

SECURED

ROMANS 8:12-25

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 of Romans is simply majestic. It is filled with wonder and glory in ways, perhaps more than any other chapter in the Bible, that capture the essence of God's purpose. It is a tightly packed argument. It sets in context the necessity of a life lived for God to see the salvation of the Lord. It is all by grace, but grace empowers an ethic that reflects His glory. That is the heart of Romans 8.

ETERNAL FUTURE (ROM . 8:12-13)

Paul has just masterfully dissected the idea of the mind set on the flesh, in comparison with the mind set on the Spirit (Romans 8:5-11). The flesh leads to condemnation and the Spirit leads to a life of peace. Therefore, Paul says *"we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh"* (Romans 8:12). The flesh will push and pry and try to figure its way into our lives but with this push, know that you are not obligated to give it expression. Sin shouts so loudly at times arguing its necessity in our lives, but we must hear Paul's word: we are no longer under its obligatory power! It is not simply that we are no longer under its power that is the reason, however. It is our eternal future that should guide our living. Paul writes that *"if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die"* (Romans 8:12). Spiritual death and eternal separation from the Lord is the end of those who simply cannot live without satisfying the passions of the flesh. He adds, *"But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live"* (Romans 8:12). Standing in the balance of our lifestyle is the truth of who we are and the proof of whose we are. Our eternal future demands our present holiness.

ETERNAL INHERITANCE (ROM . 8:14-18)

Jonathan Edwards' work, *Religious Affections*, makes the masterful point that genuine believers will show signs that prove their union with the Lord. Those that do not, prove their allegiance lay elsewhere. When Paul says the *"all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons"* he is saying what Edward's said before Edward's was born: Christians look like Christ! (Romans 8:14). We cannot expect to receive the inheritance that the Son of God will receive if we are living in opposition to the Father. Paul says the we *"did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!'"* (Romans 8:15). It is intimacy with the Father that we share because of Christ (Romans 8:16) and, therefore, those who profess to be in Christ and live intimately with the flesh will not receive God's inheritance. Living according to the flesh is often a temptation when we desire to escape suffering that comes with our confession of faith in Christ. Paul says as children of God we are *"also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him"* (Romans 8:17). Paul is reminding them and us, that our inheritance, however crazy and odd it may seem, is connected to our endurance in suffering. Heaven is granted to us who believe at the moment of our belief. Heaven, however, will not be entered without pain and struggle and trials. We are encouraged with these words, *"For I*

consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). Our endurance to gain the eternal inheritance comes, not by looking and focusing on the momentary and light challenges, but in contrasting them with weighty and eternity glory.

CREATION RESTORED (ROM . 8:19-22)

The finality of reconciliation - that time in which all will be restored - is not simply related to humanity. Often time we think that reconciliation is about man and it is. But reconciliation is about the whole of God’s creation. Nothing the Lord created should be given over to the flames of evil or eternal hell. All parts of creation were created good but, Paul says, and as such should be seen as worthy of our efforts to bring the kingdom to bear upon it. Everything is awaiting change. But the whole *“creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God’s sons to be revealed”* (Romans 8:19). Creation is waiting on the children of God to be the children of God; to bring the reality of the kingdom upon all aspects of life *“that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children”* (Romans 8:21). It was Adam whose sin brought chaos to the world and it was the last Adam that brought redemption to it. Now it is the sons of this Adam whose purpose in life is to live in such a way as to bring about the consummation of all things when true, and ultimate reconciliation will take place. Creation groans for this with labor pains, ready for the birth of renewal when Savior comes.

CONCLUSION

For what do you groan or long? The answer will prove so much. Our lives *always* reflect and move in the direction of that for which we groan and long.