

“LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD”

Romans 8:18-27

A few years ago, the Barna research organization conducted a national survey among a wide variety of people. They asked this question:

If you could ask God any question and you knew He would give you an answer, what would you ask Him?

After tabulating the results, the number one question was this. . .

Why does God allow pain and suffering in the world?

The world is broken. Greed, poverty, abuse, injustice, jealousy, racism, and every possible manifestation of man’s inhumanity to man rears its ugly head ruthlessly and persistently.

- **senseless murders**
- **terrorist attacks**

- **wars and rumors of wars**
- **natural disasters**

Despite our modern medical technology, thousands of people die every year from cancer, stroke, diabetes, severe infections, and heart attacks. Bizarre ideologies rip to shreds the framework of the traditional family. Do I need to say more?

This morning I'm preaching a sermon out of Romans 8:18-27. It's entitled "LIVING IN A BROKEN WORLD." Today I'll be sharing three crucial keys for believers to live in a broken world and to glorify the Lord in the process. The truth that permeates this passage is an important one that you must absorb and adopt.

It's hard now, but . . .

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Okay, here's our first key . . .

1. DEVELOP THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE.

Romans 8:18... 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.

To set the stage, let's look back to verses 16-17. When you repented of your sin and received Jesus as your Savior and Lord by faith, you became a child of God. The Holy Spirit confirmed that truth in your spirit. As an heir of God and fellow heir with the Lord Jesus Christ, *we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

The contrast between the present and the future is neatly summed up in the two terms, ***suffering and glory***. They are joined together and they cannot be separated. Keep this in mind. . .

- **Some suffering is self-inflicted.**
- **Some is due to our commitment to the Lord Jesus.**

- **Some is simply the result of living in a broken world.**

Jesus shared this with His disciples just hours before He was crucified . . .

John 16:33... “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Now that we have that fact settled, let’s turn our attention to verse 18 . . .

“For I consider” — This refers to reaching a settled conclusion based on careful study and reasoning. *Paul strongly affirms that any suffering that we experience in this broken world is a small price to pay for the glory we will experience with the Lord Jesus in His kingdom for all of eternity.*

2 Corinthians 4:17–18... For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** 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.

To develop the right perspective, you must make the same calculation that Paul did. In verse 19, Paul adopts a cosmic perspective. . .

Romans 8:19... For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

There are three facts about the world that I want you to see . . .

This world was created by God.

The implication for Christians is that the world has value, and we must be good stewards of it.

This world is not what it was created to be.

Adam sinned. As a result, brokenness was introduced into God's perfect world.

Genesis 3:17–18... Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of

your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; *Cursed is the ground because of you*; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. **18** "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field.

The world will one day be renewed.

The redemption of our bodies means the resurrection of our bodies. This is what creation will experience, a resurrection.

"Anxious longing"— This vivid expression suggests that the world that God created is standing on tiptoes with the eyes looking ahead with intense expectancy. Jews were familiar with God's promise of a redeemed world.

Isaiah 65:17... "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."

Isaiah 35:1–2... The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus **2** It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God.

Isaiah 55:12... “For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap *their* hands.”

“Revealing of the sons of God”— In the present age, the world is unable to distinguish absolutely between Christians and nonbelievers. At the appointed time God will reveal those who are truly His.¹

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Romans](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 454.

Colossians 3:4... When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Developing the right perspective for living in a broken world is essential.

It’s hard now, but . . .

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Here’s our second key . . .

2. LOOK FORWARD TO REDEMPTION.

Look forward to the redemption of creation . . .

Romans 8:20–21... For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope **21** 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 the creation was subjected to futility”— The aorist tense of the verb looks to a single occasion—*the fall of Adam and Eve into sin*. Before Adam sinned, no weeds (cockle burr) or poisonous plants (poison ivy) and no thorns or thistles or anything else existed that could cause mankind misery. After Adam sinned, the creation was subjected to futility. *“Futility”* carries the idea of being without success. In spite of God’s curse on creation, much of the beauty, grandeur, and benefits of God’s creation remains.

- **Flowers are still beautiful.**
- **Mountains are still majestic.**
- **Forests are still full of life.**
- **The stars are still awesome.**
- **Food still brings nourishment.**
- **Water still refreshes and sustains life.**

God’s gracious provision for mankind is still evident!

Just as man’s sin brought corruption to the universe, so man’s restoration to righteousness will be accompanied by the restoration of the earth and its universe to their divinely-intended perfection and glory.²

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to insert *HOPE* into the text here in verse 21. God’s curse on creation is not permanent. The day is coming when the created order will be set free from its bondage to decay. Freed from corruption, it will share in “*the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*”

The day is coming when a new heaven and earth will be in place (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1). They will take their place with the children of God in the perfect freedom of a sinless universe.³

² John F. MacArthur Jr., [Romans](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 455.

³ Robert H. Mounce, [Romans](#), vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 185.

Romans 8:22... For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

In Romans 8:22-27, we find in some form the word "GROAN." It is repeated three times and yet is found nowhere else in this letter. In fact, it is found only six more times in the entire New Testament. The interesting thing is that it is applied to three different objects in these verses: to creation, to believers, and to the Holy Spirit.⁴

Currently, the entire universe is in travail. As in childbirth, the pain is not meaningless but "*carries with it the hope of new life for all creation.*" So the creation is "*GROANING*" anxiously looking forward to its redemption and renewal! However, its redemption is tied to the redemption of the believer's body . . .

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, [*Romans: The Reign of Grace*](#), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 877.

Look forward to the redemption of Christians . . .

Romans 8:23... 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.

Likewise, we as believers are inwardly groaning as we anticipate the final phase of our salvation—the redemption (resurrection) of our bodies.

The Holy Spirit’s work in us and through us is a type of spiritual first fruits. These first fruits are a foretaste of the glory that awaits us in heaven when our corrupted and mortal bodies are exchanged for ones that are incorruptible and immortal.

2 Corinthians 5:4... For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be

clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Philippians 3:20–21... For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Romans 8:24–25... **For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.**

We are not saved by hope but our salvation is characterized by hope. Therefore, endurance is essential as we live out our lives in a broken world. Get this now . . .

Our salvation was planned by God in ages past, bestowed in the present, and is now characterized by hope for its future completion. The believer's hope is not based on wishful

thinking or probability, but on the integrity of the clear promises of the Lord In this life we cannot expect to experience the reality of our glorification but only the hope of it. But since the believer's hope is based on God's promise, the completion of his salvation is more certain by far than anything he sees with his eyes.⁵

How do we live in a broken world? There are three keys. (1) Develop the right perspective. (2) Look forward to redemption. Hey . . .

It's hard now, but . . .

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Here's our third key . . .

⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*Romans*](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 465.

3. PRAY WITH GENUINE CONFIDENCE.

Hope carries us through times of suffering (24–25). It is the Spirit who comes to our aid when we find ourselves unable to pray as we should.

Romans 8:26–27... 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; 27 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.*

It is easy to become discouraged in our praying, for we are conscious that we do it so badly. Paul does not say that the Spirit removes our weakness. What the Spirit does is to help us know how to pray and what to pray for. He preserves and enlarges our hope and gives us the aid we need to endure through times of suffering. The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be heard and according to the will of God!

Believers have two divine intercessors. Christ is our intercessor in the court of heaven (Romans 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The Holy Spirit is our intercessor in the theatre of our own hearts.

Are you suffering today? I want you to know that you can pray with genuine confidence!

CONCLUSION

Hey,

It's hard now, but . . .

THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

Paul does not minimize our suffering. He does maximize the glory that awaits us in Christ Jesus. We've looked at three keys that are absolutely essential for believers as we live out our lives in a broken world. . .

1. DEVELOP THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE (18-19)

2. LOOK FORWARD TO REDEMPTION (20-25)

3. PRAY WITH GENUINE CONFIDENCE (27-28)

Some of you have been profoundly touched by the Holy Spirit with the deepest need of your life. That need is to repent of your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ. He is your only hope for this life and for the life to come. Come to Christ today with saving faith!