

East Cooper Baptist Church

December 3, 2017

Groaning and The Hope of Heaven

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:1-4

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 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. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 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. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Romans 8:18-25

- I. Thinking with depth and clarity about trials and eternity, verse 18F.

When we are tone deaf to the realities of the eternal world we are living in a "world without windows" (Peter Berger).

- II. Embracing the "all ready but not yet" (inaugurated eschatology) which anticipates the coming of Christ and underscores the significance of daily living.
- III. Groaning inwardly as we eagerly await ("on tip-toes") with joy, disappointment, and expectation.

"The immediate, which is formed by our present circumstances and our short-term prospects, may sometimes be horrific. We may be suffering a job loss, health crisis, a public scandal, the death of a child, or a close friend, or a Job-like combination of disasters. But however bad the immediate, the ultimate is always hopeful, and in the tension between the immediate and the ultimate lies the possibility of the resilience of faith."

Fool's Talk, Os Guinness, pg. 71

- IV. Groaning and physical decay, verse 23b.
- V. Hope as we wait with patience.

"Hope is not something that is now seen, for if that which is hoped for it is now realized, it is no longer a hope but an attained reality. What is emphasized again is the "not yet" character of Christian redemption, for believers do not yet possess their resurrection bodies. In verse 25, Paul closes the circle by saying if believers hope for what they do not see, then they "wait eagerly" for that hope "with endurance" regarding attendant circumstances." Romans (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament), Thomas Schreiner, pg. 439-440

Biblical verses to meditate on and memorize for the month of December:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4