

Groanings

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Date: 16 June 2019

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[0 : 00] Now let us turn back to the chapter that we read, chapter 8 in Paul's epistle to the Romans. And we can read from verse 20.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope. For the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption. And obtain the freedom or the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. And especially verses 22 to 24. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

[1 : 09] And so on. And we can look at these groanings that this chapter is on about and take them in the order that we find them.

We are first the groaning of creation. Secondly, the groaning of the Church, the believers in Jesus Christ. And thirdly, the groaning of the Holy Spirit that is brought before us in the verses further down.

So we'll take these three groanings in the order in which we find them in the chapter. First, the groaning of creation.

So here we have three groanings. The groaning of creation. The groaning of the Church of Jesus Christ.

And the groaning of the Holy Spirit. And we have also a movement here. A movement.

[2 : 21] The movement of the Church. The movement of creation and the Church. Towards a future inheritance. And a future glory.

And Paul here is bringing before us. Paul here is bringing before us creation as a person. He personifies creation. As a creation that is groaning. Just as a person groans inwardly, so Paul says the creation itself is groaning.

And the picture that he is bringing before us here is of the Church. The Old Testament Church. When she turned her back on Mount Sinai.

She left Mount Sinai behind. And she was churning towards the Promised Land. She was on a journey towards a certain destination.

[3 : 32] But she had not reached that destination yet. And so we find both creation and the Church. Both creation and the Church.

Are in an almost there but not yet situation. They are on a journey as well. But they have not yet reached their destination.

They are in an almost there but not yet situation. And it is as if the creation is realizing. Keeping on with Paul's picture of the creation.

His personification of creation. It is as if creation is realizing. That this is not the way things ought to be.

Hence we have the groaning. How does creation groan? Well, I think Paul was drawing from the eruptions of nature in his own day.

[4 : 45] We have volcanic eruptions. Sudden earthquakes. Violent storms and so on. Are all evidences of the creation groaning.

However, this groaning is not negative. But positive. Paul resembles these groanings of creation. Asking nothing but birth pains. And we all know. A mother who suffers from birth pains. That she knows. That she will sooner or later be delivered.

From these pains. And that is the picture he is building up for us of creation groaning. It is simply the groaning of birth pains.

Which reveals to us. That creation is sure. That it will be delivered. From its present situation.

[5 : 44] It will be delivered. From its present situation. And the amazing thing. As we look at this passage. Is that this deliverance.

That creation is waiting for. Is linked very much so. To the glory. That will be revealed.

In the children of God. That will be revealed. In the children of God. In the resurrection. That is unto life. And Paul is more or less.

Paul is more or less. Making this picture for us. As if creation is craning its neck. Eagerly looking. For the redemption.

Of God's children. And you might. You might say to me. Well are they not already redeemed. Yes they are already redeemed. But that redemption.

[6 : 43] Is not yet complete. That redemption is not yet complete. And so creation. The creation waits longingly.

For the redemption. Of the church of Christ. Jesus Christ. Why? Simply because.

Creation's present situation. Is very much tied up. With humanity's fall into sin. With humanity's fall into sin.

As a result of our fall into sin. The creation came under. The curse of God. And the ground produced thorns and briars.

As Genesis reveals to us. Wings grew out of the ground. And it was more difficult. For men and women. To take forth from the ground. The food that is necessary.

[7 : 42] To sustain life. By the sweat of your brow. For you will eat your bread. That was the promise. Of God. That was the promise of God.

After the fall. So as a result. Of her fall into sin. The creation. And that's what. That's what Paul is meaning here. In verse 21.

That the creation itself. Will be set free. From its bondage. Or going back to verse 20. For the creation was subjected to futility. Not willingly. But because of him.

Who subjected it in hope. Who has subjected it in hope. God. And who subjected it to futility.

God when he cursed. The creation. The world. Which is inhabited. By men and women. When he cursed it. At the time. Of her fall.

[8 : 38] Into sin. Of her fall into sin. And so. Creation. Came to suffer. From the same futility.

As humanity. When we desire. To be as gods. That was. That was. What led to her fall. That we desire.

To be like God. And even to be elevated. Above. God. Himself. And that's what led. To her fall. Into sin. Now the word futility.

Here simply reminds us. Of the vanity. Of vanities. All is vanity. That we find in the book. Of Ecclesiastes. Or maybe the garlic.

Itself is more. Emphatic. In that sense. Geomonas. Ne neomonas. Geomonas. Ne nullenich. Vanity of vanities.

[9 : 37] All is vanity. All is vanity. And the reformers. The reformers. Used to. Used to say.

That the word. That the word futility. Suggests. The weariness. And the despair. That is the fruit. Of the constant.

Repetition. That makes up. Most of life. Now you. Think. And. I can think back. Of when I was working.

Myself. And you think. Of when. When you go. To your work. Yourself. Tomorrow. And Tuesday. And Wednesday. And what do you do? Very often.

We repeat. This. Do. We repeat. Doing the same. Things. As we did. The day before. And when. When we come back. From our work. And have our tea.

[10 : 33] What do we do? We sit. We relax. By sitting back. And watching. Television. It is this. Constant. Repetition. That makes up.

Most of life. It leads to weariness. And. Despair. And since. Her fall. Into sin. As this passage. Points out for us. Since her fall. Into sin. The creation. The world. Which we inhabit. Has been encompassed. By nothing.

But decay. Corruption. And death. Decay. Corruption. And death. And you can put that.

Beside. You can put that. Beside. A life. Times. Times. Label. Being made.

[11 : 29] Worthless. And brought. To nothing. By a sudden. Violent storm. Or an earthquake. Or a sudden death. Now we don't live.

In a. Part of the world. Where we experience. Certain violent storms. Or earthquakes. Things. But we do. Suffer. From certain.

Deaths. And every one of us. Probably. Knows. Somebody. Or maybe. More than one.

Person. Who retired. And only got. A couple of weeks. Of that. Retirement. Retirement. When they were removed.

From the scene of time. By a certain heart attack. Or whatever. We know others. Who were approaching. The retirement. They were only months.

[12 : 25] Away from it. A couple of months. Away from it. And they themselves. Were taken away. Suddenly. From the scene of time. A lifetime's labor.

Of. And they did not. They were not. Able to enjoy. The fruits of it. Taken away. Suddenly. At an. Inopportune. Moment. We all know. And I know. I know a person. Who worked. With myself. From this district. Itself. And I think.

He only got. A couple of weeks. Of his retirement. When a certain. Heart attack. Took him away.

And he was looking forward. He was looking forward.

To his retirement. But this is what happens. Not only. Is. Creation. Encompassed. The world. That we live in. Encompassed. By decay. This decay.

[13 : 20] Corruption. And death. But that brings. With it. Its own uncertainty. We live. In. We live.

A life. That is. Very. Uncertainty. Uncertainty. We do not know. What tomorrow. Will bring about. Now look at things.

Look at things. From humanity's. Point of view. Things look. Very bleak. But when we look at it.

From God's. Point of view. Then things are filled.

With hope. Things are filled. With hope. The goal. The end. Goal. Of creation. As this passage.

Reveals. To us. To us. Lies.

In the hands. Of God. And it's not dependent. Upon. Humanity's. Future. Plans.

[14 : 16] Not dependent. At all. Upon humanity's. Plans. For the future. And the end. That God. Has in view.

For creation. As a whole. Is. That it will be liberated. From the slavery.

Of decay. Corruption. And death. Of decay. Corruption. And death. That is the end.

That God. Has in view. For the whole. Of the created order. What we've got to remember. Is this.

That humanity. Men and women.

Were given the task. By God. At the beginning. Of creation. To be stewards. Over creation. To take care. Of the creation. Just like Adam.

[15 : 23] Was taking care. Of the garden. But when we fell. Into sin. When we disobeyed. God's word. What was the result?

We came. To violate. Creation. To exploit. Creation. For our own.

For our own. Selfish. Ends. For our own. Selfish. Ends. We were no longer. Taking care of it.

In the way God. Intended. That we would do. But we came. To violate. And to exploit.

Creation. For our own. Selfish. Selfish. Ends. And you see. From this passage. That believers. In Christ.

[16 : 23] Will be reinstated. As stewards. Over. The new. Creation. Over the new. Creation. And it is then.

And only then. That the time. Of groaning. Will be passed. Past. That the time. Of groaning. Will be passed. For the delivery.

Of the new. Creation. From the womb. Of the old. Is assured. For us. By. By the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ.

From the dead. God. The scripture. Reveals to us. That Christ. Is the first born. From the dead. The beginning. Is resurrection.

From the dead. Was the beginning. Of the new. Creation. Which brings us. To the. Second thing.

That we have here. The groaning. Of the church.

[17 : 20] And Paul. Makes the transition. In verse 23. When he says. Not only. He makes the transition. From creation. To the church. Of Jesus Christ.

In verse 23. When he says. Not only the creation. But we. Ourselves. We ourselves. And we as believers. Very often.

We think that. The problems of this world. Has nothing to do with us. We belong to the world. That is to come. But this passage.

In this passage. Paul reveals to us. That we are still. Very much involved. In the world. Around us. We are found. Groaning.

Along with creation. Knowing. Knowing full well. That this is the way. Things ought. Not to be. Knowing full well.

[18:18] That this is. The way. Things ought. Not to be. And we have been given. As believers. A foretaste. Of the glory. That is to come. When we receive. The Holy Spirit.

When we receive. The Holy Spirit. And so. We bear. The conflict. Of this present age. Bearing at one. And the same time. The hope.

Of the glory. That is to come. And the shame. Of her falling. To sin. That is what. The Holy Spirit. Does. Is it not? The Holy Spirit.

Receives. Are the things of Christ. Reveals them. Unto us. And gives the glory. Unto him. He plants. The seed. Of this. Hope. Of the glory. To come.

Within our hearts. And at the same time. He continues. To convince. And convict us. Of our sin. So that we bear.

[19:16] The conflict. Of this present age. The hope. Of the glory. That is to come. And the shame. Of her falling. To sin. And we look. You and I.

Look out. On the majesty. Of creation. And especially. When we live. In an island. Like this. We look out. Every morning. On the majesty. Of creation. And we are in awe.

At the artistry. Of God. And yet. We know. As we look. Upon the majesty. Of that creation. We know.

That contained. Within that majesty. Is much. Much tragedy. And much pain. And as creation. Groans in travail. Waiting for the new world. To be born. From its womb. So we groan.

[20:13] Waiting. For the completion. Of our adoption. As sons and daughters. Of God. And when will that. Completion come. When our bodies.

Are redeemed. When our bodies. Are raised. In glory. In the resurrection. That is unto life. Is it not. What Paul. Is pointing out to us. In this great chapter. About the resurrection. Chapter 15. In first Corinthians. What is he saying. About these bodies.

That will be raised. Well first. They will be sown. In dishonor. They will be raised. In glory. That which is corruptible.

Shall put on. In corruption. That which is mortal. Shall put on. Immortality. In the mortality. That is when our redemption. Is complete.

[21:14] And it's not complete till then. That is when our adoption. Is brought to completion. When we are raised.

In bodies. In glorious bodies. It's not that what Jesus promised. To us. That he would change. This lowly body. And make it like. Unto his own. Glorious body. And so. The present judge. The church.

Of Jesus Christ. Like the old testament. Judge. She's been delivered. From the bondage. Of Egypt. What was her Egypt? The world. And the world's culture.

And the world's ways. She's been delivered. From that. She's been delivered. From the bondage. From her bondage. In Egypt. But she has not yet. Entered into the promised land.

[22:09] The new heavens. And the new earth. Which is part of the inheritance. That believers in Christ. Are craving for.

Believers in Christ. Are craving for. No believer. No church. Can never be satisfied. With the way things are.

At present. With the way things are. At present. Just as peace. And equality. Is absent. From a present age. And yet.

Every believer. Knows. That these are qualities. That will permeate. The age to come. That will fill. The age to come.

And yet. We find. All of these qualities. Absent. From this. Present age. We look. As Peter. Peter puts it. In a second. Epistle.

[23 : 04] In a second letter. In chapter 3. If we are believers. In Christ. Here tonight. We look. For a new heavens. And a new earth. In which righteousness.

Dwells. And we know. That while we are living. In this present age. Living in this. Body of sin. That we are pale shadows.

Of our future selves. And we can say. With John. We do not know yet. What we shall be like. But we know. That when he appears.

We shall be like him. For we shall see him. As he is. 1 John chapter 3. And verse 2. And we will be able.

For the first time. In our experience. To live in the humanness. In which we were first created. Why? Because we will be conformed fully.

[24 : 05] To the likeness. Of Jesus Christ. That is when Christ's promise. Will come into. Will come into fulfillment.

That he will change this lowly body. And make it like unto his own. Glorious body. God. God.

Nobody ever walked this earth.

And could say that they lived. Truly as a human being. While they were here in this world. But Jesus Christ.

God's son. God's son. God's son. And that is what. Believers in Christ. That is the fruit. That they will.

Truly bear. In the world that is to come. They. Their conformity. To the likeness. Of their savior. Will be made complete.

[25 : 07] And listen. Look at the picture. Look at the picture. That Isaiah paints for us. Of this world. Of this new heavens. And new earth.

Look at what he says. The wolf. He says. Shall dwell with the lamb. The leopard. Shall lie down. With the young goat. The calf. The lion. And the fattened calf. Together. Means that they will lie together. And a young child.

He says. Shall lead them. They will not hurt. Nor destroy. In my holy mountain. For the knowledge. Of the Lord. Shall fill the earth. As the waters. Cover the seas. Isaiah. Chapter 11. Verses 6. And 9.

[26 : 04] And so. We as believers. Groan in harmony. With creation. Waiting. Waiting. Expectantly.

For the redemption. Of our bodies. Which takes us. Finally. To the groaning. Of the spirit. The groaning. Of the holy spirit. And what is true.

Of creation. And what is true. Of the church. Of Jesus Christ. It's also. Through of the holy spirit. Within the groaning.

Of creation. And within the groaning. Of the church. God. This. Unsearchable. God.

Grow. Is groaning. Also. God. Is groaning. Is groaning. Isn't that amazing? God. This.

Unsearchable.

[26 : 57] God. Is groaning. Also. The spirit. Sustains us. And supports us. In our weakness. The holy spirit. Sustains and supports us. In our weakness.

We desire. Along with creation. We desire. Along with creation. For the justice. Peace. Equality. That creation.

Is longing for. So we long for it. So we long for it. But how to get to that point. We do not know. We do not know.

We live in a world. Where certain tragedy. And certain bereavement. Is commonplace. And they sometimes.

Rock us back. On our heels. To the extent. That we do not know. What to pray for. As we ought. Words.

[27 : 52] Simply. Fail us. Words. Simply. Fail us. Yet as Paul. Reveals here. It is at such.

Moments of weakness. It is at such. Moments of weakness. That we can count. On the Holy Spirit. To step in. On our behalf. And give expression.

To our. Inarticulate. Groanings. This. One could say. Is the essence. Of prayer.

There needs to be words. Employed in prayer. There is no doubt. About that. But there are times. And situations. There are times. And situations. When words fail us.

And what is revealed here. What is revealed here. Is that our groanings. Do not simply rise. Into a void. Of nothingness. God calling.

[29 : 08] and from the heart of his redeemed church. What was he meaning by that?

Well, is it not the Christ in us that is groaning? And is it not the spirit of Jesus Christ that you and I have received that dwells within our hearts?

And we live in a world where sin still exists, where sin still exists, and we are all too aware of that sin which still dwells within our hearts.

And Paul gives expression to the frustration that believers experience because of this in chapter 7, the previous, the chapter before this.

And if you listen to what he says first in verse 19 in chapter 7, For I do not do the good, for I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

[30 : 21] On verse 21, So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right to evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being.

But I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death.

Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, O Lord. And sometimes we think we have all the answers. We think we have this world sustenance. And suddenly we are hit by a certain tragedy or a certain bereavement that reminds us that we are not at all in possession of all the answers.

When Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, looking down upon Jerusalem, do we find Jesus rejoicing in the coming doom of Jerusalem?

[31 : 40] No, we don't. We find Jesus choked with tears. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I would have gathered your children like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not.

What was behind the tears? He feels the pain of the world. It's confusion, it's turmoil, and particularly the devastation that humanity's sin has brought into his creation.

He feels the pain, understands the confusion, sympathizes with the turmoil, and wants to do something about the devastation that sin brought in.

And we feel the same if we have the Spirit of Christ. We cannot but feel the pain of the world in which we live.

We feel the same if we are in Christ. After all, it is those who it is those who have this hope for glory who groan.

[33 : 15] Why do they groan? Because they know that things are not going to remain as they are. Things are not going to remain as they are.

And we know that this very Spirit that brooded over the waters of creation, that dwells within my heart and your heart, if you are in Christ tonight, will bring forth this new creation from the womb of the old.

Why? Because Christ has reconciled unto himself all things in heaven and all things on earth. as Paul points out in his letter to the Colossians, chapter 1. In him the fullness of the God had dwelt bodily and through him all things in heaven and in earth have been reconciled through the blood of his cross.

Well, where does that leave you on this evening? Do you know anything of this groaning?

[34 : 46] Do you feel the pain of the world? Have you got the Spirit of Christ? Or are you simply comfortable with the world's tragedy and pain and saying, it's got nothing to do with me?

Well, my advice to you is awaken from your slumber and seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. May the Lord bless to us these few thoughts. Let us pray.