

# The Groaning Creation

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## Grace Protestant Reformed Church

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We turn in God's word tonight to the eighth chapter of the book of Romans. Romans 8. I've been preaching a series of sermons on Romans 8 in first church and the sermon this evening comes from verses 19 through 22. Romans 8, the text will be verses 19 through 22. Let's begin reading at verse 12 and we'll read through verse 27. Romans 8:12,

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 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. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature [or the creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature [again, the creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 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. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

We read Gods' word to that point tonight. Our text is verses 19 through 22 of Romans 8.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Beloved congregation, sons of God, we must expect to endure some suffering in this life. Verse 17 of Romans 8, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him." Some of our suffering, suffering with him; suffering that is the same as the suffering that he endured. Not, of course, atoning suffering upon the cross but the suffering of the rejection of the world. If the Son experienced that kind of rejection, then will not adopted sons experience something of that?

That suffering, difficult though it is, is merely a short temporary suffering on the way to everlasting glory with him. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. The glory that is his glory come home to us, the glory of the Son also granted to the adopted sons. Glory that is not just a glory that we see, observe with our eyes, but a glory that is revealed in us; the manifestation of God's glory coming even out of us in our resurrected bodies, the redemption of our body; the glory of sons who fully image their Father in sinless perfection; the glory of his delight in us as his children fully; the glory of our sonship no longer private but publicly manifest before all the world, "This is my Son." That glory is going to be so great, the apostle says, that it will far outweigh the temporary suffering that we endure in this present time for the sake of being sons of God.

The hope that we have is so weighty that the greatness of it is so much heavier than the difficulty or badness of the sufferings now. The child of God lives in hope, hope for what is coming. Even though he groans now under his sufferings and difficulties, the miseries that he experiences in this life, he also groans out of the anticipation of that glory that is to come.

Now add this lest the people of God live in the middle of a big vast world where many, majority are not sons of God experiencing this with them, lest the people of God feel alone in this misery and in their hope, the apostle now adds: and the whole creation is with you in this, sharing in your misery, groaning under it and at the same time groaning with you in anticipation of the same hope. There is something, of course, utterly mysterious about that, the creation groaning with us. The creation is not conscious. The creation is not a person and yet it's being pictured here as conscious and as personal. It's a figure the Apostle Paul is using, of course, and we dare not, on the one hand, try to make what is obviously a figure, not a figure. But there's another danger, too, that on the other hand we push to the other extreme and explain away what the apostle says is really nothing that has any relationship to what we experience in this creation.

There is a continuous work of God's providence, as you know, every second, upholding this creation and God is, by his providence, upholding this creation under the curse that is coming down upon that creation and the effect of God's holding it up every day while the curse is pressing down upon it leads to noises, sounds that the creation makes which sounds are personified here as the creation's groaning. The apostle is pointing us to something mysterious but real. Not conscious but real. Providence has written our own groans under the curse and to the very creation itself so that we may see in the creation around us both a shared misery and a hope. Mysterious, yes, but also real and that's good. Mystery that's not grounded in reality, of course, is just mysticism, but on the other hand, reality that doesn't have some mystery to it, is just a textbook in that religion. Let's get both tonight as we hear the groaning creation. Notice, first, the meaning of that groaning creation; second, the full explanation for why it is; and third, the comfort that the creation's groaning is to us.

Verse 22 of Romans 8 states that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It's groaning. The word for "groan" there in the Greek is the exact same word for "groan" that's used of God's people groaning in the next verse, verse 23, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption"; and it's the exact same word that's used in verse 26 of the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The exact same word those three times with the exact same meaning. It means "to sigh under the difficulty of something" so that the burden, the heaviness, the weight of something that is upon you presses out almost naturally a groan, a sigh, and an audible noise that though it's not speaking any words, that noise, it is still communicating and communicating this: tired, troubled, breaking down.

It's not only God's people under their burdens of this present time who groan that way but the creation itself groaneth, references to the inanimate part of creation. Of course, we are part of creation but we're not in view here in this part of the text because what is groaning is described later as groaning with us. If it's groaning with us, it can't be us here. The creation that groans is also not the reprobate unbelieving whether humans or demons. The creation in the text that groans is also waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God and the reprobate unbelieving, whether human or demons, are not waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The creation that's groaning also does not include the angels. The creation is made subject to vanity, the text says, and the bondage of corruption, and the angels were never made subject to vanity in the bondage of corruption. The creation, then, is referring to what we sometimes call the brute creation: the birds, the plants, the animals, the seas, the mountains, even the dirt and the sand, and the sun and the moon and the stars, the vast reaches of the universe. The whole cosmos is groaning.

Groans arise out of the experience of misery, don't they? Misery. Heavy burdens that press out this groan. In verse 23 of the passage, when we're groaning, we're groaning because of misery, misery of this present time of verse 18, and the text tells us that when the creation groans too, it's groaning, first of all, out of misery. It describes that misery in two ways. First of all, it describes it in verse 21 as the "bondage of corruption." The

bondage of corruption because the creature, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption," that's what it's under now, the bondage of corruption and that's misery. The creation is bound under bondage. It can't get out from under the control of something and what it can't get out from under the control of is corruption.

Perishing. Decay. Destruction. Death. Corruption is death. Corruption is like a slave master over the creation and the creation is bound to it. It can't but do what corruption says. Corruption is a principle of death that is over this creation, infiltrates it, and rules it. Of course, the text is talking about the curse, the curse of God that fell upon man in the beginning fell also upon the creation and the curse, of course, was essentially this: you die. You die so that the creation, too, is bound by death. Death has an absolute hold over it, physical death, decay. The creation can't stop decaying. Slowly but surely it's dying.

This is an observable fact. It's so obvious that every scientist upon the earth, even unbelieving, acknowledges it. Sometimes it's called the scientific law of decay or an implication of the second law of thermodynamics, or sometimes the law of entropy; that the creation is constantly losing its usable energy, not it's energy but it's usable energy. But you don't have to be a scientist to see that. Everybody knows. Your car doesn't get newer as the years go by, it gets older. The trees don't get more virile as the years go on, they get more brittle. Everything, everything is decaying, everything around us from your body, to your house, to the roads that we drive on, to the very earth itself.

God keeps it alive, yet as it goes on and there are energies that come from other places that continue to bring life to the earth. The sun sends out the energy of heat and light that grows new life upon the earth. The human beings upon the earth apply energy to it. You paint your house so that it doesn't decay as rapidly as it normally would. You put up a retaining wall to prevent erosion. But all those things are only temporary upward movements in an otherwise downward spiral and trend of a creation that is decaying, constantly in the process of decaying. The sun itself is losing usable energy. It's decaying. Stars are dying leaving black holes behind. It cannot possibly be stopped for the creation is bound by the principle of death. It infiltrates it and governs it and as much as the creation wants to throw that off and escape it, that principle rules it. It cannot shake itself free from it. The bondage of corruption.

The curse, beloved, was not only physical death, it was also spiritual death, and even that aspect of the curse, spiritual death, affects the creation in its misery, not directly but this way: that the creation now is bound to support a humanity upon its surface that in the main is a humanity that is spiritually dead, and that's the second part of the misery of the creation in the text. Verse 20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." And the curse that came upon man in the beginning, the creation was made a servant of vanity.

Creation is a servant. It's created to be a servant in the beginning, a servant of man, a home to man from which man may draw some life. It was obligated to support humanity and the original purpose of the creation was to be unified with its humanity so that together the human beings on it would give glory to God, drawing its life from the

creation, creation supporting and man with one voice honoring the Creator. And it did live like that for a time before the fall, have a taste of the joy of that, supporting a humanity free from sin, serving Jehovah God, glorifying him in everything, but now after the fall, the masses of humanity that live upon it, the majority live for the glory of man, not for the glory of God. Their lives and actions, though used by God, of course, and his sovereignty in spite of themselves for his own purpose, are not directed by them for the glory of God but are empty, vain, worthless. Every apple and every steak that the creation produced was supposed to go toward giving energy to man to live for the praise of his Maker, but now its apples and its steak go in so many cases to the giving of energy, the giving of life to man so that he can put his fist in the face of God and say, "Not you but me!"; to live an empty and vain life and the creation has to support this, not willingly, but it has to support this vanity all history long and it doesn't want to and it gets tired of it.

It wasn't created for this originally. When that man goes to murder somebody, he does it with the energy from the pancakes he ate that morning that comes from the wheat that the earth yielded to him. He goes in the power that the milk from the cows gives to him. His heart races as he draws out the gun or the knife and he breathes heavier and more oxygen is drawn in for the task, oxygen that the creation gives to his lungs. With the rest that he gained in the darkness of night, from the creation rotated to shut the lights off for him so that he could sleep, and under the curse of both of these things, you see, the bondage to corruption, the fact that it's dying, it's decaying, and the misery of its subjection to serve so much vanity, emptiness, worthlessness, the creation groans. All history long it groans, it cries, "Ah! I feel the principle of death within me like a man getting older in decay. And with what life I have within me, I am to support so much vanity and emptiness." And as this creation gets older and older and closer to the end, more and more tired it gets and more and more it groans until one day it's going to convulse in its death groans at the end in the vials of the book of Revelation.

Creation groans out of misery, bondage to corruption in subjection to vanity but groaning, beloved, is not only due to misery and the weight of a misery being borne, but groaning is also due to hope, hope of being delivered from that misery. Someone who went through the process of adopting a child from an Eastern Block country once related how eerie it was to go into an orphanage in an Eastern Block country to get their child to take home for adoption, eerie not so much because of the country that they were in, not so much eerie because everybody spoke a different language or because the people were strange or the children looked funny to them, but eerie because they said, "When we went into that orphanage, it was absolutely silent." There are cribs all around, babies all around, and beds with small children and yet silence. Nobody's crying. The babies are not crying. It's all still and quiet. Why? Because for so long these infants and these children have been left there alone crying and nobody came to answer their cries and so they gave up. They stopped crying. They stopped groaning because nobody came to answer.

It's horrific but it indicates, doesn't it, that the groan out of misery, that expression of hurt, is not only due to the misery itself but also because you expect that someone will hear my groans and someone will answer and rescue me out of it. Why groan any longer if you know no one is there to hear and to answer? Isn't that part of your groaning as the

children of God? Yes, you groan in the sufferings of this present time under the weight of that misery that presses those groans out of you, but not only is that the source of your groan, it's also that you have an expectation, a hopeful waiting for deliverance.

Verse 23 of Romans 8, we groan waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. We are anticipating an answer. It's part of the expression also of our hope that he's there to hear me cry, "Abba, Father. I'm awaiting, Father. I'm awaiting. This misery is pressing this out of me but I'm crying to you because I know you hear and you answer and I'm waiting but I need help. Father, help!" So, too, the creation. It groans not only because of the misery and the burden but because there's a hope for it, a sure hope that one day it will be released from this bondage to death and its subjection to serve vanity.

Don't miss those little words in verse 20, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." In hope. It has hope and the hope is this, verse 21, that "the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It has hope that one day in the future it shall be delivered from this bondage to that principle of death so that the law of decay and corruption no longer is the law that rules over it. Instead of being bound to the principle of decay and destruction, it will be brought into the very principle of life that is in the very Son of God himself, and will be in you and me as sons of God on that day. It will break free. It will be liberated from its curse. It will share in the glorious existence of the sons of God, in your future existence, and just like for us, so for it. It won't just stand there and watch it on the outside, but that glory will infiltrate it and the majesty of God's gloriousness will shine out of it as it's transformed into the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

The principle will be life and not death and it will never die again, never decay again, and it will never serve any of vanity or spiritual death ever again either, only life and light, and that future date will only support the sons of God. The whole body of the elect will walk upon its surface. With one voice, that body will lift itself up to the praise and honor of God and use, however that works, use what's in that new heavens and new earth to honor and magnify him.

All of its energies will go, be pressed into not vanity but the glory of Jehovah in his grace, and it can't wait. Verse 19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for," this day, "the manifestation of the sons of God." Earnestly it's expecting this. It's looking forward to it. The Greek word literally means it's standing on its tiptoes and it can't wait. It's looking for it to come. For that moment it groans, it travails in pain, the birth pains, like a mother in pain but knows that that pain is going to end and she'll give birth to this child she can hold in her arms, the creation is travailing and it's groaning but in expectation that it will give birth into the new heavens and new earth out of itself. It has hope.

Oh, child of God, this is what you must hear in the creaking of the trees when you walk through the forest. There are lots of trees here in Michigan. Hear it. Say it to your children or sometimes, children, you'll have to say it to your parents, sometimes children

are better at mysterious things even than parents are, "Dad and mom, don't you hear? It's groaning with the weight, the bondage. It's dying. It's decaying. These trees are getting old, dad and mom, and they're crying out, but they're crying out in hope too, that one day they will be delivered into the same liberty as the sons and daughters of God. Do you hear it, dad? Do you hear it, mom?" This is what you must hear, people of God, when this old world, tired of its bondage to corruption, begins to break apart and its insides begin to spew out of the cracks in its tectonic plates. This is what you must hear when this old world can't hold itself steady under the weight of the curse and it quakes, shakes. This is what you must hear when its winds blow and twist mightily across the land, it's the breath of its groaning out of its misery and its hope.

Why is it that this creation was made subject to this bondage of corruption at the fall of man so that it groans under the misery of the curse for man's sin? And along with that, why is it that the creation may look forward to release from that bondage at this point and no earlier or later, at the manifestation of the sons of God when people are brought into their full sonship so that it can groan also out of hope for that day? The answer, of course, is that God created an astoundingly strong connection between man and the creation, the connection both organic and legal. Organically, remember Adam was out of this creation. Adam was a dust creature. He was a part of the creation. Organically Adam and the creation are connected. We and the creation are connected. But also legally, legally Adam was the creation's head. When God created Adam, he created him to be head not only of the human race but also head of the creation itself.

Adam was federal head or covenant head. One way you can remember the covenant in such a way that you don't forget this part of God's covenant is to remember three B's. Three B's. God's covenant is a bond, that's the essence of his covenant, right? A bond with a body, his elect people in Jesus Christ, in an abode. A bond with a body in an abode. There is always a place. God has this bond with his people from the beginning all the way to eternity. In the very beginning, Adam and his wife were the body who experienced that bond with God, walking and talking in the cool of the day, and the earth and specifically the garden of Eden on the earth, was the abode for that, the place where that happened. And all three of those things were tied together from the very beginning and as Adam the head went, so went the body and so went the abode. When Adam lived in obedience, the creation, the place, the abode, the home where God and his people would dwell was not subject to this principle of death, the bondage of corruption. It was curse-less as Adam was curse-less. No thorns. No thistles. No death. Only after the fall when Adam rebelled against his Maker did the bondage of death come upon all things. Not only Adam, not only his progeny, but that principle of death infiltrated everything: the animals, the trees, the ground, the sand, the stars. Everything.

God himself subject the creation to that curse when Adam fell into sin as the just penalty for his rebellion and the text says in verse 20 that "the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." It's not talking about Adam, it's talking about God. God made the creation subject to vanity. It's not talking about Adam because it says "in hope." There was no hope in Adam. God subjected it to this because of Adam, to be sure, because of his fall, because of his sin, but

this was God's subjecting. God justly gave the penalty he said he was going to give, "In the day you eat, Adam, you because you're a head, everything you represent will surely die." And from that moment not only did Adam start to get aches and pains and start to grow old, but the trees and there are thorns and there are thistles for the earth.

But God didn't abandon his covenant, his bond with the body in an abode. He will, instead, lift it to a higher life and experience and so God gives the body and the abode a new head so that they can have the bond greater than they ever had it before. The new head, the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the new human race, the human race that was always the kernel in the shell of the race from Adam, God gave this man Jesus Christ, God and man, to be head of this now cursed abode too, and God charged his Christ with maintaining the bond and with lifting the abode out of its curse, in part first and then finally and fully later, and lifting it so much higher than it was in the beginning to be a place for the body to have the bond in again forever.

So when Jesus Christ came, the new head, he bore the curse, the bondage of corruption upon himself. Why did he have a crown of thorns upon his head? It tells you, beloved, that he's also bearing the curse that came upon the earth in the beginning, the thorns and the thistles, and he was bearing that for the creation itself too. He was its King. "Peace!" he cried. "Be still!" and all creation listened. He secured sons out of that redemption so that not all was vanity for the earth, and in the end he will remove all the vain chaff and liberate everything entirely, bring it into his own life in all of its fullness in that day when you are manifested as the sons of God publicly before all the world. Everything in this creation will be lifted up. Animal life will be represented there, though not individually. Plant life will be represented there. It will still be this earth, a fundamental continuity. Your eternal home is still this earth. Your abode, it's the abode of God's covenant forever yet all of it new and lifted to a higher state than it ever was even in the head, Adam, the glorious life of Jesus Christ infiltrating all of it.

This was the promise of God in the covenant with Noah. Genesis 9:13, "I do set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and," and you think it's going to say "thee" but it doesn't, "me and the earth." God promised the earth would be liberated from the curse. Hope, beloved, the creation has hope. It groans out of misery and the weight of that misery but also in hope. God has sworn it as one of the promises of his own covenant. He has sworn to give the creation itself grace. The power to liberate the creation is grace and the only kind of grace there is, grace in the cross of Jesus Christ; redeeming grace found in the redeeming work of the new head upon the cross.

The hope of the creation around you, beloved, is not that man himself will eventually lift the curse up from off of it. Isn't that the heart of the worldview that is common? It's common among secularists that everything is going to evolve eventually and we, humans, are going to help it evolve to the point where the creation is liberated from death and its bondage to death. It's also the worldview of too many Christians, that in some coordinated effort between the sons of God and those who are not the sons of God, we will together lift this world out of its bondage to corruption on the basis of a common grace that isn't found in the cross of Christ, that isn't rooted in his work upon the cross,



and a grace that doesn't handle the curse but is something different altogether. But there's no grace apart from the redeeming grace of the cross. Certainly, of course, in God's providence we can hold back some particular expressions of that curse at some times and we work together for that in love for the neighbor, but we can't liberate it. We can't redeem it. Redemption comes in the cross of Christ. There's only one way that the creation will be liberated from its bondage and that's by the same one who subjected it to its bondage in the first place in hope. God in Christ who himself bears the curse upon himself, takes that principle of death, that bondage into his own body and soul and pays it upon the cross and out of special, particular, redeeming grace, liberates the creation, brings it into its hope.

In the covenant with Noah, "make a covenant between me and the earth," and isn't it a common grace that is the power of that covenant with the earth but a special grace rooted in the cross of Christ. Genesis 8:20-21, "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." On the basis of the sacrifice, the smelling of the offering, the blood that pointed to Christ who would himself take the curse for the earth too, God said, "I make a covenant with the earth and I redeem it and will liberate it." This was the purpose of God from the beginning, from before the beginning, from eternity. "For it pleased the Father," Colossians 1, "that in him," Christ, that head, "should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Now remember, people of God, that there is a "For" at the beginning of our text. It connects it to the context, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." In the context, the Apostle Paul is giving God's people comfort. He's told them about the fact that they're going to suffer along with the Son in this present time and he's giving them comfort in those sufferings, and much comfort he has given already, the glory of the sons of God that is awaiting, and now he adds this and you wouldn't think at first, "Why go here for comfort in our sufferings?" But look, when I told my children a while ago that we were going to go visit Frederik Meijer Gardens, some of the younger ones weren't really all that excited about that and that future was not worth anticipating, but as they saw the older children of the family, the rest of their siblings get excited about this, all of a sudden they started to get excited about it and started to anticipate it coming up. That's what the apostle is doing. You are the younger siblings but instead of pointing to older siblings, he points to the ground beneath your feet and to the trees around you and says, "Look, sons of God, this glorious coming, it's awaiting the children of God, the fullness of the redemption draws nigh. I know it's hard for you to grasp, I know you can't see it, it's hard to wrap your mind around it but it's sure and it's marvelous, it's glorious. Look around you. Listen, the whole creation is waiting for it and standing on tiptoe for it to come in. Would the sun and the moon and the stars and the nebula and the animal life and the creatures of the sea be looking forward to it if it wasn't magnificent?"

When one of my children is sick, it's always better for their attitude if a couple of the other children are sick with them because in the misery of the sickness that they experience in the present time, they have others with them experiencing what they are experiencing, groaning out of their misery. This is also the point of the apostle. It's with you. It's groaning with you. You're not alone. This is why all the parallels here between the creation and the sons, the sons have present suffering, so too the creation has present suffering in the bondage of corruption. The sons have hope, verse 24, the creation has hope, verse 20. The response of the sons is that they groan, so too the response of the creation is that it groans, same word. But also the response of the sons is that they wait patiently in hope, verse 23, and so too the creation is waiting patiently, verse 19. You're not alone, the apostle is saying. As the sons of God in this world, you feel so small, so alone and you wonder, "Is this glory worth it? Is it really there? Is it really majestic as I endure all of this in my life?" The whole of God's created reality is with you and with one voice out of the same covenant and the same promises and the same redemption, it's groaning out of its sufferings of bondage and yet in anticipation of the hope and the liberty that is to come, and because you are sons yourselves, you can go outside and you can hear it. It takes the ear of faith to hear the creation's groans, beloved. The world can't hear it. They hear noises but not groans out of bondage and anticipation of glorious hope, but you can. You can who share its hurts and its hopes.

So you walk and you say, "I know, trees, I know. I know, but it's coming. It's coming. How patient you all have been and for so many more years than me. We wait together, you and I. It's coming. It's coming. He promised it. Christ has already come to ensure it." Do you hear it, beloved? Then you hear what only a son can hear and be assured glory is coming and with you all creation is waiting patiently and with hope. Amen.

*Father in heaven, we wouldn't have thought to be comforted this way but it is comforting, oddly comforting. And Father, grant that hope is ever set before us and that with one voice children in the creation, in the home that cry out, may it one day experience altogether peace that passes all understanding. Bear us up, Father, in our present sufferings and lift our eyes up to where our hope comes. In Jesus' name. Amen.*