

YOUR GLORY WILL BE REVEALED

Hear again the Word of God for this fourth Sunday after Trinity:

For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its choice, but through the One subjecting it in hope.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

A familiar pattern occurs throughout this time of the Church Year – the Word proclaimed and administered brings growth and new life in Christians. The “greening,” in the sense of the new life growth, of believers begins and continues with the proclamation of God’s mercy in giving His only-begotten Son, Jesus to be the sin-bearer for the whole world. God’s will was to save the world, the entire creation, you and all people, from the judgment of corruption, death and decay that He passed upon Adam on account of his willful sin. The first man’s action, will and thoughts brought the curse that is suffered in the whole creation. It is found bringing the crosses that we Christians bear in this life. Therefore, St. Paul reminds those who are being given new life and growth through the Word of the relative weight of our life crosses:

For I continue to reckon that the sufferings of this present season are not worthy (to be placed) alongside the glory about to be revealed in us.²

The Apostle is maintaining that after adding up all the debits of this age, of life under the cross, that it has no place when compared to the credits of the eternity that await us in Christ. The reckoning that he speaks of is just like a bookkeeper, or an accountant, uses to set debits against credits. On account of the mercy of God, the

¹ Romans 8:20.

² Romans 8:18.

balance sheet, the final sum of negatives and positives, for the Christian, is balanced immeasurably to the positive. Those words of comfort begin words of assurance that are found throughout what we number as the eighth chapter of the Letter to the Romans.

Our theme text for this week reminds the faithful, you who remain in Christ, that the curse against Adam and his children is not everlasting when it says, *for the creation was subjected to futility, not by its choice, but through the One subjecting it in hope.*³ Suffering in this creation, by humans and all that was created for our benefit, will have an end. That End was begun on the cross, and it will be completed on the Last Day. Suffering even that of Christians who bear your crosses as you follow Jesus, will have an end, and your glory will be revealed.

That is because our Father in heaven, while punishing sinners, remains a merciful God. The Father's mercy is that to which the Psalmist clings, even as he contemplates his enemies' wrath, in the words you and I recited today, *the Lord will fulfill his purpose for me, your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.*⁴ The mercy of God was displayed in the example of Joseph as it was proclaimed that he forgave his brothers who had sinned greatly against him. The truth of God's mercy was declared as that which you who are in Christ may share, as you hear it declared in the Gospel reading for this week: *all of you must continue to become merciful, just as your Father remains merciful.*⁵

You are being called, with those words of Holy Scripture to growth and new life in Christ. You are, by the very declaration of the Good News, being freed to share the

³ Romans 8:20.

Father's steadfast love, His mercy, even as you have heard it shared by David, Joseph, St. Paul and Jesus. That is to say, that the Christian, and the Christian only - no one from any other religion, faith or creed may hold this - is free to live under true mercy in a creation that is groaning under the weight of man's sin. That truth is conveyed in the inspired words of the Apostle in his letter to the Romans:

*For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its choice, but through the One subjecting it in hope, that, also, the creation will be freed from the slavery of decay into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*⁶

Creation, as used in this long sentence, is all that which God created for the benefit of His highest creatures - man and woman. From our Christian perspective, this means that suffering in this life happens in a larger, world transcending context. These words declared to you today are the Apostle's, hence God's way, to communicate to your new nature in Christ, *the confident expectation that suffering is not the final word.*⁷ St. Paul points us *to the eager yearning for that glory which runs through all creation.*⁸ It is to say that, when corruption, death and decay came into the Lord's proclaimed good order on account of Adam's sin, all things that are subhuman began to groan under the immense weight of sin.

Had God left humanity, and by extension, creation, under that burden, then there would be no reason for hope. Man and woman would spend their lives scratching out a meager existence, bare subsistence, while waiting upon the death that was sure to come.

⁴ Psalm 138:10, *English Standard Version*.

⁵ Luke 5:36.

⁶ Romans 8:20-21

⁷ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991).. 547.

⁸ *Ibid.*

However, as God's greater attribute is mercy and His alien work is to punish, even in bringing His judgment on Adam God offered hope, the Promise of the Seed, the Son who would restore all things. This Promise was given to the mother of all mankind, before the father of all received his punishment.

The order of Promise then punishment is important. It indicates that the will of the Eternal Father is to restore, atone, forgive and renew. This He would do, as we children of God know and believe, Himself. Yes, punishment would and did come upon Adam for his most grievous sin, but it would not end there. In other words, St. Paul, for your assurance, and the consolation of all believers suffering in this fallen world, picked up the theme of the Promise of the third chapter of Genesis when he wrote,

that, also, the creation will be freed from the slavery of decay into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.⁹

This means that God would provide, and did provide, a release from the sorry lot of decay and death. With these few words, echoing the themes of the whole of God's revealed grace; St. Paul ties the restoration of the fallen creation to the restoration of fallen humanity. Specifically, and solely, this restoration is discovered only in those who bear the Name of Christ. In you Christians, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have had your sins washed away with the water and the Word, and return to that bath of regeneration each day to drown your old nature with sin and evil desires that your new nature might live right before God in purity, in you alone among all humans, the transformation of creation is declared to be now, and not yet.

That is an important reality, especially for Christians whose lot in this life seems to be only suffering and distress. That which you truly are, by God's work alone, sons of God, is still veiled to the sinful world. Your glory is hidden, under the cross. By that I mean the cross of Christ, and the crosses that you bear in this world as you follow Him. The freedom you have is from sin and its eternal consequences, hell and separation from the Source and Font of Life.

There is, according to the Word of God, and by experience to some, knowledge of this hidden glory, this freedom from sin. The Apostle informs the Church that creation, that is, all that is not human, looks forward to the day that the wonders of God's mercy, grace, forgiveness and salvation will be fully revealed to all. He uses these words,

*For the creation with eager expectation is continually waiting for the revelation of the sons of God.*¹⁰

Yet, to those who remain outside the Faith, this expectation in which you live and sub-human creation waits is unseen, unheard, and unknown. The theories of the Fallen, and their gods, press in upon you. They attempt to entice you away from the glory that is yours as a child of God. From time-to-time you may succumb to the temptations and join in with the Fallen. You may sin repeatedly the same sin, while desiring to be free to be what you have been named: a child of God.

Sin and Adam's curse still hold sway in the fallen creation. But, as God, through His Word, returns you to Himself, bringing you to repentance, and offering you

⁹ Romans 8:21.
¹⁰ Romans 8:19.

forgiveness, you will remain free from everlasting bondage. To assure of your forgiveness standing before the merciful Father, when His Word turns you from sin, the section of the Letter to the Romans for this week gives assurances. That is declared, foremost this week, that God in Christ has taken away His anger at your sins and paid the price fully for them. All that may press in upon you, sin, suffering, death and decay – all the results of Adam’s sin – have been taken away in the redemption that Jesus the Christ won for you on the cross. Hear again the assurance that comes to you across the centuries, to bring you hope in the mercy and grace of God,

For we ourselves know that all the creation (is) continually groaning and continually laboring until now.¹¹

The words here describe creation as a woman in the throes of childbirth. She is crying out, and pressing down in labor to deliver that for which she has waited a long time. As a mother labors in pain, she does so with the expectation of the birth that is to come. While her affliction is real, its time will pass, and the joy of the newborn will surpass the trials of the groaning.

Just so, it is, St. Paul indicates, with creation. This time of groaning, though immense when compared to the hours of labor a human mother may experience, will pass. Then the glory, the joy of what we are in Christ will be the glory, the joy of all creation, which God will restore to perfection. (A more glorious perfection, I contend, for in this new creation there will be no room for another Fall, nor sin, nor weeping, nor struggle, nor suffering, nor death, the devil and hell. All of those will pass away in a

rush of cleansing fire. Then they will never impact the redeemed nor the creation restored again)!

Not only that, (the Apostle writes), but also we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, and we in ourselves continue to groan inwardly continually awaiting our adoption by the redemption of our body.¹²

You can be sure and certain of that for you have what the Lord has named his Firstfruits. That is, the Holy Spirit dwells in you bringing you consolation and comfort. All the Words of God are yours, and have been fulfilled by Christ in you. That which you have is a down payment for that which you will receive. The Spirit, Who opens your ears, hearts, minds and souls to the eternal truths of the Word, to the reality of Christ-crucified for your sins, is your deposit and guarantee. This is yours to hold onto as you await the completion of the adoption of your body, not by the putting off of your mortal flesh, but the final liberation from this doomed body of death. Your glory will be revealed.

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Trinity IV (LSB One-year series)

Genesis 50:15-21; Romans 8:18-23; Luke 6: 36-42

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Pastor Michael A. Morhouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

¹¹ Romans 8:22.

¹² Romans 8:23.

Additional Notes:

This section “contains overall themes of assurance that dominate chapter 8.”¹³

Freedom, the redemption of this body, sonship (as key element in the Christian’s glory).¹⁴

“viewed from a Christian perspective, the suffering of this life is placed in a larger, world transcending context which, although not alleviating its present intensity, give to Christians the confident expectation that suffering is not the final word.”¹⁵

“Paul can point to the eager yearning for that glory which runs through all creation...”¹⁶

Regarding v. 20: “Release from the sorry sway of the ‘law of sin and death.’”¹⁷ “Paul firmly ties the transformation of creation to the transformation of Christians.”¹⁸

“The rent which was between himself and God ran through all creation, after man’s willed, fatal trespass nothing was as it had been before.”¹⁹

There are three testimonies to the new destiny of the New Man who inheres in the Christian. These three witnesses are those that assure the Christian of the divine reality that he/she is a child of God.

1. The state of physical suffering – corruption, decay and death;
2. Adam’s Fall;
3. Redemption.²⁰

“In union with Christ, however, Christians must undergo suffering.”²¹

Regarding verse 19: “Paul is affirming a solidarity of the nonhuman world with the human world in the redemption that Christ has wrought.”²²

apokaradokia - one “with uncertainty stretches the neck and cranes forward to see what some coming event or object might be like.”²³ kara (head) + dekomēa (stretch) + apo (away from).²⁴

mataioths – has a broader concept than “corruption, decay,”²⁵ “means the inability of something to fulfill its intended purpose.”²⁶

dia ton upotaxanta - causal usage: would then refer to Adam;

agency usage: would then refer to God, “by him who subjected it.” To suggest agency is rare but not unattested.²⁷

fqora - perishability, and putrefaction + powerlessness, lack of beauty, vitality and strength.²⁸ Combining the ideas of both mutability and corruption.²⁹ ktisis – sub-human creation.³⁰

Firstfruits – a guarantee of what is to come. A liberation from this body of death or doomed body, not a release from enfleshment.³¹

kairos – “limited duration of time”³²

Hope – “Paul probably has in mind the protoevangelium...”³³

To bring His will for your salvation to you, God established the preaching office. Through it, *God gives the Gospel and the Sacraments, through which He, as through means, gives the Holy Spirit, who gives belief, where and when He wills, in those that hear the Gospel, which there teaches that we, through Christ’s service not through our service, have a gracious God, when we believe this.*³⁴

¹³ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991). 544.

¹⁴ Ibid. 545.

¹⁵ Ibid. 547.

¹⁶ Franzmann, Martin. *Romans: A Commentary*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 148.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991). 544.

¹⁹ Franzmann, Martin. *Romans: A Commentary*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 148-149.

²⁰ Albright, William Foxwell and Freedman, David Noel, eds. *The Anchor Bible*. Vol. 33, *Romans*, by Joseph Fitzmyer. (New York: Doubleday, 1993). 505.

²¹ Ibid. 506.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. 507.

²⁴ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991). 550.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Gasque, W. Ward, ed. *New International Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 6, *Romans*, by James Edwards. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992). 213. Edwards argues for God as the one who subjected creation to hope. This would be agency usage.

²⁷ Albright, William Foxwell and Freedman, David Noel, eds. *The Anchor Bible*. Vol. 33, *Romans*, by Joseph Fitzmyer. (New York: Doubleday, 1993). 508.

²⁸ Ibid. 509.

²⁹ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991). 553.

³⁰ Ibid. 551.

³¹ Albright, William Foxwell and Freedman, David Noel, eds. *The Anchor Bible*. Vol. 33, *Romans*, by Joseph Fitzmyer. (New York: Doubleday, 1993). 510.

³² Gasque, W. Ward, ed. *New International Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 6, *Romans*, by James Edwards. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992). 212.

³³ Barker, Kenneth, ed. *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Romans 1-8*, by Douglas Moo. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991). 553.

³⁴ *Concordia Triglotta*. “Confession Augustana, Der V Artikel. Vom Predigtamt.” Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis. 1921. p. 44.