

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Romans 8: 18-22

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Romans Chapter 8. We will read verses 18-22 today.

Jesus Christ was sent by the Father God to earth to accomplish the redemption plan established in eternity. When Jesus carried out His ministry on earth, outwardly He had no form or comeliness, just a carpenter from Nazareth in Galilee. His life was full of sorrows, often despised, enduring much suffering, and ultimately heading to the cross of Calvary. However, when Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the last time to observe the Passover, He was welcomed by crowds, because they had heard the testimony of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, and even Greeks came requesting to see Jesus.

At that moment, Jesus declared, as recorded in John 12:23–24, “Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.’” He knew He would be crucified on the cross, like a grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying. At that time, He would be glorified, for He was originally the second person of the divine Trinity, full of glory. However, His glory was veiled by His physical body, not revealed, and others could not see it.

When He died and His body was broken, He would rise again and manifest His inner glory. Just as a grain of wheat dies and produces much grain, Christ, through His many sufferings, broke the body that veiled His glory, and when He removed the outer covering, He would display His inner glory. Jesus Christ is the firstfruits, passing through suffering, removing the covering, and manifesting glory; He is the prototype of receiving glory. Every one of us who belongs to Christ must, like Him, pass through suffering with Him and also receive glory with Him.

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

We read this verse yesterday, and today we emphasize one point: like Christ, we too must pass through suffering to remove the covering on us and manifest the glory within us. The word “revealed” originally means to uncover, and this word is translated elsewhere as “revelation.” Christ is the firstfruits who received glory, having removed the covering and obtained glory, and He becomes our revelation. When we see His glory in this revelation, we are drawn to rise up and follow the Lord quickly.

A servant cannot be greater than his master, nor a student above his teacher; the path the Lord walked, we must also walk. Therefore, the Father God has measured out our lives and prepared many afflictions for us, and these afflictions will become our blessings, removing the covering on us and manifesting the various virtues grown in our soul through the path of sanctification. When Christ returns, we will put on a spiritual body, fully manifesting the glory stored within us. Just as Christ became our revelation, we too must become a revelation to all creation.

Next, Paul describes the process of receiving glory in a unique way, perhaps one we have never considered. God is the sovereign Creator of all things in the universe, and when speaking of the state of receiving glory, Paul takes us beyond our narrow perspective, showing us from God’s viewpoint what glory truly is. He tells us that in the process of waiting for glory, there is groaning—groaning from three sides. First, the groaning of all creation; then, our own groaning; and finally, the groaning of the Holy Spirit, which is a truly remarkable expression.

This week, we will first read about the first two groanings, which carry a sense of helplessness, an inevitable emotion during the waiting process. Next week, we will read about the Holy Spirit’s groaning, which is full of assurance and hope.

Verse 19: “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”

The creation refers to all things created by God—not only the birds of the air, the beasts of the earth, and the fish of the sea, but also trees, flowers, vegetables, mountains, plains, seas, deserts, and even the sun, moon, and stars; all these are creation. They are all eagerly waiting for the sons of God to be revealed. The sons of God are us, those who have received grace and salvation. Today, many of us are still children, but one day we will grow into sons of God, and God's glory will be manifested in us. The word "revealing" uses *apokalupto*, the noun form of revelation. This means the sons of God will remove their covering and manifest God's glory. Why does all creation earnestly long for us to manifest this glory? The answer lies in the next verse.

Verse 20: "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope."

Our ancestor Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden not only caused his own fall but also affected all things God created. Genesis 3:17 tells us, "Cursed is the ground for your sake." Originally, in the Garden of Eden, all creation coexisted in harmony, without sin, aging, or death; it was a scene of flourishing, glory, and freedom. Because of Adam's sin, creation was also cursed, resulting in the creation we know today. Animals follow the law of the jungle, with the strong preying on the weak, and plants experience the fleeting brilliance of spring and the sorrow of autumn.

Because sin entered the world through one man, Satan became the ruler of this world, governing it. Creation lost its meaning and value, thus being subjected to futility. God is a God of purpose and intent, and He created the universe and all things for His eternal purpose and intent, which gives creation its meaning and value. Now, Satan has usurped God's creation, ruling it with sin and death, causing all creation to live under futility. This was not creation's own will but was imposed by the one who subjected it, Satan.

Dear brothers and sisters, recall how, before we knew Christ and accepted salvation, we too lived under futility, not knowing the purpose of our existence or why we were alive. Perhaps we tried many new things, but after a while, everything became

tasteless and meaningless. There was always an empty void in our hearts that could not be filled; we experienced the vanity of vanities, all was vanity, like grasping shadows or chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us, “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts.” The word “eternity” in the original text means “forever.” God placed something called “forever” in man, which is the human spirit. Only eternal things can satisfy the spirit; all things on earth cannot. Until one day, we accepted Jesus Christ as our lifelong Savior, and the Holy Spirit entered our spirit, we found eternal satisfaction. This is our personal experience.

But Paul here broadens our vision and elevates our perspective. All creation, having lost its created purpose and value, has fallen under the bondage of futility. Paul reminds us that creation was made by God for us, and when we fail to manifest God’s glory, creation loses its meaning.

Paul saw this clearly, which is why he wrote in Ephesians 1:22–23, “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Only when the church is filled with Christ, becoming His body, can creation return to the order God intended at creation. Christ, with the church, is head over all things, and all things are brought under Christ, which is their rightful place.

Verse 21: “Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

Creation still hopes to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Today, we can still appreciate the beauty of nature, but this beauty is often fleeting; we can still sense the vibrant life of the animal kingdom, but this life faces the cruel law of the jungle. This leaves us with a sense of regret, for creation has fallen into the bondage of corruption. This is not God’s original creation but the result of Satan usurping God’s creation, ruling it with sin and death, causing creation to fall into corruption. Though creation lacks the cognitive awareness we have, Paul confidently tells us

that creation longs to be delivered from the bondage of corruption and to enter the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The Chinese Union Version's translation "obtain" is not entirely accurate. The original text uses the preposition *eis*, translated in English as "into," so "enter" would be more precise. The phrase "glorious liberty" in the original is "the freedom of glory," so it should be "the liberty of glory." A better translation would be: to enter the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Creation longs to be delivered from the bondage of corruption and to enter liberty. Only when the children of God receive glory can creation enter this realm of glory and gain true liberty.

When will the children of God receive glory? At the return of Christ. The reason Christ delays His return is that the church has not yet been built, and the children of God have not yet grown to maturity. Only when the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all the world and all the sons of peace return to God's household, and the servants serving in God's household each receive redemption—a talent of silver—and through their service, some gain ten talents, others five, which is the measure of spiritual life growth. God also gives each servant silver according to their gifts: some receive 5,000, others 2,000; those with 5,000 gain another 5,000, and those with 2,000 gain another 2,000, fulfilling their personal gifts.

At that time, Christ will return to settle accounts with His servants, for God's judgment begins with His household. Then Christ will come to judge the nations and bind Satan for a thousand years, ushering in the millennial kingdom. At that time, the saints will put on spiritual bodies, manifesting the glory of the sons of God, and creation will enter this glorious kingdom, gaining true liberty. Isaiah 11:6–9 describes the scene of creation in the millennial kingdom: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." At that time, creation will be delivered from the bondage of

corruption, and the earth will be filled with a harmonious and radiant scene. What a beautiful kingdom that will be, a kingdom to long for.

Verse 22: “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

Creation eagerly longs for the millennial kingdom to come soon, so it can be delivered from the bondage of corruption and gain the liberty of glory. But today, it can only labor under bondage. When creation sees the children of God being unprofitable, slothful, and slack, still vying for power, pursuing the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, it can only watch and do nothing but groans deeply.

Dear brothers and sisters, the next time you experience an earthquake, know that it is the earth groaning: Why have the children of God not yet manifested glory? The next time you encounter a typhoon, it is the atmosphere groaning, urging the children of God to quickly manifest glory. The next time you hear the gentle flow of water or the chirping of insects and birds, it is creation softly encouraging you to hasten to manifest the glory of God’s children. The next time you see wildfires in summer or the desolate autumn scene, it is creation’s silent protest: Why have the children of God not yet manifested glory? Do we not realize that our growth affects the well-being of creation? Because of our ancestor Adam, creation fell into the bondage of corruption, and now, because of our slothfulness and failure to bear fruit, it remains in that bondage. Creation can do nothing but groans deeply. Do you hear its groans?

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! Through Paul, You have given us such a profound reminder that all creation eagerly longs for the children of God to grow to maturity quickly, so Christ can return soon and bring a glorious kingdom, where creation can enter the realm of glory and enjoy true liberty together. Lord, forgive our slothfulness and our failure to bear fruit. We previously lacked this vision and did not realize that creation groans because of us. Lord, help us turn back, actively serve in the church, and encourage one another with the saints, so the church may

be filled with the scene of revival, hastening Christ's return. Bless the church I am in. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.