

2024/02/04

## SERMON

**Justification: Apocalypse is Redemption****GOOD Morning OIC,**

I have overlapped a few verses key to today's emphasis on **Apocalypse** or the End of Time in God's Plan for Christians Justified by Faith! The Apostle Paul had brought all of God's Creation into this magnificent exposition of Knowing God's Actions, or *Theology* for past, present, and future events. The main theme of Justification: God's Solution to **man's sin problem** through the Sacrifice of God's Son, is now shown as the Animal World's sin problem as well. In---

**(Romans 8.19-21)** *19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*

The Creation, most related to our thinking in the Animals and Plants, has a problem from sin, not of its own making, but Man's sin. Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden has brought death to all living things. But note, somehow the creation is *eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God*. That is waiting for God to reveal all Christians as His sons. We are adopted, but will have the same glory as His Son, Jesus, from before time began. As I mentioned last week, the Animal world senses the Presence of God around them and in Christians. Only God knows how conscious this is; but it is real and often obvious, to newly born-again Believers with pets.

Remember death came into the world by Man's, not animals' action. **(Romans 5.12)** *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned* — Death also spread to nature; animals, vegetation, everything living.

Now I want to emphasize a question implied as we read in **(Romans 5.19)** *anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God*. I ask: "If nature or creation is *waiting eagerly for the revealing of the Sons of God*, why can't we?"

In verse (.20) *subjected to futility, not willingly* by God. God has, with pain in His heart of Justice, inflicted this *futility* on His Beloved Creation! We see beautiful Japanese sparrows fighting with each other, and carnivorous animals like eagles and ravens feeding upon these smaller birds; and, of course, the big flesh-eating cats in the jungle. God subjecting the *creation to futility* does emphasize the truth of the Bible that death did come to man and animals from one man's sin. But for man and nature there is **the hope or promise** that all the futility in all living creatures will end when Jesus and the Glorified Christians come back to the Earth, *into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*. The futility of nature is an obvious statement of the futility of Mankind without a Saviour. Solomon made this famous statement written in the Holy Scriptures in (Ecclesiastes 2.17).

*So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is **futility** and striving after wind.* Solomon's wisdom is intentionally there by God to show that the wisest and most powerful life without a Saviour is *futility*.

#### **TAKEAWAY #1**

**The Promise or Hope for Man and Animals is totally in the Son of God bringing God's glory back to Earth. Only Christians have a *down payment* or taste of this now. The animals now sense this coming glory, especially from our presence, and creation also reveals it. God has given this promise of complete restoration to all Creation after Jesus returns in Glory.**

Reading (**Romans 8.22-23**) *22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*

Now Paul focuses away from Creation back on the Christians' experiential Life in the Spirit.

**(Romans 8.23)** Is an **Apocalyptic** or End of Time reference that *the whole creation groans and suffers the **pains of childbirth*** as we read in Jesus' prophecies on the End Time. We believers in Jesus should be *groaning as well*. **We groan, not from a life without contentment in Jesus; but only because the Holy Spirit has given all Christians tastes or spiritual drinks that make it clear that The Best is Yet To Come.** As written in (1 Timothy 6.6/ NLT) *Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.*

**Apocalyptic ...**Reading in (Mark 13.3-8) **3** *As He {Jesus} was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,* **4** *“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?”* **5** *And Jesus began to say to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.* **6** *Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He!’ and will mislead many.* **7** *When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.* **8** *For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. **These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.*** Birth pangs in us Christians as in **(Romans 8.23)** *waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body {our new Resurrected Glorified Body}.*

The Apostle was well aware of all Jesus taught, not to mention his personal conversations with the Risen Lord. Again, God's highest creation, Mankind is getting special notice that Time is running out. Nature's groaning obviously relates to not only some sensing in the Animal Kingdom; but also, in the activities of the Earth itself, and of course the prophets, especially the Great Prophet Jesus. Earthquakes and other events that men erroneously call simply “natural” continue to be more severe; and more frequent all around planet Earth. The obvious question is that if after *birth pangs* a baby arrives, so what will be born on Earth? Nothing less than the Glorified Jesus' and the Glorified Saints' appearance will be the End of Time on Earth as we know it. Glorified Saints! ... That is us, OIC, along with billions of others! For those of us who get excited at a dramatic end to a movie, or a sporting event: You won't be just watching but in the center of the action when Jesus returns.

**23** *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.* The Amplified Translation describes the *first fruits of the Spirit* as ***a joyful indication of the blessings to come.***

We Christians have the first fruits of the Spirit. We have tasted something of the Age to Come, the glory of Holy Spirit within us, beginning at re-birth as **(Romans 8.16)** says *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.* Note that the sensing of this *testimony by the Spirit* to a new Christian may be more noticeable to different Christians. But it will happen eventually for God promised it here in His Word.

We Christians should never forget, nor stop asking God to remind us, that at rebirth, or sometime later, there was an *assurance, that now I am a Child of God*. If somehow the lasting results of that experience with Holy Spirit has faded, do not despair. You are here in Father's House, Jesus' Church, for God to renew and encourage you. The psalmist pleaded for such, as in:

(Psalm 85.6) *Will You not Yourself **revive** us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?* AND we read in (Psalm 119.37) *Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And **revive** me in Your ways.* The Amplified Bible Translation (AMP) defines *vanity* as “all those worldly, meaningless things that distract—let Your priorities be mine”. It does not take many distractions from meaningless things in a busy part of this world like Japan to take our eyes off not only Jesus, but the Glorious Future God has promised for us at the End of Time.

And the prophet Isaiah said in (Isaiah 57.15) *For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to **revive** the spirit of the lowly And to **revive** the heart of the contrite.”*

I believe that Jesus wants to revive any of God's Children here today who find themselves as not able to look forward to a future filled with God's glory. Simply pray to God with a contrite heart {overcome with sorrow for sin of making worldly affairs hide His promise for our Glory}. He by His Spirit within you will cause more faith for that glorious future.

The OIC Prayers at the Lift Sign and myself, are always available to pray with anyone who seeks this renewal from Jesus' Hand. We will soon find ourselves to be *waiting eagerly for that Glorious Adoption as Sons*.

**Reading (Romans 8.24)** *For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? (v.25) But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

*Hope* in the Bible is belief in future actions by God by faith in Him and His Word. It is not just “wishful thinking” as you might hope for the Hanshin Tigers to win the championship, or maybe, nice weather on your day off work. It is a “solid” sense of “It will happen...God said so!”

Experiential Christian Living as we walk in the Spirit will have testimonies by Holy Spirit in our lives to encourage, not eliminate the need for **faith**. Often these testimonies by the Spirit of God

include *feelings*. God is capable and wise to give His sons good and bad feelings. Remember God has feelings (both good and bad) and we are made in His image. Some Christians are afraid of letting *feelings* be important. But they are important to God as part of His wise plans for His Children.

Some people, Christians or non-Christians, depend too much on their feelings regardless of the source, either God or life events. The all-wise God knows us better than we know ourselves. Regarding experiences with strong feelings from God, these are always confirmations of His Love.

We humans like to make others feel good, thus *by feelings*. Why wouldn't God do that also. The Bible confirms that He does just that, **Psalm 34:8**

*O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!*

It is also important to note that *feelings* from the Spirit of God are not the same as ***seeing God***.

Such in **(Romans 8.24)** *For in hope we have been saved, but **hope that is seen is not hope**; for who hopes for what he already sees? (v.25) But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

**“Our Victory in Christ”** is the heading over these next Bible verses in the New American Standard Bible – 1995 Version.

**26** *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;*

This heading is correct and fitting. For as the book of Romans has emphasized in recent weeks, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the God Head, Holy Spirit, is our inside source and guarantee of Victory in Christ. As a Christian matures, God intends for him to trust the Holy Spirit's intercession about things beyond his intellect or ability to comprehend.

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. As written in (1 John 2.1-2).*

(John 14.26/Mounce)

*But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you regarding all things, and cause you to remember everything that I have told you.*

Definition (MOUNCE/ Greek Dictionary): *paraclete* - **one called, or sent for to assist another; an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another, 1 Jn. 2:1; one present to render various beneficial service, and thus the Paraclete, whose influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ himself.**

Therefore, Jesus' visible physical presence has been replaced by the invisible yet physical presence of Holy Spirit. He desires to make His Presence known in Christians as their Helper. Jesus still is our special Advocate in Heaven. Most special because He became human as we are. But the Holy Spirit is on Earth NOW. And God is One God so, unlike our struggle to communicate accurately, all Three Persons in the Godhead work as One. Thus in (Romans 8.26) *but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;* This means that Holy Spirit prays to God for us! How can we fail?

**(Romans 8.27)** Confirms this exegesis, that is, bringing out the true meaning, of Unity in the Godhead. For Paul then writes: *27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* God searches the hearts of Christians.

We know that God sometimes reveals that He knows men's thoughts and hearts. Jesus spoke to His apostles in His first appearance to them after His resurrection: in (Luke 24:37-39) *But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh.* But the indwelling Spirit of God is always *on duty* we might say as our Helper and link to God in Heaven, interceding for us saints *according to God's will.*

We sing songs of Praise from **(Romans 8.28)** regarding God's power for our welfare. That is a *good thing;* but, like most Holy Scripture, it is meant to connect or outflow from the previous verse. Thus, *"according to the will of God" in (v.27)* is a plumb-line or a guiding principle for **(Romans 8.28)** *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* God applies His almighty power to our lives to cause *all things to work together for good.* We must not throw out either **the intercession by the**

**Spirit** or *according to the will of God* from the previous verse to exegete or understand what v.28 means to Paul and to God. We want to think we know what *for the good of those who love God* will result in a good event for us personally **after a difficult, discouraging, or demonic activity in our lives.** Instead of in our lives, it would be better to say in **“our walk in the Spirit with Jesus.”** The Bible makes it clear that for the Cause of Christ, our lives are expendable. Is the servant greater than the MASTER? (John 15.20) *Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also.* Thus, God often acts to cause good to our *calling* which may or may not seem good for us at the time.

God knows by His indwelling Spirit, who is interceding for us, that a result that looks or feels good to us, is not good for us in light of eternity, nor, in even in the light of our current walk to fulfill our **“calling.”** **Calling! What a powerful word in the Bible ... in God's heart for His Children. I will attempt to bring out how the proper understanding of these verses in Romans must be done in the light of a Christian’s “high or heavenly calling.”** Next week, from (Romans 29-30) **I plan to bring out more of the focus on a Christian's “calling” in light of Eternity.**

As in (Hebrews 3.1) *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession;*

To bring out this particular part of Romans, I have chosen two verses in Philippians that Paul described with much feeling and pathos his *calling*. I chose a Bible Translation, actually a paraphrase by J.B. Phillips. (Philippians 3.13-14/Phillips) *Yet, my brothers, I do not consider myself to have “arrived”, spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal—my reward the honour of being called by God in Christ.* If there ever was an apostle with pathos and emotions, it was the Apostle Paul. His emotions soared like an eagle when he considered the *honour of being called by God in Christ.* It is important to consider the weight of the word *calling* in understanding **(Romans 8.28).** The Amplified Version (AMPC) captures several points or concepts that I am aiming at, that I see in the text:

*We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose (v.28/ AMPC)*

- 1.) *partner in their labor* - We have seen how after a Believer makes the right choices to live in accord with the Spirit, and not in accord with the flesh; the Spirit can lead him to glory. This glory is already and not yet. The already produces fruit of the Spirit and testimonies for Jesus' name with the Spirit's power. The Spirit-led life has Divine blessings and Divine Purpose.
- 2.) *fitting into a plan for good* - The Holy Spirit causes Providential events and experiences for Spirit-led Christians. NOTE: All Christians have the Holy Spirit. But only the Christians who allow God to lead them, mostly by asking Him, will experience Providence that effects the expansion or growth of God's Kingdom. Jesus promised that the Devil could not stop this growth in (Matthew 16.18b) *...I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.* The powers of we Christians' fleshly and sinful desires are what often hinders the building of Jesus' Church. That need not be, as we saw the Helper, the Holy Spirit, will give us victory over our Old Nature so that we live now as "Sons of God."
- 3.) *called according to [His] design and purpose* – **Called** is God's proactive intervention in a Christian's life to create his personal **calling**. It may appear similar to others, but totally unique to that Christian and to the Lord Jesus.
- 4.) *to and for those who love God* – I placed this in a different order. The original Greek language didn't make stress meaning by order as by grammar structure. I find emotionally loving God, such in Praise Music, is a good thing; but the Promise of "to and for the good" requires a **love that is more than emotional** in a serious relationship with Jesus. There is also the qualifier of a heart to obey Jesus. Jesus simply stated this in (John 14.15) *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.* I am not throwing out the teaching in (Romans 7) regarding unplanned versus willful sinning. I believe that Jesus sees a heart desiring a total commitment to keep His commandments. Failure to do a good job against our old nature will be less frequent as a Believer matures to allow Holy Spirit to cause a closer walk with Jesus.

## TAKEAWAY #2

**So, the *for the good of in* (Romans 8.28) includes the relation of that Christian for God to *cause all things to work together for good.* I must add to my exegesis which clearly shows**



**what God calls good may not agree with what we would call or feel is good. What was good for God's Kingdom was the death of His Son. We, servants following Jesus, must not demand that our *good*, regarding Earthly concerns, works against the *good of God's Kingdom*.**

Earthly events such as futility of the Creation, wars and rumors of wars, famines and even false Christs fade away with the Holy Spirit's causing “**joy in the hearts**” of Christians who have a solid hope of experiencing God's Glory at the End of Time. The Spirit of God already gives a taste of that same Glory to all Christians before the Apocalyptic Glory for the Sons of God. God also revives and restores this hope in Christians who have lost the *joy and confidence* to live everyday with their focus on being led by the Spirit all the way to *seeing Jesus*.

God always adds a large amount of His *undeserved favor or grace* in all His actions with His children who are sincerely committed to follow Jesus. As Sons of God, all our troubles and trials come under our trusting God to really work all things in our lives for our good in light of Eternity with Jesus. This is an Apocalyptic Aimed Living ... from *Here to Eternity with and for JESUS!*

***Let Us Pray,***

#### REFERENCES

{ } - Pastor Bruce's added notes for clarity

**AMPC** - Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

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