



## *When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do*

*"Wait for it!"*

Romans 8:18-22

Probably my favorite scene in the movie, *Jaws*, takes place below deck in the *Orca*. Quint, Chief Brodie, and Hooper are discussing their various wounds and scars.

Quint asks Hooper to feel a permanent bump on his head he acquired in a fight with a cop on St. Patrick's Day in Boston.

Hooper tells him he's got that beat and reveals the bite scar from a moray eel.

Not to be outdone, Quint describes why his arm will no longer fully extend. He was injured in an arm wrestling contest at "an Oke bar" in San Francisco.

Hooper and Quint then swap shark bite scars. Meanwhile Chief Brodie sheepishly looks at his appendicitis scar.

Hooper thinks he's won when he dramatically points to his chest and reveals that Mary Ellen Moffit broke his heart!

Then it gets really heavy. Chief Brodie asks Quint about a scar on his arm. It's from a tattoo removal. Quint describes how he survived the sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* - the WWII ship that delivered the bomb, "the Hiroshima bomb" - and how the sharks attacked the men in the water awaiting a rescue that no one expected would come.

The apostle Paul would win any scar-contest among believers over who suffered the most for the sake of the Gospel!

Whenever the apostle Paul discusses sufferings I think it's a good idea to refresh our minds with the trials he endured. In Second Corinthians 11:23-28 he wrote,

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool - I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2 Corinthians 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

2 Corinthians 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2 Corinthians 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness -

2 Corinthians 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Paul wrote those words in 56AD. He would live another ten years before being martyred by beheading. He wrote those words before being almost beaten to death in the Court of the Gentiles; before the shipwreck on the Island of Malta; and before being bitten by a poisonous snake whose venom was always fatal.

Keep these things in mind as we explore the next several verses!

Romans 8:18 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 need to understand that “sufferings” are the dominant feature of “this present time” in which we are living. He’ll explain why in verse twenty.

This doesn’t mean we will all suffer the same way. Indeed, some people seem to cruise through life.

It’s talking more about the characteristic of the world in which we live. Look around and you won’t have to go far to see terrible sufferings.

We should “consider,” or *judge*, our individual sufferings as not even “worthy” of comparison to “the glory that shall be revealed in you.”

In other words, rather than getting all worked up over our sufferings we should simply accept them as par for the course and keep serving the Lord.

*How different is our attitude!* We make such a big deal over our sufferings, but even more over the sufferings of others. We feel as though we are not very Christian if we tell others to endure, persevere, or tough it out.

Let's use Paul as an example of a more biblical way to treat sufferings. When on his way to Jerusalem Paul was repeatedly warned through prophecy that imprisonment and sufferings awaited him there. The believers along the way begged and pleaded with him to not go there.

**Their begging and pleading was a greater trial than what awaited him!** It was par for his course to go to Jerusalem, be imprisoned, and suffer. He accepted it as part of his necessary service to the Lord.

With compassion we must adopt the attitude of Paul – even towards others.

When “shall glory be revealed in us”? Certainly the Lord glorifies Himself through our suffering. But this looks forward to the future, as we next read,

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

“Revealing” is from the same Greek root word that is used of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We are the “sons of God” in this verse - all those who will one day be resurrected.

The final “revealing of the sons of God,” that moment in which all believers in Jesus Christ will have been resurrected and are in their glorified, eternal bodies - **that's what life is about!**

God's creation is said to have an “earnest expectation” with regards to our being revealed. It means that God's creation, what we might call the universe, is moving toward a definite purpose. The universe isn't a random result of some big bang. No, it was created with purpose and is now on track for that purpose to be realized and fulfilled.

Creation “eagerly waits” for God’s sons to be revealed. I used to “eagerly wait” for Christmas morning, to be able to open my gifts, to see them ‘revealed.’

Paul wasn’t getting weird or New Age-ish, but the idea here is that the very universe is looking forward to the consummation of God’s plan for us.

God’s “creation” was good until Adam and Eve sinned. Then it began to feel the effects of their sin. Now it awaits the unfolding of God’s plan of redemption.

I like to point out that the universe only exists as a place for God to meet with mankind. It’s pretty elaborate; it’s rather extravagant. It’s all there only to reveal God’s great love for us.

It’s good to be reminded that we live in a fallen world. When people wonder why God allows so much suffering the answer is that man sinned.

I read of a newspaper that invited folks to write letters answering the question, “What’s wrong with the world?”

G.K. Chesterson sent a letter to the editor. His answer to their question, “What’s wrong with the world?”, was, “I am.”

The state of the universe is our fault. How so? Adam was representing us in the Garden of Eden when he willfully sinned.

Theologians call this representation by Adam the Federal View of the Fall. This view teaches that Adam acted as a representative of the entire human race. With the test that God set before Adam and Eve, he was testing the whole of mankind.

Adam’s name means *man* or *mankind*. Adam was the first human being created. He stands at the head of the human race. He was placed in the garden to act not only for himself but for all of his future descendants.

When Adam sinned, the repercussions of the sin were felt throughout the whole of God’s creation. We’ve already seen this previously in Romans.

In Romans 5, for example, Paul makes the following observations:

- “Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin” (v12).
- “By the one man’s offense many died” (v15).
- “Through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation” (v18).
- “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (v19).

When Adam sinned, God came to him and laid-out for him the plan of redemption. God preached the Gospel to Adam in the Garden, letting him know that He would come to redeem the human race.

God is still moving to correct what we have distorted. One day creation will be renewed.

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope;

“Creation” was tied to our decision in the Garden of Eden. When we fell into sin, sin affected all of creation.

God made it that way; He made it *subject* to our decision. But He “subjected it in hope.” Things won’t always be as they are. The future is full of hope.

I’d say that the only hope, really, is the future redemption of creation once God is through dealing with the sin issue.

I think we ought to be good stewards of God’s creation and even more so in light of its fallen condition. But ultimately only God can resolve the issues of nature and the environment.

And He will:

Romans 8:21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Jon Courson:

Creation is hurting. Julie Andrews notwithstanding, the hills may be alive with the sound of music - but they’re singing in a minor key. Why? Because all creation was cursed when man sinned in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, the more you study nature, along with its beauty, the more you see its cruelty. We enjoy the delicate flower, but

shudder at the devastating flood. Earthquakes and tornadoes, thunder and avalanche are as much a part of nature as gentle streams and peaceful meadows. That is why nature groans and waits for the day when the King comes back and for the day when the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Once we receive new bodies we enjoy “the glorious liberty” God intended for our first parents and their offspring. We will be free to love God and fellowship with Him forever. We will be free to enjoy His created universe as children enjoy an amusement park.

Everything will be an E-ticket ride and there will be no lines!

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

You may have encountered the phrase, “the throes of death.” Even though fallen, creation is *not* in the throes of death but rather “in labor with birth pangs to be delivered”!

The worst is yet to come. You can read about it in the Revelation. But just like the birth of a baby, once delivered the pain gives way to joy.

“Until now” means during the current age in which we live and until the Lord returns.

The underlying assumption of these verses is that both you and creation will suffer more-and-more until the coming of the Lord.

The horrible tragedies, both natural and those men inflict upon other men, are not God’s fault. They are not even God’s judgment. They are the inevitable result of sin entering God’s creation by our choice.

Yes, it was **our** choice – mine and yours. Adam and Eve represented each of their offspring. They chose for us and we reap what they sowed.

But Jesus chose for us, too. He chose obedience and to die on the Cross in our place. With His representation we have become new creatures and await the final redemption of our bodies and the creation of a new universe.

*Wait for it!*

