

Romans 8:18-25

Town North Presbyterian Church – Rev. David J. Rogers

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At the end of the book of **Revelation** Jesus promises:

“Surely, I am coming soon.”

And the church replies:

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

As Christ’s people we EAGERLY WAIT for His coming.

At this point in the letter Paul is lifting our eyes (as believers) to look at our GUARANTEED FUTURE GLORY – in the midst of our PRESENT SUFFERING.

We see that in **verse 18**.

“For I consider that the SUFFERINGS of this PRESENT time are not worth comparing with the GLORY that is TO BE revealed to us.”

Notice PRESENT SUFFERING is being compared to FUTURE GLORY.

And notice Paul says there is NO COMPARISON between the two.

In other words, our PRESENT SUFFERINGS – are “...*not even worth comparing...*” with the FUTURE GLORY that IS TO BE REVEALED to us.

In other words, if it were possible to set these two things SIDE-BY-SIDE to COMPARE their SIZE or SCALE – the DIFFERENCE would be ENORMOUS!

Illus: My wife is a Science teacher and she has a chart in her classroom showing the SCALE of SIZE between the EARTH and the SUN.

If the EARTH were the size of a BASKETBALL – the SUN would be the size of the EPCOT Center at Disney World. If you have ever been to EPCOT – you know it's HUGE!

The SIZE difference between the EARTH and the SUN is ENORMOUS!

That is what Paul tells us here in a SIDE-BY-SIDE comparison between your PRESENT SUFFERINGS as a believer – and the FUTURE GLORY that is to be revealed.

There is really NO COMPARISON between them.

And remember, the reason Paul is making this comparison is because of what he just said in **verses 16-17** – (which you heard last Sunday).

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we SUFFER with him in order that we may also be GLORIFIED with him.”

Paul reminded us that Jesus Christ is our elder brother – the FIRSTBORN – who has gone before us to the INHERITANCE of GLORY. He is our ELDER BROTHER – and we SHARE in HIS INHERITANCE.

HE SUFFERED in this life – and was later RAISED and ASCENDED to GLORY. And we – as His brothers and sisters – will have a SIMILAR EXPERIENCE. We follow Christ on a path of SUFFERING in the PRESENT – to GLORY in the FUTURE.

It is a path of PRESENT SUFFERING – to FUTURE GLORY.

WHY do we need to hear this?

We need to hear it because our PRESENT SUFFERING can become overwhelming.

Our PRESENT SUFFERING can often lead you to DESPAIR. You LOSE HOPE. You want to STOP the pain. You want to QUIT.

Notice how God describes this PRESENT SUFFERING to us here in **verse 22**.

“For we know that the whole creation has been GROANING together in the pains of childbirth until now.”

Creation has been GROANING.

And notice **verse 23**.

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, GROAN inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

As believers we GROAN.

GROANING is an appropriate word to describe our experience in life, isn't it?

You all know what it means to GROAN.

A GROAN is what comes out of you when you are in deep PAIN.

It may be PHYSICAL PAIN or EMOTIONAL PAIN.

GROANING is what you hear when you are in a hospital – or Emergency Room.

GROANING is what you hear at a hospice – when a family member dies.

You GROAN when you are in DEEP DISTRESS and EMOTIONAL PAIN in the middle of the night.

A GROAN is what comes out of us when we are in PAIN.

And that is the way God describes our experience in a world that is under His CURSE.

We GROAN.

Doesn't that describe your experience in life?

You have great plans and expectations in life. Then all those plans and expectations fall apart. They lie "crumbled" in the dust. And you GROAN.

You had great expectations for your marriage – and your children – and your future. But they come crashing down. You find yourself at a place in life where you NEVER wanted to be. Relationships are TORN or FRACTURED – and you face the painful reality that they may never be fixed. And you GROAN.

Or if you are young – you go to a new school – and you have no friends. The other kids pick on you – and you feel alone and sad. You GROAN.

GROANING is an appropriate word to describe life in a world under God's CURSE.

And notice we are told it's not only OUR experience as humans. It's also the experience of ALL CREATION!

God tells us in **verse 22**:

*"For we know that the **whole CREATION** has been **GROANING** together in the pains of childbirth until now."*

CREATION GROANS!

Paul is specifically talking about the created world of all animals and inanimate objects.

He is talking about all creation in the world around us: Dogs, cats, snakes, ants, rocks, trees, grass, hills, rivers, oceans – and everything else in the created order.

He "personifies" these things. In other words, he speaks of them as if they were HUMAN – and had HUMAN thoughts, and emotions. He describes them as **GROANING**.

We can see that DOGS and animals may GROAN.
But TREES and ROCKS and HILLS don't GROAN.

But God is describing what has happened to all the CREATED world around us.

HOW does GROANING describe what has happened to all these created things?

Notice we are told in **verses 20-21**.

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

Notice God tells us something terrible happened to the created world.

The terrible thing that happened was that the WHOLE world was put under God's CURSE.

Notice it says the CREATION was “...subjected to futility...” and CREATION was put into a type of TERRIBLE SLAVERY – being in “...bondage to corruption.”

WHEN did all this happen? And HOW did all this happen?

Well, if you are a bible reader you know the answer to that question.

We are told the answer in the FIRST book of the bible – **GENESIS**.

God created the whole world – and human beings – and said everything was GOOD.

And God told the first human beings:

“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God intended mankind to be His image-bearers in the world to have DOMINION over the whole created order. God gave mankind the created order for mankind to use and manage and care for and enjoy.

But what did man do?

He rebelled against God – disobeying God’s command – and brought himself and ALL CREATION under God’s CURSE. Mankind was created in God’s image – and at the “pinnacle” and HEAD of all God’s CREATION. So when MAN came under God’s CURSE – it brought EVERYTHING ELSE in CREATION under God’s CURSE as well.

God told us this also in Genesis.

After man’s rebellion God said this to the first man Adam (**Genesis 3**):

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife

and have eaten of the tree

of which I commanded you,

‘You shall not eat of it,’

CURSED is the GROUND because of you;

in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;

and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face

you shall eat bread,

till you return to the ground,

for out of it you were taken;

for you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.”

Notice God said:

“...**CURSED** is the **GROUND** because of you...”

The GROUND – the EARTH ITSELF – came under God’s CURSE because of Adam!

That is what is being described here when it says the CREATION was “...**subjected to futility**...”

It meant the earth was subjected to **EMPTYNESS** and **FRUSTRATION**. It would NOT PRODUCE all that it was intended to produce. Instead of producing the lush fruit it was designed to produce – it was now subjected to DROUGHT and disease, and blight, and killing insects. The man would LABOR and TOIL by the sweat of his brow – but the LAND would just NOT produce the FRUIT it had been designed to produce.

Instead, it would produce THORNS and THISTLES.

And that would not only be true for the GROUND – but for EVER SINGLE PART of the CREATED order! It would be true for **ANIMALS** as well as trees and plants and streams.

Animals GROAN under the CURSE.

I thought of that the other day when visiting Andrew and Sarah Carlson. Their chicken has CANCER! Chickens get CANCER. Our dogs and cats get infected with DISEASE – or suffer old age and DIE.

God tells us the WHOLE CREATED came under His CURSE because of man’s SIN.

The WHOLE CREATED ORDER was put into SLAVERY to this CORRUPTION that brings PAIN and DEATH.

In this way **ALL CREATION GROANS!**

Your DOG GROANS. And plants, trees, streams and hills GROAN as well as they DIE and ERODE and CRACK under DROUGHT and DISEASE. They all **GROAN**.

That is the experience of LIFE NOW in a world under God’s CURSE.

We all GROAN.

So HOW do you PRESS ON in this GROANING?

HOW will you CONTINUE as you GROAN?

Paul tells us here it is by LIVING IN HOPE.

What does it mean to LIVE IN HOPE?

It means to press on in your PRESENT SUFFERING longing for FUTURE GLORY.

That is where CREATION LIVES – and it is where WE are supposed to LIVE as Jesus Christ's fellow-heirs. We LIVE in HOPE.

We LIVE in SURE and CERTAIN HOPE of what is ahead for US and all CREATION. What is ahead is the RENEWAL of all things and FREEDOM from sin.

This is where CREATION LIVES – and WE LIVE (as believers) – while in PRESENT SUFFERING. We LIVE IN HOPE of that FUTURE GLORY.

And we see that in what God tells us here in a very interesting way!

Notice that we are told that BOTH the **CREATION around us** – and **WE OURSELVES** LIVE IN HOPE.

Notice Paul says this about CREATION in verse 20-21.

*“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, **IN HOPE**²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”*

Notice what Paul is saying about CREATION here.

CREATION was SUBJECTED to this CURSE of FUTILITY – NOT WILLINGLY – but because of GOD who SUBJECTED it to this.

In other words, the CREATION was NOT subjected to this CURSE because of its own CHOICE. CREATION didn't CHOOSE this. And CREATION didn't CHOOSE to SIN as mankind did. Instead, you could say that the CREATION around us is a PASSIVE SUFFERER.

CREATION is only SHARING the CURSE that mankind CHOSE by their sin.

It was the WILL of GOD – NOT the CREATION – that caused it to be subjected to this futility and GROANING.

BUT the amazing thing to notice is this.

This subjection to a CURSE was NOT FINAL and HOPELESS for CREATION.

Instead, Paul says creation was subjected to this futility “IN HOPE.”

What does that mean?

It means that CURSE God put on CREATION was NOT a HOPELESS ONE!

With that CURSE God also gave a PROMISE. The PROMISE was that a DESCENDANT of ADAM would come to RESCUE CREATION and REMOVE the CURSE!

A RESCUER would come who would be WOUNDED – but would CRUSH the DEVIL – and ultimately DESTROY SIN and DEATH and REMOVE the CURSE.

That was a GAURANTEE from God to the CREATED WORLD.

And from that time – Paul says here – CREATION itself “...WAITS with EAGER LONGING for the revealing of the sons of God.” (Look at **verse 19.**)

So the CREATION has been GROANING in its PRESENT SUFFERING – EAGERLY WAITING for that day when the CURSE will be REMOVED – and ALL THINGS made NEW.

IT IS COMING.

And in this way CREATION LIVES “**IN HOPE.**”

It LIVES “**IN HOPE**” of that day when the CURSE is REMOVED and there will be a RENEWAL of ALL THINGS!

And notice Paul speaks in the SAME WAY about US – as BELIEVERS.

In our PRESENT SUFFERING we too live “**IN HOPE.**”

Look at **verses 23-24.**

*“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ **For IN THIS HOPE we were saved.**”*

Notice what Paul is saying here.

We are SAVED “**IN HOPE.**”

What does that mean?

Well, think of what it means to be SAVED.

This word is used throughout the bible to describe what GOD does for us through Jesus Christ. It describes ALL the BENEFITS He gives to us including FORGIVENESS of SINS, SANCTIFICATION (or HOLINESS), and GLORIFICATION (meaning FINAL DELIVERANCE from SIN, DEATH and EVIL in the world.

Jesus tells us (**Luke 19**) He came “...to seek and to SAVE what was LOST.”

It refers to a COMPLETE and FINAL SALVATION. It refers to a SALVATION that is one day FINALLY POSSESSED – in which we have been RESCUED from all DANGER.

It is that FINAL SALVATION described by Jesus when He says (**Matthew 24**):

*“But the one who endures to the end **will be saved.**”*

And here is the point Paul is making here:

When we put our trust in Jesus Christ we are **SAVED IN HOPE.**

In other words, we are SAVED. But we are SAVED “IN HOPE” – because that FINAL SALVATION is NOT COMPLETED YET.

We ENTER INTO this SALVATION “IN HOPE” – WAITING with EAGER LONGING for this SALVATION to be COMPLETE!

In this way WE – as believers – we LIVE “IN HOPE” just like CREATION does.

WE – and CREATION – both LIVE “IN HOPE” when our SALVATION will be COMPLETE. It is NOT COMPLETE YET.

In this life we GROAN. WE GROAN – and CREATION GROANS.

We BOTH LIVE “IN HOPE” – for the SALVATION which is coming in completion.

As theologians say: We are EAGERLY WAITING for CONSUMMATION of all things. Our SALVATION has BEGUN. But it is NOT COMPLETE.

And we LONG for that day when it WILL be COMPLETE.

App: Is this a description of the way YOU are living in this world?

Are you WAITING EAGERLY for your final adoption as a child of God?

Are you WAITING EAGERLY for that day to be WITH CHRIST – in the new world?

If you are a BELIEVER in Jesus Christ – this is how you must see your life.

You LIVE “*IN HOPE.*”

Your whole life is directed toward this ONE great object:

The COMPLETION of your SALVATION.

That means the RENEWAL of all things.

Th – when your ADOPTION is made COMPLETE and you are WITH the LORD with NO MORE SIN – serving Him and LOVING Him in perfect COMMUNION on the NEW EARTH.

You LIVE “*IN HOPE*.”

So since we have the promise of FUTURE GLORY, we LIVE “IN HOPE” during our PRESENT SUFFERING.

And as if to heighten our ANTICIPATION Paul gives us a few descriptions of that FUTURE GLORY we anticipate.

I am going to very briefly call your attention to THREE of them:

FIRST, our FUTURE GLORY is **COSMIC GLORY**.

SECOND, our FUTURE GLORY is **COMPLETE GLORY**.

THIRD, our FUTURE GLORY is **CERTAIN GLORY**.

And my prayer is that these descriptions will HELP YOU and ENCOURAGE YOU to LIVE “*IN HOPE*” – in the midst of your current GROANING.

MP1: our FUTURE GLORY is COSMIC GLORY (20-22)

FIRST, notice Paul says our FUTURE GLORY is **COSMIC GLORY**.

We see that (again) in **verses 19-22**.

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.”²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Notice again, God tells us the whole CREATED ORDER of this world lives:
“...in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

In other words, there WILL BE a day when this WHOLE CREATION will be SET FREE from its BONDAGE to CORRUPTION. In other words, ALL CREATION will be BROUGHT BACK to its original PERFECTION. There will be **NO MORE disease, drought, or death.**

The WHOLE CREATED ORDER of things will be MADE NEW.

The CREATION will NOT GROAN any longer.

Illus: That is what **Isaac Watts** was describing when he wrote the hymn “***Joy to the World.***”

He was describing the JOY which came to the WHOLE WORLD through Jesus Christ.

When Jesus Christ came into the world to DESTROY the works of the Devil – He meant that He came to destroy EVERY LAST INCH of it!

As I mentioned earlier, mankind was the pinnacle of CREATION. When mankind SINNED it brought corruption into EVERYTHING in this world – INCLUDING all creation.

But CHRIST came into the world to DESTROY that work of the Devil. Jesus brought JOY to the WORLD!

And **Isaac Watts** said it like this:

*“No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;*

he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found."

EVERY SQUARE INCH of CREATION was CORRUPTED.

And Christ came to make HIS BLESSINGS FLOW to EVERY SQUARE INCH of CREATION!

App: That means the GLORY you look forward to as a believer in Jesus Christ – is a COSMIC GLORY. Christ DID NOT come to ONLY to bring an "individual salvation" – but Christ came to MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!

This may cause you to see Jesus Christ – and His SALVATION – in much BIGGER TERMS than you have thought before. Many believers think of Jesus Christ and salvation simply in personal terms of "getting out of Hell" and "going to Heaven." And they don't consider the larger scale of what Jesus Christ actually came to do – and what it means.

Christ came to SAVE the WORLD.

He is the WORLD'S SAVIOR – who will SAVE those who call on Him – **AND** SAVE all CREATION! CREATION cannot be "FIXED" by mankind. The problem goes MUCH DEEPER than simply STOPPING Carbon Dioxide emissions.

GOD says the PROBLEM with our environment must be traced all the way back to SIN.

Man's relationship with GOD is the SOURCE of every ENVIRONMENTAL problem.

[PLEASE don't mis-understand me in saying we DON'T NEED to do anything to care for God's world. And I am NOT saying that Carbon Dioxide emissions don't cause damage to our environment. And I am NOT making that statement simply to be "politically correct" toward the current trend of "environmentalism."]

The point is simply this:

This is GOD'S world.

Mankind was called to be a STEWARD of God's world, but we turned to SIN.

So SIN is the SOURCE of all our ENVIRONMENTAL problems – and we LIVE “IN HOPE” of that day when Jesus Christ will RETURN to make ALL THINGS NEW!

Our HOPE is in Jesus Christ ability to FIX our world – NOT man's scientific ability to FIX our world. And Jesus Christ will SURELY do it one day!

So as we see CREATION around us GROANING – we LIVE IN HOPE as believers.

We DON'T LIVE as the world which has NO HOPE. But we HAVE HOPE that ONE DAY – this WHOLE CREATION will ONE DAY be MADE NEW!

So we DON'T LOSE HEART like the environmentalists. But we LIVE IN HOPE!

So FIRST, notice Paul says our FUTURE GLORY is a **COSMIC GLORY**.

MP2: Our FUTURE GLORY is COMPLETE GLORY (23)

SECOND, our FUTURE GLORY is **COMPLETE GLORY**.

We see this in **verse 23**.

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

When we first read these words they can be confusing.

Paul says that as believers we “...wait eagerly for adoption as sons...”

How can Paul say we “WAIT eagerly for our ADOPTION” – when he just said a few verses earlier that we are CHILDREN of GOD – and SONS of GOD – already?

The answer is that Paul is talking here about the **COMPLETION** of our **ADOPTION**.

He is talking about the day when our ADOPTION as SONS will be **COMPLETE!**

In other words, there will be a day when we come into our FULL INHERITANCE as SONS OF GOD. As it is NOW – we are SONS – but we have NOT YET received all the FULL BENEFITS and BLESSINGS as SONS.

But the DAY is COMING when our ADOPTION will be COMPLETE!

Notice Paul mentions ONE THING which will be included in this COMPLETE ADOPTION: The REDEMPTION of our BODIES. This is ONE PART of COMPLETE ADOPTION which we will ENJOY.

Our BODIES will be MADE NEW!

App: The longer you live in this world – the more EAGERLY you WAIT for this “IN HOPE.”

I know many of you here today MORE EAGERLY HOPE for your BODY to be REDEEMED than you did 20 years ago.

As we get older our BODIES begin to BREAK DOWN. You GROAN.

You have more PAIN in the body.

You need CATARACT surgery. You need a KNEE REPLACED. Your MEMORY begins to FAIL. You spend more time at DOCTOR’S OFFICES.

You CAN’T DO the things you used to do with ease.

ALL THIS should make you LONG MORE EAGERLY – and with great JOY – for the REDEMPTION of your body. God PROMISES you – it WILL HAPPEN!

Because your elder brother Jesus Christ was RAISED with a NEW BODY – YOU TOO will be RAISED with a NEW BODY. It will be your SAME BODY – but RENEWED and INCORRUPTABLE – NEVER to BREAK DOWN AGAIN!

You must keep that in your mind as your body breaks down.

This is what it means to LIVE “IN HOPE” as a believer. You GROAN in your PRESENT SUFFERING – but you KNOW your NEW BODY is coming. It surely will happen!

So SECOND, our FUTURE GLORY is COMPLETE GLORY.

MP3: Our FUTURE GLORY is CERTAIN GLORY (23, 16-17)

FINALLY (and briefly), our FUTURE GLORY is CERTAIN GLORY.

We see this also in **verse 23**.

“And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

Notice reminds us – as believers – that we have the “FIRST-FRUITS” of the Spirit.

Paul is most likely describing a practice God commanded for the nation of Israel.

The FIRSTFRUITS was both the BEGINNING of the harvest – AND a PLEDGE that the FULL-HARVEST would follow in due time.

In this case it seems like he is emphasizing the fact that the Holy Spirit is a PLEDGE – which guaranteed the FULL HARVEST to come.

Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit in a similar way in His letter to the Ephesians. He describes the Holy Spirit as the “DEPOSIT” or “DOWN-PAYMENT” or “EARNEST MONEY” of the full amount to come.

So here, Paul tells us – as believers – that God has given us His HOLY SPIRIT as DEPOSIT – GUARANTEEING our FINAL ADOPTION and GLORY to come!

In other words, we have a CERTAIN – and GUARANTEED – GLORY TO COME!

WHY is it CERTAIN and GUARANTEED?

It is CERTAIN – and GUARANTEED – because of JESUS CHRIST!

Remember, Paul just said in verses 16-17 that we are FELLOW HEIRS with Jesus Christ. That means WE INHERIT what HE INHERITS!

It is because of HE SUFFERED for our SINS – and HE was RAISED – that WE are GUARANTEED this GLORIOUS inheritance!!

It is CERTAIN HOPE – because of HIM! That is TRUE HOPE.

TRUE HOPE is something that is GUARANTEED in the FUTURE.

Illus: I recently watched a documentary on the famous college basketball coach **Jim Valvano**.

Valvano coached at **North Carolina State** in the 1980's. During that time North Carolina State pulled off one of the most astounding upsets in college basketball. In 1983 – against all odds – they beat the Houston Cougars to win the NCAA Final Four tournament.

The documentary told the story of how Coach Valvano gave HOPE to his players.

In the first practice of the season Valvano did only ONE THING.

They DIDN'T dribble a basketball. They DIDN'T shoot a basketball. They DIDN'T run.

Instead, he had all them practice a celebration for winning the Final Four. He had them celebrate and give high fives – and gather around the hoop while he climbed a ladder and cut down the net – as they all celebrated the victory.

The players told this story and said this was how Valvano inspired HOPE in his players.

But that was HUMAN HOPE.

Valvano could not GURANTEE his players would WIN the Final Four.

But HOPE from GOD is very DIFFERENT!

HOPE that is GIVEN by GOD is GUARANTEED!

To LIVE "IN HOPE" as a follower of Christ means you are GUARANTEED.

You are GUARANTEED by GOD that ALL CREATION will be MADE NEW!

You are GUARANTEED by GOD that your ADOPTION will ONE DAY be COMPLETE – and your BODY will be MADE NEW!

App: It is GOD'S PROMISE that allows you to WAIT PATIENTLY as you GROAN.

You can WAIT through GROANING – when you are CERTAIN that FUTURE GLORY is COMING.

Conclusion: So consider that when you come to this table of the Lord Jesus today.

Just as the BAPTISM EARLIER was a SIGN of God's COVENANT PROMISE.

So also this table is another SIGN of God's COVENANT PROMISE that IN Jesus Christ's – there is FORGIVENESS of SINS.

When you receive this promise – you receive it IN HOPE.

That means you are taking GOD at His WORD. You are believing God's PROMISE that He has SURELY taken away the guilt of your SIN – and WILL SURELY declare you NOT GUILTY on that day when you stand before Him in the final judgment.

It is all taken on a PROMISE.

Your salvation ultimately rests on GOD'S PROMISE.

Will God be FAITHFUL to His PROMISES?

Does God speak the TRUTH?

SURELY God speaks the TRUTH. And surely God NEVER LIES.

So in our PRESENT GROANING – we WAIT EAGERLY for FUTURE that GLORY.

Let's pray...