

45-08-07-All Things Work Together for Good
disease, decay, death, resurrection, trust, prayer, Holy Spirit, hope
Rom 8:28

Christian believers have reasons for great expectations!

INTRODUCTION: (Scripture reading: Rom 8:18-28, NRSV)

–Rom 8:28 is familiar in the KJV, “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*”

Let me re-read its context in Rom 8:18-28 from *The Living Bible*: “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. For all creation is waiting patiently and hopefully for that future day when God will resurrect his children. For on that day thorns and thistles, sin, death, and decay -the things that overcame the world against its will at God's command-will all disappear, and the world around us will share in the glorious freedom from sin which God's children enjoy. For we know that even the things of nature, like animals and plants, suffer in sickness and death as they await this great event. And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us-bodies that will never be sick again and will never die. We are saved by trusting. And trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have-for a man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust that he will get it. But if we must keep trusting God for something that hasn't happened yet, it teaches us to wait patiently and confidently. And in the same way-by our faith -the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as he pleads for us in harmony with God's own will. **And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.**”

–The promise in last verse, Rom 8:28, is one example why **Christian believers have reasons for great expectations. But let's look at...**

I. The Context of that Promise: a world of “thorns and thistles, sin, death, and decay—the things that overcame the world against its will at God’s command”

- A. [In *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis explains how the question “*Why is there suffering, if God is good?*” led him into atheism and then out of it. He has many great insights. But the one related to this passage is why God subjected creation to a law of death and decay: paradise couldn't be our real 'home' anymore.]
- B. The reason “*all things work together for good*” **isn't** from living in a perfect, peaceful paradise, but from finding divine grace in a disrupted world that echoes the chaotic disruption of human sin.

C. This decaying, dying home is intended by God not to feel like our true home, otherwise we would want to live here in sin forever....

TRANS: [I often tell those on death-beds how God has been *weaning them off of this world* through so many losses in so many areas of life. “*This world doesn't feel like home anymore.*” **Why?** Because God is making it easier to say ‘good-bye’ to a diminishing *here* and ‘hello’ to a delightful *hereafter*.] We have **reasons for great expectations**, even if God’s promise must “*work together for good*” in the midst of a discouraging *context*. But there’s also...

II. The Connection in That Promise: “we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory”

- A. Jesus promised us His presence through the Holy Spirit, Who “helps us with our daily problems and in our praying.”
- B. *Why do we need help in prayer?* Even believers are disrupted by sin, “we don't even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should,” but as our direct connection with God, the Holy Spirit “pleads for us in harmony with God's own will.”

TRANS: As Christian believers, **we have solid reasons for great expectations!** The word “*hope*” in Scripture doesn’t mean “*I hope so.*” but “*I expect it!*” And this points to...

III. The Consummation of the Promise

- A. In the context of a sin-cursed world, not “*all things*” are “*good*”: the body’s slow decline toward death is among the *worst things* we witness or experience. (If you find a paradise here, you’ll lose it!)
- B. But those expectantly connected to the resurrection hope in Jesus Christ, “wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us–bodies that will never be sick again and will never die.”

CONCLUSION:

–This *hope*, this *expectation*, this *anticipation*, was the firm *faith* of _____. I like how this version puts it: “We are saved by trusting. And trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have.... if we must keep trusting God for something that hasn't happened yet, it teaches us to wait patiently and confidently.” Right now, _____ might be saying, “My patience paid off! My expectation is now experience!”

Romans 8:18-28 (NRSV)

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God;

20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;

23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.

27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.