

**FROM GROANING TO GLORY**  
**December 3, 2017 Morning Service**  
**Romans 8:18-27**

We're in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans during these weeks and so you find your place in Romans chapter 8. This morning we've come to verse 18 and we'll read through verse 27 in just a moment as we march our way through this great chapter. As many have said, the greatest chapter in the word of God. Often it is written that if the Bible is God's word to man then Romans is the diamond in that word and Romans 8 is the sparkle in the diamond. It is there for us to look at to feast on during these days. So we're making our way verse by verse through this. So if you've got your Bible you find Romans chapter 8. We'll begin in verse 18. For those that join us by Internet, television, radio, those on the Warrington campus, thank you for being a part here at Olive today. We will hear from the word of God a message that I've entitled, "From Groaning to Glory."

Did any of you groan when you got up this morning? From groaning to glory. In Romans 8, this great chapter begins in the first verse that there is no condemnation in Christ. The chapter will conclude that there is no separation from Christ but in the middle of this grand chapter we find in our text today that there is no self-exaltation for the follower of Christ. As we do not exalt ourselves, yet we walk in this world looking for the world to come, groaning in this world with our eye on the glory that is to manifest itself. Paul writes concerning that in Romans 8 beginning in verse 18 and reading through verse 27. You follow along and listen because this now is the word of our great God.

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.<sup>1</sup>*

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From groaning unto glory. In this world we indeed groan. Paul writes about that in II Corinthians chapter 4 when you read these verses and II Corinthians 4 verse 16. *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying* [How's your outer man today? Wearing out, isn't it? I've never seen so many knee replacements in one church in all my life. Nearly everybody I meet in this place over 65 or 70, I say, "How are you doing?" They say, "Well, they've got me in that – I've got a new part." Then they'll put a hip on you. You get a new shoulder. Oh if we ever work up to brain implants we're going to have revival in the church. Though our outer man's decaying], *yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction* [Get that phrase. Momentary. It's not forever. It's not heavy, it's light affliction] *is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

How in the world do we walk through this world in our groaning, looking for glory? Verse 23 gives the key. The first fruits of the Spirit. They will give us victory if we walk in the Spirit but if you walk according to the flesh you will collapse under this groaning. You will stop. You will give up. You will fail. You'll cash in your chips if the flesh is all you've got but we walk not in the flesh. We walk in the first fruits of the Holy Spirit. That is how we move through this groaning unto glory. So what are the action steps found in this text? There are three actions that we must take as we move through the groaning unto glory.

Now I am not telling you today that after you get saved you just limp along and do the best you can until you die and go to heaven. I'm telling you, there is victory in the midst. In this world you will have tribulation. You're either going into it or coming out of it because we walk in the world that is foreign to the things of God but we live as a bright light and as a seasoning salt. How do we do that? This text tells us how that we move through the groaning looking for glory. You see these three.

Number one. We wait with patience. Notice it in verse 19. For the anxious longing of the creation waits. Notice it in verse 23. Even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting eagerly for our adoption. Verse number 25. For we hope for what we do not see with perseverance. We wait eagerly for it. We must wait with patience. Wait with patience. Now I've been alive long enough to know the waiting and the patience is not the easiest thing you do. As a matter of fact, patience does not come normal to the flesh. It is a gift, a fruit of the Spirit. It is only as you walk in the spirit that this waiting with patience comes to us.

Now in this text Paul gives us an illustration. He says, "Just look around you." He said, "The very creation that you live in is waiting. The earth. The globe. The solar system is aching and groaning, looking for a Redeemer." Verse 20 tells us: *For the creation was subjected to futility.* The King James tells us there it is vanity. It's subject to vanity. It wasn't willing, not willingly but because of Him who subject it. Adam died and the world died. The thorns came and you work now by the sweat of your brow. The very earth we live on groans like a woman in travail waiting for the glory of birth.

We find that in three places in the word of God. Just hear these texts very quickly. In II Peter 3:10: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, [verse 12] looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise [hallelujah] we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*

This is not your final resting place. I'm telling you, you're going to a new heaven and a new earth. The earth groans. Isaiah prophesied it in Isaiah 65:17-18. Look at it up on the screen right here. *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. [Verse 18] "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness."* I'm telling you, there is a new Jerusalem, a new heaven, and a new earth that is coming. This earth travails.

Thank God we've hit December because hurricane season is over. Can I get a witness? Amen? We're glad it's gone. The only bad news I've got is she's coming back again. Down in the Gulf it'll start to spin and the world will groan and off the coast of Africa will come that little move and all of the weathermen will start to sweat with excitement to say, "Oh, what's her name going to be? Alice. Bob. Carol. Daniel. Eugene. Frankie." We'll name them and the wind'll blow and we'll pray in Jesus' name that it goes to Texas or up the east coast where they really deserve the judgment of God. Last year every county in Florida except Santa Rosa and Escambia was under a hurricane watch. Only the righteous were blessed.

This old world groans. Tornadoes across the plains, mountains erupting, volcanic ash, earthquakes. This old world longs to be changed. It's groaning just like you are. I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He'll wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will be no longer any death. There'll be no longer any mourning or crying or pain. The first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I'm making all things new." He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

He gives us the illustration that the world is groaning but verse 23 says not only the creation but we ourselves also groan. You don't have to pastor a church like this very long until you see this groaning. You'll watch people weep at a casket where we groan. Yesterday I sat in a funeral service I did not do for a young couple whose baby lived 22 minutes. 22 minutes. There was groaning. That mother had carried that child,

birthed over at Sacred Heart Hospital and yet 22 minutes after delivery the diagnosis was given and found and that granddaddy walked over and picked up that little white box that they'd put that baby in and he held it with one hand and he patted it and looked at his son, and nodded as if to say, "All is well." They walked out to the gravesite. Groaning.

I took a picture with my two granddaughters just down the hall this morning. I knew I was going to share this with you. I held those little girls up close. As they buried that baby yesterday I thought, dear God, what would I do? I'd wait patiently for the new heaven and the new earth. Friend, we're just here for the twinkling of an eye. A thousand years is like a day and we're going to a place where there's no groaning and no tears, no sadness. That's where we're headed. So while we're here, we wait patiently from groaning to glory.

We don't just wait patiently, this text teaches us secondly that not only do we wait with patience, we hope with faith. Oh yes we do. Look in verse 24. For in hope we've been saved. Anybody here saved? Say Amen. If you've been saved, you've been saved by the hope of the resurrection but hope that is seen is not hope. If you can see it, it's not hope. For who hopes for what he already sees? Verse 25. If we hope for what we do not see, oh hallelujah, with perseverance, we wait eagerly for it. We hope with faith. Faith looks backward and upward. Hope looks onward. Faith accepts. Hope expects. Faith has eyes for him who makes the promise. Hope has eyes for the good things God has promised. Faith appropriates. Hope anticipates. We're headed somewhere we've never seen. We're going to a place that you've never laid eyes on. We hope through faith. That's how we move from groaning unto glory.

You listen to this. You as a believer in Christ, you dare not remember what God forgets. Don't you remember what God forgets. What did He do with your sin? East to the west, behind His back, and He remembers it no more. Don't you remember what God forgets but also don't you dare forget what God remembers. He knows where you are. He knows who you are. He knows what you're walking through. Hope with faith. You say, "Pastor, I can't see it." No, it wouldn't be hope if you could see it. We walk not by sight. We walk through this groaning unto glory with no self-exaltation knowing that this light, momentary affliction is working in us a great work for the abundance of the name of Christ alone.

Wait with patience. Hope with faith. But the third action point here is in verse 26 and 27. That is we pray with abandon. We pray with abandon. Look at verse 26. *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings [The Spirit groans, we groan, the earth groans, the Spirit of God groans, with groanings] too deep for words [we don't understand them]; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

We pray but we really don't know how to pray. Do you ever run out of words talking to God? You just come to the end of yourself and you pray with abandon. You

just say, "Lord, I don't know," and you cast your every care over on Him. The Spirit then intercedes for us. The Spirit groans. He says in this text, the Spirit groans and knows and searches our heart. The Spirit knows what's in your heart even when you cannot verbalize what's in your heart. He knows the will of God when you do not know the will of God and He knows the mind of the Spirit of Holy God. He knows what God wants done so we pray with abandon.

I think of the little boy that was out in the yard. He had a big stone to move and he was under it and he was grunting but he couldn't budge it. His father came out. He said, "Now use all you've got and move that stone." He'd grunt and sweat and pull. He said, "I'm telling you, use all you've got." He said, "Father, I'm using everything I have." He said, "I'm telling you, you're not. Use everything you have to move that rock." He couldn't budge it. He said, "Father." He said, "You're not using everything you have." He said, "Father, what do you mean?" He said, "Ask me to help you. Use everything you have." Friend, when you can't, you cast your burden over on the Father and you pray with abandon and you move from groaning unto glory.

I've stood so many times especially with ladies looking in a casket. Oh hard days. I think of these flowers for Brother Joe over here and his sweet wife. I think of our friends at Warrington this morning. You know, they came to the place they didn't know how to pray. They didn't know what to do. Their church had come to the place. They didn't know what to do next. God had a plan and God knew and the Spirit began to intercede and moved us to where we needed to be. They were groaning and we see the goodness of God. What do we do? We wait with patience. We hope with faith. We pray with abandon.

Now that's a pretty good introduction to a sermon, isn't it? That's just moving up to what I want to tell you. I've introduced to you this thought of groaning. How do we do it? We take action as we wait with patience and hope with faith and pray with abandon. But now here is the sermon for the morning. It is found in verse 26. Verse 26 says: In the same way, the same way the Spirit helps us with hope, the same way the Spirit also – what's that word? The Spirit does what? Helps. Now look right up here at me. I'm going to show you how smart I am. You don't know how smart your pastor is. *sunantilambanomai*. That's that word. Doesn't that make your socks run up and down your legs like a window shade? *Sunantilambanomai*. The Greek word is this long. The English word is this long.

Look at it. Verse 26. Look right there. In the same way the Spirit also *sunantilambanomai* our weaknesses. The front end of that Greek word is *sun*, S-U-N. It means beside. *Antilambanomai* means to pick up or to persevere. What it literally means is that the Holy Ghost comes alongside of you and puts His arms under you and when you can't He scoops you up and carries you to where you need to be because He helps you in your weakness or your infirmity. When you're groaning, the Holy Ghost comes and comes *sunantilambanomai*, alongside of you and picks you up and carries you forward.

Do you ever need the Holy Ghost to do that for you? I have. I got on my face this morning. I said, "Lord, I don't know how to preach. I don't know how to pray. Would you just pick me up and take me where I need to go today?" That doesn't mean there's no work on your part. It doesn't mean you don't have activity to do. It doesn't mean there's not some – I'm telling you, what we need to do we cannot do but *sunantilambanomai*, the Spirit of God – this word is only used two times in the entire Greek New Testament.

It's used right here in Romans 8:26 and the only other time it's used is in Luke 10:40. It's the story where Mary and Martha are working. Martha is in the kitchen and Mary is worshipping Jesus. Martha says, "Lord Jesus, Rabbi, wouldn't you tell her to get up and come *sunantilambanomai*, tell her to quit having church and get over here and help me?" The Spirit of God comes along and He helps us.

Church, that's the first fruits of the Holy Spirit. That's why we as believers respond in a different way to groaning from the lost world and when they see the Spirit of God take us through the groaning with our eyes on glory rather than on this world they say, "They've got something I want." Now here's the real sermon outline. All the rest of that was introduction. You thought I was kidding.

Walking in the Holy Spirit, that's what you've got to learn to do. You've got to learn to appropriate the first fruits of the Spirit. How do you do that? There are three words and you know they're of God. They all begin with the same letter. Here we go. Three things you must do if you're going to have the Spirit of God come alongside of you and pick you up and take you.

Number one. If you're going to walk in the Spirit you must commence. You must commence. You must start. You must take the first step. When we finish in a moment, Jon's going to come and play this piano and he's going to sing a song. When he sings that song on the first stanza we're all going to pass our deacon ballots to the end of the row and a deacon's going to come and scoop them up and take them to the counting office. We're going to do that.

Then after that first stanza, he's going to sing a second stanza. At the second stanza, I'm going to walk out into the foyer and I'm going to stand by the big Christmas tree. Some of you are going to come and take a first step with Christ today. You're going to come be saved today. You're going to understand that without Jesus you're lost, that you'll die and go to hell but Christ has died for you, that they stretched Him out on a cross. He became sin for you. He died for you. He is going to redeem you and adopt you as we saw last Sunday and if you would but believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you would be saved and you're going to come take that first step. I'm going to be waiting for you and somebody at our next step tables are going to talk with you and help you and pray with you.

Some of you have never joined this church and you're going to walk right out there and you're going to do that. Some of you need to come and just have someone

pray with you as begin to say, “Man, I’ve been saved, but I tell you, I just need to begin.” Friend, you’ll never walk in the Spirit until you take the first step.

Today – and you guys know me. I love sports. I don’t ever talk about it here. I don’t have to walk but ten paces and somebody will ask me about it. Today I’ve already had a hundred questions. Today – I’ve never worn this outfit before. This is the first time I’ve ever worn this. I’ve worn this suit. I’ve worn this shirt. I’ve worn this tie but I’ve never put it together. Today I am wearing in honor of the University of West Florida their colors. That’s who I’m wearing right here. They are in year number two of Division II football and they are shocking the world. They’re going to be in the semifinals. If they win two more games they’ll be national champions. If Mayor Hayward doesn’t have a parade downtown we ought to kick him out of office, I’m telling you.

Why do I say that? Because somebody somewhere started. They took the first step. Somebody started the University of West Florida. Then someone got the crazy, rabid idea, let’s have a football team. They said, “We can’t do that.” But somebody said, “Oh yeah.” And then two became four and four became forty and forty became eighty. They said, “Let’s do it.” They said, “We’ve got to find a coach.” So we hired a coach and we took a step and we didn’t even have football the first year. They practiced all year and didn’t play a game. They commenced.

Let me tell you, friend, you’ll never walk with God if you don’t start. You’ll die in your groaning. You’ve got to take the first step and say, “O God, I come to give my life unto you.” That’s how you start. It’s how you walk in the Spirit.

The first thing you do is commence. Secondly, now get this. If you’re going to walk in the Spirit you must also understand the circumference, the circumference of walking in the Spirit. I’ve preached a lot about the Holy Spirit and being empowered. Listen, if you’re going to walk in the Spirit there is a circumference of walking in the Spirit. Now stay with me. If I told you to walk in this room where would you walk? You would walk inside these walls. You wouldn’t go out the door because if you went out the door you’d be outside of this room but if I tell you to walk in this room you walk in the circumference of this room.

Let me tell you, when God says walk in the Spirit He sets a boundary of circumference and you walk within the obedient circumference of God. That’s how you walk in the Spirit. He draws a circle and He says, “You are in the Spirit right here.” You walk in it. You get outside of that. You’re walking in the flesh. You’ve denied Him. You quench. You disobey.

You must start and then you understand the circumference. It’s called obedience of walking in the Spirit. Then thirdly, after you commence and you understand the circumference then there must be continuation. It’s the perseverance that he talks about in verse 25. With perseverance we wait eagerly for it. We walk forward never stopping until one day God calls us home. In our groaning, looking for glory, we stay faithful until the end. It is a sad, sad day when so-called believers give up and turn their

back and walk away before they ever see glory. Friend, the Spirit of God will sustain you. He comes alongside of you, *sunantilambanomai*, and He picks you up and He carries you forward.

Now watch this. Last sentence. You must yield to the helper. If you don't yield to the helper, He can't help you. I see believers. God comes to pick them up and they say, "I don't want any charity. I can do it on my own." Yeah you can do it on your own. You can walk in the flesh on your own. You say, "No, no. I'll do the best I can." Let me tell you, friend, the best you can will cause you to collapse but God'll give you supernatural strength in the inner man. While our outer man is decaying our inner man is being renewed day by day by day by day. He picks us up and he walks us forward toward glory.