paul wrote his letter to people who were suffering. They were suffering under the oppression and absolute atrocities of the Roman government. They were literally being fed to the lions and put into stadiums for show. And, Paul wrote them a letter of encouragement to hang in there. His words are an encouragement to us today.

To review—last week, we discussed three main points about our future glory we have in Jesus Christ. 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.

There are three more characteristics involved with the future glory I want to talk about today, and here they are:

1. The future glory involves our adoption.
2. The future glory includes new bodies.
3. The future glory is worth the waiting.

First, THE FUTURE GLORY INVOLVES OUR ADOPTION.

SCRIPTURE: Verse 23: ²³ *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.*

Wait a minute. I thought we were already adopted as God's sons? Go back to Romans Chapter 8 verse 15—

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:15-17 ¹⁵*For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”* ¹⁶*The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,* ¹⁷*and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

EXPLANATION: The Spirit of God tells us we are his children. If you remember, in a previous sermon, I said “When we live a life in the Spirit of God, we have a new family. God is our Father, and Jesus is our brother.” He is our Savior, but he is also our brother because he is the Son of God, and we are adopted into that family. And, through our brother Jesus, we have a new Father—from which we will receive an eternal inheritance. So, as we live, we experience the Spirit of God, and we can call God our “Daddy.”

SCRIPTURE: But, verse 23 of Chapter 8 says *we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship—the redemption of our bodies.*

EXPLANATION: You see, we are still waiting for this final glory. Everything about our life today is waiting. We wait in line. We wait to be seated. We wait to be paid. We wait to get well. Everything we do involves waiting. We’re also waiting to live. I could have said we are waiting to die. But, as we see in the scripture, we become fully alive after we leave this life. Everything involves waiting. We are waiting for this final glory—our ultimate adoption as children of God. But, we already know we are his children through the Holy Spirit. He testifies this good news. We have the spirit of adoption. It’s the “already and the not yet.” This adoption is the “already and not the yet.”

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION: This concept reminds me of the people of God in the Old Testament. They had their sins forgiven through the animal sacrificial system, but in reality, their sins were rolled forward until the time of Christ. Were they just as forgiven back then as we are forgiven today? Yes, why? Because of the promise of God. Titus 1:2 says God cannot lie. So, if God promises it, as God did in the Old Testament, their sins would be forgiven if they went through these animal sacrifices—would they be forgiven? Yes, because the future would bring Christ who would pay for the sins of those people—the people who sinned before the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

So, just because it hasn't happened yet, doesn't mean it's not so—because God cannot lie.

ILLUSTRATION: Now, how many of you have ever experienced a broken promise? Probably everybody in the room, at some time or another. If it's not happened to you, well, it's going to happen to you. How about presidential promises? I think presidential promises are more like presidential ideas. Every president has made promises they couldn't keep. There are many people who run for office and then forget it

But, if God makes a promise, it's done. Even though it's not done, it's done because he promised it and he cannot lie. So, again, it's the already and the not yet. These people of the Old Testament were forgiven of their sins through animal sacrifices, their sins were rolled forward.

APPLICATION: And, in the same way, with our adoption, we are adopted as children of God by promise, but it will be made reality in the future. We can have confidence that God will keep his promises. It's the already and the not yet. We are adopted as promise. We can have confidence God will keep his promises.

Listen, if you have repented of your sins, if you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, and you believe, and you live for Christ—and your experience in believing and your experience in repenting was not “going through the motions,” (if that's what it was, then you're not saved), but if you have truly repented of your sins, believed in Christ, and live for Christ, being adopted into his family by promise means you cannot be unadopted from the family of God. And, until you learn that, accept it, and believe it by faith, you will be completely ineffective as a follower of Jesus. If you think you have to keep doing stuff to earn his favor—you will be ineffective as a follower of Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: I don't know how many people we have here who are adopted or who are parents who have adopted a child. But, no parent who adopts a child, “un-adopts” a child. They accept that child. And, adopted children will tell you, “This is my mom, and this is my dad.”

APPLICATION: If the human bond between adoption is so strong, how much greater is it with God. We are adopted into his family.

And, we know we are God’s children right now because of a promise from a promise-maker who keeps his promises.

EXPLANATION: Verse 23 says we have received the first fruits of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit guarantees us of our inheritance through Christ. He reminds us of Jesus’ teaching. He comforts us. He lets us know we are children of God. And, the first fruit is the first crop that comes, guaranteeing the rest of the crop will come at harvest time. The Holy Spirit is the “first fruit.” The Holy Spirit is the first reminder of our full inheritance—at the end of time. The Holy Spirit’s working in our lives and the Holy Spirit’s convicting us of our sin, the Holy Spirit’s reminding us of the forgiveness of our sin when we repent—that’s our guarantee of our full inheritance at the end of time.

And, now—with our pledge—the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus—we are called his children. But, the scripture says we groan inwardly for more in this period of waiting.

Not only does creation groan, but the scripture says we groan. Why do we groan? The scripture says—we who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan for more. We are like a farmer, who went out into his fields and who plucked the first bit of grain that grew or the first tomato of the season—receiving the first fruit. He might be holding a little handful of grain in his hand. What can he do with those grains? I guess he could eat those grains. The grains signify two things—a crop that’s coming (more grain) and what can be done with the grain. The farmer knows what can be done with the grain.

APPLICATION: We too—have this first fruit—the Holy Spirit—but we are waiting too for the future glory to come in full.

ILLUSTRATION: A woman who was struggling in her life said, “God has been so good. He’s been so faithful. I just want more.”

ILLUSTRATION: Recently, I spoke with a woman who is very ill. As we talked face to face, she said, “I know it’s just a matter of time. I am ready to go. I have accepted that fact, and I am at peace.”

If we could all have that peace the woman has, this world would be a different place. She wants every day to count until she goes, and she even sang a song for me.

SCRIPTURE: John 1:12 ¹² *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*

EXPLANATION: You know as a Christian, we have some rights. The scripture says we have the right to be called children of God. We call God, “Daddy.” But, we eagerly await the day when we will be brought into the very presence of God to receive our full inheritance. We await this “wedding day” as Revelation describes it.

Review 1: The future glory involves our adoption.

Second, THE FUTURE GLORY INCLUDES NEW BODIES.

Verse 23 says: We await the redemption of our bodies.

EXPLANATION: This is one of the things we are eagerly waiting for because of Jesus. One indicator we are not yet living as full, realized sons and daughters of God is our mortal, dying bodies. We might have souls and minds being renewed daily, but we are living inside imperfect bodies.

But, the body too will be resurrected. Jesus proved it by rising from the dead and receiving a new body. What kind of bodies will we have? This is a question Paul addressed in Corinthians. In Corinthians 15, we read there are two types of bodies—natural bodies and spiritual bodies. The natural must come first through Adam, and then the spiritual one comes afterward through Jesus. The natural one is transformed by the power of Jesus.

How could our dying, physical bodies enter a Kingdom that will last forever? We wouldn't belong. We wouldn't be equipped for it.

ILLUSTRATION: Our astronauts wear space suits because our human bodies are not equipped to live outside of this atmosphere. Even pilots who leave this lower

atmosphere, have to wear flight suits because our bodies are not equipped to live outside of this limited area God created for us.

EXPLANATION: So, our physical bodies will not inherit the Kingdom of God because we are not equipped for the kingdom of God. We wouldn't belong. We wouldn't make it. Paul—in addressing this topic—reveals a “wonderful secret,” which isn't a secret anymore.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 ⁵¹ *But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!* ⁵² *It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.* ⁵³ *For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.*

EXPLANATION: Again: *Our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die.* Our bodies now—subjected to death and decay—must go away so we will live again in bodies that never die.

ILLUSTRATION: Our bodies are dying—whether we want to believe it or not. Did you know, red blood cells live for about four months and then die? Skin cells live for 2-3 weeks and then die. Colon cells live for about 4 days and then die. Do you know how many cells in our bodies die every minute? About 300 million. So, the body has to constantly replenish cells. But, even in this life—the death of our cells is necessary for life—so we can get new ones that adapt to our growth, development, and continuing life.

ILLUSTRATION: Right now, we are living in a body that is not our real home. Paul talks about our bodies being tents. You've been camping before? You've lived in a tent before, and you know it's not your home. It's just a temporary home.

APPLICATION: We struggle with body image, with body imperfections, and with body illness. No matter how hard we work out in the gym, these bodies will never be “fit” for the kingdom of God in its future glory. Our earthly body needs to be killed so we can experience our new bodies in Jesus.

And, this hope of a future glorified body brings great encouragement. Paul talks about this tent we live with in—

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:4-10 ⁴ *For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.* ⁵ *Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

[God has fashioned us—he has made us for the purpose of clothing us with our heavenly dwelling. What is mortal—what is dying—will be swallowed up by life.]

Verse 6, Paul writes: ⁶ *Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.* ⁷ *For we live by faith, not by sight.* ⁸ *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.* ⁹ *So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

APPLICATION: So, believer listen to me, while death is on the mind of people throughout life, the believer does not have to worry about death. Paul said he would refer to be away from our body since it means being with the Lord. Our goal should not be about pleasing our own body—which is dying—but pleasing our Father—who is in heaven. And, this goal is forever. A person can train all they want in the gym and to get fit. But, this body with all its earthly “fitness” will grow old and die. What we do spiritually—in Christ—what we do while in the body—is what matters. And, what we do for eternity—while away from this body is what matters in the future and what will last in the future—“the already and the not yet.” Through Jesus, we will be glorified—“fit” for heaven.

ILLUSTRATION: I read about a doctor in Europe that is convinced he can do a head transplant. He is convinced he can attach all these bones and tissues to do a head transplant. His goal is living forever. You know that sounds worse than death, doesn't it?

Review: The future glory involves our adoption; The future glory includes new bodies.

Third, THE FUTURE GLORY IS WORTH THE WAITING.

We are in the waiting room of life—having received the first-fruits of the Spirit—the Spirit of adoption. We know we are children of God, but we are waiting for the promise to be fulfilled. We are waiting for complete glory and new bodies and a new Heaven and a new earth.

So, what is taking so long? I want to warn against us asking this question. I admit, I ask myself this question sometimes. The scripture warns against scoffers in the last days who ask this question—

SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 3:3-4 ³ *Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”*

ILLUSTRATION: There used to be a sign on I-40. “Jesus is coming soon,” and someone put over it—“2,000 years of coming soon.” What does the scripture say? There will be scoffers who say, “When is he coming?”

EXPLANATION: But, Peter continues... They choose to forget God formed the heavens and the earth by his word. And, by the same word—he is reserving the present heavens and earth for fire—keeping it until the Day of Judgment and destruction. He is preserving the earth in his patience. He does not want anyone to perish. He wants everyone to come to repentance.

APPLICATION: So, as we wait—we do not complain, “*What is taking God so long?*”

We go back to what Paul says, “I want to please him while I’m in this body.”

But, we can ask—Why is the future glory worth the waiting?

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:24-25 ²⁴ *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.*

EXPLANATION: We are saved in this hope. It wouldn't be hope if we saw it all or understood it all. This is good because hope is an exercise in of itself, isn't it? We are saved by faith, so we have to learn how to live by faith and what hope means.

APPLICATION: I had a conversation with someone about how we don't offer enough hope to each other. It's easy, when we don't feel good, to despair. But, in Christ, there's always hope because we know where we're headed. So, in the meantime, what do we do? We seek to please God while we're in the body.

SCRIPTURE: Verse 26 says: 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.*

EXPLANATION: The Spirit is our Helper. We don't know how to pray like we should. We pray selfishly and with our limited mindset. But, even when we don't know what to pray, the Spirit intercedes for us. The Spirit within us groans—wordless—as it says.

SCRIPTURE: Verse 27: 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.*

EXPLANATION: The Spirit intercedes because we have the Spirit of Jesus in us. Of course, God recognizes his own Spirit. The prayers we pray through the Spirit is his will.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION: Jesus taught us to pray, *“Your Kingdom come, your will be done”* (Matthew 6:10) and *“Not my will but yours be done”* (Luke 22:42).

CONCLUSION: For those of us who are in Christ—it says we have received the first-fruit of the Spirit—we have received the Spirit. In other words, there's been a blooming—a small harvest—the Holy Spirit is the first fruit, the promise of more to

come. We have been saved by this hope of glory. This glory is very different than the world's glory. It is not even worth comparing.

But, still so many trade the glory of God for the “glory” of man. People put their worth in what man thinks or what this world offers instead of the glory awaiting the children of God.

As believers, we need to not fall into this trap. We need to memorize the phrase “future glory.” We need to live our lives knowing we will future glory. We need to be encouraged by the promise of our hope—the freedom of all creation from death and decay, our final adoption as sons and daughters of God, and our new bodies. We can be encouraged to live a life with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Even in our groaning, we can be encouraged, if we know the Spirit is transforming us and praying for us in ways we don't know and understand or can't even hear for God's will to be done.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee
USA