

Romans 8: 12-25 Living as God's children, eager and waiting... 19th July 2026

Pray: Lord, give us faith and hope as we hear your word this day. Amen.

We've met the builder and he's promised he can transform our very 70's kitchen and bathroom into a beautiful and workable space.

We now eagerly and patiently await for works to begin and be completed in a few months time.

It's been almost 2 years that we've suffered and groaned just a bit about the state of our bathroom and kitchen. (Now I know our suffering is nothing compared to those who have tiny one room homes for a whole family or no home at all, this is a first world problem...but stay with me as I use this as an illustration!)

We've groaned when the hotplates didn't work and we had to cook on a gas camp stove or BBQ outside, we groaned and have had to make do messily without a pantry in the kitchen, we've not been happy with the broken toilet that is in the laundry off the main living area. We've gotten used to the very brown and orange flowery tiles, and I've suffered through not having a dishwasher after a busy dinner party! And now the cutlery drawer is broken...

But we have hope that all will be transformed. However, first there will be some more pain and increased hardship to endure – mess and builders in the house with no kitchen to use – all cooking outside! But we will be patient and eager as we wait in hope for the wonderful transformation that we will enjoy, and the pain will soon be over.

In the meantime, we must do our part, take action ourselves. Pack up and clear out the kitchen and bathroom. We need to choose new appliances and tiles etc. But it will all be worth it!

What are you eagerly and patiently waiting for?

As Christians, we wait for something so much more important than a new kitchen, or new car, or new hip or knee!

We wait with hope for God's glory to be fully revealed in us and in all creation. The day when all will be put right, a new heaven and new earth, a day when our bodies will be gloriously transformed.

When we become Christians, we have a foretaste of what that glorious future will be, for God fills us with his Holy Spirit, we have his very presence with us.

The message in Romans 8 is such great gospel good news.

Last week we heard that as people belonging to Christ, filled with his Spirit, we are not condemned, but are set free from sin and death through Jesus.

The first couple of verses from today's reading, (12-13), continue with the message that we are to live according to the Spirit, and in the Spirit's power we can put to death, on the cross with Jesus, all the misdeeds of the body. Put to death all those things that are not in line with God's desire of how we are to live, of loving him and others. Paul says we have an obligation to live by the Spirit. This obligation doesn't take away from the free gift of forgiveness and grace, but if we are filled with the Spirit of Christ, we should live accordingly.

He then goes on to say (v 14) that those who are led by the Spirit of God are his children! Not slaves living in fear, but free children. We are adopted in his family, sons and daughters of the Creator of the Universe. Adoption in Paul's day in Rome gave the adopted son a name and estate to inherit. They were not seen as inferior from natural born children. In his day, it would definitely be a son, not a daughter. A little aside I was surprised and encouraged this week when reading the end of Job that when his fortunes were restored and he had more children, his daughters were granted an inheritance, along with their brothers! Of course, God does not discriminate between male and females. We are all adopted equally into his family. We are given his name, we are *Christ..ians*.

We are called into an intimate, personal, familial relationship with God, we are his heirs, and we can call him "Abba, father", the term Jesus himself used when speaking to God. He called out to his "Abba" when he was in the garden of Gethsemane. We are invited to use the same term – like a child speaking to their loving, close father. (I know this can be an difficult idea for those who did not grow up with a loving Father, we need to look at Jesus and his relationship to the Father, whom he would regularly go and spend time with and get strength from). Jesus himself teaches us to pray "Our Father."

Paul goes on to say (v17) that as children of we are not just heirs of God, but co-heirs with his son Jesus Christ.

That is an astonishing statement. Think about it... He places us as his joint heirs, equal children with Jesus! Jesus also prayed for all believers to be united with him and his father, to be one, just as they were. (John 17) Incredible if you think about it. Do we live like this? As God's children, united to Christ.

However, Paul says that to be co-heirs with Christ, to share in his glory, means we must also share in his suffering. (v 17).

It is unlikely that we will have to suffer and die on a cross like Jesus, who for the joy before him endured such pain. (Hebrews 12) But there are many persecuted Christians who do suffer physical pain and torture for their faith, for remaining connected to Jesus. For

saying that they are a child of God. Suffering and glory go together; Jesus was glorified on the cross as well as in his resurrection and ascension.

We too will suffer on the earth before we experience the complete joy of resurrection and total transformation.

We live in this age and wait and hope eagerly and patiently for the age to come.

In the meantime, we have the Spirit, the seal, the promise, the first fruits of what is to come. As we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, living as God's children, we will know his peace that passes all understanding, his joy, his love, his presence, always with us. Giving us strength to persevere through the suffering and pain in this world. Just like he gave Jesus, empowering him in his ministry and in strengthening him to obey the Father to suffer and die on the cross that we might live. By his Spirit he will transform us to be able to live lives full of love and grace, laying down our lives for others.

And our present sufferings, whatever they may be – ill health, poverty, depression, persecution – are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us. We need to remember this when things get really tough – this is not forever. One day we will know complete freedom and healing, our transformed glorious bodies are coming!

And then Paul goes on to say that it is not just we humans who are suffering and groaning and looking forward to release and freedom and glory – but all of creation!

Like humans, creation has been in bondage to decay since the fall, we read about in Genesis 3. The ground was cursed to produce thorns and thistles. Yes, there is still much beauty in the earth, but because humans chose to follow their own way, they have not been the good stewards of the earth that God intended. We see the impact of this today, such as places that are over forested, polluted water ways, animals that have been hunted to extinction, and so on.

The earth is suffering and groaning for the day of redemption and glory.

And it is coming – we wait patiently and eagerly – because we don't know when. But while we wait and suffer we keep our eyes on God, we hold onto the hope of the glory yet to come. Like pains in childbirth, our struggles won't last forever, and we'll be so glad we endured, and like after child birth, the pain will mainly be forgotten when new life arrives.

We don't know when this glory is coming, and we don't know really know what it is going to look like. But we have some ideas and glimpses from scripture. Like our new kitchen and bathroom, we've seen small pieces of bench top and tiles, but we won't have the full picture until it's completed. John speaks in Revelation 21 of a new heaven and new earth where there is no more tears, pain, death or mourning, the old order will pass away. No more cancer, MND, alzheimers... but we can't fully imagine what we will look like.

As for creation, it will be so beautiful and there will be no more deadly tsunamis, earthquakes, destructive fires and floods. As Isaiah prophesies (chapter 11: 6-9)

"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

*⁸The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.*

*⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.*

Isn't that something to eagerly wait in hope for?

In the meantime, as we wait, we listen to the Spirit, we live as children of God – we tend and care for the planet as God instructed us to – being good stewards of the land. Doing the best we can and encouraging and praying for others, leaders of the nations, to share the resources of the earth. At our travel slide sharing night on Wednesday, Richard Gijbers shared some old and new photos of their time in Nepal. He was a missionary with the forestry department, 40 years ago the hills were bare of trees from overuse, and he was involved in reforestation and this year returned to see tree covered hills.

We live with faith and in hope for what we can't yet see or have, trusting in God and his promises.

Our builder promises he can transform our kitchen and bathroom. Our hope in the finished product will help us endure the pain of the building process, and we will help as we wait, packing and clearing, ready for the new and shiny things to come.

We will continue to suffer in our bodies and on this earth until we die or Christ comes in all his glory – but we live in hope. We live with the joy of the first fruits of the Spirit, his peace, his strength, his guidance; God's very presence living in us. Knowing we are his much-loved children. We live for God, helping to bring his kingdom on until it is full of his glory.

Let's pray: Father God, we thank you that we are your much loved children, co-heirs with your son Jesus Christ, looking forward to our inheritance. May we come to you as our Abba Father, may we call out to you in need, receive your comfort and strength in the journey of life, may we hear you tell us you love us, and may we tell you and show how much we love you, living lives led by your Spirit. Help us to bring your kingdom here on earth. May we hold on to hope and eagerly await with patience the day when we and the whole world will be restored and filled with your glory.

