

Unexpected Truths 3) Glorious Freedom Awaits Us

Romans 8:18-25 • 2026-08-31



Do you ever just groan under the heat. This past week I was driving in Phoenix when I heard a clunk and my window suddenly fell in my car and wouldn't go back up. Normally that's not too bad a repair and after a few hours I was able to fix the broken part. But you can imagine my groan when that window fell, and I was driving in Phoenix and the car told me it was 110 degrees out. It made for a fun drive. But according to some the heat is not getting better. In fact, you better start packing. At least that's what many scientists are saying if you plan to be here in 1 billion years. Astronomy is a fascinating field of study. Scientist not only try to calculate the distance of stars and planets but speculate on their lifespan and ages. It is currently thought by many scientists that the sun is about at its halfway point through its total lifespan. If it follows the patterns observed in other stars it will continue to burn for another 5 billion years. But as it gradually brightens the earth may become uninhabitable in around 1 billion years when the oceans begin to boil. At least that's the current consensus of most scientist. I guess we better start packing to head to the next planet in 1 billion years. We might laugh at the idea of needing billions of years to pack.

But before you start packing, we might have to ask, "Can we even escape this planet?" At the fastest speed we have sent humans into space, it would still take us 150,000 years to travel to the nearest rock planet outside our solar system. Even at the fastest speed scientist think we might be able to attain, 1/20th the speed of light, it would still take a lifetime of travel to visit any known planet that could potentially have water. So, is an eventual death and slow death of our own planet all that awaits mankind? Are we "trapped" here on this planet and to face our doom? That's where we are left to reason out just by observing the galaxy. But the author of creation has made known to us that something glorious awaits us, not death and a fading star, but freedom from decay and a glorious life unending. It's an unexpected truth only found in God's Word. God's the travel agent. And with him we go from groaning to glory.

In his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul lays out the glory that awaits us. "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." This puts our present life into perspective. When you consider what we are headed for and what awaits us, the present sufferings aren't even worthy of comparison. Some of us have more sufferings in the present than others. But before you think the Paul just didn't get it recall his story. If you think Paul isn't putting your present suffering on the scale for comparison, then think about what he brought to the table to compare. He suffered slander from his enemies. He was wrongly imprisoned no many occasions. He bore the life-long scars that come from being whipped and beaten and pelted to death with stones. He had faced shipwreck, nakedness, hunger, and was separated from all his friends.

This same man, Paul, also had a grasp on the glory that will be revealed in us. We can try to imagine what heaven might be like. But he writes that he was once taken up to the highest heaven and say things that were unspeakable. He could not tell whether in body or spirit, but he had a glimpse of glory. And we can try to picture what the exalted and glorified body of the dead might look like. Paul saw the glorified and risen Jesus who appeared and spoke to him more than once. I think it's safe to say that he of all people can make a fair comparison of present sufferings to future glory.

Our present sufferings, whatever you might face, aren't even on the same scale of comparison as the glory that awaits us. One of my sons is knowledgeable about 3D printing. I get the limitations of the printer, but on a whim asked him what would happen if you tried to 3D print a vinyl record. He said they aren't anywhere on the same scale and that trying to print and listen to a vinyl record made by a 3D printer would be like trying to build a tiny Lego set using 40-pound cinderblocks. They aren't anywhere near the same scale of detail. Paul says that the degree of our suffering, however big we might think it to be, isn't on the same scale as the degree of glory that awaits us.

But our problem is that we only get to experience our present sufferings and have no way of comparing it with our future glory when we look at ourselves and nature. When we look at our own experiences and nature it is filled with groaning. We are reminded here that all of creation shares with us in the present suffering. It is waiting for the glory that is ours because it too will share in that glory.

Thousands of years ago the creator responded to the first sin which brought all suffering and death. When he spoke to the man regarding his rebellion he said, "Cursed is the ground because of you. It will produce thorns..." And we've seen that curse ever since. Creation itself groans under the curse. My family watched a documentary on the making of the Panama Canal. Horrifically some people were killed by explosions during the dangerous construction. But out of the 25,000 people who died over the course of all the construction efforts by French and Americans, mosquitos were the primary culprit. Still today an estimated 1 million die from diseases spread by mosquitos every year. And what about the 1000 people who die globally each year from crocodile attacks? Their groans are cut short and those who survive groan the loss. Creation itself has turned ugly. We were reminded of this in recent years as New York and states along the Canadian Border recorded the worst air quality ever. Not just from pollution, but fires that raged in Canada. Creation groans under the curse. We were reminded of it these past few weeks as fires forced many to flee in Spokane Washinton and just this past week in Reno. Homes were destroyed. That same danger looms over many every year. Creation groans under the curse. This past week many watched in horror on social media as lives were

swept away on camera by the sudden flood that overtook parts of Nepal. Hundreds of lives buried alive in the mud left behind. Creation groans under the curse.

But it isn't going to stay that way. All the disease, fire, famine, flooding, and death that we see is the present season. The Scriptures tell us something that we would never guess by looking at ourselves and at the creation. We all will go from groaning to glory. Creation is not doomed to face a death star or boiling oceans. "Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

Creation is looking in eager expectation for the day when the children of God will experience freedom and glory. Can you picture the rattler with its nervous rattle and defensive strike looking forward to the time when it is no longer shaking to threaten? Can you picture the stars that will gradually fade and die looking to the small little specks walking on this planet, waiting for us to be glorified? The mountainsides eroding and spilling the blood of so many are waiting for the day when the crumbling ceases and erosion ends. "The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth."

And we ourselves groan inwardly along with all creation. Even we Christians who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit groan. Our present suffering is not little or insignificant. It is indeed great under the curse. But it is small when compared with our future glory. So we eagerly await what is to come! "We wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."

The adoption papers have been signed. We already have the Holy Spirit, a firstfruit and deposit guaranteeing what is to come. But we are not yet in our new home and with our new bodies. Christ has already redeemed us from the curse and purchased us as his own. But we will not fully experience what that means until these bodies are redeemed from the curse and brought out of the grave and made new from the dust. And they will be made to be perfect and holy, transformed to be like the glorious body of Jesus. We will live free from suffering, free from fear, free from death. And the glory that awaits us is so indescribable it is most often described as what it is not. There will be no more curse! Yet at time the Bible also describes for us what it is. It will be freedom and glory. And that freedom from the bondage of sin and death and the glory that awaits us will be so great, that we can't even begin to imagine or compare it with our present suffering!

This is the glory that Christ knew when he went to face the cross. He knew he was returning to the Father and would fully enjoy the glory he had with the Father from before time began. He knew the joys that were set before him. Our present sufferings are there to make us eagerly await that same glory. His past sufferings were there to endure the curse in our place. I find it interesting to read at the beginning that God curses the serpent, and he curses the earth and the ground. But he doesn't pronounce a curse on the man and woman. Instead, he tells them of someone who would be born of the woman and would face the serpent, the devil. He would be struck but would himself crush underfoot our enemy. God told as at the beginning of time and knew at the very start. He would take the curse away. Jesus, the only Son of God suffered in the the past so we might have glory in the future. And so that today even as we face suffering, we eagerly await what is promised, freedom and glory, freely given to us by the one who signed our adoption papers with the blood of his own Son. And we will see him who died and lives in glory forever, our Redeemer.

You won't find this hope anywhere else. It is only found when you look to Jesus. The closest hope we find in creation and ourselves by mere observation is bleak. In 1689, while observing a passing comet, a French Jesuit priest was looking at the constellation known as Centaurus and discovered that the star Alpha Centauri is two stars in a binary system. Without a telescope the two stars appear as a single bright star. Then, in 1915 a Scottish astronomer discovered that there is a third star in the Alpha Centauri star system. That one, Proxima Centauri, cannot be seen by the naked human eye. Then just ten years ago a Spanish astronomer announced he had discovered there was a planet orbiting Proxima Centauri which is rocky and nearly the same size as earth. This planet is in the inhabitable zone; its sun made it possible for temperatures for liquid water. This star and planet are the closest to our solar system.

But this is all desperate searching and still under the curse! If you could somehow manage to travel more than 4 light years away, or 25 trillion miles (at our current fastest speed that's 150,000 years and some note the universe is expanding so fast we can technically never travel there) what would you find? Scientists have no hope for ever visiting. The planet is likely tidally locked making one side perpetually burning and the other side dark and colder than we can imagine. And even if you could find a safe transit and place to land its star, Proxima Centauri is occasionally visible to the human eye. Even if for only 7 seconds when it releases solar flares that are 100 time stronger than our sun and would complete destroy any life that might be on its orbiting planets. Why do I mention all this? We might get excited to hear that the star closest to our sun has a planet the same size and orbiting in a habitable zone. But it turns out despite being the closest it remains most unreachable and is almost certainly entirely uninhabitable. If you were to try to make it to the closest inhabitable planet, death awaits. All creation groans!

And so do we. That's because we don't have it all just yet. But our glorious freedom awaits us. All creation will be made new! Solar flares, radiation, the cold emptiness of death will be gone. We wait for a new creation free from the curse and bodies that will never face suffering or death. We have it in Jesus. We in faith wait for it eagerly and patiently, enduring all as we go from present groaning to future glory.