

# Romans 6... 7...8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE  
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

**Romans 8:23** Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

**Romans 8:24** For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

**Romans 8:25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

Groans are heard in these next few verses. We **groan within ourselves** (v23) and the Holy Spirit groans on our behalf (v26).

There are all different types of groans. I don't want to limit what is meant too much, but the particular word used here refers to a *sigh* that is the result of some pressure being applied.

What is pressing against us causing us to sigh? The reason given in this passage is that we are in our fallen mortal bodies:

1. In verse twenty-three you see a direct connection between the **groans within ourselves** and the **waiting for... the redemption of our body**.
2. In verse twenty-six the Holy Spirit groans in response to what Paul called **our weaknesses**. In the KJV it's **infirmities**. It includes mental weaknesses but only because we are in mortal, fallen bodies.

Our bodies are falling apart! Within even the best of them resides the flesh and sin. So we groan and long for our new, glorified bodies that we will receive at the resurrection of the dead and Rapture of the church.

**Romans 8:23** Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

The **firstfruits** were the pledge of the fullness of the future harvest. We have received the Holy Spirit to indwell us. The body He indwells is, of course, mortal and temporary while He is immortal and eternal. We have this heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel. The having of Him is a profound guarantee of things to come.

**Romans 8:23** ...even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Note that we **groan within ourselves**. It is describing our deep internal desire to be free from the earth and home in Heaven. It is not a license for us to complain or to go around being depressed and discouraged. Quite the opposite! We **groan within ourselves** knowing the glory that awaits us in the very near future.

We're **eagerly waiting**. Think of something you want to do that you are willing to wait for. I'm thinking of the folks who camp out days or weeks ahead of time to get into a movie or concert. They are excited and eager in their waiting, willing to suffer hardships for the event.

We are **eagerly waiting** for two things:

1. The first is **the adoption**. We've already seen that our adoption as Christians gives us full access to all the rights and resources of our Father's household. In what sense are we **waiting for the adoption**? In our current state we see through a glass dimly. We do not and can not have full understanding of all things. Everything is ours but we're not able to grasp all of it just yet in our finite minds.
2. The second thing we are **eagerly waiting for** is **the redemption of our body**. If we die the Lord will resurrect us at His coming. Our current body will be like a seed giving rise to something far more beautiful and glorious. If we are raptured we will be changed immediately.

We are like those crazies who camp out – only our whole life is one long camp-out until the main event.

**Romans 8:24** For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then you **are** saved. You are justified by faith in Him. There is nothing more you need believe or do.

But that is not to say your salvation is complete. Spiritually it is; physically it isn't. Thus we still **hope** for the completion of our salvation when our bodies will be transformed.

**Hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?** By definition **hope** looks to the future. It expects something in the future. We're expecting new bodies, a new earth, a new city, and an eternity filled with fellowship with Jesus.

Most earthly talk about the future is tentative. It can be downright scary. Whether it's global warming or super viruses or nuclear war we sometimes have to wonder, "Will there even be a future?"

The answer is "Yes," because God has said so. My **hope** in the future is secure because it is based on the Word of God and proven by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The history of the world will unfold just as it was written by the prophets.

More to the point, I have a future to **hope** for. I know that He who has begun this good work in me will complete it.

The future is something to hope for. In the mean time the return of Jesus is my blessed hope.

**Titus 2:13** looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

**Looking for the blessed hope** of the Lord's return puts all my life's groanings into perspective. Paul put it like this:

**Romans 8:25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

Albert Barnes made this insightful comment on verse twenty-five:

Where there is a strong desire for an object, and a corresponding expectation of obtaining it - which constitutes true hope - then we can wait for it with patience.

Where there is a strong desire without a corresponding expectation of obtaining it, there is impatience. As the Christian has a strong desire of future glory, and as he has an expectation of obtaining it just in proportion to that desire, it follows that he may bear trials and persecutions patiently in the hope of his future deliverance. Compared with our future glory, our present sufferings are light, and but for a moment (2Corinthians 4:17). In the hope of that blessed eternity which is before him, the Christian can endure the severest trial, and bear the intensest pain without a complaint.

The more pressure the more I sigh. But the more I sigh the more I see the coming of the Lord as my blessed hope. The more I expect Him at any moment. The more I rejoice in my trials.

It is becoming more and more popular to criticize Christians who have a strong belief in the blessed hope of the Lord's return. It's said of us, for example, that they are too heavenly minded to do any earthly good. Within what passes as evangelical Christianity many are moving towards more social action.

It is all too possible for pretrib, premillennial Christians to ignore social needs. But in the long run it is the spiritual condition of the heart that is essential.

Something else to consider. If I lose sight of the future hope of my adoption and the redemption of my body I will remain or become weak in my walk on the earth. If my hope is not grounded solidly in the Lord's return for me then I will not know how to approach my sufferings. I will fail in them rather than flourish.

The return of the Lord to complete my adoption and fully redeem my body are not neutral doctrinal issues. They are incredibly important to my spiritual well-being and maturity on a moment-by-moment basis.

The further out I think the Lord will come for me the less this hope will affect me. Of course regardless when I think the Lord is coming for His church He could come for me any time. I could die. But most of us do not live as if we were going to die today.

If I think the Lord is coming for His church at the end of the Great Tribulation, or in the middle of it, I am not living with the kind of hope

Paul was talking about. Not now anyway. It wouldn't kick-in until the Tribulation began. And then it would be very mechanical because I would know the day the Lord was coming. It is hope deferred to believe in a mid- or post-tribulation return of the Lord for His church.

However if I believe the Lord's return for me in the Rapture is imminent then I am full of hope. It's better even than thinking I could die today! Even if I try to remind myself to have hope because I could die today, I'm better off thinking I could be transformed **any moment**.

A strong pretrib, premillennial belief in the Lord's return to rapture you is a priceless incentive for living a victorious Christian life.

