

Romans 8:18-25

When There Seems to Be No “Next Season”

1. Nothing Compares 18

A. The Sufferings of this Present Time

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” -2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ESV

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” -1 Peter 1:3-5 ESV

B. The Glory to Be Revealed

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”” Revelation 21:1-5 ESV

“Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall,

with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” -Revelation 21:9-14, 18-21 ESV

2. The Creation Waits 19-22

A. Where Is This Groaning From?

“To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”” -Genesis 3:16 ESV

“And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”” -Genesis 3:17-19 ESV

B. We Bear Witness to What Is Coming to the Rest of Creation

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” -Isaiah 11:6-9 ESV

“As in the beginning, God generated the heaven and the earth, in the breast of a believing man he generates again. It’s regeneration. Just as surely as the work of God in calling the world out of nothing was a major miracle, so the work of God in calling a Christian out of a sinner, making a Christian out of a sinner, is a major miracle.”

AW Tozer, “*Begotten Unto a Living Hope*”, July 26, 1953

3. Our Current Place 23-25

A. The First Fruits of the Spirit 23

“He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.” -2 Corinthians 5:5 ESV

B. The “Already” and the “Not Yet” 24

“In v. 24 Paul expresses the paradoxical nature of his gospel. It is a matter of “already” (we were saved) and “not yet” (in hope). Salvation begins to happen to the believer in this lifetime, with “were saved” referring to the event of conversion, but the story of salvation is not over until the redemption of the body.” - Ben Witherington

C. It Is Going to Take a Lot of Patience 25

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” -Hebrews 11:1 ESV

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” -Galatians 5:22-26 ESV

Reflection: How reliant are you on the Spirit for the places that you groan over the most?

Follow UP in the Word through the Week...

Monday: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How much of what Paul describes is a reality in your life? Is this perspective your perspective?

Tuesday: Revelation 21:1-5. As you read these words, do you know that they are your future? What part of the future action of God in your life do you look forward to the most?

Wednesday: Genesis 3:16-19. Just how fallen are we as human beings? How does this passage explain the pain of life and reality of death?

Thursday: Isaiah 11:6-9. How do these promises explain the reversal of the curse? How complete will the reversal be?

Friday: 2 Corinthians 5:5. How is the Holy Spirit working in your life to show you the hope of the guarantee of what is to come?

Saturday: Galatians 5:22-26. What part(s) of the Fruit of the Spirit seems to be most challenging right now in your life? Are you going back to the Lord to “crucify the flesh” where the need is present in your life?