

Romans 8:18-25

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 8, Romans chapter 8, verses 18 through 25 this morning, Romans chapter 8, verses 18 through 25.

I feel a new sense of liberty this morning because prior to many of you getting here, I spoke with Miss Barbara Redd in the back and she was speaking with me about a book she was reading. And it was a book she was reading concerning an interview with Billy Graham, the late Billy Graham, and his messages. And she said, you know, they said in that book that sometimes he would have up to 17 points in a sermon.

And she said, I looked at Billy and said, we're pretty lucky. And I said, well, if you're telling me, she said, now his points might have been a minute apiece.

She was real quick to put that in. I said, well, I mean, I can go 15 and we can, you know, at least go under. But no, I'm not going to do that to you guys. I said, you know, best quote I ever heard from Billy Graham, somebody asked him, how many points should a good sermon have?

[1 : 07] And he looked at the pastor and said, at least one. At least have a point. He said, if you don't get up without a point, then you don't have it preached a sermon. But that's okay. He did have many points.

But we're in Romans chapter 8, starting in verse 18 and going to verse 25. If you're physically able to do so and desire so, I ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found for us in the book of Romans, Romans chapter 8, starting in verse 18.

Paul writes,

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you for the opportunity you've given us to come and to praise you in song. Lord, to encourage one another in fellowship. Lord, I pray now that we would hear from you in your word. We pray that it would speak to our hearts. We pray that it would penetrate to the very depths of our being. Lord, that it would move beyond just the listening to a man speak.

[3 : 04] But Lord, that it would be hearing the word of God. Lord, I pray that you would take me and all of my weaknesses and all of my shortcomings. Lord, that you would make me nothing but a conduit to say to me and say to others exactly what it is you want to say.

And we ask that you would do it even now. We pray, God, that you would draw us closer to you through this word. And Lord, that you would move us closer to one another. God, that we may be your people for your glory and your honor.

We ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus. Amen. You may be seated. We have been making our way the last few weeks through Romans chapter 8. Such a powerful chapter found in the midst of a powerful book.

Romans is a book of great matter, of great weight really throughout church history. It has been that one anchor which, like the song said, has held the church true to its course.

It has been the thing that has led a number of people to salvation in Christ simply by the reading of it or the listening to it or even reading the introduction to commentaries on it.

[4 : 09] It is the book personally that touched my life. That I came to Christ while reading the book of Romans and seeing exactly what it said. Sitting alone by myself just by the encouragement of a pastor, reading the book of Romans and seeing what it said about salvation.

It is a book really that doesn't deal with the small matters of the faith, but really it throws the large rocks of the faith in there. We have entitled the whole book, The Foundational Doctrines of Our Faith.

Because Paul is writing about the foundation of the faith and the major doctrines that the faith must be built upon. And the main one of those is justification by faith and faith alone.

That you are saved through faith and not by works, lest any man should boast. That your salvation rests totally upon the work of Christ and not the work of man. That it cannot rest on your works

because your works, all of your righteousness, the Bible says, is like filthy rags.

That because we are unclean, everything we do and everything we touch is unclean. And if we were to try to work our way to heaven, it would never happen because we simply could not do it.

[5 : 16] Because as Paul very clearly tells us in the first three chapters of the book of Romans, that all men have fallen short of the glory of God. That each one of us has taken what God has created perfect and made it imperfect.

We have messed it up. We have defiled it. And because of that, because we live in a sin-stricken body, in a sin-stricken world, we cannot save ourselves.

But the gospel says the good news is that God loved us so much, he sent his son to die in our place, to bear our price. And Paul fleshes that out. What it means to trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it means a complete surrender.

We've looked at the last few weeks. It does not mean that you decide for Jesus, that you make decisions, rather that you depend on Jesus. That you run to him and cast your whole being upon him.

That you understand it's nothing that you can do and nothing that you have done. And it's nothing that got you saved and there's nothing that keeps you saved. It is Jesus and Jesus alone. And we have looked at the beauty of that.

[6 : 18] Because if you believe you have earned your salvation, then it is your responsibility to keep your salvation. And my friend, I know me better than anyone, which means you know you better than anyone else, which tells you that you will never be perfect.

And if you are relying on yourself to keep your salvation, then that is a bad place to put all of your hope. We fall short. But the good news that we find in the book of Romans is that God knew all of that.

And yet he decided to give us a better representation other than Adam. Now we can be represented by Jesus Christ. And when God sees us, he would really see the impression of Christ upon our lives.

He no longer looks at us as we are. He sees us as we will be. And then we get into this thing of the believer's hope. This morning I want you to see the believer's persevering hope.

The believer's persevering hope. It is not just his or her hope. It is a persevering hope. It is the hope that doesn't make sense to the rest of the world.

[7 : 19] Jesus, before he was crucified, was telling his disciples in the book of John that he would give them a joy that passes all understanding. A peace that nobody else would be able to comprehend.

A presence that no one else would be able to know. And he really spoke of a hope that would endure through every hardship, through every trial, and through every temptation.

And he told them these things because he had also told them that if they do these things to me, then they will do them to you. He never painted the picture of an easy believism.

He never painted the picture of an easy faith. Rather, he painted the picture of following your master to a place of ridicule, a place of trials, a place of persecution, and a place of suffering.

And when Paul is writing the book of Romans, he is writing to a church that is doing just that. It is amazing to me how many letters we find great comfort from when we live in ease and prosperity, which were written to believers who were living in suffering and in shame.

[8 : 23] And it is not that we ought to be shamed because of that. It's just that we ought to be further encouraged because of that. That if these words could lift up those who were suffering, how much more those who are at ease.

And we find here the hope that perseveres. What type of hope is it that holds on when everything else seems to be falling apart? What type of hope is it that really is steadfast even when the world seems to be moving in so many different directions?

What type of hope is it that is sure as anything you've ever stood on, though no one else around you can see it, but they can see the effects of it? And it is what Paul is encouraging them to do, to live in a persevering hope.

A hope that even though you may not be able to define it, the Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews that hope is the evidence of things not seen. It is the belief.

I believe it was Tony Evans who said that faith acts as if something is so because the Word of God says so, even though it may not look like it is so. Let me think about that for just a minute. Yeah, I

had to write it down to look at it, right?

[9 : 32] Faith is acting as if something is so simply because the Word of God says so, even though to everyone else it may not look to be so. Faith means I'm going to step out on the limb no one else can see, and I'm going to trust that God will keep me there because if He can hang the earth on nothing and tell it to stay there, and it did, then surely He can keep me when He tells me to step out, and I do.

And you say, well, does it say God hung the earth on nothing and told it to stay there? Book of Job. Go to the book of Job. He created the earth out of nothing. Now, that's Billy Joe's paraphrase, right? And He hung it in the heavens, and He hung it on nothing and told it to stay there.

And the last time I asked any scientists or the last time I saw any NASA things, you know there's a NASA channel. It's pretty cool to watch every now and then. It's just pictures from heaven or actually pictures from the sky.

There's the NASA channel you can flip on, and you just see images from outer space, and they show the earth. And the cool thing is the earth is still hanging on nothing, and somebody put it in the right place.

So when God tells me to step out on nothing, then I can trust He can keep me there too. And we're talking about this. When the world says, this doesn't seem to make sense, there's no reason why you should still have hope.

[10 : 41] How can you persevere? And Paul gives us just three. I'll give them to you very quickly, hopefully, and you'll see the believers persevering hope. Number one, there is the hope of a shared glory.

There is the hope of a shared glory. The Word of God says in verse 18, For I consider, by the way, it's never wrong to consider or to think or to be inquisitive about things.

God is not afraid of your questions. God is not afraid of your concerns. God is not even afraid of your doubts. I serve a God that is bigger than my doubts. He is bigger than my questions, and He loves to hear my questions, and He loves to hear my considerings.

Paul says, For I consider, I have thought this out a little bit, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

I want you to see, first of all, that this is a temporary state of existence in which we live. He says, the sufferings of this present time. God did not call us to Himself to give us a comfortable life.

[11 : 42] Now, He called us to Himself to live in fellowship with Him for all of eternity, beginning now. But we know we have an enemy who comes against us and attacks us, which means sometimes now it is uncomfortable.

Sometimes now it is unpleasant. Sometimes now the present time seems to be a place of suffering. But Paul says, when I think about this, when I consider this, I understand that the sufferings are just for the present.

And God created us for so much more than the present. He said that the sufferings of this present time, for when I consider this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

And we understand this. What Paul is saying is that no matter what I go through, no matter what I have to endure, by the way, Paul was a man of good pedigree when it came to this. The man that was beaten a number of times.

He was left for dead. He was stoned. They considered him dead. He got up. He went back in and he preached again. He was a basket case lowered through city walls in Damascus in a basket.

[12 : 44] He was in hunger. He was in pain. He was in shipwreck. He was in starvation. He was beaten, imprisoned. He was eventually beheaded. This man said, For I consider the sufferings of this present time as nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed.

Unfortunately, what we do today is we compare ourselves not with what we will be, but with what others already are. We begin to compare ourselves not with the glory that will be ours, but with the glory which seems to be theirs.

We begin to compare ourselves with those around us, not with the one before us. And when we do that, my friend, we do not have to look very far to see one of two different types of people. You do not have to look far to see someone who is worse off than you, and you do not have to look far to see someone who is far better than you.

And unfortunately, we tend to focus on the latter one, and we look at those who are better than us, and we tend to get a little discouraged, and we tend to get a little depressed. What Paul says, When I look around, I don't see what people are.

I just look to who he is. And when I begin to understand this, he says, I begin to consider and to think about all the things that I'm going through. I do not say, Poor, pitiful me.

[13:56] I say, Wait until you see me. Because right now, you're not seeing me. You're seeing my sufferings. You're seeing my pain. You're seeing my uncomfortable situation. Right now, you're seeing the brand marks of Jesus Christ.

But there will be a day where you'll see my glory, and I like that. I'm one of those who gets a little excited, and a little carried away, thinking that I'm going to share in the glory of Christ, because I know a little bit of what it means to cost to follow Christ.

Because if we give up something to follow Christ, it is because we are looking forward to an investment he has already made for us to share in Christ, and what a glory it is. And the problem is, is we tend to look at this world as if this world is the place where we're going to get that glory.

My friend, listen to me, young people. You will not find a glory in this world that is worth holding on to. You will not find a glory in this world that is worth laying a hold of. You will not find a glory in this world that will do anything for you in eternity.

As a matter of fact, the glory this world offers you will often discourage you from eternity. And Satan is very good about offering the beautiful, because he is an angel of light.

[15:03] He doesn't track around with horns and a sharp tail and a pitchfork. The Bible says, he was the most beautiful angel God created. He was an angel of light. He was beauty in all of his magnificence.

And when he offers you something of this world, he offers you something that is appealing to the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, or the desires of the heart. He offers you something that would promote glory.

And Paul says, that's not where we need to be looking. I'll look at the glory that will be revealed. He says, I'm going to share in his glory. But friend, I want you to notice what he says here. He says, this is not a glory that comes forth from me.

This is a glory that is revealed to me. I believe that someday I will live in a body much like I see the resurrected Savior. I shared with the church on Wednesday night. I can't wait to be able to walk through locked doors.

I think that is so cool that Jesus, and maybe it's just the way I thought, it says they were gathered together, the doors were locked, they were afraid, and Jesus came in their midst. He's in a glorified body that you can touch, that you can handle.

[16:03] He can eat, and yet he can pass through locked doors. I can't wait to do the things that only God can do in that body. But here's the thing, it's not because of anything from within me.

When we read the Bible, and we see Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, we see glory coming from within him. It says that he was glorified in their presence. And the wording says there that it came from within.

It is not that somebody shined a light on him, it's that the light that was inside of him began to shine through him. And they began to see how glorious he was. But here when we speak of the glory of the people of God, it says it is something that is revealed to us.

The glory we have is not a glory that is in us, it is a glory that will be illuminated on us. It is a glory that will shine on us. And my friend, listen to me. Though we live with the presence of Christ daily, he is being covered up by the ugliness of this world.

But there will be a day when the fullness of his glory shines on us. And we will be much like the moon, and we will just reflect his glory back to him. And that glory is going to be so good, it's going to change everything.

[17:11] Because look at what your word says. The word says, creation cannot wait for the revealing of what? The sons of God. Usually it's the revelation of the son of God. Now it's the sons, that is us.

The children of God. So that creation will be transformed by our glory. Isn't that good? Too often we get discouraged because we look at how bad things are.

But my friend, I want you to see how great things will be. There will be a day of shared glory.

Number two, not only is the perseverance of hope resting on a shared glory, it is resting on a

redeemed creation.

This is something that I think at times we fail to comprehend, just the weight of our own sin. But Paul makes it very clear. Verse 20 says, For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, 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.

For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. What is he saying? He says, When man sinned, it was so bad, it didn't just affect man, it affected all of creation.

[18 : 27] That when man fell, when man decided to live in rebellion against God's standard, they did not just affect themselves. My friend, I want you to hear me out. Some of us say, Well, my sins and my choices are mine.

I'm going to do what I want to do, and it doesn't affect anyone else. But the Bible disagrees with you. The Bible says that when man sinned, all of creation was affected. That when man chose to step outside of the order of God, everything was subjected to futility.

One of the glorious things you'll find in Scripture is that at creation, everything was herbivorous. Nothing was meat eating. I don't really understand it, but everything was peaceful.

Everything was gentle. Everything ate the plants, and everything ate the fruit, and everything ate the tree leaves, and all these things. But one thing you find after Noah comes off the ark is everything begins to fall apart.

Everything begins to get messed up. Well, what did that? It was man's willingness or intentional decision to rebel against God because God created man and told him to what?

[19 : 30] Rule over creation. Well, when man messed up his headship, that is God, then he messed up his authority over what God put under his command. And the sin of man has affected creation.

Creation wasn't meant to be like this. Do you think that God would create something that would create natural disasters the way we see them today? People say, Well, if God is so good, why do bad things happen all over the world?

Well, if God is so good, and if God is so loving, then why does God allow hurricanes, or tornadoes, or tsunamis, or all these natural disasters? If God is good, why do we have all these bad things?

Well, that's easy. Because God is good, and man is bad. Man has messed up what he's living in. And he's messed it up to a point that all of creation groans. It was never intended to be like this.

That's why when you go to the book of Isaiah, and Isaiah is writing of the latter days, the days of the reign of Jesus, not just of the coming of Jesus, the days of what we call the second coming of Jesus, Isaiah says that the lion and the lamb will lay down together.

[20 : 36] That the young child will reach his hand until the serpent's hole and will not be bitten. That nothing will live in fear. That there'll be no shame because all of creation groans until the day of redemption of the sons of God.

Friend, listen to me. There's a day coming when this world will go back to being what it was intended to be. And that is good. But right now, it's not. Friend, your sin and my sin, it affects so much more than just us.

Our willing rebellion against a holy God has created a world of disorder and confusion. It has created a world of terrible events, of natural disasters.

It has created something that God pronounced good and it has made it beautiful, a beautiful, majestic, admirable, sure, but at the same time deadly.

Isn't it just like us to take something that's so good and to mess it up? It doesn't take long, right? That's the nature of the beast, we say.

[21 : 42] That's who we are. But here's the hope. There will be a day when it will all be right. There will be a day when it will all be back to the natural order.

There will be a day where we once again rule creation. That's why it tells us in the book of Revelations that the sons of God rule in different parts of the world. That they have rulership.

That God gives them authority over different places of creation. Because creation is redeemed. The last and final one that leads to the persevering hope of the believer is a finalized adoption.

It is a finalized adoption. Now Paul has already told us in Romans 8 that it is through the spirit of adoption that we cry out, Abba, Father. But he comes back to this thought of adoption here at these verses in chapter 8.

He says, not only does creation groan, but he says in verse 23, and not only this, but also we ourselves having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

[22 : 50] For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance, we wait eagerly for it.

Look at it. It says, and not only this, but we ourselves having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

The hope of the believer is a finalized adoption. Paul says, this beautiful thing we have been given, which is the Holy Spirit. He tells us in the book of Ephesians that the Holy Spirit is your engagement ring, that you are sealed until the day of redemption with the Holy Spirit, that God has done put a ring on your finger, and that ring is the Holy Spirit.

And then he tells us over and over again that that spirit produces fruit within us. We are told that by the power and the presence of the spirit, we can have peace, we can have comfort, we can have comfort to comfort other people.

We are told that we can have love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control. All of these things can be within us. All of these things well up, things that we used to not be, all of a sudden we find them coming into existence because of the spirit.

[23 : 56] We have an assurance of our salvation because of the spirit. We have the conviction of our sin. You ever notice that? You accept Christ or you come to Christ and you give your life to Christ. All of a sudden the things you used to enjoy, they don't taste as good as they used to anymore.

The things that you used to have fun, they're not as fun as they used to be anymore. And people say, well that's why I don't want anything to do with Jesus. He'll take all my fun away. No, he'll redeem it and he'll give you what is really pleasing to you.

He doesn't want you to be entangled in these futile things. But the spirit is there to show you the things you must avoid. And the spirit is there to give you that feeling deep within you. And you're like, I don't know if I should do that.

And all of a sudden you have this, what we call the nagging of the spirit. We have this feeling that when someone is sharing the gospel with us, I need to respond to that or I should do that. And we have this leading.

The Bible tells us now we have the mind of Christ. That we can know exactly what it is Jesus would do if he was walking with us. It tells us that we have the presence of God.

[24 : 55] That even in terrible times we can have the peace that passes all understanding. It tells us that we can have an understanding of his leadership. We can honestly go before him and say, God, what would you have me to do?

And we can honestly believe that he will respond to us. I want you to do this. You may think that I'm crazy but I think it's the assurance of scripture that God can speak to your heart and he speaks to the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

But friend, listen to me. All of these things Paul says are just the first fruit. They're just the tip of the iceberg. That if the presence of God could be so real in your life right now, that if you could live by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, that if you could cast yourself upon him.

Friend, church history is full of it. The world history is full of it. Someone once told D.L. Moody, the world has not seen a man that has cast himself completely upon God and what God could do with him.

D.L. Moody looked at that individual and said, I intend to be that man. And if an uneducated shoe salesman could preach to the soldiers in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and go back and found a church called Moody Bible Church which started a college, Moody Bible Institute that would send pastors around the world and not only begin revival in this continent but also in the European continent and be the encouragement and empowerment of all the people of the ages and himself never being ordained into the ministry just simply bowing his head before God and say, here I am God, use me.

[26 : 25] If he could do it, then anyone could do it. He was an uneducated, untrained, unequipped individual who gave himself to the leadership of the Spirit. And friend, listen to me, that's just the first fruit.

that's just the beginning. Paul says, we have the first fruits of the Spirit. As good as what God has already given us, it's just the first.

Which the first always means there's more coming. It is a signifying picture that there's going to be more. There's going to be fruit upon fruit upon fruit. It is when you offered the first fruits, the offerings in the Old Testament, they would take their first fruit and they would offer it to God because that is them saying, in faith, God, we believe you brought it first, so we think you'll bring more.

It is not God, we've got to keep it and see if more comes. We're going to have given it to you now because we know more is coming. And God gave us the Spirit to show us there's coming a day. Friend, listen to me, we have already been adopted and he has already made the payment. But we have not been fully adopted. He says, the redemption of our bodies. We are not yet what we should be. But I'm confident that I will be someday what he's called me to be.

[27 : 41] You know why? Because my daddy's already paid the payment of my adoption. My daddy has already paid the price on the cross. My daddy has already displayed his power at the empty tomb.

The one that I cry out, Abba, Father, Daddy, Daddy to, has already promised me with the presence of the Spirit that he's going to adopt me. As a matter of fact, he's already put my name in his book. That's called the Book of Life. He changed my name when he adopted me. You may still know me as Billy Joe, but the Bible says in the heavens there was a new name recorded. A name which I don't even know yet has been recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

He's already put my name. He's got my birth certificate. He's already given me his blood type. He's already covered me with his blood. He's already paid my price. And I know he'll bring me home someday.

I live in hope that he'll finalize that adoption someday because my daddy's already told the judge he's adopted me because my daddy, he's the judge. And he's already said you're mine.

[28 : 43] Friend, listen to me. I don't have to worry if it'll be better. I don't have to worry if I can count on his word. The Bible says he's already called me his child and he'll take me home someday and he'll make me what he's called me to be today.

I don't know what it is that you're hoping in. But my prayer is that you will hope in a hope that perseveres because outside those doors is a world who's going to throw darts at you.

Outside those doors is a world that is going to cause you to want to doubt. And you need to have something to tell that world you're holding on to that gave you the confidence in here.

And what I find the only thing I can hold on to is the very promises of the word of God. Let's pray.

God, I thank you so much for what you've done. I thank you so much for all you've given and I praise you for your word and the assurance that it promises and brings.

Lord, I pray today if there's one here who does not know you as their father, they cannot call out to you as their Abba father. They do not know what it means to be adopted into the family of God.

[29 : 53] Lord, I pray that by the power and presence of your spirit you would reveal that to their hearts. Lord, that it would not be of a work that they do but Lord, it would be of a position they accept. It would be of accepting you as their Lord and Savior for your glory not their own.

And Lord, for those of us who are certain of that, we pray that you would help us to leave here and to live in the confidence that that produces. Lord, that we would have hope to follow you in difficult days.

We would have confidence to trust in you when everything else seems to be going away. And Lord, we would lean upon you in times when there seems to be nothing else to rest upon. We ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.