

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Gain of Glory**

Scripture: Romans 8:17-18

Code: 45-60

Romans, chapter 8 ... we embark upon a new section of the eighth chapter and one that will take us a while to work our way through. We'll do the best we can to get started and cover as much as we can in the next couple of weeks, and then I'll be gone for a couple and then come back and we'll pick it up where we left it off, but we're going to see all the things that are here that the Spirit of God will want to teach us.

We're looking at Romans chapter 8 and we left off last time in our study at verse 16, so we're going to begin looking at the section that runs from verse 17 through 30. And that is one section, as you'll see as we get on to our study tonight.

Every Christian lives really in the light of glory, the hope of glory to come. Several of the songs that we sung already tonight that were sung to us, speak of the hope that we have, the forever life that we enter into in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ someday when we go to be with Him in His glory. I suppose our hope can best be summed up in the words of I John 3:2, that we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. The psalmist said that he would never be satisfied until the time when he awoke in the likeness of the Lord. And our great hope is heaven, the presence of God, the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the hope of glory is the theme of this particular part of Romans chapter 8, and it is a rich, rich passage. In fact, it's beyond our ability to understand, it's beyond our ability even to imagine all the things that are inherent in the great teaching of this particular section.

Now I want to back up for just a moment so that I can give you a little bit of a feeling for what's going on here as we approach verse 17. The purpose of the entire eighth chapter is to elucidate a statement made in verse 1 and that statement is very familiar to Bible students, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." There is no condemnation; no judgment will ever be meted out as a penalty for the sins of those who are in Christ Jesus. We have no condemnation status with God.

Now that's a great statement about the security of our salvation. If we are never to be condemned, then that is to say we are secure. That's a great statement about what some theologians call the "safety" of the believer, the safety of the believer. It is a statement of profound assurance of salvation. We are in no condemnation status before God.

And it comes, I think, at a very remarkable and very important point in Paul's letter because he has just discussed in chapter 7 the fact that believers are going to sin, right? He's just discussed that, that the things he wants to do he can't do, the things he doesn't want to do he does. And he says of himself, and you see it there in verse 24, "O wretched man that I am." There's a wretchedness. Verse 25, "I myself serve the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin." So, chapter 7 is a statement about the believer's sinfulness. But in spite of that, chapter 8 affirms, "There is therefore no condemnation," and the "therefore" means that's it's connected to chapter 7. Even with the truth of chapter 7, that as long as we're in this flesh, as long as we're in this human body, we're going to struggle with sin and we're going to fail to do what God wants, there will still never be any condemnation. That's a great word of affirmations...a great word of assurance. And it is so monumental a testimony, it is so remarkable a statement, it is so hard to believe that we who continue to be sinful, who continue to do the things we ought not to do and not to do the things we ought to do, that we will never be condemned is so remarkable a statement that he goes on throughout the eighth chapter to explain how that can be true. And basically what he says is that it is true because of the unique ministry of the Spirit of God, He confirms to us what is given us in Christ.

I guess a better way to say it; we experience the truthfulness of it by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a fact. It is an accomplished fact based upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that work is defined for us from chapter 3 right on through the end of chapter 7. It is the work of Jesus Christ that purchased for us a no-condemnation status which is so hard for us to believe that the Holy Spirit must be in an ongoing affirmation ministry to convince us that it indeed is true. And so, chapter 8 is the Holy Spirit's chapter and it's all about how the Holy Spirit confirms the no-condemnation status of the believer and it ends with a glorious paean of praise, a glorious benediction that concludes with the fact that nothing shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord. The assurance of which is borne to our hearts by the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And we've been going through the chapter and seeing how the Holy Spirit confirms our no-condemnation status, how He confirms our security, how He confirms our safety. First of all, we saw in verses 2 and 3 that He does so by freeing us from sin and death. Secondly, in verse 4, by enabling us to fulfill the law. Thirdly, in verses 5 to 11, by changing our nature. Fourthly, in verses 12 and 13, by empowering us for victory over the deeds of the body, or sin. Fifthly, and we saw this last time, He affirms to us our no-condemnation status in spite of our sin by confirming our adoption. We are the sons of God and the Spirit bears witness with our spirit.

Now finally, and really climactically, this is the coup-de-grace, if you will, of the chapter. The Holy Spirit confirms our no-condemnation status by guarantying our glory, by guarantying our glory. First, by freeing us from sin and death, then by enabling us to fulfill the law, then by changing our nature, then by empowering us for victory, confirming our adoption and finally, by guarantying our glory, verses 17 through verse 30. And then after verse 30 comes the great benediction of praise that concludes the chapter and blesses the name of God and affirms our safety and security because of who He is and

what He's accomplished in Christ.

So, the freedom we enjoy from sin's dominion, the ability to do what is truly right, the desire to mind the things of the Spirit, the power to overcome the deeds of the body, the sense of belonging to God that makes us feel intimate and cry, "Abba, Father," all of these are confirmations given us by the work of the Holy Spirit and they are to assure our hearts of the truth of verse 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation ... 11 It is a great, great chapter on the security of the believer. And we went into that in detail in chapter 5. And chapter 5, basically, talks about the security of the believer from the theological viewpoint, from the facts. This chapter talks about the security of the believer, if you will, from the feelings, from the confirming of the Spirit of God in our hearts. And then it concludes with a reiteration of the glorious facts and truths that we are secure in Christ.

So, the theme then of the section we're looking at, verses 17 to 30, is that the Spirit guarantees our glory, and this is both something that He places within our hearts in confidence and a fact as well. And that's why it's a little bit hard to make a clean distinction between the two in all of the Spirit's confirmation to our minds and our hearts which we feel. In other words, we feel secure; there is a fact as well which brings that reality or that feeling about. So we don't want to make too clear a distinction.

But the Spirit of God here is ministering to the believer from within the believer, affirming and confirming the security of his no-condemnation status. And so, the Spirit comes to us to guarantee our future glory. And He does it not only by the feeling but by a reiteration in the Word of God of fact. For example, look at verse 30, and that would be sort of a key verse, although it's the final verse of the section it really is the summation of the whole section. "Moreover," it says, "whom He did predestinate," that is whom the Lord did choose to redeem or save, "them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, or saved, and whom He justified them He also glorified."

Now there is no loss between justification and glorification. Whoever is justified, that is made right with God through Jesus Christ, will be glorified. That is precisely what our Lord Jesus meant in John 6 when He said, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me and I have lost none of them...none of them." And so, where there is justification there's glorification.

And may I give you what I think is a very important theological truth? There is no salvation without glorification. You cannot invent a salvation that doesn't end in glorification. Because one of the tenses of salvation is future. And it is not salvation unless it embraces the future. Which is to say the idea that you can have a salvation and lose it and forfeit glorification cannot be so. Because inherent in the very truth of salvation is that it is a future reality, it is a guarantee of glory. You see verse 29? "We have been predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son." Before you were saved, God planned to save you. And in saving you to bring you into conformity to His Son Jesus Christ. That's the same as glorification. So there cannot be the fulfilling of a saving purpose unless in that fulfilling there is glorification. You understand that? So glorification is the completion of the reality of salvation.

This then is the goal of our salvation. This is the climax of our salvation. This is the end of our salvation. We are saved unto eternal glory. And that is a truth given to us in Scripture over and over as we shall see going through this section. But it is also the special ministry of the Spirit of God to affirm and confirm that to our hearts. And I believe He does it by placing in our hearts the hope that is indicated in verse 24. We are saved in hope. You see, the Spirit in us fills our hearts with hope and that hope is an affirmation of the reality of ultimate glory.

Looking back for a moment, as you see man in his original creation, you know that man was created in the image of God. He was created in His likeness. And therefore he had glory. Man was glorious. Man was able to be honored and respected. Man was without sin. He radiated the essence of God's person. And he had glory. But when man fell, he lost the original glory. He lost the original dignity and honor and respect. He lost the beauty that was his in creation. And that's why Romans 3:23 says man has come short of ... what?...the glory of God. He lost that.

And I believe people born into the world basically know their devoid of glory. That's why there's such a stampede for self-esteem. That's why there's such a tremendous effort on the part of human kind to find self-satisfaction, to get respect. As Rodney Dangerfield puts it, "I don't get no respect." And I think innately in the heart of man there is that longing to be respected, to be somebody, to be esteemed, to get back the glory that man somehow feels is missing. And in the quest for that he fills himself with ambition and pride and jealousy and envy, trying to rise above others, and never is he able to really gain back the glory. Man after the Fall cannot know pre-Fall glory. But in Christ the glory is restored. And someday those that are saved are going to be taken to the place where they will fully reflect the glory of God; they will be found again in His image and likeness, where they will be like Jesus Christ only it won't be taking us back to Eden, it will be taking us beyond Eden. For perfection is better than innocence. And so there will be a radiant glory that even exceeds that which Adam and Eve knew before they fell.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, that great British preacher, was right when he said, "Salvation cannot stop at any point short of entire perfection or it is not salvation." That's a very important thing to understand, that's very theological. There is no salvation that is short of perfection.

So man in Christ is reserved unto glory. That's why this chapter closes saying nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. Nothing shall condemn us, it says earlier. No one will lay any charge to God's elect. Whoever He justifies He glorifies. There's no such thing as a salvation without glorification ... no such thing. So man in Christ is reserved for glory and it is a glory beyond Adam, it is a glory equal to Christ.

We're already on the way, you know. Have you read 2 Corinthians 3:18 lately? Listen to what it says. "But we all," that is those of us who are in Christ, "with an unveiled face, no veil, nothing to blind us or

hinder our vision, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." As we look at the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same, literally being changed, into the same image from glory to glory, from one level of glory to the next level of glory and it says, "By the Spirit of the Lord." You see, the ministry of the Spirit of the Lord while we're here is to take us from one level of glory to the next level of glory to the next level of glory, He lifts us up in terms of restoring man's dignity, of giving back his genuine respect, of giving back the honor that he lost in the Fall and little by little as we gaze at the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of God works in our life to give us more glory and more and more until finally someday when we see Jesus Christ, we will reflect His full glory. So, we're on the path to glory, folks. And that's what salvation is. It is the path to glory. And once you begin, you must come to the end because the essence of salvation is that it brings us to glory...to the image of Christ.

Now, as we look at the verses, verses 17 through 30, there are three great features that I want you to see. And we'll just give you the three and we'll work our way through them in the weeks that it takes. And I don't want to hurry because I think this is so very important. At the same time, I don't want to drag things, so we'll move along as best we can.

Three things to note: the incomparable gain of glory, the inexpressible groans of glory and the infallible guarantee of glory...the incomparable gains of glory, the inexpressible groans of glory and the infallible guarantee of glory.

Now for tonight, let's look at the incomparable gain of glory, verses 17 and 18. Verse 17 says, "And if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together, for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Now the whole theme of glory is introduced to us by linking it up with the prior passage dealing with our sonship, our adoption. You'll remember that it told us in verses 14, 15 and 16 that we had become the children of God by adoption and we knew that we were the children of God because verse 14 says we are led by the Spirit of God, verse 15 says we are given by the Spirit of God the intimacy that allows us to cry, Abba, Father. We are freed from bondage. We don't fear God anymore. We rush in to His presence having the sense that we're His children and we're welcome. And then verse 16, the Spirit confirms our sonship by bearing testimony along with our spirit that we are the children of God, that's a subjective ministry of confirmation in our own hearts. And the essence of 14 to 16 is simply to say we're children of God. You see, we're secure because we belong to God. We're His children and He doesn't turn on His own children. He brings His own children to full maturity. In fact, He brings them to glory. And that's where verse 17 moves in. The Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit, leads His children to glory, brings them all the way to the fulfilling of the plan.

And so, 14 to 16 affirms that we are the children of God. And then we pick up verse 17, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Now if we are the children of God, it

says, and by the way, I want you to understand what the word "if" means. It's not a doubt. Not at all. It's the word ei, it's e-i in Greek. And it introduces what is called a fulfilled condition. And the best way to translate it is "since." Since ... since children, since we are children, and that's just been proven in verses 14 to 16, since we are children we are also heirs. And we know we're children, Galatians 3:26 says, "For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." If you put your faith in Christ Jesus, listen, you are a son of God. And if you are a son of God, then you are an heir. Then you will receive the inheritance. You see, again there's no gap. If you're a son, you're an heir, if you're an heir; you're going to receive what is promised to the heirs of God, the joint-heirs with Christ. Wonderful to realize that. Since we are children, we are also heirs.

So, as we talk about the incomparable gain of glory, let's first of all talk about the heirs. Who are these people that receive glory? Well, they're the children of God. Galatians 3:26, "The children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." We have become heirs to God's merciful gifts. In Hebrews 1:14, just draw one verse to your attention for a moment that will help you to understand this, in talking about the angels in chapter 1 of Hebrews, he closes that section by saying this, "Are they not all ministering spirits?" Angels, basically, are servants. "Sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." And that's a great title for Christians. They are heirs of salvation; they are the ones who have been given the promise. In James 2:5, "Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom?" We are those who are the heirs by faith in Christ. And Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance."

So, when you were saved you were made an heir and God never disinherits anybody. He's always faithful. Philippians 1:6 says, "He that began a good work in you will ... what?...perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And it begins by saying, "Being confident of this very thing." And so there is a confidence that if you have been saved, you've been saved unto glory. If you are a child of God and you cry in your heart, "Abba, Father," and you sense the leading of the Spirit, and you sense the confirmation of the Spirit witnessing in your spirit that you belong to God, then you can be confident also that by that testimony of the Holy Spirit that you're a child, if you're a child you're also what? An heir. That's a wonderful thing.

Now remember that Paul here in writing to the church at Rome is picking up some of the Roman custom, and Roman tradition. And of course, as we saw last time, their tradition was that when an adopted child was brought into a family, that adopted child was in no way inferior to any other child. In fact, in some cases was actually superior to the rest by the choice of the father who adopted them. But I want you to make a little distinction in your mind and it's helpful if you can understand the background. In the Jewish culture, who really received the inheritance in the family? The first born. And Jewish custom and tradition was to give a double portion of everything to the first born. That was not the case in the Roman tradition, in the Roman custom. In the Roman custom, all...all of them were given equal parts, all of them were given equal parts, all were equal inheritors, even the adopted

children. And Paul in writing to the Romans is using the Roman form of passing on the inheritance as his analogy. So when he says here we're all heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, it's a statement of equality that affirms that we'll all equally inherit. And Roman law, also, we learned that what you received by inheritance was more surely yours than the things you possessed by purchase. Nothing was as securely yours as that which you inherited. And so Paul uses the Roman idea to confirm the equal heirship as well as the security of that inheritance for the analogy of the security of our no condemnation status.

And if God according to John 1:12 has given you the authority to be His son, there's no indication in Scripture ever that He disinherits one who is His own. And so, the text simply says since children then heirs ... there's no loss ... there's no loss.

Look with me for a moment...I commented earlier on Galatians 3:26, I want to draw you to two verses in Galatians that I think are very important to our understanding. Galatians 3:29, and we're going to study some great things so stay with me and hang in there in your thinking. In Galatians 3:29, "If ye be Christ's," if you belong to Christ, "then are you Abraham's seed." In other words, then you really are the fruit of faith, Abraham is the model of faith, Abraham is the example of faith, he's the pattern of faith and everyone who comes after him who believes God is said to be, in a sense, a child of Abraham by faith. He's the father of the faithful, Paul calls him. "So, if you're Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And again, it's the same idea. If you are Christ's and if you are a child that manifests the same faith that characterized Abraham, then you are an heir.

Chapter 4 of Galatians verse 7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." And again it affirms the same thing. Great statements of finality. Great statements of security.

And so, we meet the heirs who will receive the incomparable gain of glory. Who are they? They are the children. The children who in their hearts are confirmed as those who belong to God by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who are able to cry, "Abba" because they sense an intimacy with God through the access provided them by Jesus Christ. They are the children who are led by the Spirit.

Now, after we've seen the inheritors, or the heirs, let's look secondly at the source. Again, back to verse 17, "Heirs of God..." and the indication of that statement is that God is the source of our inheritance. It is God who gives us the inheritance. God is the one who laid it up for us. God is the one who passes it on to us. We inherit directly from Him.

In Colossians 3:24, it says: "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance." Of the Lord you will receive it. It is God's to give. And He gives it at His own sovereign discretion to those who are His children.

There's a similar indication to this one and I think it's so beautiful ... in Matthew 25:34, at the judgment of the sheep and goats, as it's commonly said, in verse 34, "Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Oh, what a thought! We inherit from God something prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. God is the source and God planned us into that inheritance before the world began. From everlasting to everlasting, I change not, He says. And if we have been planned in as His inheritors, He will dispense to us the inheritance. And the excellence, you see, of the inheritance depends upon the one who gives it, right? I mean, some of us are heirs of people who haven't got anything to give. But to be an heir of God is to inherit every thing...every-thing ... everything that He possesses will be ours, heirs of God. It's an incomprehensible thought.

There's a kind of beautiful thought in the midst of this and just to...I give it to you for your meditation. In Psalm 73, verse 25, the psalmist says this: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Another occasion he said, "My heart pants after Thee as a deer pants after the water brook." In Lamentations 3:24, I think it's 24, yes, "The Lord is my portion."

Now those verses kind of indicate to us that the thing we would most want to inherit in the midst of all that God possesses is that we would want to inherit God Himself, right? We would want the Lord to be our portion. And I think that's exactly what the Scripture is saying. In the midst of all the things in all the universe that we could possess, the best thing is to possess God Himself. In Revelation 21:3 it says when we get to the new Jerusalem, the glorious eternal city, behold the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

The best part of the inheritance is to inherit God Himself. Oh what a thought...what a thought. So, the heirs--those who are sons. The source the God of the universe. What about the extent? The extent of the incomparable gain of glory? Verse 17 says, "We are joint-heirs with Christ." In other words, we will receive an inheritance to the same extent that Jesus Christ will receive. That's the extent of our inheritance. Someday when we get to heaven we're going to get everything that God has promised to give Jesus Christ. What a thought ... staggering. I mean, it's staggering. Because everything is going to be brought into subjection to Him, everything. Look at Ephesians 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." How many spiritual blessings? All of them. And then he goes through them and talks about them and says in verse 11, "We have an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will." What an inheritance. Verse 10 says that He will gather together in one, all things in Christ which are in heaven, on earth, even in Him." Everything ultimately resolves in Christ and we inherit all of it. I mean, there won't be anything that doesn't belong to us. It's incredible.



Jesus describes Himself as the heir of all things, Hebrews 1:2, you know that passage. Do you remember it? "God who at sundry times, diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hast in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things." If He's heir of all things and I'm a joint-heir with Christ, then I'm going to inherit all things, too. And it's a wonderful thing to think about because it isn't like, "Well, all right," the Lord says, "Look, I've got all you children now and I'm going to give everybody equal, so you get this piece, you get that piece, you get this piece, you get that piece," and so we've all got our little square shot of glory. No, no it wouldn't be like a father who say had six children and he said, "All right, now I've got so much money and so much property and so much land, and I'm going to divide it up equally. You get this piece, you get that piece, you get one-sixth, you get one-sixth, you get one-sixth." It isn't that way at all.

It's like a father who looked at all six of his children and said, "Look, you all get all of it." You say, "That would never work." You're right. Because they're all sinners. But in heaven it will work fine. And in heaven it isn't going to be piecemealed out so everybody gets an equal share, in heaven everybody gets everything and nobody's in conflict with anybody ever about anything. We all possess it all. All knowledge, all wisdom, all glory, all blessing, all, all there is.

Now, if that doesn't help you want to go to heaven, I don't know what will. And may I say it's an act of grace beyond conception because when we are made joint-heirs with Christ, we receive by grace what He receives by right? We will literally, and this is a great thought--Matthew 25:21--when the Lord said this at the judgment, we literally will enter in to the joy of our Lord. The same joy that He had. It says that when He endured the cross, He endured it--in Hebrews--for the...what? Joy that was set before Him. What joy? Hebrews 12:2, well, He knew that beyond the cross was the joy of the glory of inheritance and when we come to Christ, we enter into that same joy because we inherit the same thing. He says in Revelation, "We will sit with Him on His throne." We will reign with Him. Revelation 20 verse 4 says ... 3:21 says we'll sit on His throne, Revelation 20 verse 4 says we'll reign with Him. We'll inherit a new name. We'll inherit a crown of gold, it says in Revelation 3:12 and 4:4. We'll bear His image. First Corinthians 15:49, "We'll bear the image of the heavenly." And as I said earlier, 1 John says in chapter 3 verse 2, "We'll be like Him for we'll see Him as He is." Luke 22:30 says, "We'll gather with Him and sit down at His table." I mean, there won't be any place we can't go. There won't be any access we can't have. We'll inherit everything that eternity has. Boy, what a thought.

Look at the end of that first verse we're looking at, verse 17. So that we may also be glorified together." Oh what a thought! We ... we enter into the same glory of Jesus Christ. You see ... remember 2 Corinthians 8:9, just thought of it, it says that He was rich but for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made... what?...rich. He was rich. He became poor that we might become as rich as He was before He became poor. And in John 17 He says, "Father, restore to Me the glory I had with You before the world began," and that's the glory we're going to get. Now

we're not going to be equal to Him in the sense of deity, but we're going to be equal to Him in the sense of inheriting all that deity possesses. They'll be no limitations. There are no "No Trespassing" signs in heaven, there are no "Don't touch" signs, there are no "forbidden" signs, there are no "You break it, you pay for it" signs. None of that stuff in heaven. And in John 17:22 it says, and I love this statement, I've loved it for years, "And the glory," He says to the Father, "which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." Isn't that incredible? Oh, it's a staggering thing...staggering... just staggering.

You say, "Well, aren't we kind of intruding on the Lord? I mean, isn't He up there saying, 'Boy, Father, grace is enough, I mean, You get them into heaven, but You've got to give them everything that's Mine? Don't I get anything just for My own?'" You might get the idea that you're intruding on an area you have no business being in. Well, if you fear that, I want you to hear the words of the Lord Himself in John 17:22 to 24, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and Thou in Me that they may be made perfect in one that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and loved Me as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world." He says it's My will that You do that. This is no intrusion on Him. It's My will that they be with Me where I am and behold all the glory there is to behold. And you inherit it in the sense that it's there and it's on display for you. It's a staggering thing. It's impossible to comprehend this.

And we need to think more about it, friends, cause we get so bogged down in the earth, don't we? We need to escape sometimes to the thought of heaven. And the greatness of this inheritance is beyond our comprehension. It is of grace not works, right? It is of grace not works. I mean, we didn't do anything to earn it. We weren't even born in the right family; we were of our father the devil. We had to be adopted. And we were adopted by sovereign will.

It says in Titus 3:7, "Being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." It's by grace. It's by grace.

In Hebrews 9:15, it says this, what a great statement, "That we who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." It's by grace. It's by the sovereign call of God. We did nothing to deserve it. And it is a covenant. Once God promised it to us, He had to fulfill it. God never breaks His covenant.

In Hebrews 6:12 it says that we need to be patient, waiting to inherit the promise. Does God lie? No, He keeps His word. It is a promise. It is glorious. It's ... it's beyond description. Paul one time was caught up into the third heaven and came back and said, "I can't tell you what I saw, I can't tell you. I saw things too wonderful to be uttered," right? I just don't think there were any words. It was just beyond any possibility of description. And the Apostle Paul longed for that glory, that inheritance. In Philippians 3:20 when he said our citizenship is really in heaven from which we look for the Savior,

the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our lowly body that it may be fashioned like His glorious body. See. I mean, he said ... we just keep looking up there and if you're not looking up and if you're not waiting for the Second Coming of Christ and you're not anticipating heaven, then you're simply too tied down to this planet. It's a blessed comprehensive glorious hope. It's a life-changing hope, too, you know. John says in 1 John 3, "He that hath this hope in himself...what?...purifies himself." Boy, when you know what you're heading for, you sort of clean your life up. You know, I say to myself someday I'm going to inherit everything that Jesus Christ possesses, I'm going to enter into heaven, I'm going to be like Christ, I'm going to be in eternal glory, I sort of ought to get myself in line for that. I want to be the kind of person that a glory inheritor should be. It's life changing.

And it's so secure ... it's so secure. First Peter 1:4 says it better than it's perhaps been said anywhere. "We have been promised an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," I love this, "that fadeth not away." Everything in the earth fades away, grows old, gets defiled, corrupts. It is an incorruptible, undefiled, fading-not-away inheritance, reserved in heaven for you...for you who are kept by the power of God. Isn't that great? You don't keep yourself saved anymore than you got yourself saved. You're kept by the power of God. And there's an inheritance ... your name is on that list, it was written down before the world began, wasn't it? And I think when you look ahead like that; it ought to be cause for present joy. Next time you get a hangnail or something, you ought to see it in perspective.

In Romans 5:2 it says, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." I mean, if I really live this way and I really anticipate what God has for me in heaven, then nothing that happens to me on this earth is an issue. And that is why Paul could say, "I know how to be abase and how to abound. I really don't care, folks. If I live, I live unto the Lord. If I die unto the Lord, so whether I live or die, I'm the Lord's and I'm not about to get hung up down here." And that's what our Lord meant when He said the stuff that matters is up there, friends, so lay up your treasure there where moth and rust doesn't corrupt and where thieves don't break through and steal. So all this is cause for present joy. And so no matter what happens to your body, nomatter what happens to your circumstances, heaven is where we're going.

So, we meet the heirs of this incomparable gain of glory, the source is God, the extent--equal inheritance with Christ Himself. And the proof of it...the proof of it? Verse 17, "...if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together." Now this is a very essential thing. How's ... where's the proof? I mean, how do you know this is going to come? Where's the guarantee?

It comes to us through suffering. I think the Spirit of God brings suffering into our life and I think He has to do ... He has--and the idea of the word suffering has to do with persecution, mockery, scorn, ridicule, whatever comes to us by virtue of our union with Christ. That's part of it. And you can mark out a child of God because he'll be one the world doesn't really like. He'll be one that doesn't fit in. And persecution and ridicule and mockery go to all extremes. Sometimes it's a light kind of affliction; sometimes it's martyrdom and everything in between. But we've all been ostracized or alienated or

looked down on, mocked in some way or another for our faith in Jesus Christ if indeed it is faith in Jesus Christ. Because he simply says here we are the heirs if we're the ones who are suffering. We are the ones who will be glorified together with the Lord if we're the ones that are suffering. So it's a statement of fact about us. Christians are going to be alienated from the world.

Now let me just help you to understand what the phrase means because of the Greek. The word "if" here, again is a different word than the earlier one. It is the word *apar* and it's a very interesting and important word. It means "inasmuch." Or it means "since," again. And the way it should perhaps read best, "If children then heirs," or "Since children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ inasmuch as we suffer with Him." In other words, it is a mark of our identity. It is assumed to be a reality. Second Timothy 3:12, "All that live godly in this present age will suffer persecution." There's no way around it. It's just part of it. And *apar* translated "since" there has been a very traditional way to translate it and I think that's the way it ought to be translated. I think it is a proof of the fact that we belong to Christ. Suffering is a necessary element in our lives. If you're a true Christian, there's going to be suffering. I mean, that is reiterated to us time and again.

In 2 Timothy 2:11, it's a faithful saying. "If we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him. If we suffer, we'll reign with Him." It's a faithful saying. In other words, this is true as true can be. If you're going to be one of those who reign with Him, you're going to be one of those who suffers with Him. The true Christians, you see, are a rebuke to the world. A hostile, God-hating, Christ-rejecting world doesn't take kindly to believers. And may I suggest to you that the more you suffer, the more you grow? First Peter 5:10, "After you suffered a while the Lord will make you perfect." That's right. The more you suffer, the more you grow. The more you grow, the more you're fitted with a capacity to glorify the Lord. You see, 1 Peter 5:10 says, "God has called us unto His eternal glory." Oh, that's great. "Called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus after you have suffered a while."

You say, "Well, why do we have to suffer? I mean, if You called us to eternal glory, why don't we just get on with the glory? I mean, I just soon get saved and leave. Why do I have to hang around and suffer?" I'll tell you why. Because the more you suffer here, the greater will be your capacity in eternity to glorify God. Did you hear that? The more you suffer here, the greater capacity you'll have to glorify God in eternity.

You say, "Where did you get that?" Second Corinthians chapter 4, for an initial place, 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse ... now verse 8, I want to just flow through this, I want you to watch this, this is tremendous. Paul says, "We're troubled on every side," verse 8, "not distressed. We're persecuted," verse 9, "and we're always bearing about in our body the dying of our Lord Jesus." In other words, he says we live on the edge of death all the time. We're persecuted and so forth and so forth. Verse 11, "We who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake. Death works in us and life in you." In other words, to bring life to you, we have to put our life on the line. And he's talking about what it costs. But we do all this, the end of verse 15, for the glory of God. And verse 16 picks it up, "For

which cause we faint not but though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

You know what happens to one who suffers in the cause of Christ? There's an inward infusing of divine strength . Peter puts it this way: "The Spirit of grace and glory rests on you." And then in verse 17, this monumental statement, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Did you hear that? The more you suffer in this life, the greater will be your capacity for glory in the life to come. It's no different than what the Bible talks about in terms of rewards. And I believe rewards are capacities to radiate the glory of God ... capacities to serve the glory of God ... capacities to take in the fullness of the glory of our inheritance. And the more you suffer here, the more you learn about God and the more you abandon yourself to His service lovingly and the more you take of the rebuke of the world, the closer you draw yourself to Him, the more you're infused with His strength, the more you are fitted to bear an eternal weight of glory. So when we suffer in this life, beloved, it is not for no reason at all, it is to increase our capacity for an eternal weight of glory. And only God knows the fullness of what that means. But I'll tell you one thing. On those terms, I'm willing to suffer because I'm going to have spend forever there and I want to be able to glorify God as much as I possibly can. And so I don't run from that. Somebody said the other day, "We'd like to join your church but I'm afraid of what my mother would say." Don't tell me that. Don't tell me that. Because you don't understand this truth. Whatever affliction you get, whatever ostracizing, whatever difficulty you have is only to give you light affliction which works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Verse 18, "So we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen." The things that are seen are just temporal and the things that are not seen are eternal.

So, Paul says, in a sense, I welcome the persecution, it increases the capacity eternally that I'll have to give God glory.

Look at 1 Peter 1...1 Peter 1:6, "In this ye greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be you are in heaviness through manifold trials." Heh. He's just said you have an inheritance, verse 4, reserved in heaven, verse 5, kept by God, ready to be revealed in the last time. And you say, "Oh boy, inheritance, inheritance... I'm excited about it."

"And in this you greatly rejoice." Sure you do. Rejoice in that inheritance. "But now for a season, if need be, you're in heaviness through manifold trials." Why? "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honor and glory." When? When? "At the appearing of Jesus Christ whom having not seen, you love."

When-when does all this trial stuff going to pay off? It's all going to pay off with glory. You know what I believe? I believe that the eternal capacity to glorify God is dependent upon the willingness to suffer for the sake of Christ here. Therefore those who will be the greatest in terms of the capability of

glorifying God through eternity will be those who suffered the most for the cause of Jesus Christ. There is a purpose ... there is a purpose. The more we lose our life here, the more we will radiate the glory there.

We shouldn't be surprised, Jesus said in John 15, if they hated you ... if they hate Me, they'll hate you, right? They persecuted Me, they'll persecute you. So you don't flee that. You don't run from that. You don't compromise... "I don't want to say anything that's going to get me in trouble." Boy, you know, it's just amazing what compromises go on among quote/unquote Christians today. "Well, we don't want to offend anyone. We don't want to pay the price for our faith." Second Corinthians 1:5, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our comfort abounds by Christ." You don't have to fear anything. As much as you suffer, that's how much the comfort of Christ is going to bring peace to your heart. Some people are afraid to get into any kind of a deal like that cause they think it ... they'll never be able to handle it. I've had people say to me, you know, "How can you get into a situation and say that? You know, how... why is it that you can write articles like you do, don't you think you're going to get in trouble? Don't you get a lot of negative mail?" Sure, and for every letter that comes negatively, I welcome the consolation of the Spirit of God. And I wouldn't trade that for anything. To speak the truth and to say what needs to be said and to take a stand and to let things fly if they need to fly and then to get whatever you're going to get in terms of trial or tribulation or persecution or alienation or whatever ... I mean, I got a letter the other day that was absolutely unbelievable. I can't even repeat the words ... what I was called. And all the time I was reading those words,

I was being affirmed in my heart by the consolation of Christ, the comfort of the Spirit. And I believe in taking that stand, there's a sense in which the light affliction that comes back only confirms for me in the glories of eternity a far greater weight, a capacity to glorify my Lord. And that's what Paul meant in Philippians 3:10 when he said that I long to have fellowship with Christ's sufferings. He said I bear in my body, to the Galatians, the marks of Jesus Christ. To the Colossians he said in 1:249 "I fill up in my own body the afflictions meant for Christ and oh what a privilege it is to bear the blows of Him who bore the blows for me." Great truth. So, suffering for Christ in this sin-cursed, Christ-hating world is normal for the Christian. It's routine stuff. We should be willing to do it because in so doing it we not only receive the consolation of the Spirit, but we are given a greater capacity in eternity to glorify God. And I wouldn't trade that for anything. Oh, to be able to glorify the one who gave Himself for me. What a great thought.

And of course, back to Romans 8, the end of that verse, verse 17, we will comment on verse 18, fear not, but the end of that verse talks about being glorified together, great thought, with Christ. He suffered, we suffer. He's glorified, we're glorified. It's a long way from the health-and-wealth doctrine, folks. It's a long way from the peace-and-prosperity doctrine. Christianity is not an escapism. And Christians, who want to avoid all conflict, limit their potential for reflecting God's glory forever.

So, we see the heirs of this incomparable gain of glory, the source, the extent, the proof and lastly, the comparison. It's very simple, verse 18. You say, "What brought you to this conclusion, Paul? Why are you willing to suffer so much?" "Because I reckon," and he's not from the south, that's not what he means, that's not the term, the word *logizomai* means "I come to the settled conclusion by way of reasoning." I come to a strong affirmation. And that affirmation is this, "...that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." What a statement.

You see, the reason he can live the way he lives is because he knows there's no comparison. The sufferings, the word is *pathema*, it's used particularly of the suffering of persecuted Christians, 1 Peter 5:9; 1 Corinthians 1:6 and 7. It's also used of the sufferings of Christ, interestingly enough, in Hebrews 2:10. So, it was the suffering of Christ,

the *pathema* of Christ and it is the *pathema* of the believer, the mutual suffering for the cause of Jesus Christ in this present age as opposed to the age to come, in the here and now, that isn't even worthy to be compared. So we don't back out of suffering here, we would rather suffer and receive the glory to come. Any suffering in this world fades into triviality when compared to future glory. And the comfort in the darkest hour of the Christian's trial is just that, that no matter what you suffer here it fades into absolute nothingness in comparison to what we will inherit in the glory ... look at it ... that shall be revealed in us. Not to us, not for us, not on us, but in us.

I guess maybe Daniel said it as well as anybody. Daniel 12:3, he says: "And they that be wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament." The glory revealed in us ... we're going to be like eternal stars, the glory shining out. First Peter 5:1 says we are partakers of His glory. Oh what a thought.

You know, when the world suffers, they have no hope. What do you think goes through the hearts of people? For example, you take a mother who loses a child. I've seen this at funerals. She looks into the casket. I've seen another lift the baby out of the casket and press that child to her breast knowing that because she didn't know Christ... there was no hope to ever see that life again...no hope. People who live only for the here and now, nothing in the future. There's no resolution to anything. There's no righting the wrongs. There's no ... there's no giving rest to the weary. There's no ... there's no equity. There's never anything that's going to be different than it is, it's all right here and now--all the injustice, all the pain, all the loneliness, all the hopelessness of a no future view. But for believers, we know it will all be okay over there and everything will be righted that's wrong, won't it? And all the injustice will be justice and all the poverty will become riches and all the pain will be gone. And we live in the light of that hope. And so, because we know the glory that shall be revealed in us, it's far beyond anything that this life could ever bring of pain, we consider that the suffering isn't even worthy to think about. Don't even think about it. It isn't even an issue. Doesn't even enter into our minds. We're so abandoned to the eternal weight of glory.

Our suffering comes from men. Our glory comes from God. There's no comparison, right? Our suffering is earthly. Our glory is heavenly. Our suffering is short. Our glory's forever. Our suffering is light. Our glory is heavy. Our suffering is in this human body. Our glory's in total perfection of personhood.

And so, the incomparable gain of glory ... and it is, I believe, the wonderful ministry of the Spirit who tells us we're sons of God, who confirms that in our crying "Abba, Father," who witnesses with our spirit that we belong to God. And by that ministry of the Spirit, He confirms that if we're children, then we're heirs. And if we're heirs, we are going to inherit an incomparable glory that makes anything in this life of pain fade into utter insignificance.

And you know something? It will happen because if you're His child, you're His heir. I close with this verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and 24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you holy and I pray your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

See, that's our prayer. And then listen to this, "Faithful is He that called you who also will do it." He'll do it. He'll keep you till that day. What a great thing. That's our hope.

Well, that's only the beginning of what's in this chapter in this particular section. Let's pray.

Father, we are in awe of Your grace and we count it a privilege to suffer. We feel guilty because in our part of the world, in our little slice of history, seems like we don't suffer very much. Lord, we're not looking for that, we don't have a martyr complex, but we don't want to compromise. We want to be bold; we want to be representing Jesus Christ, whatever it costs of alienation, being ostracized. Maybe, Lord, it's just that we're not that vocal about it so people don't know who we really belong to. Help, us not to try to avoid the light affliction in this world and therefore forfeit the full weight of glory potential that lies in the world to come. O God, how wonderful. We're in no-condemnation status and we are they who will inherit an incomparable inheritance of glory. Nothing to compare to it. We thank You. We are not worthy, we confess that. But, O God, we want to give You all that we have, all that we are in living expressions of thanks. We want us to be all You want us to be. We want to suffer, if so be it, for Christ's sake while at the same time representing Jesus Christ in a Christless world. And, Father, help us not to get earthbound, but to long as the Apostle did for the world to come, for the glory that shall be revealed in us. We do not boast, we are humbled for we are unworthy sinners. We do not deserve a no-condemnation status with You and we do not understand why You have chosen us, but what is darkness to our intellects is sunshine to our hearts. And so we thank You for Christ's sake. Amen.



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