

Hope Formed - Romans 8:18–30

Introduction

Last week, we talked about where hope begins. We observed that biblical hope is not wishful thinking or crossed fingers but is **confident trust rooted in the faithfulness of God**. We learned that before hope is ever felt, it is spoken, and before it is ever experienced, it is revealed through God's promises. God spoke hope to His people while they were still in exile, reminding us that waiting does not mean abandonment and delay does not mean denial. But if we're honest, waiting is one of the hardest things God asks us to do. We wait for answers. We wait for healing. We wait for clarity. We wait for God to move in ways we can't yet see. And in those seasons, waiting can sometimes feel like wasted time – like God is silent, or slow, or distant. Scripture, however, tells a different story. Scripture teaches us that waiting is not empty, and it's definitely not wasted time; especially when we are waiting on God to reveal His perfect plan. Waiting is one of God's primary tools for shaping hope. And that's where passages such as Romans 8 become so important. Romans 8 is one of the most honest, hope-filled passages in the New Testament. Paul doesn't sugarcoat life. He names the tension we all feel – creation groans, we groan, and even the Spirit groans. And yet, right in the middle of all that groaning, Paul tells us something remarkable: **hope is being formed**.

Let's have a look at what Paul says by reading **Romans 8:18-30**.

Hope Acknowledges Groaning

The first thing I want to point out about this passage is that God is aware of suffering. Paul begins by saying, *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."* Here Paul is not dismissing suffering – he's putting it in perspective. He describes creation as groaning – not merely whispering or sighing but truly groaning. Paul wants us to understand that creation has been broken ever since the fall of man. These painful moments across history were real; they are still real, but they are not meaningless.

It's the language of childbirth – pain with purpose. Pain that is leading somewhere. Pain that is producing something. That something is the eventual glorification of His children. Creation isn't the only one groaning. We are too. We feel the weight of brokenness. We feel the ache of "not yet." We feel the tension between what God has promised and what we currently see.

An important take away from this is – hope begins with honesty. **Hope does not require us to pretend everything is fine**. Hope just helps us manage. Some of you are carrying deep groans today. A groan for a child who's wandered. A groan for a marriage that's strained. A groan for a body that's failing. A groan for a future that feels uncertain. If this is true, don't be discouraged. Paul teaches us that groaning is not a sign of weak faith but is instead a sign that you long for the world God has promised. Know this: If you're groaning today, you're not alone. You're in good company - with creation, with the saints before you, and with the Spirit of God Himself.

Hope Eagerly Waits

In verse twenty-three (23) Paul says, “*we wait eagerly*” for our redemption. That word “eagerly” is powerful. It means to stretch your neck forward – like someone standing on their tiptoes, looking, stretching to see what’s coming.

When it comes to God and His plans for you and your life, it’s important to recognize that waiting is not passive. It’s not resignation. It’s not giving up. It is, however, active trust. Waiting is leaning forward, stretching; believing that God is working even when you can’t see it. Look at verse twenty-four and 25 (24-25). Paul says, “*Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*” Patience here is actively waiting on God. It is Hope, eagerly awaiting!

Think about a seed planted in the ground. From the surface, it looks like nothing is happening. But beneath the soil, life is forming. Roots are spreading. Growth is beginning. And it’s this unseen work that is the most important work. This is the type of work God does in the waiting seasons. He works beneath the surface. He forms character. He strengthens faith. He deepens trust. Some of you are in a season where it feels like nothing is happening. But God is doing more in the soil of your soul than you realize. He’s forming you into the person He intends for you to be.

Hope Carried by the Holy Spirit

In the final verses of our passage today, Paul acknowledges a deep human reality. Pain, confusion, waiting – these things, especially moments of suffering; they cause us to be “*weak.*” But get this, Paul says something breathtaking: “*The Spirit helps us in our weakness.*” Not after we get strong. Not after we figure things out. Not after we pray the right words. The Spirit of God is right there in the middle of it; right there helping us – “In!” “Our weakness.” How awesome is that!

In recognizing our weakness, Paul steps further by offering powerful words of encouragement and hope. This is the only place in Scripture where the Holy Spirit is described as groaning on behalf of believers. When we don’t know what to pray, the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Think about that:

When you’re too tired to pray... the Spirit prays for you.

When you’re too confused to pray... the Spirit prays for you.

When you’re too heartbroken to pray... the Spirit prays for you.

Hope is not something you carry alone. Hope is something the Spirit carries in you.

And then Paul gives us one of the most beloved verses in Scripture (vs 28): “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*” Please do not misunderstand what this verse is teaching. It’s not teaching that all things are good. Nor, that all things feel good. Our hope is sustained because we understand that God is working **good** in all things, according to His purposes. And sometimes, this takes time!

I love how Paul concludes his writing about suffering and groaning, about our weakness, and about how God’s will plays into everything.

“*And we know*” – This is not emotional optimism. It is confident trust, grounded in the character of God. We can be certain because we know God fulfills His promises.

“*For those who love God*” – This identifies Christians. The promise Paul is speaking of belongs only to those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

“*All things*” – These two words summarize the things Paul just spent ten verses describing – suffering, loss, weakness, confusion, waiting – ALL THINGS!

“*Work together*” - The emphasis is not on the things themselves, but on God’s active involvement. God is divinely and sovereignly orchestrating all things toward His intended end.

“*For good*” – This phrase is why this verse is often misunderstood. “Good” does not mean – immediate relief, or personal comfort, or even success. Paul explains this in verse 29 and 30, where “good” means conformity to Christ and final glorification.

“*Called according to His Purpose*” – God’s purpose precedes our understandings. His plan has been in place from the very beginning. This phrase is grounded in God’s initiative and not in human effort. It is intentional and secure.

Conclusion

Hope grows in the tension between what God has promised and what we currently see. Waiting is not wasted. Groaning is not failure. Weakness is not defeat.

God is forming something in you.

God is working something for you.

God is preparing something ahead of you.

So, keep waiting.

Keep trusting.

Keep leaning forward.

Keep Hoping.

Because the God who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.