

“AAARRRGGGHHH!”

Romans 8:18-27

INTRODUCTION:

*How many are familiar with Charlie Brown in the Peanuts comic strip? Sometime we would hear Charlie Brown holler, “AARRRGGGHHH! For example when Lucy take a football away from Charlie in a game. He would always land flat on his back and yell “AAARRRGGGHHH!” This was the writer of the comic strips attempt to express with a single word what we would call a **groan**. A groan is an expression of hurt, frustration and longing for things to be better. Charlie Brown was groaning because he was frustrated at repeated failure and falls and because he was longing for a better day.*

In our passage this morning we have three groans mentioned. We have the creation groaning in verse 22, the Christians are groaning in verse 23 and the Holy Spirit is groaning in verse 26. In the first two and maybe even the third groan the word is used to express frustration at repeated failure and falls, and that we are longing for a better day. In real life it isn't just Charlie Brown who is groaning. There are a lot of people who feel as if life has let them down and have a longing or groaning for things to be better.

So Paul's message in this section of Romans is “Suffering shouldn't discourage us because one day the groaning will end and the glory will begin.” Or another way of putting it, “The best is yet to come for the Christian.”

I first time heard the phrase “the best is yet to come” was when I was in college. This was a favorite statement of one of the instructors there. “The best is yet to come.” That is a good thought. It's a positive thought. Do you believe it? The best is always yet to come is not only for the Christian but for the world as a whole.

Let's see how the best is yet to come as taught in this passage.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME FOR CREATION

First, the best is yet to come for Creation. Verses 19-22:

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 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. For we know that the whole

creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Paul is speaking of the physical universe. It is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. Creation seems to know that something good is going to happen and it eagerly awaits it.

You may ask, “What’s wrong with creation as it is?” It is not as God created it to be. It is under a curse. In Gen 3:17 it says that God put a curse on the ground because of the sin of man. Genesis 3:17:

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.

Not only on the ground which grows food, but all of creation was affected by Adam’s sin. Corruption, death, destruction, natural violence, etc is part of this curse. But God didn’t curse the ground just as a punishment, but He did in order to give it hope for its restoration. God is planning on restoring his creation back to Edenic conditions and it is related to His salvation for mankind, the crown of His creation. The creation seems to know this, although most mankind doesn’t. Listen to some more Old Testament passages referring to this:

(Isa 11:6-9 NKJV) {6} "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. {7} The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. {8} The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. {9} They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Creation seems to know that better days are coming and it longs for it to come. Creation is earnestly looking for this to happen. Verse 19 speaks of the creation having an “earnest expectation.” It is literally “straining their neck.” When we want to see something that is wonderful but may be difficult to see we strain our necks to see it. We have an “earnest expectation” of seeing it, but it may be a little difficult at the present.

The words “groans and labors with birth pangs” suggests that it is not the corruption that is causing the groanings, but it is the birth pangs which are causing the groaning. The creation is groaning with labor pains seeking to give birth to something new, like a newborn baby. The creation gives out sighs of hope for something better to come like the birth of a new child.

There is a new heaven and a new earth coming. Listen again to Isaiah

(Isa 65:17-25 NKJV) "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. {18} But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. {19} I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. {20} "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. {21} They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. {22} They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. {23} They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, And their offspring with them. {24} "It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear. {25} The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

When will it happen? Will it happen “in history” or after history? The Isaiah passage gives indication that it is still “in history” for it speaks of death, “the child shall die one hundred years old” and sin *the sinner being hundred years old shall be accursed). Verse 18 mentions the “revealing of the sons of God.” This may be a clue and this leads to the second ‘groaning.’

THE BEST IS YET TO COME FOR GOD'S CHILDREN

The second groaning speaks of the best is yet to come for God’s children. Verse 23:

And not only they, 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.

This groaning within, I believe, is the longings Christians have the full privileges of sonship, which will be realized at the redemption of our body. We know that God is not finished with us yet and we groan for his completion.

We are ‘waiting for the adoption.’ The idea of adoption in Roman culture gives deeper meaning to Paul's use of the word in this verse.

When a young Roman attained legal age, his father took him into the Forum, and from the Bema said to the citizens: "This is my son; he has now come to full age; he inherits my name, my property, my social position." Then he took off the toga proetexta -- the body toga -- and put on the toga virilis, the coat of a man.....

There is a day of redemption coming when God shall take you as His child and set you on the forum of the universe, and say, "Bear witness, this is My son; in Christ he is the joint-heir of My name, My nature, My dignity, My possessions, My throne." And then we shall lay aside the body of our humiliation, the toga that we wore when we were minors; and put on the garment of our glory, of our maturity.

Paul speaks of this experience also in II Corinthians 5 when he writes:

(2 Cor 5:1-2 NKJV) For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. {2} For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

The final phase of the glory of the children of God will be at the resurrection. It is when our natural bodies will be raised to incorruption and the application of full redemption in Christ will be realized.

How are we to respond to the great future coming? The one word in Romans 8:25 is "**perseverance**" It should make us more faithful, more steadfast even under the pressures of our present sufferings. This hope should give us patience, steadfastness, and to know that our work for the Lord will not be in vain. The classic passage on our resurrection is in I Corinthians 15. There Paul concludes that we should be steadfast and faithful and know that our work is not in vain.

(1 Cor 15:58 NKJV) 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.

The Christian is one who has hope and can persevere through the present time with joy and confidence even while suffering. We know our labor is not in vain because God will use every work for Him in bringing to pass His great and glorious ends in this earth.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is a third groaning in this passage which speaks of the best is yet to come for the Holy Spirit. Verse 26

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

We have the presence of the Holy Spirit to guarantee God's fulfillment of all His promises to us. He prays for God's will in our behalf. His prayers for us are groans that God's will will be realized in us.

The purpose and the prayer of the Holy Spirit will one day be fulfilled in our lives. Until then the Holy Spirit keeps us in the will of God through His work and intercession for us.

Many times we don't know how our labors are fulfilling God's will. We don't know what to pray about in situations because of our limitations in seeing the big picture. But we don't have to worry about whether we are praying correctly about the details of the will of God. We are not wise enough to know the details of the will of God, but the Holy Spirit is and He is interceding for us and God hears His prayers. This gives us hope that what we do for the Lord will make a difference in God's overall plan. We are to walk by faith, in hope and perseverance doing what God has revealed to us in His Word. The Holy Spirit will take care of the rest.

CONCLUSION:

The best is yet to come! We know that this material creation will be renewed and changed by God to fulfill His original purpose for it. We know that we will one day enter into our full redemption, the redemption of our bodies.

As God's children we long within for the full experience of redemption, even the redemption of our bodies. We are saved in this hope. And this hope gives us perseverance in our faithfulness to the Lord.

The Holy Spirit is interceding for us with groanings which cannot be uttered that we will fulfill God's will for us. When we don't know quite how to pray about a matter, we know that the Holy Spirit is praying and we can be confident that God will answer His prayers. God will accomplish His will through us.

With these great promises how can we not have the attitude that the best is yet to come!?! With these great promises how can we not know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord?! With these great promises how can we not persevere in our serving the Lord?!

Amen? Amen!