

The Christian's Glorification

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Romans 8:18

Preached on: Sunday, January 1, 2012

After being away from Paul's epistle to the Romans for a few weeks during the Christmas season, we now return once again to Romans chapter eight and this morning we will be focusing primarily on verse 18. Romans chapter eight. Here the apostle reveals some very profound and practical insights on how to respond to suffering.

Let me read this passage to you, Romans eight verse 18.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”¹

Now before we look at this text closely, it is important for us to once again wrap our minds around the context in which this has been written. You will recall that the great theme of Romans chapter eight is the assurance of the believer, the security of the believer, our assurance of salvation that justification will automatically result not only in sanctification but also ultimately in glorification. You cannot have one without the other. It is for this reason that Paul would say in Philippians 1:6:

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”²

Until the day when we receive our final reward and glorification. Now there are many people who struggle with the assurance of salvation because, frankly, in most cases they have never been truly born again, they have never been justified. They don't understand the gospel. Many people trust in their own goodness or they believe that because they belong to some denomination or participate in some church, because they have done some ritual or whatever, that they are truly saved.

But, in fact, in many cases as the Lord tells us in Matthew seven most people who profess Christ do not really know him. There are the few in contrast to the many, the few that truly know Christ versus the many who think they do, but do not.

But from the very beginning of this epistle Paul has set forth this argument that explains how sinful man needs to be reconciled to a holy God and that can never happen apart from the gospel of God, that we must be saved by grace through faith in Christ. And in chapter five he rehearsed for us the marvelous benefits of our justification, justification being that work of God whereby we are declared righteous based upon the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us so that now the believer is hidden in Christ. God no longer sees our sin, but sees the perfection, the holiness of his beloved Son in whom we are now hidden.

¹ Romans 8:18.

² Philippians 1:6.

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And now in chapter eight he is going to expand upon this theme. He is going to underscore, yet again, the security of the believer and that is based on the assertion at the beginning of Romans eight verse one that:

“There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”³

We have been delivered from the law. We have been united to Christ by the Holy Spirit. What the law could not do was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. He will go on to describe how that we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit of God that gives us victory over sin. Paul has made it clear that our salvation is guaranteed by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that delivers us from sin in the process of sanctification. And one day he will deliver our very body from corruption in glorification. And it is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that proves that we are children, sons of God that an adoption has taken place. We are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ.

Therefore on what basis can our salvation possibly fail? And now in verse 17 he describes how the Christian's sufferings are inevitable in this present age. He will say that we are children,

“... heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”⁴

We will learn in Romans eight that our sufferings even are those things that God has ordained for us, that he will cause all things to work together for our good and his glory and all of this will animate our longings, the longings of our heart for the blessed hope of our resurrection and the certainty of our Lord's return.

Because we are sons, we are destined for glory where we will receive an inheritance that we do not deserve. Utterly staggering.

He will go on to reveal how that the entire cosmos will one day enjoy a recreation and even the Holy Spirit joins with the saints and all of creation in groaning for the day when the curse will be reversed. He is the one that actually intercedes for us in our feeble prayers. Paul will go on to explain how that our assurance of salvation is really anchored in the character of God, that before the foundation of the world, he devised a plan of redemption to bring glory to himself. And only if he fails will our salvation fail.

Many people will say, “Well, we will never know until the very end.”

I have heard that many, many times from people. In fact, a man that I talked to just recently said, “Yeah, you never know. We may blow it. We may blow it and it is all over. And sometimes you don't even know when you blow it.”

³ Romans 8:1.

⁴ Romans 8:17.

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And I remember saying to him, "Dear brother, you need to reread Romans eight."

To say that a man can lose his salvation, frankly, is to impugn the character of God, because it is all his works. It would be, therefore, to elevate the will of man over the will of God, making man not God sovereign over salvation.

As we look at Scripture, especially Romans eight, we see that he set his love upon us. He predestined us. He calls us. He separates us, sanctifies us, justifies us and moves us inexorably towards glorification. His plan required the giving of his Son whom he did not spare. But the text says that he delivered him up for us all. Can there be any greater guarantee?

My friends, if just one man's salvation could fail, then it would endanger everything that God has promised. If one man's salvation could fail, if there were in any way a danger of man or Satan doing anything to disrupt this plan of redemption, then the whole of God's plan would be subject to fail. The perfection of his character would be in jeopardy and the sacrifice of his Son would become an act of futility.

By implication, Paul's point in all of this is to simply say: Would God decree and orchestrate such a plan that he could not accomplish? Of course not. Would he decree a plan by his uninfluenced choice and then leave it up to the will of man to be completed or the whim of Satan to be defeated? Of course not.

In verse 33 of chapter eight he will say God is the one who justifies and Christ Jesus is he who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Surely, beloved, his work of intercession is not deficient.

And then the inspired apostle will close with one final guarantee, the most astounding of all and that is the love of Christ.

Who can separate us from the love of Christ? No one. Nothing, because of justification, he is saying, there is no condemnation. Because of love there is no separation.

Now as we approach our text this morning may I remind you even more specifically, since we have been away from it for several weeks, that in verses 12 and 13 the apostle deals with the Christian's obligation. We are no longer debtors to the flesh, but to the Spirit. And our joyful obligation is to submit to him who empowers us as we put to death the deeds of the body.

And in then in verses 14 through 17 he addresses the Christian's confirmation, how the genuineness of our faith is found in our understanding and experiencing and manifesting the works of the Spirit and this leads us now to verse 18 where he will reveal great truths pertaining to the Christian's glorification, thus, the name of my discourse to you this morning.

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Beloved, here we have a passage that not only causes our hearts to beat wildly with anticipation as we reflect upon the glories that await the redeemed in the eternal state, but it is also a text that is filled with very practical insights on the matter of how we should deal with suffering in our life. And, of course, this fits well with the apostle's theme of assurance, because, evidently many in the first century were confused.

They were thinking, well, no wait a minute, Paul. How can we be justified, become a child of God a joint heir with God's beloved Son, destined to share in his glory and yet still have to endure all of this suffering? It doesn't make sense. Maybe some of you grapple with that. Certainly many people have done through redemptive history. Many people continue to do so even this day.

You know, many people come to Christ and they claim promises God never made. They come to Jesus and they hear the invitation that basically says, "Come to Jesus and he is going to make you happy and healthy and wealthy and successful. You are going to have heaven on earth." And so they sign up for this deal and then reality hits. Nothing seems to change. In fact, many times it gets worse. Think of all the people that you know who were once a part of a church, but now they want nothing to do with Christianity. It is like, hey, I have tried that. It doesn't work. I don't even want to talk about it. Of course, for the most part those are people who have believed a false gospel. They decided to get a little life insurance, so to speak, a little fire insurance, just in case all of this is true, sign up for maybe a better life, you know, get God to be on my side, to pull a few strings for me and basically at the core of all false teaching of all false gospels is this idea that God exists for us rather than we exist for him. It is the idea that we come to Jesus because of me and my needs rather than God and his glory.

Most people do not understand that the good news of the gospel is all about the forgiveness of sins and the great joys of a better life awaits another day, awaits the days of glory.

And what a tragedy it is to see even a Christian experience some inevitable suffering of life and, of course, we all experience them. Some of you are in it even right now and I have got several friends, two of them that I heard just this week that just literally broke my heart. It caused me to just weep over what is going on in their life.

But in some cases people will experience these things and they will become angry with God. They will begin to doubt God and be filled with discouragement. And as a result in many cases they lose their sense of assurance of their salvation.

Let me give you an example of how this may play out in times in your life. I have experienced this before. You have some great tragedy that befalls you and you have a well meaning brother that comes to you as you are being just weighed down with some great adversity and they say, "Well, my friend, I am so sorry that this has happened, but God is sovereign."

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And, boy, that it is real helpful. Yes, that is true. God is sovereign. But it is not like when you come away from that you say, "Boy, I feel a whole lot better now."

Or, somebody will say to you, "Yes, this is tough, but, you know, bother, if you just trust in him, he will never give you more than you can bear."

Oh, good. Boy, I feel a lot better now. And even though that is true, it is still a bit hollow, is it not?

Or someone will say, "Well, just hang in there. There is blue sky up there somewhere. God is working all things together for good."

And you kind of go, "Huh. How does he know that things are going to get better?"

What if they get worse?

Or sometimes you may have a person in your life like Job's wife that just simply says, "Curse God and die." Sometimes that is how we feel.

So how should we respond to suffering biblically? Are we to just kind of grin and bear it? Because after all God is sovereign and he is working all these things to ultimately for his good, even our good and his glory? Are we to just endure it? Or are we to just resign ourselves and just kind of tough it out?

The question that we want to look at as we approach this text this morning is: Really, how can we transcend the pain of suffering in such a way that we do not lose our joy and our excitement regardless of how difficult things get? Is this possible?

Well, the answer is yes. If you understand the Christian's glorification.

So I wish to approach this text from the perspective of a triumphant sufferer. Can I put it that way? We all want to be triumphant sufferers, a born again believer whose joy cannot be shaken by the circumstances of life. And this will require that such a person attend to two things and this is my outline to you. Very simple. You must attend to your mind and to your life.

And I pray that these truths will bring great comfort to those of you who are suffering as well as prepare those of you who aren't because one day you will.

Now before we examine Paul's statement closely, I want to remind you that Paul suffered in ways that few men have ever suffered. In fact, I am not sure anyone save the Lord Jesus Christ ever suffered in such a way and yet he never succumbed to some kind of long term debilitating life dominating depression.

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You will recall in 1 Corinthians 4:11 he says:

“To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless.”⁵

And in verse 13 he said:

“... we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things.”⁶

And in 2 Corinthians one beginning in verse five he says something fascinating. He says:

“...the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.”⁷

That is what we want to know more about. What is this comfort?

He went on to say:

But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.⁸

And then that great text in 2 Corinthians two beginning in chapter 11 verse 23. Paul spoke of how he had been:

“...beaten times without number, often in danger of death.”⁹

Can you imagine that? In other words, to the point of death.

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst,

⁵ 1 Corinthians 4:11.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 4:13.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 1:5.

⁸ 2 Corinthians 1:6-7.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 11:23.

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often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.¹⁰

Beloved, this is a kind of suffering that we cannot imagine and this is suffering for the cause of Christ. And yet he would say even though he was suffering greatly that his comfort was abundant through Christ. Nothing could steal his joy. Nothing could steal his hope.

Given such ill treatment it would be easy for him to conclude and for others to conclude, huh, God has abandoned you. Your salvation is lost. The gospel must be some kind of a hoax. But not so. Instead he writes here in verse 18 of Romans eight.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”¹¹

So here we have a man that speaks from experience, not from some untested theory.

So how did he triumph over such adversity? How can we be triumphant sufferers?

Well, the short answer is that the triumphant sufferer will carefully attend, number one, to his mind. To put it real simply—and I will expand up on this—he will use his head. He will think deeply and carefully about some very important issues. We see this at the very beginning of verse 18. He says:

“For I consider...”¹²

Or it could be translated, “I reckon.” It comes from the Greek word λογίζομαι (log-id'-zom-ah-ee). It means to calculate. It means to evaluate, to form an opinion based upon careful analysis.

In chapter three verse 28 we read the word:

“For we maintain [or reckon or consider] that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”¹³

There we see the same word. In other words, based upon a careful analysis of divine revelation, he is convinced that salvation is entirely a gift of God, that there is not even the slightest part of it that we have conceived or earned. So he has reckoned this.

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.

¹¹ Romans 8:18.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Romans 3:28.

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So what is it that Paul has considered here in this text and thus strongly affirms? Well, he says:

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”¹⁴

Now think about it. On what basis could the apostle make such a dogmatic assertion? Well, it is on the basis of his personal, careful study of his position in Christ and his future inheritance. That is what he has been talking about all the way through.

I cannot emphasize, dear friends, how important it is for believers to grasp these doctrinal truths pertaining to their position in Christ as well as the future privileges that are ours as a result of that.

Frankly, doctrinal ignorance pertaining to these matters will inevitably result in increased sorrow in the midst of suffering and often times cause you to just collapse under the weight of adversity. I have seen this over and over. I have death with probably by now into the thousands of people who are struggling with some great dilemma in their life and there are those who will have a smile while tears are rolling down their face, still praise the Lord and experiencing their joy. And there will be others who are sitting over here with their thumb in their mouth curled upon a couch looking for some kind of medication, wanting to watch TV to somehow escape from the incredible pain.

And I can tell you without fail, the person over here with the joy is a person who has a strong understanding of who they are in Christ and they are standing on that firm foundation. These people over here, they don't really know what you are talking about. Moreover, they do not really understand all of the glory that awaits them. This is the result of our lazy minds especially in our culture, even Christians that are ignorant and therefore gullible.

Now what are the kinds of things that Paul has considered? Well, the list is so long, but I will give you just a few that he has taught us thus far. Remember according to chapter five there were nine benefits of justification. We have peace with God, access to God. We have a permanent standing in grace before God. We have jubilant hope of glory. We have joy in tribulation. We have, therefore, proof of salvation. We have a subjective inner awareness of God's love. We rejoice in God to the degree that he becomes the unequalled delight of our heart. And finally he says that we are saved from the wrath of God in an eternal hell. Well, that is just for starters.

So he has contemplated these things. And in verses 14 through 17 remember he addresses the Christian's confirmation. This is all validated by the works of the Spirit. Well, what does the Spirit do? Well, he has reminded u that he leads our lives. He relieves our fears. He assures our Spirit and he guarantees our glory. These are the things

¹⁴ Romans 8:18.

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that are the rock solid basis of everything that he thinks and therefore when suffering comes along, those storms of suffering cannot dislodge him from such an anchor of truth.

But beyond all of this, he actually experienced a foretaste of glory. You will recall in 2 Corinthians 12 verse four he said:

“[I] was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”¹⁵

No wonder he was such a triumphant sufferer. He had a firm grasp of his position, of who he was in Christ as well as the future privileges that he would enjoy as a joint heir with Jesus. And then he was commissioned to tell us all about this.

Now it is our job to listen carefully, to understand it, to use our minds, to think, to learn, to study, to analyze and then to live out these truths in our life.

Well, again, notice his words in verse 17.

“... if children, heirs also, heirs of God.”¹⁶

Can't you see the reasoning here, the reckoning, the logic?

“... if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”¹⁷

You may recall the key word there is the little word “if.” This introduces a fulfilled condition. It could better be translated “because.” In other words, because of all that Paul has revealed to us before, we are indeed God's adopted children, he is saying. It is like grab a hold of this, folks. We are God's adopted children. And if children, then we are obviously heirs. And if heirs, we are obviously awaiting an inheritance. And we are waiting for that inheritance that is in glory that we will share with Christ. Moreover he says because we are children of God we are not only heirs of God, but also fellow heirs with Christ.

This is staggering, isn't it? He has used his mind. He has said, “Do you realize that you are heirs of God?”

Again, think about this and we went over this before. God is not only the source of our inheritance, but he himself is our inheritance. This is just mind boggling. And, of course, for Paul having been transported into the very presence of God he knew first hand the ineffable glories that await us.

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:2.

¹⁶ Romans 8:17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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At the end of verse 17:

“...if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”¹⁸

So this makes perfect sense. He is using his mind here. He is reckoning these things. We are fellow heirs with Christ. Therefore we are going to share in glory in the same way that Christ achieved his glory. How did Christ achieve his glory? Through suffering. Ok, I get that. I am beginning to understand that.

And if suffering was his portion, it is obviously going to be ours as well. So, indeed, we are going to suffer for Christ because we are hidden in Christ.

So Paul carefully analyzed all these things in his mind. Shall we say he reasoned from Scripture and as well as from personal experience the truths pertaining to his position in Christ and the glory that would be his as a result of suffering for his sake? This is what he is teaching us by the power of the Spirit.

Now I want you to think for a moment. I want you to dream with me a little bit. I was accused as a young child of being a day dreamer at times. The teacher would be going on about some thing that I found unimportant, but my mind was somewhere and I was thinking about things that were more transcendent shall we say? So I want you to do that with me just for a moment.

Can you just imagine what Paul must have witnessed when he was caught up into paradise? Beloved, heaven will exceed the joy of anything that you have ever experienced. It will exceed those things beyond calculation.

Do you not believe that the same creator that made us knows precisely the kinds of things that will bring inexpressible and eternal joy to our heart? I would ask you. Why do you think he gave us an imagination. There is no other creature that he has created that has that. I would submit to you that he gave us our imagination to whet our appetites for glory.

I am convinced that heaven will surpass anything that I could ever imagine, anything that we have ever seen in the science fiction movies. I believe it is going to surpass *Star Wars*. It is going to outstrip C S Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* or Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, all of those things that are so exciting. Who is to say that our infinite God does not have an infinite number of other galaxies and other unknown solar systems, creatures, perhaps just waiting for us to conquer to the praise of his glory. We don't know. Perhaps he has created other creatures with whom he has chosen to glorify himself. But he knows full well what will thrill us.

¹⁸ Romans 8:17.

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Dear Christian, never underestimate the creative love of God on our behalf. Never underestimate the infinite riches of his omnipotent hand to be able to delight his creatures with unfathomable splendors and adventures.

I think of just what he has described for us in the new Jerusalem, remember, in Revelation 21. He describes the capital city of heaven. It is a cube 1500 miles in each direction. You do the math that is 2,250,000 square miles. That is a big city. You can liken that distance to the size of the entire western portion of the United States. Go from the pacific coast of California to the Mississippi River. And its length and width and height will all be equal.

Exciting, isn't it?

All of the sudden your sufferings don't seem so big, do they? You start getting a little bit excited when you think about these things. And we know that emanating from within that city is the effulgence of the glory of God, the shekinah glory of the living Christ, his presence refracting from every imaginable portion of that translucent city, displaying unimaginable colors because now we will be able to see the full light spectrum rather than the tiny one thousandth sliver that we are able to see now.

Heaven will transcend the limits of time and space. As we read Scripture it will transcend gravity and the electromagnetic force that we are accustomed to. It will be a perfect universe that is not water based. Yet we will nevertheless maintain aspects of our humanness which is consistent with having been made in the image of God.

Don't ask me to explain it beyond what the Scripture says. We will still have a body that is somehow made up like Christ, like the bodies that we have now, a body like Christ had in his glorified body, one that is not limited to time or space. Remember, he could just move through walls, transport himself thousands of miles away instantly.

But greatest of all we shall see his face and his name shall be on our foreheads. Can you imagine that?

You will recall in Revelation 3:12 he promised to give us a new name by which we will know him for all eternity. No wonder, dear friends, Paul would say:

“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”¹⁹

In 2 Corinthians 5:8 he says:

“...we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”²⁰

¹⁹ Philippians 1:21.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:8.

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Well, of course. Well, Paul has considered all these things. He has used his mind to carefully judge these matters. And, as a result, he can say with great certainty, "Folks...

"...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."²¹

Now I want you to notice the phrase "not worthy to be compared with."²² If we look at this technically in the original language, we can see that it really expresses the idea of something that has both value as well as weight, the idea of something being heavy. So he is saying here that these things are not of equal weight when placed side by side on a scale. That is the idea. Suffering is a mere trifle. It is as light as a feather, shall we say, compared with the colossal weight of the glory that awaits us.

So Paul is saying that the weight of all of our sufferings, as heavy as they may be at times causing us to just feel like we are going to falter under the load, those become as nothing when compared to the weight of glory that will be ours.

Now, my friends, this will be no comfort to a man straining under some oppressive load of sorrow unless he knows with certainty the weight of glory that is going to tilt the scale. So suffering and personal glory are not of equal weight. The privileges of our inheritance are infinitely heavier in value and blessing.

So when we suffer, are we to just resign ourselves to it? Are we to anesthetize the pain? You know, add a few more Tylenol or get some of the stronger stuff? How about alcohol so that we can live in a fool's paradise. Is that what we are to do? That is what most people do. And certainly that will be your choice. But may I offer you a better way and that is the way of the gospel? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, be transformed, be hidden in him through faith and then with your mind consider who you really are in Christ and all of the implications that that has for your life, now and in glory.

So a triumphant sufferer will, first of all, carefully attend to his mind. Secondly, he will carefully attend to his life.

Notice in verse 18 he goes on to say:

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."²³

Now I want you to notice this important distinction. The phrase "this present time" versus this glory that is to be revealed, in other words, an age to come.

²¹ Romans 8:18.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

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You see, the triumphant sufferer will live for the latter, not for the former. He will live his life not for the present, but for the age to come.

Now notice also, the apostle doesn't minimize the seriousness and the sorrow of human suffering. When somebody is suffering you don't want to come up to them and say, "Hey, look, it is not going to be that bad. Just hang on and it could be a lot worse."

Well, that is not helpful. I mean, you want to sympathize with them. And it might get a whole lot better. In fact, it might get so bad that you die. We just don't know.

Paul never minimized that suffering as he lived out his life. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 4:8 he says:

...we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus...²⁴

But then he went on to add in verse 16:

"...we do not lose heart."²⁵

Then I love verse 17. Catch this.

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.²⁶

So, beloved, endurance in suffering requires looking beyond this present time, living in light of eternity, looking beyond the temporal, looking beyond the physical and living in light of the spiritual, living in light of the eternal.

You will recall the life of Abraham and remember how he suffered because of his faith. How did he survive? How did he maintain such an attitude of joy and devotion? Well, the answer is in Hebrews 11:10.

"...he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."²⁷

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 4:8-10.

²⁵ 2 Corinthians 4:16.

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

²⁷ Hebrews 11:10.

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What is that referring to? He was looking for the new Jerusalem, Revelation 21.

What about Moses who suffered in such significant ways?

In Hebrews 11 verse 25 we read he was:

...choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.²⁸

Literally, if you want to translate that differently, "For he was looking to the reward..." It could be translated, "He kept on looking away to the reward."

He was living his life in light of eternity. He wasn't living for this day, but for the age to come, for the rewards of heaven. Did not Jesus tell us in Matthew six verse 19?

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."²⁹

In verse 21 he says:

"...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."³⁰

Beloved, if your heart is in this earth, you are in for a world of hurt. You will never triumph over suffering if you live for this life only. This is Paul's point here. You may recall—I know I have used this illustration before, but it is so poignant in my mind and powerful. There is a place in Chicago that I recall a special apartment complex run by Christians and there they care of mentally retarded people. And the greatest cleaning problem that they had in the place—and this is something if you go not the little tour that they will describe to you—the greatest cleaning problem they have is keeping the windows clean, because the residents are constantly pressing their greasy little faces on the windows looking for Jesus to return. That is how we need to be. They are not living for this life. This life doesn't have anything to offer.

Would that we be so vigilant. You know, unbelievers and sometimes even immature believers live their life as if this is all there is, as if it ends in death. Therefore they have no hope.

You will recall in Ephesians chapter two verse 12 Paul described how that we were once separate from Christ:

²⁸ Hebrews 11:25-26.

²⁹ Matthew 6:19-20.

³⁰ Matthew 6:21.

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“... having no hope and without God in the world.”³¹

But this life is not all that there is. In truth, this present time ends at death and then ushers us into the age to come. And that will either be heaven or hell depending upon whether or not you have placed your faith in Christ or not. This must be the supreme focus for the Christian. For this is what will not just sustain us in our suffering, but cause us to triumph over it. We must emulate our supreme example in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember in Hebrews 12:2 we read:

“...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”³²

What is the joy? What joy was he looking at? Well, it was the joy of doing the will of the Father and being exalted to his right hand of glory.

This must be our attitude as well as we live out our lives for the joy that awaits us.

Will you also notice another very important statement in verse 18? It says:

“...the glory that is to be revealed to us.”³³

So what we see here is that the surpassing weight of glory that is to be the preoccupation of our minds already exists. Do you realize that? Grab a hold of that. It already exists. It awaits us. It is ready to be revealed. It comes from the Greek word *αποκαλυπτω* (ap-ok-al-ooop'-to). The book of Revelation is the *αποκαλυψις ιησου χριστου*. It is the revealing or the unveiling of Jesus Christ. That is what he is saying here. This glory is waiting to be unveiled. It is waiting to be taken out of hiding. It is waiting to be disclosed to us.

That is why in 1 Peter 1:4 remember Peter speaks on why he has such joy, he said, because of Christ we have, quote:

“... an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away.”³⁴

What is the next word? Reserved. I love that. Don't you love going to a place and the table is reserved for you. It is reversed in heaven for you.

³¹ Ephesians 2:12.

³² Hebrews 12:2.

³³ Romans 8:18.

³⁴ 1 Peter 1:4.

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"...who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."³⁵

Talk about assurance. That is the only verse we would need right there. And then he goes on to say:

"In this you greatly rejoice."³⁶

Boy, that is an understatement. Absolutely.

"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials."³⁷

Beloved, beyond the veil of this life that is filled with such suffering and shame exists a realm of glory that exceeds the limits of language, the limits of imagination. What comfort, what consolation this is for the man, for the woman who is staggering under the weight of some suffering. And will you also notice yet another stunning truth that emerges from this text in verse 18? He says:

"... the glory that is to be revealed to us."³⁸

That could also be translated "in us." In fact, the King James does that. The Authorized Version translates it...

"...which is in store for us."

Here is what I want you to see here. This surpassing weight of glory that awaits us, is not something that will merely be revealed to us as if we are going to be spectators looking on. It is going to be revealed in us. We are going to become the recipients of it. As Peter said, he is going to be a partaker of the glory that is to be revealed, 1 Peter 5:1.

Think about that. Jesus had told Peter that he was going to be crucified at the end of his ministry, at the end of his life. For 40 years he served the Lord faithfully knowing that would be his fate. And yet he would write in 1 Peter five at the end of verse one, describing himself as:

"... a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed."³⁹

³⁵ 1 Peter 1:5.

³⁶ 1 Peter 1:6.

³⁷ 1 Peter 1:6.

³⁸ Romans 8:18.

³⁹ 1 Peter 5:1.

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So as we come back to Romans eight we see in verse 17 we are joint heirs with Jesus which is what Paul is reminding us of.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18 he says we:

“...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.”⁴⁰

And John tells us in 1 John three at the end of verse two:

“We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.”⁴¹

Beloved, these are the motivating truths that help us to become triumphant sufferers. And then look how the apostle expands his argument in Romans eight beginning in verse 19.

He says:

“For the anxious longing...”⁴²

Or it could be translated “the earnest expectation”

“...of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”⁴³

Well, what is this? Well, this is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns and the raptured saints will return with him. Remember, in the great snatching away he comes for his saints and in the second coming he comes with his saints. It will be a time when the true sons of God will have been separated from the false and we will be fully disclosed in our eternal glory. That is why in Colossians three verse Paul said:

“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”⁴⁴

An amazing statement.

In fact, Daniel described the glory of the revealed saints in Daniel 12 verse three as:

“...the brightness of the expanse of heaven.”⁴⁵ And as being “like the stars forever and ever.”⁴⁶

⁴⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

⁴¹ 1 John 3:2.

⁴² Romans 8:19.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Colossians 3:4.

⁴⁵ Daniel 12:3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

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Beloved, again, we are citizens of heaven. This earthly life is just a moment when compared to eternity.

So if you live your life in this present age only, seeking after the fleeting pleasures of this life, then you live in a fool's paradise. Or, worse yet, dear Christian, if you focus your attention on the sorrows of life, you know, you get around people that are that way. You say, "How are you?" And then you have got to listen for 30 minutes about how bad they are. If that is your focus rather than letting your mind dwell on the things above rather than the things of this world, then the inevitable sufferings of life are going to eclipse your joy.

So, beloved, I exhort you to be triumphant sufferers. Think much about your glorification. Think much about who you are in Christ. Carefully attend to your mind. Learn well who you are in Christ and all the implications of that and then live your life not for today, but for the coming age, the coming age of glory. Lay up your treasures in heaven. Be willing to suffer for the lover of your soul and then you will be able to echo the sentiments of Peter 1 Peter 4:13:

"... to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation."⁴⁷

So the next time you approach a dear friend who is suffering greatly, sympathize with them. Be willing to pray for them. Yes, remind them that, indeed, God is sovereign, that he is working all these things in a way that will ultimately bring good to you, bring joy to you in the end, bring glory to himself. But remind him, oh, dear brother in the midst of it, may I encourage you to think deeply about your position in Christ. Think of all of the things that he has done in you and for you and then think often upon the glory that is yours in your inheritance that is just waiting to be revealed to you and let the weight of that, the surpassing weight of that cause your sufferings of this day to be nothing more than a trifle.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. Help us to understand them. But more importantly, oh God, would that we lived them. And if there be anyone within the sound of my voice that knows nothing of this salvation of which we speak, the glories of the new birth. Oh, Lord, may today be the day that you bring conviction to their heart. May today be the day that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of their sins and be born again. We ask all of this in the precious name of our Savior who we long to see face to face. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 4:13.

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