

Romans 8:18-39
Our Glorification and Assurance

Introduction

1. Last week we learned about two ways in which the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer:
 - a. He is the Spirit of Life
 - 1) Because the Holy Spirit now dwells within us, we are no longer “in the flesh” but “in the Spirit”
 - 2) Because of the Holy Spirit, our spirit has been given new life
 - 3) Because of the Holy Spirit, our mortal bodies will one day be made alive eternally
 - 4) Because of the Holy Spirit, we are no longer under obligation to the flesh, but live according to the Spirit
 - 5)
 - b. He is the Spirit of Adoption
 - 1) He leads us
 - 2) He replaces fear of God with affection for Him
 - 3) He testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children
 - 4) He guarantees our inheritance
2. This passage is framed by two specific statements regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer
 - a. The first is found in v. 16 which states that the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and this ultimately leads to a discussion on our glorification
 - b. The second is found in v. 26 which states that the Holy Spirit helps our weakness, and this ultimately leads to a discussion on the assurance we have that nothing can separate us from the love of God

A. Our glorification (18-25)

1. Our passage really starts with vs. 16-17:
 - a. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are children of God (16): **“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,”**
 - b. If we are children, then we are heirs of God with Christ (17a): **“and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,”**
 - c. This will also result in our glorification with Christ (17b): **“if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”**
 - d. In a nutshell, our adoption as sons leads to our glorification
2. Paul shares three truths about our glorification (18-25)
 - a. First off, the trouble of this life cannot come close to comparing to the glory that awaits believers (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) The phrase **“the glory that is to be revealed to us”** is a bit awkward, but it is in parallel with **“the revealing of the sons of God”** in v. 19 and **“the glory of the Children of God”** in v. 21

- 2) What is to be revealed to us as believers is the nature and magnificence of our glorification
 - 3) And this glorification cannot be compared to the “sufferings of this present time” because it far outweighs any trouble in this life
 - 4) In essence, what we face today in terms of suffering is insignificant when we consider our future glorification
- b. Second, all of Creation is waiting for our glorification (19-22): **“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.”**
- 1) Creation is/was subject to futility (20): **“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it,”**
 - a) This is clearly a reference to Genesis 3:17 where the ground is cursed by God as a result of Adam’s sin
 - b) As a result, it no longer operates as intended, or provides for mankind in the way in which it was designed—Paul describes this as **“slavery to corruption”** in the next verse
 - c) In v. 22 he writes that **“the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now”**
 - 2) But, God did not subject the creation without plans for its redemption (20b-21): **“in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”**
 - a) He established it so that Creation would be set free from its slavery through the glorification of God’s children
 - b) This was foreshadowed in the protoevangelium of Genesis 3:17
 - 3) So, all of Creation **“anxiously”** longs and **“waits eagerly”** for our glorification to be revealed so that it too will be set free from its corruption
 - 4) Side Bar: The New Social Justice movement and the Redemption of Society
 - a) Historical Social Justice was a substitution for the Gospel and individual salvation
 - b) The New Social Justice movement speaks of two Gospels:
 - The Gospel of the Cross (or the “Ground Gospel” per Matt Chandler of the Acts29 church planting network) refers to the salvation of the individual through faith in Jesus Christ
 - The Gospel of the Kingdom (or the “Air Gospel” per Chandler) refers to the redemption of society by bringing the Kingdom of God to earth through social justice initiatives
 - c) The problem with this view of the Gospel is that there is no call in the NT to redeem culture or society, or to establish God’s Kingdom on earth
 - d) The assignment Jesus gave to the Church is to make **disciples** by baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus
 - e) Does this mean we don’t do things like setup soup kitchens, homeless shelters, pregnancy centers, rescue women and children from the sex trade industry, etc.?
 - f) No, it simply means that there is no mandate in the NT for the Church to do these things as a way of redeeming culture or ushering in the Kingdom of God
 - g) God will take care of that part. Our part is to make disciples.

- h) In fact, as Paul states in this Romans passage, Creation won't be redeemed until the Children of God are glorified which is a future eschatological event that happens after the Throne Judgment
- c. Finally (third), God's children hope in their glorification (23-25): **"And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."**
 - 1) The Holy Spirit's presence within us creates an eagerness and longing for the day that our adoption is finalized and our bodies are redeemed—that is our glorification
 - 2) Paul refers to this as our hope (24): **"For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?"**
 - 3) But it isn't wishful thinking...it's a steadfast hope (25): **"But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."**
 - 4) Notice the language Paul uses here as he reflects on this hope:
 - a) We **"groan within ourselves"**
 - b) We **"wait eagerly"**
 - c) We do so with **"perseverance"** or steadfastness
 - d) All of this is because as long as we remain here—unglorified—we realize that we haven't attained to our full measure of salvation—there are more and better things to come, including the redemption of both our bodies and our souls, our glorification with Jesus Christ!

B. Our Assurance (26-39)

- 1. Just as the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, He also helps in our weakness (26): **"In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."**
 - a. There is some debate over the phrase **"in the same way"**
 - 1) Some see it as referring to what was just written in the immediately preceding verses but this seems awkward at best
 - 2) Instead, it seems better to tie it back to v. 16 where Paul describes how the Spirit testifies with our Spirit
 - 3) This internal work of the Spirit not only testifies to our sonship, but it also helps our weakness (defined next)
 - b. Notice that Paul writes that the Spirit **"helps our weakness"** (26a) not **"helps in our weakness"**
 - 1) The Greek word for help here means to come along side and join in an activity—in this case He joins us in our weakness
 - 2) The Holy Spirit is indeed our Helper in all things, but here Paul has a **specific** weakness in mind
 - 3) That is, we don't know what to pray for: **"not knowing how to pray as we should"** (26b)
 - a) This refers not so much to the method (how we pray) but what to pray for (as the NIV)
 - b) Certainly, we are called on to pray, and to pray without ceasing
 - c) However, we are not aware of everything we need from God's perspective and will

- 4) So, the Holy Spirit works as our intercessor in prayer:
 - a) He **“intercedes for us with groaning’s too deep for words”** (26c)
 - b) He does this **“according to the will of God”** (27)

2. On the surface, the following verses seem to introduce a new topic, that of assurance, but they are really a continuation of the above:
 - a. Vs. 26-27 above must be seen in light of the suffering and longing for glorification that underlies vs. 18-25 (e.g. the Spirit intercedes in prayer for us when we suffer)
 - b. When He prays, He does so **“according to the will of God”**
 - c. And God’s will is that He causes all things to work together for His Children which is described in the remaining portion of this chapter

3. God’s will is described in the remaining verses (three things; 28-39):
 - a. God’s will is that He causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him (28): **“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”**
 - 1) This does not mean that there will be no difficulties in life for the believer
 - 2) It also doesn’t mean that every situation or circumstance will have a good outcome
 - 3) Rather, it means that what God ultimately has planned for us—those who have been **“called according to His purpose”**-- is good and this good is described in the next two verses:
 - a) We have been **“predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren”** (29b)
 - As to our predestination, it means to pre-determine beforehand and according to Ephesians 1:3-6 this was done before the foundation of the world
 - As to our conforming to the image of Christ see Philippians 3:20-21
 - b) We have been glorified: **“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified”** (30):
 - All of these verbs are in the aorist tense indicating in this context a past and permanent action
 - “Glorified” here refers to being given honor, praise or to cause someone or something to become great (it’s not necessarily a reference to the transforming of our earthly body into a heavenly body)
 - So God has changed our status from lowly sinners to that of glorified saints
 - b. God’s will is that He is now for us rather than against us (31-34): **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”**
 - 1) This verse is often misquoted as a rallying cry against one’s enemies (e.g. if God is for us then nobody and no thing can stand against us)
 - 2) However, the context of the verse demonstrates something different:
 - a) God is the only One who can judge or bring a charge against mankind
 - b) But, He has already justified us (33): **“Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;”**

c) So, there is no One who can now condemn us (34): **“who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”**

3) So, this verse has nothing to do with our enemies, but rather is stating that since God is now for us, there is no one to condemn us; He is no longer against us!

c. God’s will is that nothing shall separate us from His love (35-39)

Conclusion
