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

**Believers' Groans for Glory**
Scripture: Romans 8:23-25
Code: 45-62

Open your Bible, if you will now, to the eighth chapter of Romans. What a happy, sacred privilege we have tonight to get into the Word of God. I want to say how grateful I am for you that are here. Thank the Lord for those who faithfully come to study, to feed, to learn, to grow from the Word of God.

And I think a lot about the life of our church. I think about the early days when everything was going fast and furious and, oh, we were sort of a glad, happy, small group of about five, six, seven hundred people and it was as if a bomb was exploding all around here and no matter what we did, everybody came. I remember one Sunday night I preached on "Why the Antichrist Must Be a Jew." The place was packed. After I preached, some guy came up to me and said, "You're wrong." And he opened the Scripture to me and explained some things and so the next Sunday night I preached on “Why the Antichrist Must Be a Gentile." And then we had a tape for each view.

But you know no one really even cared. We were having such a great time; no one even cared who the Antichrist was, to be honest with you. God gave us some great days and the days when, we were looking at some old photographs the other night at home the other night and I saw pictures of the chicken coops that used to be out here in the parking lot. And on Sunday we... We used some of them and old bums lived in the other ones. You don't know about that but that's really true. There were saw old drunken derelicts that lived in the back. We tried everything we could to evangelize then. We didn't evict them and they occupied some of the chicken coops and we had our classes in the other ones. And it was a sad day when they bulldozed the chicken coops, to be honest with you. That's where the Grace Book Shack got its name. It started out as a book shack, it really was a shack. And we saw what the Lord had done.

I went through some of those pictures and began to see all of the things that the Lord... I remember one Sunday night; we talked about building this building. And a young couple came to me and said, "Well, we had saved all our money for our honeymoon, but we want to have that new place to worship, so here it all is," and gave it to me. And another night after church, I went back to my office and there was a paper sack in front of the door and I thought, "Oh, somebody's left some oranges or apples," and I reached down to pick it up and I almost broke my arm. It was completely filled with silver bars and a little note that said: "I don't want anyone to know who it is, but this is a gift from me

to the Lord for the building of this building." And that's the way it went, in those great exciting times. We used to preach in the chapel and there were as many people on the platform some nights as there were in the pews. All I packed around us everywhere. And those were great times.

And then, for many of you, you remember when we were in the gym over there that we used to seat people in the parking lot just facing away from the sun. They couldn't see anything and we had a little speaker out there so they could hear the message. And I remember everybody came to Grace. It just seemed like it was the place. And we had three morning services and we packed them in.

I remember one time some people were working on the sound system, so they said when they choir sings, you go to the back of the auditorium and listen, see if the choir sounds any better with these new speakers. And so I went to the back and a lady came in the back door and she had a dog on a leash and it was properly dressed, it had a little red sweater and a rhinestone collar, but she came in the back door with this dog. And I realized that this was a little unusual and I thought I'd watch the usher to see just what he did and she came right down the aisle during the singing of the number and he did kind of a double take before he realized what was happening. And went down about ten rows and stopped her and brought her to the back and I stood there just to hear what he would say. And this is the truth. He said, "I'm sorry, ma'am, you can't come in here with your dog, you...you can't do that." And this is exactly what she said, "I'm sorry, sir, but my dog has rededicated his life and we're on our way to the prayer room."

I mean, I'm telling you, God was doing tremendous things. Now we all concluded that that lady's elevator didn't go to the top floor. But everybody was involved at Grace in those days. I remember ... I remember my first Easter Sunday and some man would pick up his wife from Camarillo Mental Institution on the weekends and he decided that the best place to take her was Grace Church. And at the conclusion of my first Easter sermon, just about ten minutes from the end and I was coming to a closing, the resurrection message and she came out of the aisle and started caning down the middle aisle combat style on all fours like she was crawling under barbed wire. And the chapel was relatively small I and everyone looked and saw this lady about 55 years old snaking down the middle aisle. And so I hastily closed in prayer. And somebody picked her up and took her out and she made a little bit of noise.

One time I recall over there, I was preaching and we had the USC football team. In 1972, they won the national championship undefeated and I was kind of the chaplain for the team. And the line, the offensive line, sat in one spot. And a heckler came in and happened to sit right in the middle of them which made it very interesting. And he started to shout at me during the service, upon which he was

immediately removed, so fast I know he didn't know what happened to him. Last I saw, he went out the door about three feet off the ground with his feet going like this. In fact, we used to have a little slogan "Grace is where it's at." And the young people printed up T-shirts and you'd see T-shirts and bumper stickers all around, "Grace is where it's at." And people were trying to figure out what it was, but definitely this was where it was. And we were having great years.

And I really sense in God's wonderful timing and the grace of His goodness to us that we're still on the threshold of some great things ahead. We have our fun times. We have our novel experiences. But week after week, month after month, year after year, the thing that really thrills my heart, and I wanted to just take a moment to say it tonight, is that the folks keep coming out for the feeding of the Word of God. We know there are all kinds of way to entertain you. We know there are all kinds of ways to involve you in things that might be exciting and highly motivating and we can put on big campaigns to get you here and offer freebies and what else that we could think of, but we stay faithfully committed to the fact that the people of God are best served by the Word of God. And we're just grateful that you're faithful in that regard.

Well, having said that, let's look at Romans chapter 8. We're coming to the closing part of this great eighth chapter in our ongoing study of Romans. And tonight we're going to be looking at verses 23 and following. We' 11 see how far we get. But our marvelous text, which we began last time, or really the last couple of times beginning at verse 17, deals with the subject of the glorification of the believer, the time when we are fully the recipients of all that our salvation holds, when we enter into glory. The songs tonight have been about that, about heaven, about our great hope in Christ, someday to see Him. And Russ read 1 John how that when we see Him we'll be like Him. And that's really the heart of the message of the apostle Paul.

Now as you look at this marvelous section, verses 17 to 30, which is really one unit about glorification, in one part of this particular passage a very interesting Greek term appears. Its verb form is *stenaz*, and its noun is *stenagmos*. And it means to sigh or groan, to sigh or groan. And basically, the word has been defined by those who study the ancient Greek as the groanings or the sighings of one who is trapped in an undesirable circumstance, one who is caught in an undesirable situation which has no alleviation. It is the sighing of one who wishes for a better fate, a better place.

It is used, for example, in Acts 7:34, where in reciting something of the history of God's people in the Old Testament, it says: "I have certainly seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and I have heard their groaning and am come down to deliver them." And this was the Lord's word to Moses. He heard their groaning; they're groaning or sighing because they were in an undesirable circumstance

from which they sought to be delivered.

It's used again in Mark chapter 7 and verse 34 and I think it's worth a thought so that you'll understand the word. And there it says, "And looking up to heaven, He sighed and saith unto him, '*Ephphatha*,' that is, 'Be opened.'" And that, of course, is our Lord as He gives hearing to the deaf. Be sighed, too, because He was confronted with an undesirable circumstance and that was one who was in suffering due to sin and that caused the Lord to groan. It is used again in Hebrews 13:17, where it says that you are to obey those who have the rule over you for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. And if you're responsive and submissive, they'll do it with joy and not with groaning.

So, it is the kind of groaning or sighing that comes to one who is in a circumstance which is not desirable, the sighing of a longing soul wanting to be delivered from present situations.

Now in the passage that we're going to be looking at tonight, beginning really in verse 19 as we review for a moment, we see three great groans, three sighs and we've called them "the groans for glory," the groans for glory. First, we see that the creation groans. And then we see that the believer groans. And then we see that the Holy Spirit groans as well.

Now just to give you a broader context, the eighth chapter of Romans, as you know, is a chapter that begins with the great statement: "There is therefore now no condemnation." And its whole intent is to show us that we are secure in Christ, that those who are in Christ will never know condemnation. There is no judgment; there is no ultimate penalty for sin to be exacted on those who are in Christ.

Now the eighth chapter begins with saying there's no condemnation, then shows us why. And it is because of the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who confirms our adoption in verses 14 to 16, who empowers us for victory in verses 12 and 13, who changes our nature in verses 5 to 11, who enables us to fulfill the law in verse 4 and who frees us from sin and death in verses 2 and 3. So it is the enabling of the Spirit of God that secures to us this no-condemnation reality. God promises that we will be never condemned and the Spirit secures that. I frankly believe that's...that's essentially the ministry we call the sealing of the Spirit. He marks us out and holds us as those who belong to God.

Now in verses 17 to 30, the particular emphasis is that the Holy Spirit guarantees our glory, that the Holy Spirit guarantees our glory. And He does it, as we'll see in verse 26, by interceding in our behalf.

So, the Holy Spirit, then, is given to us in really for many great and fulfilling purposes in the plan of God, but none more significant than to secure our glory. It isn't just the promise of God that guarantees we're secure; it is also the ministry of the Holy Spirit as well, as the high priestly work of Christ. And so, in Ephesians 1, when it tells us that we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise who is the earnest, or the down payment of our inheritance, and then further, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory, we know what it means. The Spirit is given to us to guarantee our glory.

Now when you became a Christian, God gave you His Holy Spirit and He gave you the Holy Spirit among other ministries to guarantee that you make it to glory. It is not just a promise from God, it is a promise enacted in the ministry of the Spirit of God. And that is why when someone comes along and says, “Well, now you received Jesus Christ and you became a Christian, but...but you've got to hang on or you might lose your salvation in the process," they don't understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit's ministry to seal the believer against the day of redemption. It is the Holy Spirit's ministry to guarantee that we get from salvation present to salvation future; that we get from the redemption of the soul to the redemption of the body. He is the down payment on the ultimate purchased possession. And the ultimate possession is not finally purchased until the glorification of our body, but He's the down payment and God has put on lay-away, as it were, every redeemed soul to be reclaimed fully in eternity and the guarantee of that is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And so it is the Holy Spirit, then, that maintains in us that no-condemnation status. He keeps us pure unto glory. And so this is His marvelous ministry of guaranteeing our glory. And it's climaxed, then, by the statements relative to that ministry in verses 26 and 27. We may not get there tonight but we won't worry about that. I’11 be back in a...I think a couple of weeks. And somebody said that I'd been on vacation. I haven't yet, but I'm going to. I've been preaching and having a great time. And that's kind of a vacation for me. I get withdrawals if I go three days without preaching and so I become very nerve-wracking to my family so I go someplace and preach and then I feel a lot better. But I will get away for about a week of rest coming up.

But we want to look at this beginning in verse 23, kind of where we left off anyway tonight, and see how far we get. Now keep in mind that from verses 17 to 27...or 17 to 30, rather, we have this guarantee of glory. But from verses 19 to 27, we have the groans of glory, the groans of glory. And they are marvelous things to behold. We call them the inexpressible groans of glory as we anticipate a better condition, as we anticipate what God has prepared for them that love Him.

Now you'll remember the last time we looked at this chapter that I took you to verses 19 through 22 and we talked about the groaning of creation. You remember that? We talked about the fact that creation groans, Verse 19: "For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God."

Now all of animate and inanimate creation waits for the glory of the sons of God, for the full manifestation. Because when men fell, the world was cursed and so was the whole universe, right? Nature's destiny is tied to the destiny of man. And so we said then that when man was fallen in the garden and God cursed man, the curse extended to all of creation. We saw that in Genesis 3:17 to 19. And so here we find then that creation itself is personified as sighing and groaning for a glorious future. Creation itself is seen as if it were groaning for the removal of the curse that is on it. And it will come. It will come simultaneous, verse 19 says, with the manifestation of the sons of God, the full unveiling of God's children, the full unveiling of the glory that He has committed to His beloved. When we are glorified, when ultimately all God's children are fully revealed in their glory for eternity, then the curse will be removed.

Now we saw several factors in this regard in verse 20, as this is explained further, "For the creation was made subject to vanity," or futility. It was cursed. “Not willingly,” that is not because the creation did anything to deserve it, it merely was a victim of the Fall of man and the curse of God upon him. And that is what it says. It was made subject to futility or to the curse, not willingly, not because it willed to do so, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope. In other words: God. When God brought a curse on man, He extended the curse to the whole creation and so the creation became a victim of the curse. In Isaiah 24:6, for example, it says: "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth." And Jeremiah, in chapter 12, talks about the land mourning and the herbs of the field withering because of the wickedness that dwells in the land. It even says the beasts are consumed and the birds are consumed. In other words, the whole of the universe is cursed.

But then verse 21, "The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.” It also shall enter into the glorious liberation of the children of God. And so, when we are liberated, when we are freed unto glory, when we enter the presence of God and are made like Jesus Christ; and no longer is there any sin, sorrow, sickness or death, the creation as well will have the curse removed. And that's what it means in Revelation 22:3 when it says: "There was no more curse."

So, there's hope in this. And that is why creation groans. It is hoping, as it says at the end of verse 20, it is hoping for the deliverance that is to come. And it comes concurrently with the liberation of the

children of God. Now if you want a term for it, I gave you the term "cosmic regeneration." When men fell the whole universe went. When we're glorified, the whole universe is going to be glorified with us. This is the cosmic regeneration.

Now some folks asked the question last time, they said, "Well now wait a minute, John, when you were talking about that, you just sort of gave us a very general picture." And that is right. There is clearly taught in the Bible, and you can go back to the Old Testament and you can see it in the New as well, that God is going to redo the entire universe. In fact, we hear about the new heavens and the new earth. Now we are only talking about it in general, and so is Paul. He doesn't say anything, for example, in verses 19 to 22, other than that the creation groans and waits for its glory. He doesn't say how it's going to happen, he doesn't say how it's going to be done, he doesn't say what the intervals of time are, he doesn't say what the sequence of events are, he doesn't discuss the phases, he just says it's going to happen. And I gave you many scriptures that affirm that reality.

But I want to just mention to you that they're probably three facets that you ought to note in the recreation. The first one is the destruction of the present system there will be a destruction of the present cursed earth. And it is not an instantaneous and total and complete destruction in the sense that it all totally happens in one moment. There seems to be a sort of a phasing. For example, if you read in the literature of the New Testament dealing with eschatology in the book of Revelation, you will find that there is a sequence of events in which the earth begins to fall apart, right? And there's a sequence of events in which the sky begins to collapse, stars fall, darkness, moon turns to blood. We know about that from Joel's prophecy. We come down to the earth and what happens? The waters are cursed, both salt water and fresh water. The land is cursed. There's death everywhere. That which grows is cursed; life on the earth in many forms is cursed in the sort of a phasing operation.

And so, from the time of the mid-point of the tribulation on, particularly in rapid-fire succession at the end of that seven-year period, I believe there will be a sequence of devastating destructions upon the earth. And it will be God systematically destroying the present system, even the present ecological system, the earthly or universal physical system, as well as man who is set against Him.

Then when you go into the millennial kingdom, you enter into phase one of the recreation. And the lion lies down with the lamb and the desert blossoms like a rose and all kinds of marvelous things happen. But that isn't the end, that's only phase one, that's only a taste of what is to come. At the end of the kingdom, you have the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, Revelation 21. And that is the eternal state in which there is no more curse.

So, I wanted you to know that so you won't be confused. All of creation is longing for this to happen. It will ultimately happen when the tribulation is over, the millennium is over and there's a total cosmic regeneration in the new heaven and the new earth. The curse will then be removed, Revelation 22:3. But prior to that there will be a building up in the sequence of destruction events and then the reconstruction that occurs during the wondrous time known as the millennial kingdom.

Now some prophetic passages, when they describe the new earth, are speaking of its millennial elements. Some of them are speaking of its eternal elements, when the cosmic regeneration is utterly complete. But we have to put that in as a footnote because Paul is not particularly interested in all of that eschatology at this point, he's only making a simple point. And the simple point he's making is that all of creation is bound together, personified as a person sighing for deliverance, groaning for deliverance because it has been polluted and stained by the power of sin.

Now let's go to the second element and pick it up where we left off. Really that's a long review, but verse 23, the groaning of believers, the groaning of believers. And not only us, or not only it, rather. I didn't mean us. Not only it, that is creation, but ourselves also. And there he says it's not only creation that groans, we groan. We groan, not only creation but ourselves. Believers lament their cursed condition. I want you to listen very carefully now to how we look at this, because it's a reinforcement of some things that you must have clear in your mind. We also groan under the pain of the curse of sin.

David groaned, for example, that his iniquities were too heavy for him to bear. And he said to God in Psalm 38:9, "My groaning is not hid from You." I mean, everyone who has ever even longed for God, who's ever known God, Old Testament saint or New Testament saint alike, has had a certain groaning over the evil which is in his life. And the curse marks us all out. And we all groan. So Paul is on target. Not only creation, but we too, groan. We, too, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, he says.

Go back to chapter 7 for a moment and verse 24. You want to hear a man groan? Here is ...you can hear... You can hear a grown man groan in verse 24, a mature man of some sorts. And what does he say? "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Here is a believer who understands the pain of the curse. I think we've all been able to identify with that kind of groaning, where we become sick and tired of our own sinfulness.

In 2 Corinthians 5:4, even more explicitly it is said that we groan, in these words, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened. Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by life." Wouldn't you like to get rid of your mortal character and enter into full eternal life? Wouldn't you like to be rid of the debilitating sinfulness of your body, your flesh, your humanness? And so we groan under this burden. In John 11 it says that as Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus, He literally sobbed. His body was just wracked with agony. And He was sobbing. In fact, one of the verbs there could be translated "shuddering." He was shaking and shuddering with sobs because He saw the terrible consequence of sin. And so, the believer groans. We are stuck in an unsatisfying circumstance. 0 God, by His marvelous grace, fills it with fullness and joy and blessedness, but nonetheless, we all know the pain of groaning for a better fate.

For what do we groan? Verse 23: now follow very closely because the terms here are very important. "We who have the first fruits of the Spirit," that is the guarantee of glory, the down payment, the installment, "we groan within ourselves. We wait for the adoption that is the redemption of (Our what? Our what?) our body." Now follow carefully. Your soul is already redeemed. When you came to Jesus Christ in saving faith, you received the redemption of your soul. And there was an inner man that you used to be that's gone and there's a new inner man, a new you, a new creation. There was a final and eternal work done on the inner you. But your body's still a problem. And it isn't just your physical body, but all that goes with you're being human. And so, though we have had adoption in terms of our soul, we await for the adoption of our body.

What do we mean "adoption"? Well, to be introduced into God's family as His children. We've been adopted technically and officially, but we haven't entered into the full manifestation of children yet, have we? I mean, the full thing hasn't happened. Oh, verses 14 to 16 says we are the sons of God. We are the sons of God. Verse 16, we are the children of God. But we're not yet fully manifest. It's not yet been displayed to the whole world who we are. In fact, they can't figure us out. They don't know we're any different than anyone else. We look the same. That's why 1 John 3:1 says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God." We're called the children of God. That's right. We've been adopted in the terminology. "Therefore the world knows us not because it knew Him not, beloved, now are we the children of God, but it does not yet appear what we shall be for when He shall appear we shall be like Him." So, we've been adopted. And the technically is taken care of. But we've not yet been fully able to enter into the manifestation that is ours as children of God. We belong. We haven't quite had the full induction ceremony with all the rights and privileges.

And, beloved, I want to say this again. You must understand this because it's confused church groups and denominations and schools through the centuries. There is no such thing as a salvation that is present and not future. And that is why you can't lose salvation. There is no salvation that is only for now and not then. For that person who is justified is also glorified. That is the essence of redemption. And that is why he is saying we groan within ourselves because we know we've been adopted, but we are waiting for that accommodation of our bodies that'll allow us the full manifestation of the children of God when we shall be on display to be like Christ. We're already called the children of God. We have yet to enter fully into the glory of redeemed souls and redeemed bodies. That's why Romans 13:11 says this, and you need to know it, it says: "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Now some people could read that verse and say, "Wait a minute. What do you mean now is your salvation nearer than when you believed? Didn't you get salvation when you believed? You didn't just get near to it, you got it." Yes, but what aspect of salvation are you talking about? Now is the fullness of our salvation nearer than when we believed, isn't that true? I mean, if you were saved yesterday, you're one day closer than you were yesterday to the full redemption of your body, which is the consummation of your salvation. And so, we wait for the final call to glory, the redemption of our body.

Now listen, that's all that needs to be redeemed in us, just the body. And the body is really a term to refer to our humanness, our mortality. And I want to show you again how consistent the terms are. It's very, very important that you understand this. Since we were redeemed, we have become new creations in Christ. We're new creatures, old things have passed away, all things have become new, 2 Corinthians 5 tells us. We have become partakers of the divine nature. We are creatures fit for eternal glory. We have been made suitable for heaven. But we are kept in bondage like a prisoner incarcerated in a body that is a prison. And along with that body comes all of its lusts and desires and thinking patterns and drives and all of that, and they keep that new creation sort of under wraps. We are corruptible. We are mortal. We are disease prone. We are death prone. We are human. And so, we're waiting not for the salvation of our souls, but of our bodies. That's not yet done. That's not yet done. That's why I said this morning that we still can expect disease. We still can expect sickness because we have an unredeemed body. That is future. And someone says, "Well, is there healing in the atonement?" Of course there is. Of course there's healing in the atonement, but not until our bodies are redeemed in which the healing will occur.

Now go back to Romans 6 and I want to draw you back through and I think this will reinforce some things that need to be reinforced. And I want you to see how consistent Paul's terms are, very, very consistent. In verse 5 of Romans 6 it says: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." Now what that means is that when you

were redeemed, now mark this, you were planted together (What a thought.) in Christ's holy likeness. It's just an incredible thought. When you became a Christian, you were planted together in the likeness of Christ. In other words, whatever in you was redeemed was given His nature. You're like Him. You have a holy nature. You are a holy seed, living, as it were, in an unholy shell. It's a great and important biblical thought. But you were planted together in Christ's holy likeness.

Look at verse 6, "Knowing this, the old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed." Now what we used to be is dead. That's what crucified means. The old man is crucified. That's the person we were before salvation. You're not a new man and an old man; your old man is dead. And he didn't get raised from the dead. He's dead. The unregenerate nature, the being in Adam, gone. You're not an old man and an old nature and a new man and a new nature, you're just a new creation. The old man is gone, the old nature is dead. You are a new creation. The old man is dead that the body of sin might be destroyed. Now listen. The old man was sort of the package that sin flourished in. But that old man is dead. And so, from now, on verse 6 says, you shouldn't serves in. You say, "Well, if that old man is dead, isn't sin gone?" Well, no. Verse 12: "Let not sin therefore reign in (Your what? Your what?) your mortal body." The old man is gone but the body isn't.

Now listen to it this way. You see, before you were saved you were rotten on the inside and the outside. Your old man was wretched and so was your body. The seed was rotten and so was the case it was in. But when you became a Christian, there was a new nature planted in you and a new "I". "You were crucified with Christ. Nevertheless you live." It's a brand new "I". And that is a pure, holy, incorruptible, eternal, glorious creation, but it still exists within the shell of your humanness. And that is where the problem comes. And where is your problem? It is verse 12: It is in your mortal body. Not just the physical but all that comes with it, the lusts, the desires, the motives, the thought patterns. It's mortality. It's your corruptible quality, that in you which can die.

Another way to look at it is in verse 13. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness." It's in your members and that's a term for "bodily parts." Sin then is in the humanness. It's in... It's not in the soul of the person in the purest sense. And you can get so confused with terms. Just stick with the ones that Paul uses and you'll be all right. And what he is saying here is that sin is still there in our humanness, not in our new nature, not in that new "I".

Verse 17, for example, "But God be thanked that whereas you were the servants of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered and you've been made free from sin." You see, in the new creation you're free from sin. By nature you've been transformed. But you still have a problem and it's in your body, it's in your humanness. That's why we say this, folks; all

we're looking for is to get rid of what? The body with its humanness.

Now go to chapter 7, verse 14 and see again how consistent Paul's terms are. He says, verse 14: "I am fleshy, sold under sin, that which I do I understand not for what I would, that do I not and what I hate, that do I." So he says as a believer I still have a battle. I do things I don't want to do and I don't do things I want to do.

Well, why do you do that? "If then," verse 16 says, "I do that which I would not, I consent to the law that it is good." Well, what's your problem, then? If you know the law of God is good, why do you keep doing this? "Well, it is no more I that do it." It isn't the new *ego*. It isn't the new "I." It's not my new nature. It's not the recreated eternal one that God has placed in me. It is sin that what? “That dwells in me." And where does it dwell? In my humanness. "For I know that in me." Where, Paul? "In my (What?) flesh," bodily parts, bodily members, mortal body, body, always those terms, "dwells (What?) no good thing."

Verse 20, “Now if I do that I would not, it's not I," it's not the new "I", it's not the recreated me, it's not that incorruptible, divine nature that I possess by the grace of God, "It's sin that dwelleth in me."

Oh, I see, then, in other words, in verse 21 you have a law in you that when you want to do good, evil's present. You delight in the law of God after the inward man. Well, then where is this other law? Well, it's in my what? Verse 23: My members, again, my bodily parts, my bodily parts. And then he sums it up at the end of verse 25: “With the mind," that's the inner man, "I serve the law of God. With the flesh," that's the physical humanness, "I serve the law of sin." It's very, very consistent terminology.

So listen now, beloved, and you're going to get a really clear insight, I think, into salvation. The inner part of us is redeemed and fit for heaven. And all God has to do in the future is take care of the outer part. Now with that in mind, would you listen to verse 23 of Romans 8 again? In the middle of the verse, "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption." You say, "Well, you're already adopted." Yeah, that's right, on the inside, but what we're waiting for is the redemption of our what? Our bodies. So clear, so clear.

Paul put it another way in Philippians 3, and I think this is really direct. Philippians 3:20, he says, "Our citizenship is in heaven," our citizenship is in heaven, "from which also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," listen to this, "who shall change our souls." Is that what it says? Didn't have to do that. "Who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body." And then, my

dear friends, then will be the manifestation of the children of God. And even though already on the inside we're the children of God, the world can't see that. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when He appears,” and we're like Him, then it will be manifest to the whole universe who we are.

You say, "Well, what's that body going to be like?" You want to know what it's going to be like? First Corinthians 15: This is the best we can do, folks, it's going to be terrific. It won't be like the ones we have now. And in verse 35 and following, Paul — he's discussing here what resurrection bodies are like and he — at the end of verse 35, he says: "And with what body do they come?" I mean, how do redeemed bodies look? What kind of body do they have? He says, "0 you fool, that which you sow is not made alive except it die and that which you sow...you sow not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other grain. God gives it a body as it pleased Him and to every seed its own body." He says, "That's a silly question." Listen, if a guy gives you and let's say you're not a farmer and a guy dumps a pile of seed in your hand and every one of them is different and you've got 40 of them, have you got any idea by looking at that seed what it will look like once it grows? You don't have any idea. You couldn't tell a weed seed from any other seed. You could have an assortment of things anywhere from a small weed to a giant tree in your hand, a little tiny seed, you wouldn't know the difference. And Paul says you're asking me to tell you by looking at this seed what that glorified body's going to be like? You fool! He said that, not me.

But he said don't imagine that God can't do it because he says all flesh isn't the same flesh and there's one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beast, another of fish, another of birds. That's a very, very monumental scientific statement. It has to do with the combinations of amino acids. It reproduced flesh that's like other... I mean, in other words, flesh will only produce flesh like its own flesh. If you eat chicken all your life, you won't get feathers because no matter what happens coming in, your amino acids are converted into who you are as you well know. And it just keeps going that way.

But God has designed systems — 600 octodecillion combinations of amino acids, by the way — so there's no way they're going to be produced alike. And God has so much variety is what Paul is saying, they're so infinitely wide a variety of the kinds of flesh that who are we to speculate? There are celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, that is those that are up and those that are down here. There's the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon, the glory of the stars, and one star's different from another star. And so it is in the resurrection. Don't ask me a silly question. But I'll tell you one thing, it is sown in corruption and it is raised in what? In incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body. That's exciting.

I don't know anything more about it except if I look at Jesus and He still had nail prints in His hand, the scars were still there, He still looked like Jesus looked only people couldn't recognize Him unless He allowed them to and He walked through walls and He ate and He moved Himself around without walking. And He instantly showed up and instantly disappeared. So you follow the resurrected Christ around a little bit and you get a little idea. And then when He got ready, He just flew to heaven, perhaps in an instant. But the possibilities are endless. The truth of the matter is you'll have to wait to find out. All it tells us in verse 51 is that we'll be changed, we'll be changed.

And then it says we will be raised incorruptible. There's where we lose our humanness. Do you see that? We lose the flesh, the body, we're raised incorruptible, changed. Corruptible puts on incorruption. Mortal puts on immortality. And death is swallowed up, never any more death. And that's what we have to look forward to, folks. That's what we have to look forward to.

Now go back to Romans 8 for a closing thought or two on this passage. Now Paul says this is what we're waiting for and you say, "Well, why is it that we're so anxious to get this?" I think it's because of what he says in verse 23; we have the first fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit living in us, working in us, working through us, displaying God's power, showing us the grace and goodness of God, putting God to work in us, gives us a taste of glory, doesn't He? I mean, when I see the Holy Spirit give me victory over sin, I get a taste of what it will be like when I have total and complete and eternal victory over sin. When I see the Holy Spirit in me allow me to praise God, I have a taste of what it will be like in eternity to praise God perfectly. When I see the Holy Spirit within me serve God in some way which brings blessing, then I get a little taste of what God can do in eternity when I'm free from the bondage of this mortality to allow me to serve Him forever. And every time I get a little taste of that, I get a little deeper longing for what could be done if I were not encumbered by my humanness.

And so, you see, when we got the first fruit or the down payment of the Holy Spirit and we started to taste love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control, as Galatians 5:22 and 23 say, all it took was a little taste of that to let us know we wanted a lot more, right? Wouldn't you like more love and more joy and more peace and more hope? Of course you would. Of course you would. And everything we experience of the wonder and the power of the Spirit of God is only a foretaste of glory, only a foretaste.

So then, verse 24 says, this is great, "We are saved in hope." We are saved in hope. Hope is an essential element of our salvation. We were saved, aorist passive, past tense, in hope. Our salvation was planned in the past, bestowed in the present and characterized by hope for the future. We were

saved to hope. Hope is an ingredient inseparable from salvation and we've been pointing that out. That's why Jesus says all that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me and I've lost none of them. Everyone who comes to Him is held by Him because we're saved in hope. Listen, when I was saved, my soul was saved and I was saved not only to experience immediately the reality of soul salvation but to go on experiencing the hope of bodily salvation. I'm saved in hope. I... Remember that little phrase, "God is not finished with me yet? Be patient?" That's right.

In Hebrews chapter 6, it says we have been anchored. Oh, it's one of the great affirmation texts, I think it's verse 17, "God has confirmed His oath and His council of promise by two immutable things," that's His promise and His oath, "in which it is impossible for God to lie. We might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us," listen to this, "which hope we have as an (What?) anchor for the soul." Boy, what a thought! What a thought! Hope is our anchor.

First Thessalonians 5:8 says, "We have on the helmet of the hope of salvation." So great. This is one of the great truths. I...I really feel sadly about Christians who don't feel secure in true salvation. I think the reason that doctrine runs freely, that you can lose your salvation, is basically because of people's inadequate understanding of salvation to begin with. In other words, when you cheapen the entrance to the gospel, you get a lot of people in who aren't really saved. But if you lower the criteria, then you think they're saved, then when they fall out you've got to deal with the problem of whether they lost it. But if the standard of the gospel is truly held up to the pure level where it is in the Word of God, and the gospel is preached as the gospel that Christ lifted up and exalted, then you're going to set the conditions where the Word of God does, and you're not going to have people coming in and falling out all over the place that you have to explain away. There will be some, but not to the degree that we've had to deal with.

And I feel badly for people. People ask me this all the time. They say, "Well, if you...if you ... If a person doesn't believe they're secure and they don't believe in the security of the believer, can they still be a Christian?" Sure, but what a miserable one. Sure you can think you're going to lose your salvation. I've said this a lot of times. Christians may think they're going to...they're going to lose their salvation, or it's a possibility. They're not going to lose their salvation because they think they are but they're sure going to lose a lot of the joy along the way. Why? Why approach it that way? If you're truly saved, you're saved in hope. And it isn't even a salvation unless it’s fulfilled.

So, he says, but what? “But hope," verse 24, "that is seen is not hope. For what a man sees, why doth he have hope for?" In other words, the hope that is not seen is not hope, it's a reality. If you see

something, it's... You're not hoping for it. You don't have something in your hand and say, "I hope I get this." You have it. It's there, you have it. It doesn't have any hope involved. But what a...what... “For what a man seeth, why doth he hope for it? He doesn't. He doesn't. When we were saved, then, there was something we didn't have in our hand; there was something we lived to hope for. And it is the redemption of the body, the redemption of the body.

And then verse 25, "If we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." So he says we're saved with an unseen reality. We're saved in hope. And it's not wishful thinking, it's not, "Oh, I hope it comes off in the end." It's not a good guess. It's a confident assurance. We are confident. We know that He who has begun a good work in you will what? Perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. That's not wishful thinking. That's confident assurance. And 1 Peter 1:13, you remember this one? “Gird up the loins of your mind." You know what that means? Get your act together, screw down your computer, think clearly, grasp this. "Be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Isn't that great? Live in a constant anticipation of what is going to happen to you when Christ is revealed in glory. And so when I see sin in my life, I don't despair that I've lost my salvation, I groan that I might enter into the redemption of my body. And when I see sin, I don't become depressed, I become anticipating in my thoughts as I reach for a greater reality. And my waiting is not passive, it's not passive, it's a hope that serves. It's a hope that serves. Because I have confidence in my future salvation, because I'm secured by the promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, I serve with hope.

You know, in Paul's commendation to the Thessalonians, in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 he says: "I remember without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope." And the only way you can labor in love and pour out your life in the service of Christ is...is when you have the hope that in the end you're going to be glorified with Him. So the Christian is not a fatalist. The Christian is not a pessimist. We were saved in hope and patiently we wait for it. If we saw it, it wouldn't be hope. Now what does he... If you had everything salvation could give you already, you'd have nothing to hope for. But you were saved to hope. There's a better day coming, folks. The whole creation sighs for that better day and so do we. And so does the Holy Spirit. But we'll have to wait a while to hear His sighs.

Thank You, blessed Father, for our fellowship around Your Word tonight. And we have just really shared the heart of the apostle Paul who must have been filled with such anticipation. We know, Lord, that even the saints who have already died and gone to be with You are there only in spirit and they await the resurrection of the body at the Second Coming that's begun in the great event we know as the rapture and consummated in the glories of the kingdom. All Your redeemed of all the ages await the moment when they shall be called out of the grave and given those redeemed bodies. Those that have gone in their spirits to be with You now are free from sin and yet not yet complete for they have

not yet that glorified body. We here, we, too, are incomplete. We have that regenerated nature but we're still incarcerated in flesh and we long for the revelation of Christ, for the manifestation of the children of God, for the glorious liberty of Your sons when we shall be like Jesus Christ. We live in that hope. And we thank You that it is not a guess or wishful thinking but it is a reality secured for us by the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the divine guarantee that we are saved to glory. Oh what a blessed gift salvation is. And may we not dishonor Your name by doubting the reality of Your eternal gift of salvation. And out of gratitude and love, may we seek by the power of the Spirit to subdue the flesh and walk in obedience to Your holy purpose.

While your heads are bowed and just a closing thought, it's so easy for us to fall into patterns that are spiritual bad habits. And I'm challenged constantly in my study of the Word of God to try to say things in a way that is fresh and different so that we don't approach the blessed fresh things of God with a sameness that stifles and kills our productivity. But even with those meager efforts on my part, we do fall into patterns of sameness, same sins, same attitude problems. We seem to grow so slow. Like the apostle Paul, we cry, "0 wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body so bent on death?" And maybe it's time for a little spiritual inventory. It's time that we should spend some time taking stock of our life. We didn't do anything to get saved; we don't do anything to keep saved. It's all a gift. But it seems to me sort of basic that when you have been given a gift of this magnitude, when I have been given a gift of this magnitude, there ought to be enough gratitude in our hearts for us to strive with every ounce of our being to be all that God wants us to be. Security shouldn't be something that allows us liberty to sin, to stomp on grace and abuse mercy. Security should be that which fills our hearts with such far-reaching gratitude that the better we understand that we were saved in hope, the deeper runs our commitment to obedience. We should delight all the more in the grace of God and in His law when we know that He has prepared us unto glory.

I guess the deepest hurt of the ministry, the greatest pain the shepherd ever bears, is complacency among the sheep. I fear it in my life, the lives of people around me, and the church. We have a great salvation. You care because you're here. Some aren't even here. They're not even that interested. I hope you care enough too to live a life that expresses praise and gratitude.

Now, our Father, we ask that You would send us from this place, bring those to the prayer room that You would have to come and send us all away with a renewed sense of commitment to the one who has given us such a complete and gracious salvation. Who are we but wretched sinners with nothing to offer, who have been given an eternal gift. Make us ever thankful. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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