

Sunday, Jan.10, 2010

**Living Hope EFC**

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Coming Glory puts present suffering into proper perspective: Rom.8:17-27

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**ILLUS: Behold I Come Quickly: Young Pastor Flustered!**

A young pastor was giving his message when he lost his place.

His training from homiletics class immediately came to his aid..."Just repeat the last thing you said as you look at your notes & find your place.

Pastor: "Behold I come quickly." - 3 times! The last time he leaned over the podium, lost his balance, and ended up in the lap of an older lady in the front pew. Getting up, he was apologizing profusely.

Lady: "I should have known you were coming. **You told me three times. I just didn't believe you.**"

That which keeps the Christian on course throughout the ups & downs of life, is focusing on Jesus' promise: "**Behold I come quickly.**"

**POEM:** *Are you able?*

Able to suffer without complaining,

To be misunderstood without explaining?

Able to endure without breaking, To be forsaken without forsaking?

Able to give without receiving, To ask without commanding?

To love despite misunderstanding?

Able to turn to the Lord for guarding?

Able to wait for His own rewarding?

**CONTEXT: It is interesting, as Paul begins talking about the Christian's coming glory, he introduces it with "present suffering," 8:17-18.**

- Why do you suppose he does this?
- Paul lived in a world where suffering was very common. As he writes Romans he is on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey – making a collection for the *poverty-stricken* believers in Jerusalem.
- In 2 Cor.11:23-29 he gives a list of his trials he has already faced.

**Q:** How does one keep on – when life becomes difficult? –**8:18!**

**Q:** What do we say to the Christian who is suffering? What is there to say...to the parents who child is stillborn? To the pastor in a Chinese prison, or his family who is waiting? To parents who lose their teenage son in an avalanche? When a friend's body is emaciated with cancer? To the spouse in a difficult marriage? HOW ARE WE ABLE...to endure?

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Coming glory puts present sufferings into proper perspective!

(Things to remember as along the journey home.)

**1. In this life, suffering (always?) precedes glory: 8:17-18.**

It is so in the natural world:

**ILLUS:** Having a baby. Athletes. Building a career, marriage, family.

It is so in the spiritual world:

- Luke 24:26; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet.1:6-7; 2:21;. Heb.2:10,12:1-4a,7.

VS:17 **"Inasmuch as** we share His sufferings, that we may share His **glorify."** **It is not a condition for glorification, but stating a fact.**

- **εἰτερ** - used 6 times in NT. In all 6 passages the sense is "inasmuch as." (Rom.8:9,17; 1 Cor.8:5; 15:15; 2 Th.1:6; 1 Pet.2:3)
- **Suffering is not made a condition to share His glory, it is a fact that as His children, united to Him, made new in perspective & heart & sensitivity to good & evil – we will share His suffering, Col.1:24.**

Being a Christian brings us into certain kinds of sufferings:

- Rom.7 – We suffer conflict & defeat of our flesh.
- Eph.6 – We are in a struggle with Satan & his waves of assaults.
- The world system, so anti-Christ, attacks our Spirit taught sensibilities.
- Misunderstandings, oppositions, and the normal decay of life.

**ILLUS:** Britt Hume encouraged Tiger Woods to look to the Christian faith.

- Jesus Christ can offer him forgiveness & redemption Buddhism can't.
- He was criticized for demeaning Buddhism & sticking his nose in.
- He stated to Bill O'Reilly, "Any time you mention Christianity or Jesus Christ you will be irrationally criticized. It's always been so."

**POINT:** **Becoming a Christian gives us great joy! But may increase trials.**

## 2. Sufferings can't be compared with glory we'll experience: 8:18.

**λογίζομαι:** **Consider**, give value to 19 times in Romans. –4:3,4,5,6; 6:11.

**αξία:** **Comparable** or worthy to compare, that which balances the scales.

- Put our sufferings on one side & weigh them with our coming glory, and they're not worthy of being compared! (**Thimble** of water-ocean)
- They are not even close to balancing one another.

This is what we must keep in mind when we go through suffering.

- **2 Cor.4:14,16-18.**

**QUOTE:** Francis Anderson in his commentary on Job:

"Men seek an explanation of suffering in cause and effect. They look backward for a connection between prior sin and present suffering. The Bible looks forward in hope and seeks explanations, not so much in origins as in goals. **The purpose of suffering is seen, not in its cause, but in its results.** The man [in John 9:3] was born blind so that the works of God could be displayed in him." - Green, 365

This is so – even if suffering has a connection with our sin: **Heb.12:5-13.**

- God waists no suffering. He uses it for our future harvest of r'ness.

Remember: Paul is not speaking from an ivory tower, but from experience and revelation. **2 Cor.12:1-4** VS 11:21-29.

- You name the suffering – he's been there. But he adds...
- **"I've been on shore and the coming glory beyond comparison!**

## 3. Even creation groans, waiting to share our glory: 8:19-22.

This is an astounding reminder of the true nature of our world!

**Vs.19:** All creation knows & is waiting for our glory to be revealed.

- Creation “watches eagerly” with outstretched neck! Undiverted!
- And it “waits patiently, expectantly” ready for the great unveiling!
- ἀποκαλυψις – Revelation, unveiling, revealing, remove a covering.

**ILLUS:** Like a young boy looking out the window, waiting for dad. Or the unveiling of a painting or statue. All are assembled, ready...

**Vs.20-22:** WHY does Creation wait? For it’s LIBERTY!

- Creation has been “**subjected to frustration**” and will not experience its created purpose & fulfillment – until God’s children are revealed.
- **Frustration** = “futility, aimlessness an inability to reach its goals or achieve results.” Creation is broken, and it can’t fix itself.
- Earth is under God’s curse, because of man’s sin, **Gen.3:17-19**.
- The beauty & capacity of earth is in bondage to corruption, as man is.
- **It is God who subjected it, and only God can reverse the condition.**

**POINT:** Science, evolution, philosophy, man – cannot reverse this decay!

- BUT NOTE: “**In Hope**, v.20.” God had in mind from the beginning the full redemption not only of man, but of all creation! **Col.1:19-20**.
- There is coming a day when the curse will be removed: **Rev.22:3**.

#### DIAGRAM OF FIVE EARTHS

**Earth One:** Created perfect. Sin brought the curse & radical changes.

- Nature and animals and man are now in conflict.

**Earth Two:** Man is out of the Garden of Eden. Nature is subjected to futility & resistance to its created productivity.

- Until Noah’s time earth had a water vapor canopy which shielded out ultraviolet radiation and allowed for longer lifespans.
- There was a greenhouse affect globally, thick vegetation, no oceans or snowcaps.

**Earth Three:** Caused by sin and the flood of Noah’s time. (Gen.9-Rev.19)

- Earth was severely altered. Tilted on axis. Polar caps. Oceans divided the landmasses. Vapor canopy protection gone.

**Earth Four:** The radical changes brought about by Christ’s 2nd Coming.

- There are the earthquakes and destructions of the Tribulation Period.
- The topographical landscape will be changed: Mt. leveled, valleys raised. Jerusalem will be raised & made earth’s capital: **Zech.14**
- Christ will reign with justice, man & animal in harmony: **Is.11:3-9**.
- The curse will be removed from earth and man: **Is.35:1-10**.
- Life will be extended, peace & protection & joy multiplied: **65:20-25**
- The Dead Sea will live! Ezek.47:8-12.
- **But this is just the beginning of God’s glory on earth!**

**Earth Five:** The New Heaven and Earth, **Isaiah 65:17; Rev.21-22**.

- Satan & all unbelievers are forever gone. Sin vanquished.

- The perfected, eternal earth, the New Jerusalem will exist eternally.
- **Heb.12:22-23. Rev.21:10-22:5.**

### New Jerusalem:

**Inhabitants:** All the saints (OT & NT) **v.12-14**; 3:12; and the angels.

### Its Magnitude & Beauty:

- Walls (V17) 200' thick or high. City: 1,400 mile cube.

**CITY**- Dave Reagan, *The Master Plan*, 134

Would such a city be able to adequately accommodate all Redeemed?

Dr. Henry Morris in *The Revelation Record*: Postulates the total number of redeemed might be as many as 20 billion. He guesses that approximately 75% of the New Jerusalem might be devoted to streets, parks, & public buildings. Can 20 billion people be squeezed into only 25% of the space of the city?

The answer: Each person would have a cubical block with about 75 acres of surface on each face.  $75 \times 75 \times 75 = 421,875$  cu. acres.

- Building materials & streets: Pure gold –**v.18,21**. Gates: pearls v.21.
- Foundations: 12 layers of precious stones v.19.
- God is its glory: v.22. No impurity v.27. Great joy: **v.3-4**
- **2 Cor.5:5** "Now, God made us for this very reason!" **Jn.14:1-3**

### POEM

The Bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face;

I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace.

Not at the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand;

The Lamb is all the glory, of Immanuel's land. –*Things to Come*, 583

### 4. Though we groan, we are to wait patiently & expectantly our glory:8:23-25.

- My friends, the revealing of the children of God is coming. The glory we will experience is unimaginable. Are you waiting expectantly?
- And if not, why not? Do you not believe what He said? **22:7,12,20**
- Creation is waiting expectantly! Do we have the good sense of creation? We share groaning, and we will share glory!

### 5. The Holy Spirit is our comforter & intercessor along our journey: 8:26-27.

- There will be times of suffering. Times when we don't even know what to pray for or how to form the words.
- At such times the blessed Holy Spirit knows God's will for us, and He comes to our aid and prays for us with unuttered groanings, sighs that baffle words, words unable to be spoken."
- Such care does our Heavenly Father take of His Children!