

## **Groaning with hope and the help of the Spirit**

Romans 8:18-27

“How should we then live?” and “How should we then grief?”

We grief (groan) with hope and help, the help of the Spirit

Suffering in its right perspective: three different pictures from the same window

- Today: tears
- Tomorrow: glory
- In the meantime: the help of the Spirit

### **1-A description of the present reality: pain and weakness** (v. 19-23a)

**A lesson of Christian realism: Groaning is not wrong.** “We groan inwardly as we wait eagerly” (v.23). Groaning does not quench hope because it is an expression of pain as much as an anticipation of hope.

#### **Who groans?**

The creation and we groan **out of suffering**; the **H.S. groans out of love**.

#### **Why?** Reasons for groaning

- A past event: “For the creation *was subjected to frustration*” (v.20). **Suffering is the result of Sin.**
- The present state: “*The whole creation is groaning as in the pains of childbirth*” (v.22). **Suffering affects everything and everybody.**
- The future condition: “*The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay...*” (v. 21). **Suffering will not be forever.** It has an expiry date

**The principle of the two movements** gives us the key to groan with hope: Sin subjected the creation to frustration- Christ subjected the creation in hope.

Therefore, as the mother delivers with pains but with joy, so we groan in hope as we wait eagerly for the new Creation, with new creatures, that will follow the present pain.

### **2-A foretaste of the future reality: glory and fullness** (v.23b-25)

“For in this hope we were saved” (v.24). This is the truth that holds and nourishes our faith: because we were saved We do not exist for death (Heidegger), but for life.

**How we wait:**

- **Eagerly:** Leaning forward out of the window: with great expectation
- **Patiently** (v. 25): “*we wait for it patiently*”, with steady perseverance.

**What we wait:** the three-fold groan is counteracted by a three-fold hope. We wait for:

- The liberation of the creation: “*The creation itself will be liberated*” (v.21)
- Our full adoption as sons: “*We wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship*” (v.23)
- The redemption of our bodies (v.23b): the resurrection

### **3- We are not groaning alone: The help of the Holy Spirit in the meantime** (vv.26-28)

We groan with hope but also with help: “In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness” (v.26)

The divine help comes through **prayer**: “The Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans”. He prays *for us*, he prays *with us* and he prays *within us*.

The God who suffers with us is the ultimate answer to suffering.

**Conclusion:** FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

In the same way that we were once **subject to bondage**, we are now **subject to hope**. If frustration was the result of God’s judgement, the hope of glory is the result of God’s redemption.

As children of God, glory is the final step in the journey of redemption. **Glory is the inevitable destination of the people of God** because Christ was triumphant over sin and death. “We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 8:37)

In a time of great distress because of the pandemic, **we are not called to a frustrating and tiring resignation, but a joyful and enthusiastic expectation**. Because the hallmark of the Christian life is hope, not despair.

How should we then grieve? We groan with hope and help, the help of the Holy Spirit

Pablo Martínez, <http://christian-thought.org/>