

FBC Service September 2025 Romans 8:17-25 The Hope That Holds Us

As we come to God's Holy, inspired and inerrant Word, may He add His blessing to it. **Let's pray.**

Father, give us seeing eyes and hearing ears and open hearts to respond to this Your Word of truth. And by the Spirit speak to us right where we are and make us to be what You intend us to be. **Amen.**

Slide 1: The Hope That Holds Us

As believers, we live in between—the already and the not yet. We are God's children as born-again believers, saved, but not yet complete. We have a taste of glory, but the best is still to come.

What a blessed hope this is for us, when our bodies will be released from sin and suffering. **23**

“We wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. 24 We were given this hope when we were saved.”

When I was Ontario Advertising and Sales promotion manager for the Shur-Gain division of Canada Packers, writing catchy advertising slogans for the company in the agricultural sector was paramount.

For example, Shur, Shur, Shur-Gain, that's the big name! The big name for farmers in this land of ours.

Do you remember the old slogan for Crest toothpaste: **Look, Ma! No cavities!** This was a famous slogan for Crest toothpaste. A reminder we have tooth decay now because we live in a decaying world.

But there's coming a day when all the dentists will go out of business. There will be no more tooth decay because that which causes decay will be completely removed from the universe.

I have even better news. That which causes heart decay and body decay and mind decay and spiritual decay—all that will be removed once and for all. **This is the hope that holds us.**

“With eager hope, 21 the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.”

Slide 2: Two Kinds of Suffering Romans 8:17

“We are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.”

This clearly points to a kind of suffering that believers share with Christ—not just general hardship, but suffering that comes from living faithfully in a world that often rejects the Christian faith.

The phrase “share his suffering” certainly implies a participation in Christ's sufferings—enduring rejection, persecution, because of one's allegiance to Jesus.

Then in verse 18, Paul broadens the lens:

“What we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later, and verse 23, “for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering”

This includes all forms of suffering—whether persecution, illness, loss, or injustice—but it's framed in the context of hope and future glory for those united with Christ.

Paul doesn't minimize the reality of pain, trials, and tears. He doesn't pretend that life is a bed of roses. Instead, he lifts our eyes beyond the present to a greater horizon. He wants us to see that the Christian's hope is not wishful thinking, but a confident expectation rooted in God's promises.

The Christian viewpoint on suffering is to say, "Yes, it's bad. But it's not going to last forever. Yes, it's terrible, but this isn't the final story. This isn't the last chapter.

Yes, we suffer, but God has ordained that our suffering is temporary. We trust that God is working all things for our ultimate good. Something better for us is on the way." **Our suffering is temporary.**

Slide 3: What Do You Think About Suffering Romans 8:17-18 - really?

When you're not in a Bible Study, when you're not having to give the right answer, when you're not having to give the theologically correct answer in a room full of evangelicals, what do you really think about suffering?

Are you a stoic? Do you sort of grit your teeth and brace your back and just make it through. Are you bitter and cynical? Have you been run over by disappointment and suffering to the point that you can hardly respond to comfort without a wry, cynical smile developing inside. **Are you angry with God?**

Have the circumstances in which you've found yourself left you so numb, you don't know what you think about suffering, because it's been so intense.

What do you think about suffering?

For the apostle Paul it was very important that Christians think rightly about suffering. He talks about it a lot, not just in this book, but in all of his writings.

He knows that suffering is a reality in human experience in a sinful world.

And he knows that the believer's response to suffering will in large measure, indicate the quality and depth of his Christian life.

He knows that it's vital for believers to have right views on how we respond in our hearts when trials cross our path. That's what he's talking about here as he moves from **suffering for Christ** in verse 17, to personal suffering in verse 18 and 23.

He doesn't sugar coat the fact that Christians are not immune to suffering.

Slide 4: Christians Are Not Immune to Suffering Romans 8:18

Let's cut to the chase! Christians are not immune to suffering. When they embrace Christ as their Saviour, they also experience the heartaches that others experience, because they live in a sinful world.

Just because you are filled with the Holy Spirit, just because you're a child of God, just because you are justified freely by Jesus' death on the Cross, none of us are guaranteed a painless life of bliss.

And the apostle Paul wants us to pause here and contemplate again that life in the Spirit does not mean an absence from pain and suffering.

Even though we have new life in Christ, even though we are new creations, even though we are sons and daughters of the most High, times of suffering cross our paths.

We live in a world that has turned its back on God and the things of God, and we live in a world where the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil, conspire against the Lord our Maker.

We suffer. And folks, this is vital for us to understand as we are bombarded by those folks who fill our air waves and social media with miraculous claims of a life without suffering or pain. We identify them as “prosperity gospel preachers.” And oh what heartache they have caused for so many.

Slide 5: The Prosperity Gospel Teachers

These “so called” health and wealth teachers say that if you don’t have health, if you don’t have success in all your endeavours of life, if you’re not wealthy, if you’re not healthy and whole, if you’re not experiencing triumph upon triumph, it’s clearly a result of a lack of your faith; because God wants you to have an overflowing abundance of prosperity.

The Lord wants you to be successful they preach. He wants you to have health. He wants you to have riches. And if you don't, it's clearly because you haven't had the faith. Any kind of suffering or worry is not in their vocabulary.

I say away with them for the untold suffering and disillusionment they have brought upon all those who drank their Kool-Aid.

The great apostle wants to pause right here and say, if your understanding of Jesus’ promise of the abundant life is that it means a lack of suffering, you have misunderstood completely what Jesus said.

On the other hand, there are others who cope with suffering by saying, Oh well, God just can't help me. He just wasn't able to control that.

They believe that when bad things happen to good people, it's just another sign that though God wishes He could help them in those trying circumstances, it's just out of His control.

So let’s hear it loud and clear and unmistakeable! Let’s shout it from the rooftops!

Slide 6: Paul Wants to Say to These Deceptive Solutions, Wrong, Wrong, Wrong

Stressing that it's a huge mistake to miss the point that believers will indeed suffer, and that God is sovereign in all our suffering.

He's still in charge, even in the sphere of suffering and frustration.

Slide 7: He Is in Complete Control Romans 8:20-21

He is in complete control, and suffering is part of His plan for His people. *“20 against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay.”*

Paul drives home for us with clarity and force that every Christian should realize that until they experience the glory to come, there will be times of frustration and suffering.

And for some, this brings a doubting of God's will for them.

Slide 8: Doubting God's Will

How many times have you run into a friend who has said this, "You know, with all my heart, with all my might, I have attempted to be faithful to the word of the Lord. **I've attempted to follow His will.**"

I've attempted to follow His leading. I've sought the counsel of God's word. I've sought the counsel of godly men and women. I've followed in the way of faithfulness to the Lord, and I thought as best I can discern, that I was doing exactly what the Lord would have me to do.

I've never been in a place where I am more frustrated. And I've never been in a place where I am more lonely. And I've never been in a place where I'm more despairing than I am now.

I'm trying to walk close with the Lord, and instead I'm filled with anxiety and worry.

How can this be God's will for me?

Slide 9: And here's the apostle Paul saying, no, child, no. Your circumstances do not indicate a failure in your hearing the will of God.

Slide 10: Look At Jesus in That Garden

It's as if Paul is pointing at you, and he's saying, **look at Jesus in that garden.** What took him to that garden? **The will of God.**

Slide 11: What Happened When He Got to That Garden? Luke 22:42

What happened when he got to that garden? **Pain free, success, triumph, wealth, happiness?**

No. I see our Saviour there. I see Him weeping. I see Him sweating. I see Him trembling. I see Him broken hearted. I see Him praying, *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

What is it we see here? It's the sovereign will of God.

The apostle is saying, dear Christian, do you think that the Father would have called His one and only Son to suffer, and would not have called His adopted sons and daughters that way?

He calls us to glory through the way of suffering, and that is always the way it is. Difficult though it may be, we are able to experience abundant life in the suffering the Lord allows in our lives.

And if someone tells you otherwise, they have a disagreement not with you, but Almighty God.

Slide 12: Our Trials Here Are Real, but The Glory Is Beyond Compare. Romans 8:18

Have you ever been in one of those circumstances where you've been a witness to something that takes your breath away because of its grandeur or magnitude?

Paul wants us to understand that our trials here are real, and sometimes they seem as they are beyond endurance; **but the glory ahead he says, is beyond compare.**

He wants to contrast the suffering of the present with the glory of the future in the most dramatic way and on the grandest scale.

That our sufferings of the present time are nothing in comparison with the glory that is to be revealed.

And my friends, it is most unfortunate when we fail to meditate upon that reality, because the very thought of that glory to which we are going, should stoke a fervent hope in every believers heart.

The apostle Paul is saying to us, yes, you've been through so much but "there's coming a day, when no heart aches shall come, no more clouds in the sky, no more tears to dim the eye; all is peace forever more, on that happy golden shore, what a day, glorious day that will be."

He's saying to us no matter what heartbreak that we have endured, we will come to a day when all our heartbreak shall end.

I'm especially conscious of this when I look upon the lives of fellow believers and see them taking care of family members that suffer from enormous handicaps and physical and mental difficulties.

O how I thank God for you when I see you so lovingly and tenderly caring for those precious loved ones.

I think of that day, when through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, there's going to be a complete transformation.

Slide 13: Can You Imagine That Day?

No more wheelchairs. No more walkers. No more sickness and disease. No more pain. No more parting.

Stepping on shore and finding it Heaven!

Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God's hand.

Of breathing a new air and finding it celestial air.

Of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality.

Of passing from storm to tempest to an unknown calm.

Of waking up and finding it Home.

That's why we can sing, "O that will be glory for me. Glory for me, glory for me.

When by his grace I shall look on his face,

That will be glory. Be glory for me."

When that day comes, all frustration will be gone, because God's glory will be displayed not only to us, but in us.

Slide 14: The Hope Before Us (Romans 8:23–25)

“We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.”

Most of the hopes we hear about in life are uncertain—they may or may not happen.

As we move to Romans 8:23–25, Paul speaks of a very different kind of hope. It's not wishful thinking, but confident expectation, grounded in the promises of God.

Paul reminds us that though we already belong to God as His children, we are still waiting for the fullness of that inheritance: new, resurrected bodies, a world made new, and the final unveiling of our adoption. **And while we wait, we wait with eager, patient, confident hope.**

Christian hope is not uncertain—it's guaranteed because it is rooted in God's Word and Christ's resurrection.

Paul says we *“were given this hope when we were saved.”* For the believer, hope is not **“I wish this will happen.”** It is **“I know this will happen because God has said so.”**

Slide 15: The Discipline of Waiting (Romans 8:25)

“But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.”

God has promised, but we do not yet see the fulfillment. **So how are we to wait?**

Patiently: Waiting without despair. This patience is not passive resignation but active trust.

Confidently: We don't just wait— we wait with expectation and assurance knowing the outcome is guaranteed.

Slide 16: What This Hope Means for Believers Today (Romans 8:26–27)

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

While we wait for future glory, God has not left us to struggle alone.

Paul says the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.

There are times when life hits us so hard we don't even know how to pray.

Our words fail. Our thoughts are confused. Our grief is too deep.

Here Paul gives this beautiful assurance: **in those moments, the Spirit himself intercedes for us.**

God knows the groans of our hearts, even when we cannot articulate them.

The Spirit takes our wordless prayers and presents them perfectly in line with God's will.

When you don't know how to pray, don't be discouraged. Simply come before God. The Spirit will carry your weakness to the throne of grace.

When you feel alone in suffering, remember you have a divine Helper who never leaves you.

Slide 17: How Does This Hope Apply to Us Right Now?

Every time your body aches, every time sickness strikes, every time you see the frailty of life—let it point you to your resurrection hope.

As Paul says earlier in Romans 8:18, *“our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed.”*

If in all that I have said you can't find any comfort, hang on to this: God still loves you. He loves you as much in the darkness as He does in the light. Nothing you are going through can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This life is Basic Training for eternity. God is using everything that happens in your life—including those things that seem utterly senseless—to prepare you for future glory.

In this life we won't always know the answer to the question Why? But in the life to come we will either know the answer or it won't matter, because the glory will be so great that we will simply forget the pain of the past.

With that thought, let us keep on going for the Lord. Be encouraged, brothers and sisters. He loves you even in the midst of your pain. He loves you even when you don't love Him. He loves you when you feel utterly alone.

He loves you with an everlasting love. Your suffering can take many things away from you—your health, your happiness, your prosperity, your popularity. But there's one thing suffering can't do. **It can't take away the love of God.**

When we finally reach heaven, we will discover that God himself was with us every step along the way. We will stand in his presence redeemed and glorified. Every trace of this decaying world will be left far behind. Christian funerals are not the end. **They are a waiting room for resurrection.**

The sufferings of this life will be but a dim memory, fading into the mists of a forgotten yesterday. Until then, since we cannot see the face of our God, let us keep serving, keep loving, keep praying.

Christian hope is a sure hope, based upon trust in Jesus Christ as He is offered in the gospel. And only those who trust in Him, know that reality in their own experience. If your hope is in Christ, your future is certain.

Closing Prayer: “Father, thank You for giving us living hope through Jesus Christ. We confess that waiting is hard, especially in times of suffering, but we know Your promises are true. Strengthen our patience, deepen our confidence, and keep our eyes fixed on Christ until that day when our adoption is complete, and our bodies are made new. In His name we pray, **Amen.**”