

Introduction

- <https://www.foodandwine.com/gravestone-recipes-cookbook-to-die-for-11830092> - Recipes on a headstone? A way to preserve the legacy of someone.
- Why would you carve a recipe on a headstone? No one wants death to be the final word. We look for ways for the memory of someone to live on...
- For Christians, death is NOT the final word. Resurrection life awaits us. Future glory is coming.
- Knowing that resurrection life awaits us gives us much hope in this present life.
- Life right now doesn't feel very glorious. There's much in this life to enjoy, but there's also much groaning in this life. We groan over broken relationships, sickness and disease, frustrations on the job, frustrations in the home, tragic events, natural disasters, wars.
- Maybe this morning you're groaning with frustration.
- You won't always groan. In [Romans 8:18-39](#), Paul reminds us that glory awaits us. Resurrected life in the presence of God forever is coming for us.
- God has not left you empty handed. From this passage, I want to show you three realities that you now possess as you wait for future glory.

We have hope in our suffering (vs. 18-25).

- vs. 17 - Paul reminded us that those in Christ will share in the sufferings of Christ. You can imagine why - if the world opposed our Savior, the world will oppose those who follow the Savior.
- The pathway to glory is through suffering. ([2 Timothy 3:12](#))
- vs. 18-19 Paul knew what it was like to suffer for following Jesus ([2 Corinthians 11:24-25](#)).
- Future glory is far greater than present suffering. All the suffering that comes with living in this broken world is a blink of the eye compared to the eternal glory that awaits us.
- vs. 19-21 - The entirety of God's creation waits and groans for future glory.
- Creation is under the curse of sin - creation suffered the collateral damage of humanity's rebellion - decay and death, natural disorder, chaos, etc. Because humanity fell, creation was subjected to the curse along with us.
- BUT - when Christ returns - you'll receive your glorious inheritance AND creation will be set free.
- vs. 22 - Right now, creation groans like a mother in labor - the pains of natural disasters, disease and death, the world not being as it should.
- BUT pain with purpose - someday this old world will give way to a new creation where everything will be right, far greater than what we experience now, and permanent.
- Your suffering is temporary, the suffering of this world is temporary.
- When we suffer, Paul wants us to know that life might not get easier, but glory is coming.

- vs. 23 - We have the Spirit as the firstfruits - a foretaste of what's to come - and we groan with longing for what's to come - full redemption of our bodies, no longer stained by sin and brokenness.
- We were saved in this hope. We can't see it now, but we wait eagerly for what's to come.
- Hope is confident expectation that God will finish what He's promised when nothing looks finished.
- Paul is not necessarily explaining the WHY behind our suffering, but he does want us to have a hopeful perspective when we suffer. How do I maintain a hopeful when I experience so much suffering?
 - **Ask yourself, “Will my present suffering define my story in eternity?” Absolutely not!** The suffering is real. But compared to eternity, it's nothing. Your story is defined by God's finished work in your life, not temporary suffering. Paul encouraging an eternal perspective ([2 Corinthians 4:17-18](#)).
 - **See your suffering as God’s tool, not His delay.** “How long?” is our frequent question. But, God is accomplishing in your suffering - creating a longing for eternity in you, teaching you patience, making you more like Jesus, deepening your dependence on Him, and detaching you from this present world.
 - **Let suffering do its work.** We want to get out of suffering, God wants to form you in suffering. When you suffer, look for what God is teaching you. What does He want you to see about yourself? What does He want you to learn about Him?

We have help in our weakness (vs. 26-27).

- When we suffer, prayer is hard. We don't know what to pray. We're overwhelmed by the pain of suffering and it leaves us inarticulate before God.

- How many of us have ever felt like our prayers are inadequate before God?
- Your inadequacy does not disqualify your prayers, it activates the Spirit's help.
- In our suffering, we want to pray, "Take it away," and at the same time we want to pray, "Don't waste my suffering, God. Use it in my life." Which requests aligns to the will of God?
- We can't see the bigger picture. It makes our prayers feel so weak. You've asked, "Do my prayers even matter?"(Paul's example in [2 Corinthians 12](#).)
- But the hope... Paul does not tell us to try harder to pray better. He tells us the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Paul is NOT telling us that the Spirit prays instead of us. Paul is telling us that the Spirit intercedes our prayers with inexpressible groanings.
- Our help comes from the Lord. The Spirit is at work on your behalf. He takes your groanings before the Father. The Father knows your heart, and He knows the work of the Spirit who dwells within you. He knows that you want to honor the Lord, that you want to be in His will. The Spirit expresses the intentions of your heart to the Father.
- This is encouraging: God does not expect you to know exactly what to pray for in every situation, but the Spirit of God knows how to help you by groaning on your behalf before your Father.
- If the Spirit is present to intercede:
- **You should never feel like you cannot pray.** There are no wasted prayers. There's no fear that you're going to pray the wrong thing. In suffering, pray, even if it's only a sentence. "Lord help me. I'm overwhelmed. Give me wisdom."

- **You don't have to wait until you know how to pray to pray.** You don't need to take a class on prayer. You don't need to be an expert in prayer to pray. You just need to pray - you have a Father who longs to commune with you as you pray. You might not pray for an hour in the morning, but you can come before your Father throughout the day asking for help and giving Him praise for how you see Him at work throughout your day.
- **You don't have to grade your prayers.** God is not grading your prayers. If you grade your prayers, you may be tempted to NOT pray. God welcomes your inadequacy and weakness. As you pray, the Spirit will work, and you'll grow in your ability to communicate with God.

We have confidence in our victory (vs. 28-39)

- We not only have help, we have confidence. These final verses in [Romans 8](#) exude confidence in the Lord.
- vs. 28 - We're confident that God works all things together for our good. NOT some things or most things.
- For the good of His children who God has called into a relationship with Himself. God has no ill intentions for you. Everything He does is for His glory - so we might see how majestic and mighty He is - AND for our good. After all, we are His children, heirs to His Kingdom. His will is for us to be glorified and fully conformed to the image of His Son.
- The “good” might not always be what we think is best, but the “good” is always what God knows is best for His children.
- vs. 29-30 cause us to ask questions: What is predestination? Do we have free will? Paul not writing to confuse us about predestination but to assure us that from eternity past, God's plan has always been for His glory and our good.

- In eternity past, God *foreknew* you - language of relationship. Before you were ever born, God set His love on you. He *predestined* you. Before you were born He determined He was going to do a work of salvation in you to conform you to the image of His Son - who is the “firstborn” - or the older brother who is the One we are all to be like.
- Those God predestined, He called. If you’re a follower of Jesus, you experienced God’s calling. He called you out of death and into life through a relationship with Him. In that calling, you were justified - made right with God - and ultimately, you will be glorified. There will come a day that you will have a resurrected body like Christ and will forever live with Him in the new heavens and new earth.
- vs. 31-39 - If all this is true, what else do you have to say? How could you ever have the thought that God has nothing but good intentions for you? When the question, “Is God against me?” crosses your mind, let [Romans 8:31-39](#) silence that question.
- vs. 32 - If God gave up His most precious possession, His Son, for us, how could we ever think that He would not give us all that He has promised us?
- vs. 33 - Who can bring a charge against you? God has already declared you righteous. Let people declare you guilty all they want. You know it’s not true.
- vs. 34 - Who can condemn you? The only ONE who has the right to condemn you condemned His own Son in your place so you could go free. Further, His Son died in your place and then defeated death. He is now at the right hand of God interceding for you.
- vs. 35 - There’s no condemnation and no separation. No suffering or affliction can separate you.

- vs. 36 - Quote from [Psalm 44:22](#) - We feel like we're facing death daily. There's so much opposition. But - NONE of the challenges you face have the ability to separate you from God's love.
- vs. 37-39 - We are MORE than conquerors. None can break the chain of vs. 30. Every link depends on the sustaining power of God. God will not lose any that He foreknew and predestined.
- Nothing in the physical realm (death nor life) nor the spiritual realm (angels or rulers) nor anything in time (things present or to come) nor anything that opposes God's people (powers) nor spatial (height nor depth) nor anything in creation can separate you from the love of God. Nothing!
- You will suffer, but rest assured, no ounce of suffering changes the victory you have in Christ. You can be confident in your victory.
- How can you walk in confidence?
- **Remember your story.** Often look back and remember how God saved you. Look back and see how God has been with you in every season of life. Do you think He is going to stop rescuing you? (I wish I would have journaled more - taken more time to write down the God moments in my life.)
- **Hear the story of others.** You're in a church full of "more than conquerors." Let the stories of other followers of Jesus encourage you to keep your eyes on Jesus when life is difficult. Make space for times of testimony in your small groups.
- **Live on His mission with boldness.** What would you do differently this week if you truly believed that nothing could separate you from God's love? Would that change the way you live in the present? How you share the Gospel? How you obey?

- This morning, if you don't know the Savior, believe that Jesus died and rose again for you. Repent of your sins and experience victory in Jesus that will give you hope of future glory.