



Future...In Christ

Romans 8:18-25 |

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SUMMARY

Ray Ortlund says of our passage,

"This life is not really life. Our present existence is a living death, and we are on our way to real life. Christians are people who find in their hearts such yearnings for true life, such confidence in God's promises of that life, that they face into their sufferings with a rugged determination to live well and die well now..."

[Yet] Romans 8:18-25 is not about heaven, at least the way people often think of heaven - a place far away from here and totally different from this world. Paul is envisioning the renewal of creation, with our very bodies redeemed out of weary decrepitude into resurrection immortality. If you die in Christ, your personality, your spirit, your consciousness, goes immediately to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6, 8; Phil. 1:23). That confidence makes us strong. But God promises us even more than that. As Paul explains here, **God promises us a renewed creation** (Isa. 65:17-25; Rev. 21:1-5) as the theater in which we will experience the eternal drama.

Do you notice that the word heaven nowhere appears in this passage, but **the word creation appears four times** (vv. 19, 20, 21, 22)? In verse 23 Paul mentions our bodies as the final triumph of our redemption. **So here is my point.** The glory God promises us, the glory by which we should measure our present sufferings, **is not** an ethereal, unreal dream but a very recognizable reality. **It is** this creation right here right now, only renewed in perfection.

Paul envisions the redemption of our bodies, these bodies right here right now. Look at your fingers. Look at your fingerprints. The FBI tells us that those swirls of lines on your fingers are unique to you. Do you realize that, changed into a glorious body (1 Cor. 15:35-58), it is these God-created fingers that will leave your personal fingerprints all over the new heavens and the new earth? Everything suffering and death take away from us God will give back to us, and in better condition. So what do we have to lose, suffering with Christ?"

Take some time as a group to read Romans 8:18-25. Then ask these questions:

1. What stood out to you as you read today?
2. What point does Paul seem to be making?

3. How does this portion of Scripture connect to what came before? How does it connect to what comes after?
4. What didn't make sense? What do you still wonder about?