

# “Waiting for the Revelation”

*Romans 8:18-23*

## REVIEW

5 words explain this text:

### I. **REALITY** – “sufferings of this present time” (:18)

A. Here is a painfully honest acknowledgment of sufferings for us to endure in this present age.

1. Some suffering is due to personal sin – “The way of transgressors is hard.” (Prov. 13:15)
2. Some suffering is part of the curse of Adam's sin (Gen. 3:17-19).

B. In any case, life can be hard.

1. A child begins to learn this truth early on. At first the little pains of hunger or sickness or a spanking or a denial; then not getting what is wanted, not winning, learning something of loss, rejection, loneliness, insecurity, hatred, violence, temptations, crime and punishment, cliques, conspiracies, manipulations, disappointments, rejections, failures, wars, calamities, deaths . . . all find their ways into our lives in time.
2. This side of reality, hardness, is all about us. Look at the fear and hopelessness in our prisons, the brain-eating Zika virus plaguing South America, or travel diaries of American pioneers.

C. Indeed, this sin-cursed world is condemned, and ultimately there is no sense in it apart from the redemption God can supply. Creation has been made “subject to vanity.” (:20)

1. There is a fruitlessness, emptiness, and frivolousness to it all. Life is vanity and vexation. Paul's description is of a decaying condition and a pursuing of pointless ends.
2. Matthew Henry explains conditions this way: “There is an impurity, deformity, and infirmity, which the creature has contracted by the fall of man. The creation is sullied and stained, much of the beauty of the world gone. There is an enmity of one creature to another; they are all subject to continual alteration and decay of the individuals, liable to the strokes of God's judgments upon man. When the world was drowned, and almost all the creatures in it, surely then it was subject to vanity indeed. The whole species of creatures is designed for, and is hastening to, a total dissolution by fire.”

D. So Paul describes what we all know in our souls to be true: “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves.” (:22-23)

1. This is a description of birth pains. And note the wisp of optimism hinted here, for birth pains are not all bleak unless the future is still-born, a fact that leads to our second point ...

**II. RECKONING** – “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (:18)

A. The question is, what do we do with this reality of a hard life? How should we respond?

1. The answer is to think right about it. How? Be encouraged by comparison. Compare present sufferings with future glory. See also:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” (Matt. 5:11-12)

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” (Heb. 11:26)

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (II Cor. 4:17)

2. Our glorious future is represented in part by the “crown of life” → James 1:12; Rev. 2:10, 3:11, 4:10-11.

**III. REVEALING** – “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (:18)

A. Here is a significant element of our faith: The suffering we bear for our Christ-likeness shall be revealed and rewarded in due time.

B. Such a theme for us: revealing!

1. True believers shall be revealed to be Christ's: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) Compare Rev. 1:12-17.
2. Words: “There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.” (Matt. 10:26-27) “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” (Matt. 12:36-37)
3. Thoughts: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” (I Cor. 4:5)
4. Giving: “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” (Matt. 6:3-4)
5. Praying: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matt. 6:6)

6. Fasting: “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matt. 6:17-18)
7. Jesus to believers: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21)
8. Jesus to the world: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Rev. 1:7)

**IV. RELEASING** – “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (:21)

A. Creation shall be released from the “bondage of corruption” – the principle of decay, things winding down and falling apart. It is a condition often which destroys the peace, mars the happiness, dims the hope, enfeebles the faith, and weakens the love of Christians. But prisoners to corruption shall be delivered, released, from these chains. That's true for . . .

1. Creation – Isa. 11:6-9
2. Redeemed Humanity – Rev. 22:3-5

**V. REDEEMING** – “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (:23)

A. There is a redemption that remains to be carried out.

1. “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28)
2. “Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph. 1:13-14)

B. That redemption includes our bodies.

1. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (I Cor. 15:51-53)

**Are you experiencing a strong dose of harsh reality? Here are 5 points of biblical instruction:**

1. Acknowledge that **reality** IS hard.
2. But **reckon** on the comparative joy ahead if you suffer now.
3. Look forward to God's **revealing** of His saints and their service to Him.
4. Anticipate being **released** from your current bondage to corruption.
5. Abide in the hope of completed **redemption** that will include your very body.

## DISCUSSION

1. The Bible teaches that creation has been made “subject to vanity,” and so apart from redemption life ultimately makes no sense. Explain and illustrate.
2. The Bible teaches that one way to respond to the hardness of life is to be encouraged by comparison. Explain and illustrate.
3. The Bible teaches that there is much hidden today that shall be revealed. Explain and illustrate.
4. The Bible teaches that one day creation shall be delivered from the “bondage of corruption.” Explain and illustrate.