

[Romans 8:18 – 28]

~ This will be our third report in our Spiritual Safari through chapter eight of the epistle to the Romans. We're considering some natural areas of life; where all of nature has the curse of sin placed on it. Decay and death surround humanity in nature; and mankind himself is groaning today because of the curse of sin over the whole earth. That's the picturesque view Paul the apostle paints for us in this report. However, as bad as that sounds, it is not a depressing picture to any genuine child of God who understands this section of Scripture properly, correctly and completely. In fact, it is a comfort to us. I hope this report will be as meaningful to you as it is to me.

Our safari does not outline chapters of the Bible as a typical Bible study would because we are not after a theological or doctrinal understanding – we're looking for Jesus on every single page of Scripture. It's personal. When we find Him there, we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth! See, for me, this thing has to be real. Nonetheless, the theme we have in this section of Scripture is "*New Creation!*"

Everything is new in chapter eight. We've considered the new law, the new struggles for believers, the new man, the new creation, the new body, the new purpose of God and the new security of the believer. All things have become new if any man is in Christ Jesus! Naturally, He is Who we are talking about!

We may contemplate our own death, and how we will die and be redeemed; but that redemption will happen to the entire physical universe! The earth is to be redeemed. That is the plan and purpose of God; a new earth where there is no curse of sin upon it; and will never come upon it again. A glorified body is in the atonement, and a new world – but we don't have those yet. There may be a new world order, but it has nothing to do with this. My body has been rather good to me, thankfully – but I would like to trade it in on a new model. I like the promise of a body that never gets sick or dies. I'm selfish that way.

Modern psychology has deemed itself an authority concerning the habits of people. Of course, different people do certain different things and think certain things differently and sometimes insist they are right, but whose thinking is totally contrary to the Word of God. This sets up the neurons, axons and dendrites in the frontal lobe to form a literal super-freeway of sin in our psyche. These improper routes become so engrained in our thinking and are so heavily influenced by modern technology that it takes radical re-construction by the Holy Spirit to fix them; and only happens when God is permitted to take over that individual's heart, mind, body and soul. I am amazed that conversion is even possible anymore, quite frankly. Well, God isn't going to let you live in sin, my friend. Trust me on that....

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

~ The world isn't waiting for the sunrise of evolutions pipe dream – because that dream is never going to come true. The lost world knows it, they just can't admit it. I know there's a song that says, '*the world is waiting for the sunrise....*' – except, it's not. Creation, however, *IS* waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God! When the outward covering of this flesh is taken away from the sons of God, creation will be unveiled anew, also! That will truly be a beautiful day....

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

~ Remember, Solomon was quite a pessimist. "*Vanity*" means "*failure, decay and perishable*" in verse twenty; and that is one of Solomon's buzz words in Proverbs. We know all the rivers run into the sea, and the sea's not full; because it has no end. Nature is rather monotonous, actually. See, nature is even waiting for that manifestation when the Lord unveils all things new.

Why was the *“creation subject to vanity?”* – Because God did it that way, friends! No other reason. The curse of sin came upon man in Adam’s disobedience, but the physical world also came under the curse. Remember, God said, *“thorns also and thistles shall the earth bring forth to thee; thou shalt eat the herb of the field and by the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.”*

If there is one place I consider paradise it is the Florida Keys. It really doesn’t get much better than that. However, if you want to see some thorny and thistle terrain, just go anywhere down there where man hasn’t manually cut down the thorns and thistles. If you get out there in the saw palmetto swamps you’ll discover *“thorns and thistles”* is an understatement. That scrub will cut you to shreds! God said it was going to be like that – and it grows spiritually just that way everywhere we turn.

Creation has a curse upon it, and *“vanity”* means it’s empty and meaningless; there are no heightening results. Nature never seems to accomplish any profound purpose; it merely perpetuates in weary round after weary round of repetition. Solomon said, *“... the sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.”* The next day – that’s all it does – again!

Ecclesiastes 1:6 *...the wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. 7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. 8 All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. 9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun ~*

The old nature has absolutely nothing good going for it; it’s never satisfied, and it is going to die. I don’t care how much the old nature sees, hears or has, it wants to see, hear and have more! Further, the moment life begins, life begins to take it away from us. The world is under a curse; we have death and decay throughout the natural world. Out in the forest, you’ll see

dead trees rotting and corrupt. From time to time you'll get the putrid smell of dead animals. That's nature....

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

~ Browning, in his poem, says, "... *God's in His Heaven and all is right with the world!*" Well, God *IS* in Heaven, but all is *NOT* right with this world! Joel asks, "... *how do the beasts groan, and the herds of cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture? Yeah, the flock of sheep is made desolate.*" Nature sings in a minor key, my friend. Have you ever heard the sound of wind rushing through the pine trees; or waves breaking on the seashore as the seagulls make all sorts of squawking noises? There's a song breaking in those waves and in the wind, yes; but, it's a doleful, cold and mournful melody, to be sure.

If you have ever been camping in the middle of the night, you'll know the startled cry of some frightened animal piercing the night air can be unnerving; especially if it is too close to your tent. Nature is a direct audible witness to the accuracy of Scripture. Shelling wrote, "... *nature, with its melancholy chorus, resembles a bride who, at the very moment she is fully attired for the marriage, saw the bridegroom die in the church aisle. She still stands with a fresh crown and veil, but her eyes are full of tears.*" That's what's real, friends....

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

~ Not only does nature groan, but man – even the believer – is in tandem with nature, physically speaking. This is a devastating verse to those who espouse a religious philosophy claiming a Christian is a perpetual perennial smiling face. That's idiot talk, my beloved. We aren't to constantly look like a cross between a house-to-house vacuum salesman and a Cheshire cat.

Live, love and laugh your life away may be a great method for the Rotary Club; but it won't be the story of your Christian walk with God, you may be sure....

2 Corinthians 5:2 *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ~*

Psalm 6:6 *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. 7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies ~*

Romans VIII

24 *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

25 *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*

26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

~ As saved sons of God we look forward to seeing our Blessed Hope. We have not fully realized it yet, but we will in eternity. Faith, hope and love are the vital parts of a believer's life. There would be no hope if all were realized. Someday, hope and faith will both pass away in realization of the glory that shall be revealed in us. Love remains forever! The atonement will include a new and glorified body for us. Those are deep and remarkable truths.

See, you and I don't really know what to pray for or how to pray for it. If the Spirit of God didn't make intercession for us, none of it would be accepted – period. There would be nothing to say except, “*Father!*” Only Christ can give us the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities. Sometimes it's wonderful to go to God and say, “*.... I don't know what to ask for and I don't know what to say – but teach me to pray – and may Thy will be done!*” Try it. You will see results, friends. The Spirit of God makes intercession for us according to the will of God....

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

~ Well, our safari is going to camp out here until the next leg of our expedition with a soft pillow for tired hearts. God's plan and purpose guarantees the salvation of sinners. All things work together for good to those who are in Christ – ALL things, friends – even that groaning in the dark night forest and wilderness. Quite frankly, most true men of God are greatly abused and wildly misunderstood. The things I am typing are simple; but only the Holy Spirit can make any of it real to your heart! This is the knowledge that only the Spirit of God can reveal.

Spurgeon said, “*.... I do not need anyone to tell me how honey tastes. I know how honey tastes.*” I know that God loves me, friends; we don't need to argue that point. See, my fraternity pin has on it the inscription, “***Believed God!***” That's the badge of faith that worketh by love....

1 John 4: 10 *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him ~*

Now, read carefully: God is causative – meaning He controls all things; there are no accidents. There is no such thing as luck in the life of a believer. Jacob said, ‘... *all things are against me*’ but Paul said, ‘*all things are for me!*’ You’re going to have real trouble believing God loves you and that you are connected to God in any way if you’re hating your fellow Christians. We love Him because He first loved us! The only thing that will ever bring true love and joy into your life is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you know you love Him then *ALL* things – good, bad, bright, dark, sweet, sour, bitter, easy, difficult, happy, sad, prosperity or poverty, health or sickness, calm or storm, comfort or suffering - our lives and deaths - are all working together for our good. I hope this Spiritual Safari is working together for your good. We’re camped out on a mountaintop way, way up there in the stratosphere on top of the mountain of the government of God right now. I hope you can enjoy the view from up here ~