

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 8: 18-27
PREACHED ON MAY 24, 2026, BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- Last week, in verse 18, the apostle told us that after he had evaluated our present suffering and the glory that will be revealed in us in the future, he concluded that the two are not worth comparing. He wrote: “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”
- In verses 19-27, which we are focusing on today, the apostle provides detailed insights into suffering to encourage us as we endure it for the sake of our faith.

➤ **GROANINGS EVERYWHERE**

- Paul speaks of three groanings in these verses. In verse 22, he tells us that the whole creation is groaning. In verse 23, he tells us that Christians also groan, and in verse 26, he says the Holy Spirit groans as well.
- Why is the whole creation groaning? The apostle says that human beings are not the only sufferers in the world. Humans are not the only creatures who experience disappointments, pain, disease, discouragement, and frustration, and who look forward to something better, but all of creation. Wild animals are suffering. I was watching a zebra being attacked by a hippo and three crocodiles in a Kenyan river recently. The zebra, for several minutes, was tossed around by the crocodiles, and even though it managed to escape, it sustained several wounds all over its body.
- Fishes are suffering. Water pollution kills several fish every year. Bigger fish attack smaller ones. Small fish are always on the watch for a possible attack from

other powerful fish. Birds are suffering, plants are suffering, the air is suffering through pollution, mountains are suffering, etc. The whole of creation has been groaning together due to suffering. Paul wrote in verses 20 and 21: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

- When Paul used the expression "the creation was subjected to frustration" in verse 20, he meant that creation is being subjected to vanity; it has become meaningless and no longer fulfills its original function. The whole creation now experiences decay, corruption, and death. There is now the appearance of thorns, thistles, weeds, and the struggle within nature. The creation we see today is not what God originally made it. God declared that everything was good after each day of creation. Why is the creation what it is now? How do we explain the changes in creation? What happened to God's original, perfect creation?
- When Adam and Eve sinned, and sin entered the world, the entire creation was affected by the invasion of sin. Paul explains in verse 20 that suffering is not natural or inevitable; it is the result of Adam's sin. It is the evil action of one human that has affected all of creation, making everything created good suffer and be placed under a curse. When God created the world, it was not originally a place of suffering; it was a good, non-suffering place. Suffering is an intruder; it is abnormal. The creation is bearing the consequences of human sin involuntarily, not willingly.
- The Lord Himself spoke to Adam after the Fall in Genesis 3:17, saying: "To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life." "Cursed is the ground because of you, Adam." The disobedience of one man has brought suffering to the whole world ever since.
- Since Adam and Eve brought the entire created order down with them, Paul says the entire creation is groaning and is longing for the redemption of God's children. The animals, trees, air, land, and all of creation have an interest, a great interest in the second coming of Jesus Christ to bring an end to suffering, to liberate them from the curse placed on them by the Fall of Adam and Eve. The entire creation has an interest in the future glory of the Christians. It waits for this day when the bodies of God's people will be resurrected.
- Because of sin, the lion chases a deer, defeats it, tears it into pieces, and feeds its little ones with the flesh of the deer. Because of sin, animals live in fear of one another, and humans also live in fear of wild beasts and fellow human beings. This will not continue to be the fate of the world; creation will be restored because of the redemption of humans. In verse 19, we read: "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." There will come a day when there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness will dwell. This is how Scripture describes that day in Isaiah 11:6:

“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.”

- God has planned that the renewal and renovation of the whole created order are tied to the redemption of the sons and daughters of God. How marvelous it is to know that even the animals, trees, soil, etc., are all interested in the salvation of God’s children. The work of Christ on the cross not only affects Christians but all of creation. Paul wrote in verse 21: “that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”
- Creation suffers because of us, and creation will be healed and restored because of us. The whole creation's fate is indissolubly linked with that of man. Just as creation fell with man, it will be restored when believers are glorified. When creation is restored, there will be freedom from decay, disintegration, corruption, and harmony in nature where the wolf shall dwell with the lamb. There will be no more disease, weeds, fungi, or harmful growths. Death will be no more because it will be cast into the lake of fire. This future restoration will be so glorious that it makes present sufferings pale in comparison, which is why creation itself is eagerly awaiting this transformation.
- The Christian looks forward to all these future promises, but for now we groan, as Paul says in verse 23. Paul says the Christian groans inwardly, we groan within ourselves, not from doubt but from anticipation of what is coming. We groan because our salvation is not yet complete. We have not yet been glorified, where sin can no longer remain in the body. We groan inwardly because we have not yet attained the resurrected body, even though we have been justified and our salvation is certain. We groan because of all the promises God has given us, but we are still longing for that day to come. We groan because we do not do the good we want to do, but the evil we do not want to do—this we keep on doing because of the remaining sin in us. We groan because all of creation is groaning, and their restoration depends on us.

➤ **SUFFERING FOR CHRIST IS PRODUCTIVE**

- A murderer who dies in prison experienced suffering, but it was a wasted suffering. A non-Christian elderly man who is dying at a hospice has nothing to benefit from his suffering. This is not the kind of suffering Christians endure for Christ, and it is also not the kind of suffering the entire creation is experiencing now and ever since. Paul told us in verses 17 and 18 that the way to glory is through suffering for Christ. In verse 22, the apostle gives an illustration of how our present suffering leads to future glory to encourage us. He wrote: “22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”
- Paul described our present suffering and the groanings of the whole creation like the suffering a young woman endures during childbirth. Childbirth is not a

pointless pain; it is not a meaningless pain, but a pain that produces new life for the sufferer, the mother. It is the pain of good things, a joyous pain, the pain of a new life, and the pain of a blessing. A few hours after the pain, the mother carries the baby, and she is full of joy and no longer thinks the pain she endured can be compared to the new life she has.

- In the same way, Christians also suffer, and we groan for the day when our pains will bring the glorious blessings we have been looking forward to. Paul wrote in verse 23: “Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.” The suffering of the Christian is the pain that produces new life for the Christian. It's not pointless pain, but productive. This is our hope as Christians. “24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”
- Real Christianity is preoccupied with things that are eternal. Life here and now is only a preparation for eternity. All other things we put our hope in will fail us. The resurrection of our bodies is our only hope for a better future, the next life. The persecutions we endure for Christ, the insults, rejection, slandering, discrimination, hostilities, martyrdom, isolation, etc., are creative groanings that are preparing us for glory. They are all like the pains of childbirth. We suffer because we are in the process of moving into something glorious.

➤ **THE HELP THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVIDES FOR THE CHRISTIAN**

- “26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”
- Paul makes a general statement that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. The Spirit helps us in our weakness according to God's design and purpose for our lives. At the time of our conversion, the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, comes to dwell in us, and one of His works in us is to help us in our weakness. We are united with Christ, so He knows all our weaknesses and helps us.
- He helps us when we face hostility or violence because of our beliefs. He helps us when we experience social or economic exclusion because of our faith. He helps us when we feel alienated from family or community because of our beliefs. He helps us when we are sacrificing our lives for our faith in extreme cases. He helps us when we are battling doubts and crises of our faith. He helps us when we are dealing with grief, loss, or trauma related to our faith journey.
- Paul then gives an example of how the Spirit helps us in our prayer life. The true Christian has an active prayer life, and the Holy Spirit helps us. Paul wrote in verses 26 and 27: “We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit

himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

- Sometimes we ask for things we do not know whether God intends for us. Often, we look at our situations and pray for certain things without knowing what God's desires are for us. Paul, for example, had a thorn in his flesh which he groaned about. He did not state what that thorn was, but theologians have speculated that it could be either a temptation, a chronic eye problem, malaria, migraines, epilepsy, a speech disability, or a person. God has placed that thorn in his life to humble him as he indicated, but Paul was praying that God might take it away. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:8 that "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me." Three times, he prayed to God to take away what God had placed in his life. This is an example of the Christian not knowing what we ought to pray for.
- Another example is Moses in Deuteronomy 3:23-26, who prayed to enter the Promised Land, but God was wroth with him and told him to speak no more of the matter. Moses wrote: "At that time I pleaded with the Lord: "Sovereign Lord, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do? Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan—that fine hill country and Lebanon." But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me. "That is enough," the Lord said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter."
- Paul tells us that the Spirit intercedes for us. The Spirit prays through our inner beings to God concerning things we do not know how to pray for. On occasions when we are so weak and come to God in prayer and do not even know what we ought to pray for, the apostle tells us that God the Spirit knows and He intercedes on our behalf before God, He groans with us in our weakness and even though we do not know what we need the Spirit knows and prays for us.
- The Spirit groans with us and longs for the day when His work in us will be completed. He longs for the day when He will present us to God as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. The believer has two intercessors before God the Father. We have Jesus Christ on the right hand of God interceding on our behalf, and we have the Holy Spirit in us also praying for us. What a privilege to be a child of God, to have the Godhead, the Trinity working together to justify us, sanctify us, and glorify us.
- Paul wrote in verse 27: "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God." We are told that God the Father knows the mind of God the Spirit dwelling in us, and the Spirit daily intercedes on behalf of the Christian according to the will of God. Here we have God praying to God on our behalf. The Spirit brings our misdirected prayers to the Father in the revised version. Father God

answers our prayers because God the Father will not turn down the prayers of God the Spirit and also the prayers of God the Son.

➤ **CHRISTIANS HAVE A TASTE OF HEAVEN WHILE ON EARTH**

- In verse 9, Paul had stated that all Christians, everyone who belongs to Christ, have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. “And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.” Paul did not say that “And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they are a second-class Christian or new converts”; rather, it is the presence of the Spirit in every Christian that distinguishes us from non-Christians. We have the Spirit to quicken us – to make us alive, we have the Spirit to sanctify us, we have the Holy Spirit to empower us to radically battle sin in our lives, we have the Spirit to illuminate our minds – to make us understand Scripture, we have the Spirit to lead us. That is the privilege of every single Christian without exception.
- In our text, in verse 23, Paul says that we Christians have the firstfruits of the Spirit, meaning we have a taste of the glory to come. Paul borrowed a familiar practice from the Old Testament. Firstfruits was a Jewish feast held in early spring, at the beginning of the grain harvest, to thank God for His provision. A farmer goes to his farm to check his crops, and when he finds the ripest and best of his crops, he picks up a knife, cuts it, and takes it to the temple to offer it to God. The farmer gives God the best of his fruits. The first fruits are the perfect, the best, the sweetest of all the fruits, and they were dedicated joyfully to God. They are the first and best portion of the harvest. You don’t pick the first fruit of a fruit plant when the fruit is still small, hard, green, and bitter. They are not the first fruits. The first fruits you pick are absolutely ripe, delicious, and the best.
- Paul says all Christians, every one of us, those whom God has justified, possess the first fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have a taste of the glory to come. That means the work of the Spirit in the Christian is not small and not bitter, but the best, perfect, and sweetest of fruits. The Christian who once was dead in his or her sins and trespasses now possesses the best fruit of the Spirit work. What are these firstfruits the Spirit has produced in Christians? First, at salvation, when we receive the Holy Spirit, we get a taste of what will be ours in heaven when we come into our full inheritance as God’s children. The Spirit has come into our lives to regenerate us, to convict us of our sins, our self-righteousness, and convert us, to make us see our desperate condition, our great need of salvation, and lead us to entrust ourselves to Christ. We have received spiritual birth and are now born again.
- The Spirit comes to produce fruits in us, the fruits of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The Spirit also gives gifts to each of us. Some have gifts of service, hospitality, speaking, wisdom, discernment, etc. The Spirit comes and seals us that we are

His forever and ever. He comes to lead us day by day into holiness, to ruthlessly battle personal sins.

- The apostle Paul uses the expression firstfruits of the Spirit as a metaphor for God's transformative work of the Spirit in His people—a work of sanctification that will eventually culminate in resurrection glory. We groan now because we live in a fallen world, but we know the best is yet to come. This Earth is our hell; our best is yet to be. However, Christians now have a taste of the future glory through the work of the Spirit in us. The firstfruits of the Spirit are equivalent to a deposit or a down payment from God, providing the certainty that one day we will be given our complete spiritual inheritance as adopted sons and daughters of God. One day, our salvation will be completed, and we will be transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ, and He will join together the full harvest of God's sons and daughters. The Spirit has fruit from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, and all will be gathered, a great multitude and joined together in heaven.

➤ **CONCLUSION**

- You are a loser, and a very great loser if you are not a Christian. God has made every provision for His sons and daughters in everything. He not only saved us but also helps us as we go through our pilgrimage on this short and certain earthly life. He helps us in our pains; He is carrying us safely in His arms to bring us to glory.
- If you are not yet a Christian, I beseech you to flee to Christ, surrender to Him, repent of your sins, believe in His person and work, and commit your life to serving Him, and you will receive all these amazing privileges. It includes suffering, but our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.