

24. Learning About the Liberty We Have in Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the great blessings that we have received because of the fact that we are the children of God. In fact, we saw that many of those blessings are also future because they will last for all eternity. As we concluded our last topic, we saw that it was a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.

As we come to Romans 8:18-19, we read, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” Although we do experience suffering on this earth, we are reminded that those sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. That glory is far beyond anything that we can even imagine. 1 John 3:2 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Here, we see that part of the reason why we cannot imagine what we will be like is due to the fact that we will be like Him. There is no way that we can compare our sufferings here on this earth to that glory.

God is going to reveal His glory in the lives of each of us who have placed our faith in Christ. In fact, we see that the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. The entire creation includes everything except the people. As a result, we see that the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the time when God will reveal all those who have placed their faith in Christ. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” Just as we cannot know the hearts of others, the creation cannot know those who have placed their faith in Christ until the day that God reveals it. However, the creation is eagerly waiting for that day when God will reveal, to the entire creation, every person who has placed their faith in Christ.

We go on to see why the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the day when God will reveal all those who have placed their faith in Christ. Romans 8:20-21 says, “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Here, we see that the entire creation was affected by the sin of Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:17-19 says, “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.’” Once man sinned, the creation was no longer able to complete the goal that God had for His creation.

However, when all of the sons of God are revealed, then God can purify His creation and the

creation will be able to be all that God planned it to be. 2 Peter 3:10 says that God is going to purify the creation when it says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” Then, 2 Peter 3:13 says, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” The creation did not cause the limitations that came on it. Instead, those limitations were caused by sin. However, once all sin is judged, then God can purify His creation and it will be able to complete the goal that God has for His creation throughout eternity.

That is why we are told that the creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. “Corruption” means *that which is perishing or facing destruction*. The present creation will be burned up and purified so that there will no longer be any of the limitations that came into the creation because of the sin of man. Once sin is judged, both we and the creation itself will experience the glorious liberty that God has planned for us. Revelation 21:4-5 says, “‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” Once we begin to experience that glorious liberty, the entire creation will be able to join with us by enjoying that glorious liberty for all eternity.

At the present time, the creation experiences many things that are the result of sin. Matthew 24:7 describes a few of the things that have happened to the creation when that verse says, “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.” Here, we see that the earth is subject to famines, pestilences and earthquakes. Then, in Matthew 24:29, we read how sin will affect other parts of the creation when that verse says, “‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’” It should not surprise us when we think about these things that the creation is also eagerly looking forward to the time when it will no longer experience the effects of sin.

That is why verse 22 says, “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” The creation is certainly experiencing the results of the sin of man and will continue to experience those results until the time that all sin is finally judged and the creation is restored to its former condition before man sinned.

At the same time, we as Christians are also looking forward to what the Lord is going to do in our lives. Romans 8:23-25 says, “Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.” As Christians we see that the Holy Spirit has also started to bear those first fruits in our lives. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” We can enjoy the blessing of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives as we wait for the greater blessings to come in the

future.

At the same time that we enjoy those firstfruits, we are even more eager to experience the redemption of our body. That redemption actually has two parts. First, we look forward to the fact that we will be given a new body. 1 Corinthians 15:54 says, “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” Here, we see that we will be given a body that will never corrupt and never die. However, the second part is that we will no longer have any sinful desires. As 2 Peter 1:3-4 tells us, “As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” Here, we see that we become partakers of the divine nature so that we no longer will have the lusts of this world.

As a result of the fact that we can look forward to both a changed physical body and a changed inner man that is no longer tempted by sinful lusts once we are with Christ, we eagerly look forward to that time when we will be with Christ. In fact, it is that hope that helps to give us the inner peace that we enjoy in our lives at the present time. However, that hope will be fulfilled when we see Christ face to face. Titus 2:13-14 says, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.” Here, we see that we look forward with great hope to that day when we see Christ and He purifies us from every lawless thought and action.

The word that is translated “hope” means *confident assurance that God will do exactly as He has promised*. That is why that hope is called the blessed hope because we look forward to that day when Christ will appear to take us to heaven so that we can be with Him for all eternity. Romans 5:2 says, “Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” It is this confident assurance that makes it possible for us to be filled with joy as we look forward to that day when we will be in the presence of the Lord.

We also see that we want to help our children understand how to live as they wait for the coming of the Lord. We are able to wait for His coming with perseverance. The word translated “perseverance” means *endurance or steadfastness*. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” We want to show our children by our example that we can abound in the work of the Lord as we wait for His coming to take us to heaven. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the privilege that we have to serve the Lord because of the liberty that we have in Christ.