

Romans Chapter 8
Week 4, v. 19-21

Right now, we are in the middle of the XXII Winter Olympic Games. As you listen to the commentators for each event being held, you hear their evaluation of how each athlete is expected to perform based on previous events. When their expectations are met, the excitement of their commentary increases. Each of the athletes and their coaches go into these games with great anticipation of how their future may be affected if they perform well. Incredibly, their success is based on one or two executions of their sport. There is no definitive way of knowing what the results will be until it happens. The athletes' future is based on performance and with one slip can become uncertain.

How is the above scenario different than the future of God's children?

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

Again, as we saw in Romans 8:18, the word 'for' attaches the importance of continuing on through whatever trials may come because the future we look forward to is much greater.

Anxious longing <apokaradokia> in the sense of watching: intense anticipation, earnest expectation

Waits eagerly <apekdechomai> to expect fully, look (wait)

Revealing <apokalupsis> disclosure: appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, revelation

2 Pet 3:10-13 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, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with

intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.

An anxious longing or earnest expectation denotes the certain anticipation of the hope we have in Christ's return when all creation will no longer be under the heaviness of a sinful world.

Have you ever been in a crowd and have had to stretch your body and head and neck forward or around someone or something else to see whatever you were there to see? The idea of an 'anxious longing' (KJV) is this intense interest we have as a believer to look beyond our present circumstance and towards our future in heaven.

All of creation was put under the curse of sin and suffering. See Genesis 3:16-19. All of creation looks forward to that time in the future when this curse is lifted and God's children share in their inheritance with Christ.

Paul speaks of his earnest expectation for his future in Phil 1:19-20: For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but [that] with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. He was certain that in the end Christ would be glorified.

Rev 21:1-5

Rev 21:7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Matt 25:31-46

There will be a time when the full manifestation of God's glory will be revealed to us. As His children, our full inheritance in Him will be realized.

Does this truth cause you to stretch your neck out in anticipation towards His glory even through hardship and suffering here on earth?

How does this attitude change the way you respond to difficult circumstances?

Imagine, a perfect creation, free from sin, no burdens, no corruption: the full beauty that God intended in His creation solely for the purpose of His ultimate glory.

Rom 8:20-21 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, 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

God would not make the world subject to be cursed forever because of the sin of man, but gave it hope that it would be restored. Geneva Bible Notes

Gen 3: (17-18)19 By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Think of something you have tried to do, perhaps several times, without success. For me, something as simple as growing zucchini has evaded me. I've tried several different things and it seems quite futile to me so last year I didn't even try. Sad.... (do you hear the violin?) Certainly, watching a child try to master tying their shoes or putting the right piece into the correctly shaped hole, can give you a look at the feeling of futility.

Futility <mataiotes>inutility; transientness; morally, depravity:--vanity
Inutility – uselessness; transientness – passing, short-lived; depravity – impairment of virtue and moral principles, corruption

Being subject to vanity or futility is like having no purpose; no matter how hard you try, you cannot be completely successful. Your efforts are useless; whatever you might accomplish is only short-lived and your thoughts and actions are impaired. Who put the world in this state? Why? What are the last two words in v. 20 and going on into v. 21?

'in hope' <elpis> anticipation, expectation, confidence

In Christ, the world is freed from slavery to corruption.

Slavery <douleia> bondage

Slavery: being controlled by something that limits freedom; being held in involuntary servitude; being dominated by someone or something

corruption <phthora> decay, i.e. ruin (spontaneous or inflicted, literally or figuratively):--corruption, destroy, perish

corruption: dishonesty, depravity, rotting; syn – sleaze, fraud, vice

In Christ, we are freed to glory as God's children.

Freedom <eleutheria> liberty

Freedom: a state in which somebody is able to act and live as he or she chooses; without restriction or fear

What does the Bible say about slavery to sin and freedom in Christ?

Rom 7:23-25 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

John 8:31-34 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, [then] you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that

You say, 'You shall become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

Rom 6:5-7 (and v. 8-18) For if we have become united with [Him] in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also [in the likeness] of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with [Him,] that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

Rom 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

Gal 4:7-9 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

Titus 3:3 (and v.4-7) For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Imagine: when God created all things – It was good! There was no sin, no pain, no toil – just time communing with a perfect, heavenly Father. God's children and all of creation will one day be restored to that place. Creation will no longer be subject to sin but will have complete freedom from its hold.

2 Pet 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Application Questions

Read the chapter first then consider these questions and your own notes and observations to help you with personal application.

Look up 1 Peter 3:10-13. What has God promised His children? Do you long for that day when Christ returns? If so, how does this affect your focus as you move through difficulties?

What does Paul say about his trials in comparison to his future in Philippians 1:19-20?

Think about the trials God has allowed in your life. How have you grown from them? How has God shown His faithfulness through difficulties?

As God's children, we have been promised an eternal future in heaven with God. Look up Revelation 21:1-5. What are we to be doing while we wait for this future? Read Matthew 25:31-46. How does the passage in Matthew affect you? What is your response in your own life? What is your responsibility towards others?

Look carefully at Romans 8:20-21. Why did God curse the world? What is the ultimate purpose? Think! Someone who is convicted of murder and is sentenced to multiple life terms in prison has no hope for their future. They are doomed with no possibility of a better life. They are convicted, sentenced and the key is thrown away. Contrast this scenario with your guilt, your sentence and the key that has been held out to you.

What have you been set free from? What are you set free to?

Romans 7:24-25a "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!