

Word of God – Word of Life

Hope for the Children of God and For All Creation

Romans 8:14-39

This passage concludes the Apostle Paul's lengthy exploration of what God in Christ has accomplished for us. Because this passage is so complex and multi-layered, it might be better to allow specific verses to speak to your heart rather than struggling to analyze and comprehend how it all fits together.

Below are phrases from our core passage paired with reflection questions. These are intended to stir your own meditation and conversations.

- *When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God... (vv.15-16)*
How are you assured that you are beloved by God?
- *...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ... (v.17)*
What might it mean that you share an inheritance with Jesus?
- *I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. (v.18)*
What has been the impact of suffering on your faith journey? In what sense do we "suffer with Jesus"?
- *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility... (v.19)*
How do you respond to the notion that your salvation and the healing of creation are connected? What might that suggest about your calling to care for creation?
- *...if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (v.25)*
What nourishes your hope? How does hope in God's future blessings impact your daily struggles?
- *We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (v.28)*
When has this been true in your life?
- *Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. (v.33)*
What might it mean to be free of self-accusation?
- *...nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (v.39)*
What do you imagine might threaten your relationship to God? What does this promise mean in the face of those threats?

This by no means exhausts the ways we might hear this passage addressed to us in love. The effort this month is to foster a shared listening to God's living, active Word. May the Holy Spirit bless our desire to hear and to obey. One of the threads woven into our Romans 8 passage is the glory that is/will be ours with Christ. Four times we are assured that our destiny is to be glorified as co-heirs of Christ. Glory here refers not so much to the Greco-Roman version amounting to opinion or reputation, ascribed by public opinion. It is more likely the Hebrew sense of innate weightiness, honor, beauty, fiery presence, splendor and power that is at play here. The glory of God in the Hebrew Bible concerns the fiery phenomenon of radiance and brilliance. If we are "to be conformed to the image of his Son," then we will share in the divine glory.

Another thread or theme is freedom. Both humanity and creation will together experience a glorious liberation from decay, futility and everything that would threaten to separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus.

May you be richly blessed this month as you continue on this journey to 'read, mark, and inwardly digest' God's Holy Word!

Pastor John and Pastor Matt <><

