

ROMANS 8:18-39

Paul has declared the need to be led by the Spirit in order to be children of God who walk after the things of the Spirit and not after the things of the flesh. As children of God, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ of the inheritance to come. Now Paul continues to speak of this wonderful hope we have in Christ.

I) The Glory to Come (8:18-30)

- A) Sufferings of present time not comparable with glory which shall be “revealed in us” (v. 18)
 - 1) Next section explains what shall be “revealed in us”
- B) Earnest expectation of “the creation” eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God (v. 19)
 - 1) “*The creation*” = physical creation (Gen. 1:1) or spiritual creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15)?
 - a) *Physical* – the physical creation cursed by sin but delivered at the judgment day (but see the destruction of the heavens and earth in 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-13)
 - b) *Spiritual* – the people of God now subject to physical, bodily corruption but will enjoy glorification at the bodily resurrection (preferred interpretation)
 - 2) Creation [“creature”] subjected to futility, but in hope of something better – corruptible physical body (v. 20)
 - 3) Creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (v. 21)
 - 4) Whole creation [all the faithful] now groans and labors with birth pangs (v. 22)
 - 5) Not only they, but those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within themselves (v. 23)
 - a) “Firstfruits” = apostles (“we also”) and early Christians are not exempt from groaning
 - b) Waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body – resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42-54)
 - 6) Saved in this hope, eagerly awaited, but not yet seen (vv. 24-25; cf. 2 Cor. 5:7)
- C) The Spirit helps in our spirit’s weaknesses (vv. 26-27; blessing of the Spirit of God)
 - 1) Don’t know what we should pray for as we ought (imperfect, struggle of spirit)
 - 2) The Spirit makes intercession for us communicating [our] groanings which cannot be uttered
 - a) “Intercession” – pleading on behalf of another
 - 3) He who searches the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because He [Spirit of God] makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God
- D) All things work together for good to those who love God and called according to His purpose (v. 28)
 - 1) “All things” = God’s work on behalf of the salvation of man – whole scheme of redemption
 - 2) Not unconditional, but all things work together for good for “those who love God”
 - 3) God prepared beforehand His great plan for all those who would love Him
 - a) Whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (v. 29)
 - b) These He also called, justified, and glorified as ones who walk in the spirit (v. 30)
 - 4) Spoken as completed actions for God’s people in the eternal mind and purpose of God

Paul here contrasts the sufferings of the present time with the glory which shall be revealed in us. This is a contextual key because the glory that he shall speak of in the following verses is equal to what is revealed in those who walk by the spirit.

The identity of the “creation” or “creature” is important. Most understand it as the animate and inanimate creation that was cursed by sin. Others see it as the spiritual creation, God’s people. Considering the context, the interpretation is best understood as the physical body. Paul mentioned the “body of death” within whose members is the law of sin, which is condemnation and death (7:23-24). The spirit of the child of God is alive in Christ, but the body is dead because sin (8:10). Resurrected life is promised to this mortal body if we continue to walk in the Spirit (8:11). Though we suffer in this life, we are promised glorification as heirs of God, and it shall be revealed in us who believe (8:17-18).

The expectation (hope) that we have eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God (resurrection), for the body was subjected to futility (mortality) in the hope of being delivered from the bondage of corruption (suffering, death) into glorious liberty (immortality) of the sons of God. The Christian groans eagerly awaiting the adoption, the redemption of our body which is a hope yet to be seen. This interpretation fits nicely with the message of 2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:9 and 1 Corinthians 15:35-58.

Paul adds that the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, helping us when we do not know how to pray as we should, making intercession for us. When all is considered, it can only be concluded that all things that God has purposed for man’s salvation work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. From God’s foreknowledge in the beginning to the final glorification of those called in Christ, all these things work for good according to the will of God and for His glory.

II) More Than Conquerors (8:31-39)

- A) What shall we say in light of these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (v. 31)
 - 1) If God did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, will He not give us all things? (v. 32)
 - 2) Who can bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies, not man (v. 33)
 - 3) Who is he who condemns? Christ died and is risen, who is at the right hand of God, and who make intercession for us (v. 34; divine love, power, authority = great confidence!)
 - 4) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ – tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword? (v. 35)
 - a) Psalm 44:22 quoted – sufferings of the faithful for the sake of God (v. 36)
- B) In all these things we are “more than conquerors” through God who loved us! (v. 37)
 - 1) “More than conquerors” (*hupernikao*) = glorious victory!
 - 2) Fully persuaded that neither death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (vv. 38-39)
 - 3) Gift of victory given through Christ for those who are faithful in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:57)

A series of questions follow the exhortation that if God is for us, who can be against us. These rhetorical questions and their answers emphasize that God is truly for us in every way. Those justified by God are more than conquerors over all obstacles and enemies, and no thing or person can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ. What assurance and hope this provides the Christian!