

Ryan Graetz

Romans / Hope; Patience; Wait / Romans 8:18–30

Series Number: 18

Readings:

OT reading: Genesis 3:1–24

Gospel reading (8:30): Luke 24:36–52

NT reading: Romans 8:18–30

Other NT reading (10:30): 1 Corinthians 15:35–57

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®  
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# Introduction

## Introduction Proper

Waiting can be the hardest thing, can't it?

Our family waited a lot recently!

Back in 2021 I started Bible College while working as an engineer. I worked on that degree for 5 years, constantly studying, praying, working hard to prepare for ministry.

Then, halfway through last year, I started searching for a full-time pastoring role. Networking, applying, interviewing, more networking.

November came around, then December, and I still had nothing. January, February, March came and went.

I thought about going back to engineering, but I kept putting that off. I wanted a full-time pastoring role - *that's* what I'd been preparing for, waiting for these last 5 years.

Then April came around, and finally, God graciously placed me here at St. George's with you lovely people. And you know what? Its been worth the wait!

We don't like waiting. And often waiting comes with suffering, doesn't it?

Our society has instant everything - instant messaging, instant coffee, instant replay! Although five years waiting for full-time ministry felt hard, since then I've met many people who have

been waiting, persevering, even suffering far longer, in far harder circumstances. It can wear you down.

And this morning's passage got me thinking: we can't avoid waiting. It's part of life. And some things *are* worth waiting for. Somehow, we need to wait with *perseverance*, *endurance*, *patience*. So I want to show you how the Gospel, the good news about Jesus, gives us the resources we need to wait well - the Gospel helps us wait *patiently* for glory. The Gospel helps us wait *patiently* for glory.

## Acknowledge the Suffering

### State the Point

So my first point is that Gospel helps us acknowledge our suffering.

### Show from the Bible

Last week we looked [Romans 8:1-17](#). And there, Paul showed how all of us are controlled by evil.

We know the good we *should* do, but we don't do it. We know we should treat others how we want to be treated, we know we should look after the environment, we know lust, theft, and selfishness are morally wrong. But we don't always do what we should, and sometimes we *do* what we shouldn't! And that's because there's an evil power inside us, part of us - the power of sin. Rebellion against the God who created us. This is the bad news that makes the good news of the Gospel so good!

We need a *new* power - the power of God's Spirit - to come inside us and renew us, to be truly good and please God! And this is the good news: This *can* happen in us because Jesus, God's precious Son, willingly came to die in our place. He paid the price of justice for our evil deeds, and his goodness is credited to us. Now, God accepts us into his family as adopted children, and as children we start to resemble our heavenly Father - we start to become good like him, through the power of God's Spirit in us.

But human rebellion has wide-reaching consequences. We have taken over the world God created and caused environmental havoc! We've chopped down forests, spilled oil, driven species to extinction, and now scientists tell us we're heating up the globe like an oven!

But did you know, just under 2000 years ago, the Apostle Paul describes the world in a way that would resonate with us today?

Look in [Romans 8:20](#)! He writes that the Creation was “subjected to frustration.” In v21 he says that the Creation is in “bondage to decay”. And in v22 he says the Creation is “groaning as in the pains of childbirth”. He’s describing a deep anguish, lament, pain like a woman enduring labour contractions.

Even 2000 years ago Paul could see something is desperately wrong with God’s Creation! Its suffering! Its decaying, its corrupted, all is not as it should be. Why? He says someone subjected it to frustration. Who?

Well long before even Paul wrote, *God* made the world. And [Genesis 1](#) says he made it *very good*. The Garden of Eden was paradise on earth. So what happened?

We read it earlier in [Genesis 3](#): humanity disobeyed against God’s command, rebelling against him. Our hearts, minds, and bodies became corrupted. But the corruption didn’t stop there.

God created humanity as royalty. We were supposed to rule over the whole creation with kindness, love, and care. But as goes the king, so goes the kingdom.

Since humanity fell into corruption, the creation must fall too! God intended to glorify the creation, but it cannot be glorified apart from its rulers. So God cursed his creation to suffer our corruption too (Renihan 2020, ch4).

## Explain/Apply

And every day, we see the effects all around us. Earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, extinction, disease, disability, death. Its undeniable!

And not only does Creation groan, v23 says that we groan too! We struggle, suffer, we lament.

How do we deal with this?

Well, like Paul, we acknowledge it for what it is.

We recognise that this is not how things are meant to be! We don’t dismiss or minimise suffering, physical corruption, or moral evil. We don’t try to explain it away, “get over it” or pretend that disorders or suffering are somehow good. We acknowledge it, we grieve over it.

We also acknowledge our own responsibility for it. We, too, have rebelled against God; we bear some responsibility for it. So we come to him humbly, seeking his mercy, not demanding he fix it all up for us.

Jesus’ death on the cross shows us that sin and suffering really are evil. But in his resurrection he shows us there is something much better worth waiting for.

# Consider the Glory

## State the Point

Secondly, we wait patiently by considering the glory the Gospel promises us. It teaches us to think about the glory to come.

## Show from the Bible/Explain

In [Romans 8:18](#), Paul starts by saying, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

There’s no shortage of suffering around the world: earthquakes in Venezuela, war in Iran, famine in Ethiopia. But also, many Christians around the world suffer just for being Christians! They are persecuted, kidnapped, and killed in Nigeria, imprisoned in China, hunted down in Colombia. Even in Australia we are often mocked and derided for our faith.

But Paul says all that suffering is like a little LED light next to the blazing sun of our coming glory. Its nothing in comparison!

Well v19 calls it the revealing of the children of God! V21 says that we, with the rest of creation, will be liberated from bondage to decay! And v23 says calls it our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies! Still confused? Let me break it down.

Our bodies suffer from disease, disorder, old age, and finally, death. We only live to the age of 80, 90, 100 if we’re really blessed. During our lives we have to constantly take care with our frail, aging, suffering bodies.

But one day our bodies will be liberated from every health concern, unchained from every evil thought and action, freed from mortality itself!

You see, Jesus died to save us from God’s judgment against our sin. But he didn’t stay in that grave. Only days later, his body was transformed to life! His body was still physical - he proved it by eating with his friends. But his body was also *glorified*. Spiritual, immortal, brimming with health and unshakeable life!

One day he will come back and call to us, and our bodies will rise and be glorified, just like his! Imagine being a fully healthy, able-bodied 25 year old - forever! No health insurance, no car accidents, no chronic fatigue, arthritis, ACL tears, or funerals!

In fact, this hope is so good that v19 says “the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed” - even creation looks forward to seeing our glory! And God will

glorify the whole creation along with us, too. God planned that through our glorification, it could be renewed and glorified too! As goes the king, so goes the kingdom. This is eternal life.

## Illustrate

Now let me untie this rope, and I'll get XX to come help me. Could you please take this end to the back of hall for me? I got this idea from Francis Chan.

Think about what forever really means. Imagine this little bit of blue rope here is your life now. That's when you're born, that's when you die. Now look at the orange rope. That's how long we'll enjoy the coming glory! In fact, this orange rope will never stop!

But also, imagine this blue rope also represents how great your suffering in this life is. Well, Paul says our suffering isn't even "worth comparing with the glory" - so now imagine the orange bit is how happy you'll be, and how good your reward will be! Is waiting through the suffering worth it? Paul answers with a resounding "yes! (Francis Chan 2010)

## Apply

This is one of the great tasks of the Christian: pondering the wonder of our future glory. Many women will willingly endure pregnancy and labour for the marvellous promise of a child afterward. So we, too, can more patiently endure suffering if we understand the beauty of our future hope.

V24-25 say we were saved in *hope* - we hope for something we don't have yet. If you already had it, you wouldn't need to hope, you would just enjoy it! But for now, we must hope. And if we're to wait patiently, we must meditate on the glory to come.

## Rely on the Spirit

### State the Point

Thirdly, the Gospel helps us wait patiently by giving us the Spirit to rely on. We rely on the Spirit.

### Show from the Bible/Explain

Now one thing everyone knows is that good Christians pray, right? And not just that, good Christians pray *the right things*. We pray for God's will to be done. We give the Almighty

Creator of the Universe the magnificent praise and adoration that he deserves. But who actually lives up to that?

Earlier we saw a crucial part of the Gospel: Jesus died on a cross to pay the price of justice - that's what our rebellion against God deserves! And his blood washes us clean from all impurity.

But do you know what else? Because we're clean, God's own Spirit can come live inside us!

And Paul says in v26, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness." What weakness? Well, "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans." So we've seen the creation groans, we groan, but not just that - the *Spirit* groans - *for us*!

He groans in prayer to God on our behalf. When we don't know how or what to pray, the Spirit steps in, praying what we should be praying.

Now because he's Spirit, not a physical being, his groans are wordless - they're not audible like ours. So how does the Father know what the Spirit is praying? (Kruse 2012, 351-352; Moo 2018, 546-548)

Well Paul tells us in v27: God, 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."

God the Father understands the Spirit because the Spirit is perfectly aligned with him. Where we are weak, the Spirit steps in with strength. Where our prayers are selfish, or we pray things that *don't* align with God's will, the Spirit steps in with perfection. He speaks *for* us.

## Illustrate

When I was young, I lived in China. But I couldn't speak Chinese well, and I didn't understand the culture. I would sometimes try to speak to elderly Chinese people who couldn't speak English, and I needed help. In Chinese, you should say "hello" differently for an elderly person - you say "nín hǎo", not "nǐ hǎo." Now I only learned that on Friday! But I'm sure back then my translator said it the right way for me, when I was too young and foolish to know better.

## Apply

In the same way, the Spirit prays the right things to the Father for us. Isn't that beautiful?

So while we're waiting for glory in our suffering, if we don't know what to pray, *that's ok*. In our groaning, the Spirit steps in and groans *for us* to the Father. He makes our prayers acceptable, he prays in line with God's will.

That means like a child with their loving parent, we can pour out our hearts to the Father honestly and openly - he hears us through the Spirit and he cares for us. This helps us wait *patiently* - in the hard times, we know we're not alone! Because of what Jesus did on that cross, we have the Spirit to speak for us, to groan on our behalf when we just can't find the words.

## Trust the Calling

### State the Point

Fourthly, we wait patiently by trusting our Gospel calling. We trust the calling.

### Show from the Bible/Explain

Suffering can sometimes feel so *purposeless*, can't it? It's not just that suffering is hard, there just often seems to be no point to it! It makes it so much harder to bear.

But in v28, Paul says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Or, saying it a different way, God works all things together for good for those who love him. What's Paul trying to say here?

He's saying that for those who follow Jesus, not a single tear or accident or disease or struggle is pointless. Everything is purposeful, God works every bit together for our good.

Does that mean every car accident will end up somehow saving more lives than it took? Or every bad thing that happens will end up making us rich and prosperous? No! We've got to ask: what is the "good" that Paul is talking about? Or, "what is the purpose we're called to?"

He tells us in v29: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son..."

The "good" and the "purpose" are the same thing! God has destined us to become like Jesus himself! Not just in one way, in every way! In goodness, in relationship to God, and in future glory.

In fact, this verse is incredible. It says God "foreknew" us - he knew us and loved us before he even created the world! And way back then, he decided that we should become like Jesus.

Now “foreknowing” here *doesn’t* mean God foresaw who would believe in him, and then chose us on that basis. The Bible actually teaches the opposite: God knew us and chose us, not because of anything good in us - otherwise we’d have a reason to boast! Rather, God chose us because of *his own purpose and grace*.

He already knew us - our personality, likes and dislikes, our passions, even our rebellion. He saw us beforehand, like newly expecting parents see their baby on an ultrasound - but he could see our whole life.

And he loved us and chose us for glory.

And v30 leaves no room for failure: “And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” This verse is very specific - those *exact same people* he chose from before the creation of the world - it is precisely those people that he drew to himself, that he made righteous through Christ - *those people will* be glorified in the end (Sproul 1986, ch6).

And God works out every circumstance of our lives to achieve that end - to bring us to himself, to justify us and make us grow in righteousness, and one day to bring us to glory.

## Apply

Its hard to hope in such a wonderful future, right? Because we don’t want our hopes to fail! What if I fall away? What if I don’t make it there?

Well, consider this: who, or what, is going to stop him? If he knew you before he created anything, and he predestined that you would be glorified in the end, *and* he orchestrates every circumstance in between, know this: your glory is secure. Nothing can stop it.

Doesn’t that help us wait patiently? Its a lot harder to wait if we’re unsure whether we’ll make it. We need to know for sure. So Paul tells us that because *God* has determined it, its going to happen.

## Conclusion

So, to wait patiently, we must acknowledge suffering for what it is: it is evil, it is horrible, and its not supposed to be there! And we take responsibility for our own rebellion against God.

But this passage started with glory, and it ends with glory. God has prepared such a wonderful resurrection glory for us that our present suffering *pales* in comparison! So we meditate on that, we consider the glory.



And while we wait, in our suffering and weakness, we don't know how to pray as we should. But we rely on the Spirit - he intercedes for us. So we come to God confidently with the best we have, knowing he'll take it from there.

And we can wait patiently because we know no amount of suffering or difficulty can take this glory from us - God has decided from eternity past that it will happen. So we trust his calling.

And why can we rebels against God, even expect glory in the first place? Because of the wonderful Gospel, the good news about Jesus!

› v29\_slide

We get glory because Jesus laid his glory aside. 2000 years ago the Son of God came down from glory to earth as a human. He entered our suffering, and died a horrible death for us. Then he was raised to immortal life by the power of God's Spirit, so that he would be the firstborn from the dead - the first human to enter resurrection glory! And he did it so that we could follow him *into* glory! He earned it, not us, but we enjoy the benefits! What a wonderful Saviour! What a beautiful Gospel! Its just what we need to wait *patiently* in our suffering. And so we say "Come, Lord Jesus, come."

› 8:30: Trevor come up to do Nicene Creed

› 10:30: Song: Christ is Mine Forevermore

## Confession

### **Romans 8:26 NIV**

<sup>26</sup> 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.

Jesus wouldn't have entered our suffering if it wasn't necessary. Our rebellion required him to do it if he was going to save us. So let's acknowledge our sin for what it is, let's confess it to God and come to him for mercy.

And as we do so, remember that the Spirit intercedes for us - he helps us when we don't quite know what to pray. Let's take a moment of silence to confess individually, then we'll confess together.

## Assurance

### **Romans 8:29 NIV**

<sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

For those who turn away from their sin, believe in Jesus, and choose to follow him, know that God delights to forgive! In fact, if you choose to follow Jesus, he has determined that you will receive glory when Jesus returns - eternal life forever with God in a resurrected body and a renewed Creation. Its a glory that *Christ* earned for us, and we receive it only by God's grace, by trusting in him.

Now I think Cathryn is going to come up for prayer.

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