

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, September 6, 2023

Romans 8:19–22

19For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Creation-Care for a Cosmos in Labor

Main idea: God has placed us in an expectant creation that teaches us to live in expectation of glory at the resurrection.

Introduction: “She’s in labor.”

1. The creation’s expectation

- a. Revealing of the sons (plural!) of God. cf. 1:4, 8; cp. 8:29–30
- b. The original relation of the creation and man and the coming relation of the new creation and resurrected/glorified man.

2. The Creator’s hope (i.e. the hope that He gives us)

- a. He subjected the creation for man’s sake (cf. Gen 3:17)
- b. “Glorious liberty of the children of God.” But until man receives the final fullness of his freedom, the Lord keeps the creation in bondage. Rather than our looking back in despair at the fall, or being content in the present but unfinished state of grace, the current futility and bondage of corruption provoke us to look forward to glory.

3. The creation’s role

- a. The whole creation together-labors. This is the purpose of the world in its current condition: bring forth the sons of God.
- b. Birth pangs not death pangs.

Conclusion: As we suffer together with Christ, we do have a present

opportunity to bring Him glory by Christ-likeness. But the true “creation care” is that which participates in the calling and sanctifying of God’s adopted children.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 8, verse 19 through 22. These are god's words. For the earnest expectation. Of the creation. Eagerly waits. For the revealing of the sons of god. For the creation was subjected to futility. Not willingly but because of him who subjected it. In hope. Because the creation itself also will be delivered.

From the bondage of corruption. Into the glorious liberty. Of the children of god. For, we know that the whole creation. Groans and labors with birth pangs together. Until now.

Amend the senses. Reading of god's inspired and There and twerk.

The more man has overestimated, his Own. Impact and ability to do things. The more he has returned. To some of the Old idolatries have darker times. In which things like volcanic, eruptions and hurricanes and tornadoes and tidal waves and earthquakes. Uh, cost man to think something along the lines of You know, with a scientific veneer on it.

The earth is angry. It is mad at us, it's trying to get us. But they don't know. Who has subjected the earth? To the bondage that is it is in right now. And they don't know why. He has done that. In our passage, it tells us, The who and the why?

And we are to pay attention to what god is doing in this creation. That is bound to corruption. That is subjected to futility. And we are to pay attention because as we listen with the scripture tells us, Is that we are to hear that she is in labor. If you were to hear, A woman screaming and And agonizing in the next room, over.

In a hospital. It makes a great difference, which floor you happen to be on. If it's not the The labor and delivery floor. Then there's great cause for alarm. But if you are in there and you and your child or in one room, and you heard a lady, Screaming.

And In the next term over your child was very alarmed. You would say, oh no, dear It's okay. She's in labor. She is bringing forth a child and just like the bible says, When the baby is born, she will forget the distress. For the joy. That the baby has come.

That's the image that the apostle uses. In our passage this evening. As he takes us first through the creations expectation. In verse 19. And the the creations expectation is in line with or due to the creators hope. The creator's, hope. In verse 20 and 21. And then the creations role.

In verse 22. So first, the creations expectation. In verse 19. The earnest expectation of the creation. Eagerly waits. For the revealing. Of the sons of god. The apostle is assuring, the

Romans that he's not alone. He's not alone in considering the sufferings of this present time to not be worth comparing to the glory.

That is going to be revealed in us. In fact, the entire world, the entire creation eagerly awaits the revelation of that glory eagerly awaits to see what the children of god are going to be like when the whole number has been completed and they've all been brought to faith and they've all been conformed to christ and they've all been sanctified and they have all been transformed or resurrected into their resurrection bodies.

The creation is eagerly expecting. That day. He's gonna go on to say it's not just the creation which is the subject of of tonight's. Portion. But next week, lord willing, we who have the first fruits of the spirit Grown, with the same groaning, we have the same. Eager expectation.

We are with the apostle. John, what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears we will be like him and it's that eager expectation, everyone who hopes thus that's what that's the engine that motivates. The believers. Efforts and sanctification, he who hopes thus purifies himself as he is pure.

It's a response to the love that has made us children and an eagerness to see what that love will have done. When the work that it has designed is finished. And we can't see it yet. So, the apostle is not alone and as he urges the Romans, they are not alone.

Everyone who has the first fruits of the spirit. In fact, The holy spirit himself. What a friend? What a companion in our life. The holy spirit is, He pours out the love of god in our hearts, we just finished hearing. A couple verses ago that. Even as he makes us to cry.

Uh, i'm a father that we are god's children. He then adds his voice agreeing with us that we are the children of god. And he also adds his voice then to the groaning that desires the revealing Of the children of god. Now, this isn't the first time, That this has, That this has occurred in fact, in the original creation, Uh, five and a half days, god made all the other creatures.

So that there would be as it were this audience, that there would be this canvas. That there would be. This world into which he would make man. In his own image. And, Just as adam. Uh goes through a microcosm of that late on day six and there hasn't been a helper suitable for him.

There's nothing else in all creation made in the image of god. The whole rest of the creation. Isn't to be compared to this one man and he is alone. And then, The lord of lord little elves, the master of creation that that god has made the one that is in his image declares Wow.

Or at last? I think it says in many of our English translations, Bone of my bone flesh of my flesh. She shall be called. Woman. And so, there is Just on day six. But then over the whole six days, this eager expectation. This anticipation of The sun. Of god.

Now that's a little s son, and we say it that way. He even though luke will say that about Adam, won't he when he traces jesus's genealogy all the way back to him, the son of Adam, the son of god, Because it happened again. There was a revealing Of another son.

This one with a capital s. The lord jesus. If you remember that from the beginning of the book of Romans, we've been in Romans while So, maybe we should read those first. A few verses again paul upon servant of jesus christ called to be an apostle separated to the gospel of god, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his son Jesus christ, our lord.

Who was born of the seat of david, according to the flesh and Declared. To be the son of god with power, according to the spirit of holiness. By the resurrection. From the dead. In fact, he would call it and in verse 9, Not verse 8. As it says mistaken in your outlines, he would call the gospel.

In verse 9, for god is my witness, whom i serve with my spirit in The gospel. Of his son. And so there was this great moment in which the lord jesus was declared to be the son of god with power by the resurrection from the dead. And what we're hearing in this passage.

And next week's portion is that there's another great moment coming. There's a, another resurrection coming. There's another reveal this time. Not of the only begotten, son of god. Not of the son of god with power. But all of the children of god. That god had decided to take the upon whom god had decided to bestow this title.

We've referred a couple of times recently to the love that, god shows That god has shown that we should be called the children of god and this is what predestination is about, isn't it? Just a few. Versus in front of us. Now verse 29 for whom he forn you.

He also predestined To be conformed to the image. Of his son. That he might be the firstborn. Among many. Brethren. And so the creation. Is eagerly expecting? Earnestly expecting an eagerly awaiting. The revealing. Of the sons of god, the revealing of those. Who know and love the glory of god and do all that they do for god's glory.

The revealing of those who are in the image of god. And, In a way that does not belong to any of the other creatures. Therefore, the revealing of those who not only worship god and love him with all their heart soul and mind and strength, but who love one another, as christ has loved them, who love their neighbor.

As themselves. Even as man was originally created and knowledge and righteousness and holiness. But man, didn't stay. Holy did he? Rather than worshiping the creator is worshiped, the creature. He fell. The woman was deceived. She's deceived into thinking. This could make her like got With the man was not deceived.

He did not think that he would become more able to know, god more able to adore god. More able to love god. Oh, he wanted to be like god. He wanted to be his own god. He wanted the whole world to exist for him and his own glory and follow his rules.

He wanted man's chief end. To be to glorify himself. Meant to enjoy himself. Forever. But now in this redemption god has sent his only begotten who became a man. Who has been? Righteous and holy and always will be perfectly. So, With the wonderful promise that everyone who has been known in him, Everyone, who for whom he came, everyone whom the lord brings to faith in the lord jesus christ.

Will be conformed to his image. And it will be more glorious, even Than that glory which atom lost. And the creation is eager to see it. Well, this was then the creator's hope. It's not as. Uh, if the creation actually has its own desire, but it has been subjected to futility not by the exercise of its own will is not been an active planner or worker in this plan of redemption to bring forth children of god, but it is a reflection of the wisdom and the priorities of god So, Verse 20 tells us for the creation was subjected to futility.

Not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope. Now, if you have read your Bible with, Uh with honesty and humility, you know that there's only one who could subject the entire creation to anything. This is not the devil, the devil could not do this. And even if he could, the devil doesn't do things in hope.

This is not sinful, man. Who has done the sinful man. Does not do this. Do things in hope. Only gracious man. A man. Um, in whom redeeming grace is operating. Would do that. No, this is, of course, god himself. God, subjected the creation to futility. In hope, because The creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty.

Of the children of god. Now, in genesis 3, we Looked at verse 15 and we over here. God, tell the serpent that a seed of the woman is going to crush his head. We rejoice at the promise of the one, who is going to be born of a woman but stronger than the devil.

Stronger than lucifer. And we rejoice over the lord, jesus christ, who came as the scriptures, tell us to destroy the works of the devil. But understanding genesis 3 rightly through the lens of Romans 8, we solve a Hebrew question. When god says to the man in verse 17, cursed is the ground for your sake.

And some English translations, try to smooth it out and they say, on account of you, But it is for the sake of the man. Now, sometimes you might say, on account of you to mean for the sake of But we Uh, we don't do well when we try to smooth things over.

Uh, with vocabulary that are difficult, because often the difficult things, are the ones in which there is the theological treasure, That the ground was not cursed to make man look backwards. At his death. Dusty is and to dust, he will return. The ground, just cursed for his sick. Because, God is bringing.

Glorious, a glorious liberty. Of the children of god. The return to the dust is not the end. The serpent's head will be crushed. And so there are those children. Who are seed to the woman as opposed to see the serpent. About whom we just recently, we're thinking about when we looked at genesis 5 and and relation to matthew 1:1 and Um, the sons from Seth down to noah tracing the line of the children of god.

And it is for their sake that the government is cursed. So that we would not look backwards. And pine for what was lost. Until man, receives the final fullness of his freedom. The lord is going to keep the creation and its bondage. And when that prayer, oh lord, how long from under the altar and revelation 6, and the fifth seal When the, the Requirements.

The terms have been met. And the number of our brethren is complete and all of those who god loved redeemingly, from before the world began, all those for whom christ came when they have all been brought to faith. In the lord jesus christ. And the number is complete. Then.

Comes the end. Then comes resurrection, then we appear with glorious bodies. And even better. Perfected souls. But we're going to need those glorious bodies. Because we're going to be serving god and in new earth. We use the word heaven to speak about different things, don't we? Sometimes people use the word heaven.

Meaning. Um, the heavens. You know what? In Cosmology of the bible is the first heaven. The atmosphere. The second heaven, outer space. Then there's the use of the word heaven to talk about. The, the third heaven. Where, God makes his glory known where jesus right now, bodily is Where there are the the holy angels and the souls of the just made perfect.

And so sometimes we also kind of, we use the word heaven to refer to the intermediate state. Uh, that Um, That condition that we enter when our bodies go into the ground. And our soul is absent from the body, but present with christ. And we refer to that as i haven't.

Um, And i think, It might be due to that, that many people think of, when they meet, when they say heaven, and they mean the everlasting condition Not the intermediate condition. Not the temporary condition. They think often. I am afraid of. Of this kind of disembodied. Uh, Invisible. Untouchable immaterial.

Condition. But no, there's a new earth. There's a new earth that we need glorified bodies. To serve and display the glory of our god and the glory of our redeemer. The last Adam, the lord jesus christ. And so kids, all of that. All of that playing in the dirt and making forts and organizing things and getting to know the property and turning over every rock and All of those, all of those instincts and enjoyments that you have.

Uh, they participate in something good and right. For men was originally supposed to be. A. A caregiver an organizer and ruler of this world to do things that show that we were made by a wise god. And we exercise wisdom, we are made by an orderly god and we bring things into order, we prioritize the glory of God and we prioritize the good of man.

That where it's good for the for the fruitfulness and the multiplying of image bearers. That we manage the creation in a way to accommodate that and foster that to get exact opposite of what the environmentalists do, right? They don't they don't see man. As in the image of God, they don't seem man as the As the priority.

But there is coming and new earth. There's coming a new creation. In which we will both have been perfected, spiritually and will have these glorified bodies. And, Um, I can't wait. To try mine out. It's not even so much, you know, wishing i was in my 20s again with all of the physical ability and I just can't wait to see what new things it can do because jesus's body to which our bodies are going to be conformed, could do some Pretty neat new things.

And the creation can't wait either. Because there's a glorious liberty, there's a glorious freedom. That is coming. And the resurrection. In the ability for our souls, which will have been perfected from the moment of our death until that day. To finally get a crack. At righteously serving god. In his.

Earthy. Creation. And so there's the creations expectation, which Lines up with the creator's, hope. So that we wouldn't look back and despair at the fall. And we wouldn't be content. With things as they are. God forbid, that we would be content. Well, there is remaining sin. But god forbid, that we would be content.

So long, as some of what is due unto the lord jesus for his finished work, remains to be, given to him. Shouldn't we? Desire and long for isn't it right to groan. If the creation is groaning because God subjected it in this hope, if the spirit groans. Shouldn't we yet grown for that?

And so there's the creations role. The creations role in verse 22 for, we know that the whole creation groans and labors with Birth things. Together until now. And so with this scripture wants you to do. Is that when you do hear about, Earthquakes and volcanoes and plague. Salmon. That you wouldn't hear death pengths.

Yes, there is death in the world and it is because of us. And our sin. In our first father. But the scripture teaches us to hear. Birth pains. A world that is still here because god is still redeeming. A world that is not going to be like this. What God has done with it.

And so, the right response. Yes, is To take care and of the creation. As well as we can to steward it. Well to order it unto the glory of god and the good of man, all of those things are part of our increasing Christ's likeness But none of doing those things is going to be able to release the creation.

From its futility. From its Bondage. To corruption. Because it was subjected to futility and it was bound to corruption in the hope that comes at the resurrection. We are not going to undo the fall. In the created things. By our conformity to christ and all of the good stewardship that we might give it.

If we really care about the creation, We're going to evangelize. We are going to be earnest. With our children about their souls. When we're in family worship, we are going to show them the glory of jesus christ and we are going to pray for the ministry of the holy spirit to bring that glory home to their hearts.

Who knows if the last one to be converted is going to be a covenant child in family worship. Not just a Delicious thought. That maybe you're doing family worship one day. And you're opening the gospel with your children, and the holy spirit, brings the last one of your children to faith and then the clouds.

The the sky opens up and the lord jesus appears, and the eager expectation of the creation is about to be fulfilled.

And so we evangelize the disciple and we worship god. And we long for the redeeming work to be done. So that the lord jesus may come. It is the same groaning of the spirit with the creation and with those who have the first fruits of the lord jesus christ.

That we hear. The end of the book of revelation. Where the spirit and the bride are. Are inviting. All to come. To drink. The all who are thirsty to to eat and drink to receive from the lord jesus without cost. But then, The address turns to the lord jesus christ.

And we pray that he would come. And he answers. I am coming quickly.

This is. This is our great desire then. So, as we suffer together with christ, We do in the suffering time. In the present time. Have opportunity to bring him glory. By increasing likeness to him. But our desire. Not just for ourselves, but for him. Is that the day of resurrection would come?

That the last day would come. And we would be glorified. Together with him true creation care. Is that which participates in the calling and sanctifying? Of the children of god. Amen.