

THE LONGING OF CREATION

July 23, 2023

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The First Lesson; Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalm of the Day; Psalm 65

The Second Lesson; Matthew 13:1-9

Matthew 13:18-23

Sermon Text; Romans 8:18-25

For I conclude that our sufferings at the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. In fact, creation is waiting with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in the hope that even creation itself will be set free from slavery to corruption, in order to share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that all of creation is groaning with birth pains right up to the present time. And not only creation, but also we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. Indeed, it was for this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for something we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patient endurance.

These are your words, Heavenly Father. Lead us in the way of truth.
Your Word is truth.

Amen

I have to admit to you that I have never been pregnant. I have never

experienced what it is like to be pregnant. I have heard what it is like to be pregnant. I lived with somebody who has been pregnant. I have some daughters-in-law who have been pregnant. I have known lots of women who were pregnant, but I have never been pregnant. So, what I am about to tell you is something that I had never experienced. But, let me tell you what I have heard about it. Number one, there are some pros. I have heard your skin can really glow, when you are pregnant. I have heard sometimes you can have an extra burst energy when you're pregnant.

But then, I have heard there is a flip-side to pregnancy. I have heard you can get really tired, when you are pregnant, and have this huge loss of energy. I have also heard you can get really nauseous, when you are pregnant, and even the mention of what used to be your favorite food can bring the dry heaves, and maybe even cause vomiting. I have heard that, (*and in fact, I have seen this*), there is weight gain with pregnancy, and clothes that don't fit anymore. Sometimes, there is water retention, and swelling fingers and toes. I know, when the pregnancy is far enough along, there can be some real challenges. It is almost impossible to lay in a comfortable position, so you can't get any sleep. To walk can cause a lot of back pain. There can be heartburn.

That is what I have heard pregnancy is like.

Oh, and there is another one I forgot. This one I have experienced. It is called moodiness. There are some things I have learned, that a guy probably should never say to a pregnant woman. For example, I remember when Sherri was about seven months pregnant, I ignorantly looked at her tummy, which was quite big, and in ignorance said, "*Wow! It is hard to believe you are only seven months pregnant. It looks like you could give birth tomorrow!*" Don't ever say that to somebody who is only seven months pregnant. And, I think when Sherri was eight months pregnant, (which means it means it was almost over), I ignorantly said, "*Man, it seems like*

this pregnancy went fast.”

Don't ever say that to a pregnant woman.

So, it is a real challenge to endure a pregnancy.

And then comes the day of delivery. Then comes the day of childbirth. The contractions start. They come more, and more quickly, and more, and more intense. If you have ever been in a delivery room, (*as scripture describes it*), there is groaning that happens. It can be loud, intense, and long. It can be, (*I am going to put it euphemistically*), very challenging to endure childbirth.

Now, let me ask you a question. If it is so hard to go through a pregnancy, and so challenging to give birth to a child, why are there so many people? Why are women willing to go through that, not just once, but two, three, four, five times?

Here is why. The joy of that new life that finally comes supersedes any pain that mom had to endure. I am going to say it again. The joy of the new life that finally comes supersedes any pain that mom had to endure. She willingly went through it.

That is the message of today's scripture reading. It is going to present us with the fact that currently in this life, nature, and you and I, (*as God's people*), are going through suffering. In fact, our scripture reading begins this way.

**“For I conclude that our sufferings at the present time
are not worth comparing with
the glory that is going to be revealed to us.”**

In other words, as we look at what is about to come some day, when Jesus finally comes back, and makes things the way they were intended to be from the start, we are going to be able to say, “*The joy of that new life supersedes any suffering we had to endure in this life.*”

Now, this scripture passage approaches it from what is going on with nature. It is going to then tie it to you and me.

Verse nineteen.

**“In fact, creation is waiting
with eager longing
for the sons of God to be revealed.”**

In other words, it is waiting for the day when Jesus finally comes back, and brings glory back to us, and His world.

**“For creation was subjected to futility,
not by its own will,
but by the will of the one who subjected it,
in the hope that even creation itself will be set free
from slavery to corruption,
in order to share in the glorious freedom
of the children of God.”**

Here it is.

**“For we know that all creation
is groaning with birth pains
right up to the present time.”**

So, what scripture tells us here is this. Think about it this way. If anybody in this room or anyone reading this thinks sin is not that big a deal, if you think it is not that big a deal, I want you to consider that sin had such a cosmic impact, when Adam and Eve fell into sin, that it affected and infected everything, including all of nature. We know from scripture, when God created this world, He created a beautiful world, beautiful nature. And it must have been amazing. The Bible says,

“Everything God made was good.”

But, when Adam and Eve fell into sin, there were curses God placed upon certain things. One of the things God did was place a curse upon nature. So, nature got affected and infected, because of our sin.

Let me just read a couple points in scripture, when it talks about what happened to nature.

You remember when Satan was the one who took the form of a

serpent. The serpent was cursed, when Adam and Eve fell into sin. Listen to the exact wording here. (*God is speaking to the serpent.*)

**“Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than any livestock,
and more than any wild animal.”**

Do you notice what it is saying there? The serpent was cursed, but so was livestock, and so were the wild animals. The serpent was cursed more, but a curse came upon nature.

Then He goes on, and He curses the ground. He says to Adam,

**“The ground is cursed, because of you.
You will eat from it by means of painful labor,
all the days of your life.**

It will produce thorns and thistles for you.

You will eat the plants of the field.

You will eat bread, but by the sweat of your brow.”

Then, I want you to hear what happens many, many years later. It is almost the time of the flood. And remember now, all nature has been cursed. All nature is suffering this brokenness, this decay, and this falling apart. It is almost the time of the flood, and The Bible says,

“Now the earth was corrupt...”

It doesn't just say humans, it says,

“Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight.

The earth was filled with wickedness.

God saw how corrupt the earth was

for every creature (*not just humans*)

every creature had corrupted its way on earth.”

Can you imagine how violent, scary, and difficult things must have been in the days of Noah? So, God destroyed every living thing on earth.

Here we are today, and still today nature, (*It is not by its own choice. It is not because of what nature did.*) God subjected nature to

frustration, because of what we did. It is our fault. It is our choice of what is happening to nature.

Let me give you two little examples.

Yesterday I happened to listen in on a discussion between two ladies who were talking about blue birds. One of these ladies had been trying for years to get blue birds to come to her yard. Finally, this year the blue birds showed up. She was so excited, and so thrilled. The blue birds nested, and they laid eggs. Her family was excited to see these blue birds hatch. One morning they got up, and here are all of these little blue birds eggs outside of the nest, on the ground, pecked apart.

Their hearts were crushed, so they studied, *“How did that happen?”* The day before they noticed there were a bunch of sparrows hanging around by the blue birds nest. They found out it is the nature of sparrows to go into blue birds nests, and peck those eggs with their beaks, putting holes in them. Then, take them outside of the nest and destroy them.

As this lady was talking she was so sad that it had happened.

I thought, *“That is our fault. That's our fault. That is how serious our sin is.”*

The Bible says nature has been subjected to frustration. It is longing for the day when sparrows don't do that to blue birds eggs, anymore. It is longing for the day when we are finally delivered, because when that day comes, creation is going to be delivered, as well.

I will give you another example.

Do you remember last week, at the end of our church service I said, *“We are going to have a weed pulling extravaganza. There are weeds on the baseball diamond, and we are all going to get together.”?*

Twenty people showed up. Twenty people showed up, but it still took two and a half hours, and this is just a baseball diamond! Two and a half hours, and we did not even get all of the weeds pulled.

There were some weeds up to 4 feet tall! We even got into a theological discussion on that ball diamond. Somebody said, *“This is the result of the fall into sin. God said weeds will come forth.”* It is our fault. It is our fault that it happens. Now it is hard for us to grow food, and it can even be hard for children to go out, and play on a baseball field, because weeds grow up. The Bible says it is like a woman in childbirth. It is going through these pains, looking forward to the day when it is finally restored to what it was intended to be in the first place, eagerly awaiting for us, ultimately, to be delivered.

I am going to read a couple passages that talk about when Jesus finally comes back, and He restores things to the way they were intended to be. You know, The Bible says God is going to create a new Heaven and a new Earth, the home of the righteous. The Bible describes how nature is going to get along. This is taken from Isaiah, chapter eleven.

“The wolf will dwell with the lamb. The leopard will lie down with the goat. The young lion and the fattened calf will be together. The child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze. Their young ones will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like cattle. An infant will play beside the cobra's pit. A toddler will put his hand in the snake's den, and they will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain.”

Nature is longing, like a woman in childbirth, going through labor pains, waiting for the day when we are finally delivered, because we are the ones who put nature into the situation it is in. Right now, God is using nature as The Law, when we see the brokenness, and the trouble that happens in this world. You can come up with all kinds of troubles that we see in nature. It is The Law to remind us how serious sin is, and what sin has done. In fact, this passage goes on, and turns it to us. Look at verse twenty three.

“And not only creation,

**but also we ourselves,
who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly while we eagerly await our adoption as sons,
the redemption of our body.”**

So now it says that you and I, as God's people, we groan inwardly. The word '*groan*' there is connected again to this whole concept of '*being in childbirth*'.

What causes groaning in this life? You know, we do groan in this life. It says we groan inwardly. That means maybe other people can't hear your groaning, but it is your soul that is groaning. So, what causes us to groan? It is suffering. For example, I can guarantee you there are people right here in this room, right now, who are groaning, because they are exhausted. Have you ever heard of someone who is in an athletic contest, and it is getting so hard, that they let out this, "*Ahhhhh*"? There are people here who are spiritually exhausted, because of what they are going through, and what is happening. They are groaning for the day when finally, finally this is over, and what we are waiting for finally comes, and supersedes all the suffering we are going through.

What else causes groaning? Pain causes groaning. I can guarantee you there are people in this room, right now, that are inwardly groaning, because of the pain they are going through. It might be physical pain. It might be spiritual pain. It might be emotional pain. It might be relational pain. It might be financial pain. We go through those things. We groan inwardly, and it is suffering. But, it is not useless, or meaningless groaning. It is like a woman in childbirth. We know what is coming. With anticipation we look forward to the joy that is going to far supersede any of the suffering we are going through.

What else causes groaning? Groaning can be caused by frustration. Did you ever do something, and get frustrated with yourself and say, "*Ahhh.*"? I am sure we are all groaning in frustration with

ourselves, spiritually, and inwardly, “*Why do I keep doing that sin? Why do I keep falling? I don't want that to happen.*” We groan inwardly, as we long for the day when we are finally delivered from all of this, and we are restored to how God intended us to be from the beginning.

The Bible says in this passage in verse twenty three,

**“And not only creation,
but also we ourselves,
who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly while we eagerly await our adoption as sons,
the redemption of our body.”**

You see, it says we have “**the firstfruits of the Spirit...**”

Now, what are '*firstfruits*'? If you lived in The Old Testament times, when your crop finally grew the very first fruits, the very first of the crop, before the rest of the crop ever developed, (*and there was a lot more coming*), those firstfruits were to be taken to the Lord, and given to the Lord. Then, the understanding was, “*This is just the beginning. There is a lot more coming, and I am looking forward to the rest of the crop coming.*”

It says we received the Spirit as the firstfruits.

So right now, right now in the here and now, verses what is yet to come, but right now in the here and now you have received the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, as the firstfruits. And, it means there is a lot more to come.

What have you received right now from the Holy Spirit? Right now, in this life, as you suffer, as you go through troubles, as you go through trials, as you groan with what you are going through, you have the Holy Spirit. What He has done is He has miraculously, through The Word, through The Gospel, (the message that Jesus died for your sins, and your sins are washed away, because of Christ's sake), the Holy Spirit has come into your heart, and He has brought you to spiritual life. You, right now, right now, through

faith hold in your possession the forgiveness of sins. That is yours right now.

Your sins are forgiven.

Right now, God looks at you, for Christ's sake, and He says, *"I don't see any sin in that man."* *"I don't see any sin in that woman, right now."*

That is yours. That is the firstfruits of the Spirit.

You have all of the promises God has given you. For example, the promise He is going to work out everything for your good. That is yours right now. That promise is yours, and He does it. He works out everything for your good.

We have received the firstfruits of the Spirit.

It goes on, and says this.

**"We... groan inwardly
while we eagerly await our adoption as sons,
the redemption of our body.**

Indeed, it was for this hope we were saved."

So, we look forward to the day when finally, finally Jesus comes back, and He brings an end to all sufferings, all trouble, all pain, all sorrow. Our bodies will be raised to be like Christ's glorious body, and there won't be anymore trouble. It will be awesome. It will be awesome!

It says,

**"Indeed, it was for this hope we were saved.
But hope that is seen is not hope,
because who hopes for what he already sees?
But if we hope for something we don't see,
we eagerly wait for it
with patient endurance."**

I remember when Sherri was pregnant for the first time. She was in the delivery room, and things were getting pretty intense. I remember she said this. *"I am never going to do this again."*

I thought to myself, *“If I were in your shoes, I would have said that a long time ago.”*

The next day she was laying in bed holding little Matthew, looking down at this sweet, little, wonderful child the Lord had given us.

With love in her eyes, she looked at me, and said, *“That wasn’t so bad. I think I could do that again.”*

You see, because at that point, at that point the joy of new life far superseded any pain she had gone through. God promises you, He promises you the awesome joy of new life. And for Christians, that far supersedes any suffering we may go through in this life.

I am going to end with these words from our text.

**“...we eagerly wait for it
with patient endurance.”**

Amen

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts, and our minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.