



1/14/26

Today's passage reminds me of *Beauty and the Beast*. Because a young prince was arrogant and rude to an enchantress disguised as an old lady, she not only cursed him, but she cursed all who were part of his household... including the house itself! His selfish sin (ALL sin is selfish) affected everyone and everything around him. Even more real... When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the ground because of Adam's rebellion. The truth is, sin always impacts more than the sinner... even the ground around us. And in case I want to read this passage and think of others and their sin... I have to remember JD Greear's statement, "I will know that I truly believe the gospel when I see myself first as a sinner before seeing myself as one sinned against." One thing I know for sure... I can't blame the ground for my sin.

Blessings,
Jonna

Romans 8:18-30 ~

Vs. 18 ~ When thinking of the brokenness of this world, I need to have the right perspective. Paul said, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." This world is not my heaven. If I keep expecting things to be easy and pleasant here on earth, I will be frustrated. I will accuse God of not caring for me. But the truth is, Jesus said in John 16:33 that my peace is found in Him and not this world. This world is full of tribulation. Jesus knew that better than anyone... He died for this broken world.

But the promise is that a much better eternal home is being prepared for me... and I don't deserve it! It is a gift of God because of His undying love. No matter what struggle I face in this temporary life, Lord, please help me to keep my mind set on Your promises... on my eternal, priceless retirement plan!

Vs. 19-22 ~ The glory that's coming is not just for believers. It's for creation! Right now, the ground is still cursed. It's been put under an emptiness and a brokenness that it didn't have

until man sinned. All I have to do is go out to my yard and see the thistles that refuse to stop growing no matter what I do to know that the curse given thousands of years ago is still affecting creation today. But God has subjected it for a purpose... He is not cruel or indifferent. He is carrying out His perfect, holy, righteous, loving plan.

Let me not forget that He owes me NOTHING. I deserve eternal separation from Him. This earth belongs to Him. He has the right to do anything He wants. Being angry with Him about it is giving myself too much credit and Him not enough.

What is the hope for this creation subjected to futility and emptiness? It will be set free from its bondage to corruption. Biblical hope is not wishful thinking. It's eager anticipation and expectation. It's confidence in a promise of good that's to come.

The hope is not just freedom FROM corruption, but it's freedom TO glory. Creation itself waits in confidence that it will be set free, that it will be restored to perfection. This perfect glory is the same freedom that is coming to the children of God. Man and earth were cursed at the same time, and man and earth will be restored at the same time. God promises a new heaven and a new earth for His children whose bodies will be transformed to be like the glorious body of Jesus... perfectly holy and beautiful without any fear or pride or shame or frustration. This is what I get to look forward to!

But for now, the whole creation GROANS and laments and suffers through birth pangs. This is so important for me to understand. I've groaned through birth pangs, once without an epidural! It was so hard! But... so worth it!!! Creation is groaning with birth pangs, and it has the absolute confidence to know that its labor is not in vain. God has promised the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Vs 23-25 ~ Creation groans for the glory to come. All who have "the firstfruits of the Spirit" groan deep inside, wanting so desperately to have our adoption and our redemption fully realized. Right now, I'm in the process of my adoption, and Jesus has already paid my ransom. It's just a matter of time. But I eagerly anticipate the complete fulfillment of God's promise... that I will never deserve but He so freely gives.

Until my faith becomes sight in His presence, God has given me "the firstfruits of His Spirit" as a constant reminder of the guarantee of my inheritance that is to come. The Holy Spirit dwells in me.

Here's the cool thing. In the Bible, firstfruits represent the initial, best portion of the harvest. God's people were to dedicate their firstfruits to God as an act of trust that He would provide their needs. Here, God says He's giving me the initial, best portion of Himself as a promise that I'm going to experience the whole harvest someday. The Holy Spirit does SO MUCH for me. He leads me into truth. He transforms my life. He gives me freedom... and so much more!

I was saved from sin with the confident expectation and promise that I WILL be fully redeemed, fully adopted, fully experiencing the glory of God forever. But hope that is seen isn't hope. If I say, "I'll believe when I see it," I'm not really putting my hope in God. I'm demanding that He prove Himself as though I'm the judge. O Lord, please help me to be humble before You, to understand that everything I have is a gift from You, not a payment for what I earn. I can't earn salvation!

Instead, please help me to humbly wait on You and for You, patiently persevering through the pains of childbirth... trusting that anything I face on this earth will be worth it because it takes me one step closer to You.

Vs. 26-27 ~ The truth is, when I'm facing the pains of this world... when I'm groaning... I don't always know how to pray. But the Holy Spirit whom You have given me does! He helps me in my weakness. Yes Lord, I am weak! But I am not alone. The Holy Spirit groans for me! He intercedes for me with groanings that words could not express. How will my life change if I believe this with my whole heart??? This means that I have to trust that the Holy Spirit is with me, that He understands me, that He cares for me... Your word says in Romans 5:5 that He pours Your love into my heart. He absolutely cares for me!

Father, You search my heart... "O Lord, You have searched me and known me" (Psalm 139:1). You KNOW the Spirit's groanings, His intercession for all who love You and are called according to Your purpose. You know that He intercedes for me according to what You want, and not according to what I think I want. My desires are short sighted. The Holy Spirit never goes against Your purpose.

I find a lot of security in that. In fact, I kind of take it for granted... but the fact that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in complete alignment in every way is a wonderful thing. Anyone who has experienced parents who can't agree or who make decisions without considering each other knows how hard that is on a child... to not know who to believe, who to follow. But with the Lord, there is never a disagreement, never a misunderstanding... Every decision is united, made according to what is holy best and holy right. I WANT to bow to the intercession of the Spirit. I KNOW that I don't know. Thank You for helping me in my weakness of ignorance... and my weakness of allowing temptation to take me the wrong way! My job is not to KNOW. My job is to follow the One who does.

Vs. 28-30 ~ Here's the wonderful thing I can trust about God's leading and intercession... it always leads me to what's good. Even in my groaning, because I love the Lord and because I know that I belong to Him, I can trust that He will work every circumstance together for my good. Even through things that are not good, He is able to work good.

What is the good the Lord wants to do in me? I would love to say, "He does good in me so that my life is easy and comfortable, without conflict or stress." That is NOT the good. The good He works in me is to make me so much like Jesus that no circumstance can take me down. I can have His peace and joy in every situation I face... because He gives me the strength to do it.

He helps me in my weakness.

My destiny is to be like Jesus. If He predestined me to be like Jesus, then I will be most satisfied when I am like Jesus. It is awful to know you're supposed to be able to do something, but you can never get there. With God, that's never the case... He gets me there. Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers because it has always been His plan to make that happen. And He did!

Here's more good He's doing in me... He gave me the destiny to be like Jesus. Because He predestined me, He also called me into relationship with Him. Because He called me, He also justified me and treats me as though I have the righteousness of Jesus, even though I've horribly sinned against Him. And because He has justified me, He has glorified me. So... He has not forgotten me. He has not rejected me. He has not condemned me. And He does not shame me.

My eternal destiny is to be with Him forever. I would say some groaning here on earth is nothing compared to the glory that's coming. So... I wait patiently with eager anticipation of what's to come... and I bow before the Lord as He uses every suffering to shape me into the image of my perfect Savior, Jesus. O Lord, please make this so in me. Help me to understand that I don't have the big picture, but You do. Let every thorn and every storm remind me to put all my hope in You. I trust You.