

From Groans to Glory

4.20.25 EASTER

Message 33

Romans Series

Romans 8:22–30

²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. ²³Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

²⁶In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

Introduction: A Season of Loss

A. In late Nov or early Dec of 2023, the Lord dropped a phrase into my mind that I didn't want. "You are in a season of loss."

1. It was a word of warning that I was not prepared for.
2. Warning and preparation are not the same.
3. **Warned and Prepared are different conditions.**

4. My mom died not many days later.

B. December of 2023, I did the most funerals in a short time than ever.

1. Then we lost a dear saint on March, and another dear saint and friend in September, and then my dog of 17 years on my 39th birthday. And then Julie's mom on February 13 of 2025.

2. Time does not permit me to tell of all loss.

a. I've buried my friend's spouses and parents;

b. I've lost people who had been friends and colleagues.

c. I've said goodbye to family, pets, and peace and even had a concrete turtle stolen from my yard.

3. My digital notebook says I started writing this sermon on April 6, 2024, and I'm still writing it.

C. Pain is never neutral.

1. We always respond to pain, either negatively or positively.

2. We either become more like the person God wants us to be or we become less.

3. We either draw closer to the Lord and to our families or we pull away.

4. Pain is never neutral.

D. Through it all, I am reminded and being reminded that it was not meant to be this way.

1. God's perfect creation was subjected to the "bondage of decay Rom 8:21" because of my sin and the sin of my people.

2. And I remember about this time last year, holding my elderly dog, with tears in my eyes, thinking, "This is my fault."

3. If it hadn't been Adam's sin, it would have been mine.

a. If it wasn't Adam who brought death and decay into creation, it would have been me.

b. I want to blame Adam and Eve, but the man who I see in the mirror is just as guilty.

4. And as Ecologists, environmentalists, and even conservationists speak of climate change, extinction, and such, I know where the root comes from.

a. The problem isn't capitalism, industrialism, or anything like that.

b. It's sin.

c. It's the curse.

d. **As much as we try to manage the curse, we can't eliminate it.**

²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now.

1. All of creation cries out to the Creator for God's final plans.

A. Paul says the Creation groans.

1. The image is not a low, slow moan but the cry of a non-medicated childbirth.

2. The creation knows it wasn't supposed to be this way!!!

a. So, it groans.

b. So, it cries.

B. Creation knows that there is coming a day of restoration, so it groans in anticipation.

1. Creation knows that God has a plan and a purpose that will overwhelm and overthrow the trouble of this life, so it groans.

2. I've read the rest of Romans 8.

a. I know that "all things work together for the good of those who love God and who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

b. I know that "If God is for us, who is against us." Romans 8:31

c. I know that "He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all." Romans 8:32

C. Yet all of creation groans.

1. The groans are expressions of pain.

1. And pain is a reminder that all is not yet as it should be.

a. Until Jesus returns, all of creation groans.

b. And Paul says we, the believer, groan too.

2. We ourselves groan.

Romans 8:23 (CSB)

²³Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

I'm well acquainted with groaning.

A. Eight years before my mom passed away, she had a series of debilitating strokes.

1. The effects were gradual but persistent. (PICTURES)

a. and in these last few years of her life, all she could communicate was through groans.

b. I remember watching my mom walking or sitting in the nursing home, no longer able to use words and articulate thoughts.

2. Most often, she didn't recognize me, my siblings, or her husband.

a. I can remember a few moments when I would visit and it seemed, if for just a second, that she knew me.

b. You don't know how valuable that is until you have lost it.

c. Even though she couldn't speak, the twinkle in the eye became as valuable as anything she had ever given me.

3. But this was rare and what there was, more often than not, were these sounds that were nothing more than groans.

B. These groans represent many things:

1. pain,

2. loss of cognitive function,

3. loss of relationship,

4. relegation of life to past memories.

C. But Romans 8 gives us a deeper picture:

1. That these groans are a form of conversation, between creation and creator, that all is not as it should be.

2. **And for the believer, the groans are the proclamation of a remembered promise:**

3. resurrection is coming.

D. When we walk with people who are in pain and brokenness, we will hear groaning.

1. Groanings over bodies that have been broken by disease or accidents.

2. Groanings over relationships that are broken and need restored.

3. Groanings over broken finances

4. Groanings over mental health.

E. Yet, let us consider Jesus.

1. The One whose body was broken for us.

2. The One who groaned in the garden of prayer...

3. The One who groaned upon the cross as He died for the brokenness of the world and to forgive us our sins.

4. The One who interprets the groanings of the Spirit within us and intercedes with the Father on our behalf.

Romans 8:23 (CSB)

²³ Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

3. The Groanings of an Eschatological Hope.

Eschatological means things of the End.

A. Creation and the believers don't groan because of the pain but because of the hope.

1. Paul says that both creation and the believer "groan while eagerly waiting."

2. The Creation eagerly awaits for the sons of God to be revealed.

3. The Believer eagerly waits for the final declaration of adoption, the redemption and resurrection of our bodies.

B. And this future hope and glory is, at times, expressed in the power of the groan.

1. We are eagerly waiting for adoption and the redemption of our bodies.

2. My YouTube algorithm is all messed up.

- a. Lately it's showing two kinds of videos.
 - 1. Videos of people who have lost dogs.
 - 2. Videos of people adopting dogs.
- b. It might sound dumb, but watching some of these dog adoption videos is touching.
 - 1. A shelter employee is walking down the hallway with an adoption certificate the dog can't read.
 - 2. Yet it seems the dog can tell by the voice and excitement of the employee that something good is taking place.
 - 3. Then you watch as the doors are open, and the dog is taken the family out to a new family that awaits him.
- c. These dogs have usually been waiting for a family to come and adopt them for a long time.
 - 1. It's hard to tell who is more excited!
 - 2. The dog and the new family both show incredible joy.

3. At times it may feel as if we are in an orphanage awaiting adoption day.

- a. We have been told of our adoption.
- b. We see the evidence of our Father's goodness in the food we eat, and the shelter we wear.
- c. There is continual evidence of God's love and provision.
- d. And sometimes, we can even hear the Father's voice coming down the hall.

C. But while we are on this earth, our adoption is perceived through hope.

- 1. And hope lives in the realm of the unseen.

2. So we eagerly wait for adoption.

a. We don't have to wonder if it will happen, the question is how much longer must we wait!

b. We don't have to wonder if our Father loves us, because the answer is "he does."

c. But we feel as if we are growing weary in the waiting.

D. And ALL of Creation is waiting with us.

1. When we grieve at the loss of a parent, the loss of a pet, and the loss of innocence, the groans and the tears and the sighing are all signs of anticipation of a glory that only God can restore.

2. Until Jesus returns, all of creation groans.

3. Until Jesus returns, we groan too.

4. Until Jesus returns, the Spirit groans.

4. The Spirit Groans.

²⁶In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

A. The Spirit helps us in our weakness.

1. I know acknowledging pain is a sign of weakness for most of us.

2. Perhaps that is why we are told that the Spirit groans with us.

B. One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to intercede for us.

1. The Spirit intercedes at our limits, in the margins, and in our weakness.

2. He intercedes when we don't know God's will.

3. He intercedes when we don't know how to pray.
4. The Spirit intercedes and much of it we don't understand.

C. Paul says with inexpressible groanings.

1. When I'm at my limits, the Spirit prays.
2. When I'm at my weakest, the Spirit prays.
3. When I'm out of words, the Spirit prays.
4. When I don't know what to do, the Spirit prays.
5. When I have no words, God knows and interprets the groans and responds to the need.

D. We all groan.

1. The Creation
2. The Spirit-filled believer,
3. The Holy Spirit all groan
4. And Jesus hears it all and intercedes for the saints according to God's will.

Close:

A. Loss and pain are, unfortunately, part of this world we live in.

1. Yet, the Apostle Paul declared that this present suffering was not worth comparing to future glory.
2. The groans of this life have an eschatological hope.

B. Here's what I believe: when my mother stepped into eternity:

1. Her moans were replaced with shouts
2. Her groans gave way to hallelujahs.
3. What had been inexpressible is now expressed with a clarity and articulation that supersedes what she ever had on earth.

C. For the believer:

1. Remember that is coming a day when tears give way in Jesus' presence.
2. Hopelessness and loss do not have the final word.
3. The journey may be hard, but the destination is worth it all.

D. This hope that I'm speaking of is for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1. Today, if you are far from God, don't wait.
2. Give your life to Jesus.
3. Ask Him to forgive you and bring you into His family.

E. Today we celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

1. And, through a relationship with Jesus, we can celebrate your resurrection too.
2. The birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus means that one day, everything sad will come untrue. **J. R. R. Tolkien**

Prayer.