**Romans 8:18-27**

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** 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. **24** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. **26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. **27** And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

**“Groans Of A New Creation”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Our topic for study last week at the youth trip was on, “Faces from the reformation.” We looked at various individuals who helped to shine the revived Gospel back out into a dark world. One big contributor, Lucas Cranach, used less words and let his paint brush work for the sake of the people. This got me thinking about how important pictures are not only for the reformation, but also Christians in any age. The victory has been completely won by Christ and yet we are waiting to see that fullness. Artistic pictures put before our eyes what we long to see from what God has promised.

At the present, the field of this world is not so eye pleasing of a picture. It is wheat mixed with weeds as Jesus said, “Let both grow together until the harvest…” St. Paul knew how frustrating that was for Christians in Rome. They saw falsity, adversity, and vanity surround them daily in life. Even the visible church was not safe from hypocrites and those pushing for another Gospel other than the grace given in Jesus Christ alone. Thank God, things are not based upon how things look for that is no hope! St. Paul instead proclaims, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Groans go deep, but God is long-suffering so waiting upon Him turns us to Christ hoping for His righteous judgment.

1. **Groans go deep in every aspect of life.**
2. We forget how creation cries out.

* Certainly, science has helped to understand the order of life, but beneath the surface is the sadder answer.
* St. Paul says, “For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.”
* Since humanity fell in the Garden, so all of creation has received bitterness of life for God said to Adam, “cursed is the ground because of you.” (Genesis 3:17)
* Everything suffers from sin and death, which means there is a common pain and so there is a common complaint God uses to call us to repent.

1. Besides creation, we also forget why we inwardly hurt.

* This is more than unbelievers dealing with problems of life, but those who by baptism have died and risen to new life in Christ.
* St. Paul says, “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.”
* The futility with life comes from sin and death, but our flesh frustrated by works and the Law only figures, “Nothing matters, what’s the point.”
* Yet, the Spirit causes us to groan so we do not become numb to the pain or have despair consume us because God seeks to help His children.

1. More than our inward strife, we finally forget what prayer is about.

* Most assuredly, it cannot rest upon our strength, efforts, or will for even Christians are weak in what we ask.
* This weakness is the distress that hangs over us before God as St. Paul says, “For we do not know what to pray for as we ought…”
* Prayer can become mechanical as something to check off, or we can treat it like a magical incantation saying what we feel is right, or prayer just stops because, “Thy Will be Done” is too hard to say.
* On our own, we are left speechless and the impatient demands of our passions reign when actually what we need is the aid of the Spirit.

1. **Yes, there is groaning, but God’s long-suffering hides a righteous judgment in Christ.**
2. This is hope that comes to restore creation.

* Recycling, renewable resources, field management support good stewardship for the creation God has given us to care of in life.
* At the same time, this creation is not counting on us to save it from the futility of sin and death, which originates with fallen humanity.
* Before the curse, God restored hope by promising His Savior for “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”
* Since Jesus freed us by His sacrifice, He extends that judgment saying, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

1. This is hope that also comes outwardly with fullness for the hurting.

* Groans by Christians are not always the same suffering as unbelievers, but what remains is that we already are God’s adopted children by baptism into Christ.
* God comforts us with the firstfruits of the Spirit, which is His work by Word and Sacrament for here is not futility, but the faithfulness of Jesus, “For in this hope we were saved.”
* Like creation, the saints long for a redemption to see graves finally emptied, burdens of our bodies freed, and a righteous judgment coming fully from Christ.
* At the present, we patiently wait upon God who desires none to perish as weeds and cherishes His wheat that He will harvest at the proper time.

1. This is hope then that comes from the Holy Spirit interceding on our behalf.

* Rather than being hindered by our weak efforts in prayer, God has supplied an “auto-correct” way that works by His good Spirit.
* St. Paul says, “the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”
* As Christ intercedes for us in heaven, so the Spirit is at work within us and makes our requests pleasing to the will of God.
* The Spirit empowers us to search the scriptures and to see our groans cannot compare to the glory of what God promises for any that are in Christ Jesus.

On the way back from the youth trip, there is always time for conversation. The question arose, “Do you think they will ever come up with a way not to die?” I wondered the same thing as a youth. My response went along the lines about how man cannot truly conquer death. However, maybe I should have just asked a better question. “Why would we want to live forever in this life when there is so much groaning that goes with it?” Granted there is nothing wrong with long life as even the Old Testament shows. However, this creation is growing weary no less than the redemption we need for of our bodies. Even if you had a 1,000 lives to live, only one hope remains to be received by faith in a better promise. Groans go deep, but God is long-suffering so waiting upon Him turns us to Christ hoping for His righteous judgment. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.