

**Chapter 1 : Glory: The Future of the Believers (booklet)**

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Why are there germs that make us sick? Why are there floods and earthquakes and hurricanes and tornadoes? Why are there famines where people starve to death? Why did Grandma get sick and die? Why do people do bad things to hurt each other? Some become agnostics or atheists because they cannot come up with satisfactory answers to the question of how a loving, all-powerful God can allow the terrible suffering that is in the world. Philosophers, theologians, pastors, and others have written scores of books on the subject. Some of these books are helpful, while some are heretical. Job, the oldest book on the Bible, is devoted to this problem. And in our text, Paul gives part of the biblical perspective that we need to persevere through the suffering that we surely will encounter. Would you like pie with that or no pie? We all are going to die unless Jesus returns in our lifetimes. Paul deals with that mistaken view in his defense of the resurrection 1 Corinthians 15, where he says that if the dead are not raised, then eat and drink, because tomorrow you may die. But if Jesus was raised, then the dead will be raised. In our text, Paul wants us to understand two certainties and a practical conclusion that flows from them: Second, the future will be marked by glory for believers as God fulfills all His promises to us. The practical conclusion is, if we keep our eyes on the future promised glory, then we can endure present sufferings with perseverance and hope. He was not referring to an especially difficult period in history, but to the entire present age. The whole history of creation since the fall is marked by suffering. The history of nations is marked by struggles and catastrophes—wars, natural disasters, internal conflicts, power struggles, and crimes. The history of individuals is also in large part a history of trials—the trials of growing up, figuring out what to do with your life, whom you will marry, rearing children, working through struggles in your marriage, providing for your needs, growing old and facing declining health and death. Why do we suffer? How should we as Christians think about these difficult matters? For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you. In either the millennial kingdom or in the new heavens and new earth depending on your view of prophecy, Isaiah And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah pictures in poetic language a vision of a restored creation, where there will not be any violence or death. In another stunning scene filmed at night, a group of lions bring down an elephant for their next meal. Such movies portray this as the natural order of the world, in which the fittest survive by preying on the weaker species. But the Bible teaches that this is not natural. Death was not a part of the original creation, which God pronounced as good. And in the future, when believers receive the full redemption that has been promised in Christ, all of creation will be restored at least to its original state, if not to an even greater level of glory. Two observations before we move on: First, this text assumes that God is the creator of all that is. It did not evolve by chance or random mutations over billions of years. Right out of the starting gate the Bible presents God as the creator Gen. It hits you before you can duck with the fact that God miraculously created all that is by the word of His power. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The fact of creation should make you bow in wonder and worship before Him see, also, John 1: Second, even though the creation is fallen, it still bears witness to the majesty and glory of the Creator. The Milky Way stretches across the sky. The constellations beam their light from trillions of miles away. Sometimes with binoculars, I have located Andromeda galaxy, 2. It makes you feel properly small and God properly big! Standing on the rim and gazing at the vastness of that great geologic

wonder always takes your breath away. Every evening a large group of visitors gathers on the patio of the North Rim Lodge to watch the spectacle in the sky. The sunsets are gorgeous and we watched lightning from the thunderstorms across the canyon. But, sadly, I would guess that very few of those watching this spectacular show even gave a passing thought toward the greatness and glory of the Creator! But those of us who know Him should revel in His creation. If the fallen creation is this beautiful, just think how spectacular the new heavens and earth will be! It is presently enslaved to corruption and death. This needs to be stated because, as I mentioned in our last study, there is a pervasive false teaching that God wants every Christian to be healthy and wealthy. They all succumb to disease and death at about the same age as the rest of us. Do not follow their teaching! Paul himself suffered terribly. Our Lord Himself was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief Isa. He came to this world of suffering to bear our sins through His own suffering and death. So why should we think that somehow we will be exempt from suffering? In the sovereign purposes of God, some suffer more and some suffer less. But none are exempt. This leads to a third observation: We need to think biblically about suffering so that we will grow through it rather than be destroyed by it. Peter indicates that it is especially in a time of trials that the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. But we must resist him by being firm in our faith and by understanding the biblical perspective on trials 1 Pet. In 1 Thessalonians 4: The Bible gives us far more perspective on suffering than I can comment on briefly here. As you read it, ask God to instill His wisdom in your heart for how to handle suffering. But here in our text, Paul wants us to think about four things: First, our present sufferings are relatively short compared to our eternal sharing in the glory of God. He expresses the same thought in 2 Corinthians 4: For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. A third thing to think about to endure present, temporary suffering for future glory is that our future glory with God is absolutely certain. God has promised it and He cannot lie. Christ promised to return in power and glory to bring final redemption to His people and to judge His enemies. Either He was mistaken or it is our certain future. And in the rest of the chapter Paul unfolds a fourth reason that we need to think biblically about suffering, namely, that God is using it to conform us to the image of Christ. Not even torture or martyrdom can separate us from His great love 8: There is a fourth observation from our text: The fact of suffering does not undermine the fact that God has a plan and that He will accomplish His plan. The argument is especially emotional when we consider little children suffering physical or sexual abuse or the horrible effects of war or natural disasters. As we saw in chapter 5, when Adam sinned, the whole human race sinned in him. And the preciousness of redemption and hope. But the fact of terrible suffering does not undermine the fact that God has a plan and that He will accomplish His plan. He also uses the analogy of birth pains 8: The outcome of birth pains is the hope of new life. And even so, God is moving history toward a goal that includes our future glory: The future will be marked by glory for believers as God fulfills all that He has promised us. Note four things about this glory: The future glory is not totally revealed to us yet, but it includes the revealing of all that God has promised for us. The future glory includes the full renewal of creation to its original perfection and purpose. The new heavens and earth will probably be even more glorious than the Garden of Eden was. The future glory includes our freedom from sin and its corruption, including the full redemption of our bodies. The future glory is guaranteed by our present possession of the Holy Spirit, the first fruits of our redemption. The indwelling Holy Spirit gives us a taste of what it will be like to be holy, as Jesus is holy. But the Holy Spirit is the promise that God will not abandon us to our sin.

**Chapter 2 : The Eternal Glory Promised to Every Member of His Body - Part 1**

*The Believer's Future Glory. Home / Sermons / The Believer's Future Glory. Sermons Topics.*

For it is a glory which far exceeds the earthly kingdom, with its thousand years of righteousness reigning, and Satan shut up, and creation rejoicing after its long thralldom of vanity and groan. The God of all grace, who has called saints to His everlasting glory in Christ Jesus, is the best security against all that creature can or cannot do meanwhile; and the more, because as Father He carries on a constant, watchful, and righteous government of His children all through the wilderness chap. As a consequence, the future also is absolutely clear: Grant The Numerical Bible, Vol. VI, Acts to 2 Corinthians, p. The believer is not put under law, you will observe, but under grace, which is the precise reverse of law. The soul is brought into peace with God, as it finds its standing in the grace of God, and, more than that, rejoices in hope of the glory of God. Such is the doctrine and the fact. It is not merely a call then; but as we have by our Lord Jesus Christ our access into the favour wherein we stand, so there is positive boasting in the hope of the glory of God. But they do not. They come to us faithwise, and they rest on Christ through whom alone they are our portion. They are secured through Him who died for our sins and is raised out of the dead. Can He lose the blessings He has thus won? No more can we for whom He won them. Hence we can exultingly look on the future. He will have us to be with and as Christ in His own glory. With us who believe He deals as to past, present, and future, according to what our Lord Jesus deserves and His eternal redemption. May we boast of it and Him! When He comes thus in judgment upon the world the true Church is no longer on earth, but the saints, having been previously caught up to meet Him in the air, come with Him in glory. It is the time of the manifestation of the sons of God, transformed into His image, each reflecting His glory, who is the leader and the first begotten. And so these poor, persecuted, despised Thessalonians would then be the marvels for the inhabitants of the earth when they appear with Him. Blessed future for all the redeemed to come with the Lord in glory and to be like Him! Here He will have come to be glorified in them, and to be marvelled at in all those [same ones] that believed. It is an evidently different and subsequent part of His advent: The world will then know thereby that the Father sent the Son and loved the saints, appearing with Him in glory, even as He loved Him. The translation of His saints to heaven is one thing; quite another and subsequent is their appearing with Him in glory and judgment of the world. He is glorified in them. Brethren, beloved of the Lord, this is what believers are. Chosen we are to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. And glory is before all [and outer darkness before none! Now we are told of the simple blessedness of those who cleave to the grace of our Lord in the gospel, and its effect upon the heart of those who wrought in the work, and were sharers in the blessing. Hence on the one hand the unspeakable guilt of rejecting, and above all of apostatizing from it; as on the other hand the blessedness and security of those who enter in by faith. Doubts and fears are not of faith any more than the presumption founded upon our own estimate of ourselves, the natural effect of law acting upon the human mind for despair or false confidence. Christ and His work of redemption alone give a true foundation before God, and as the foundation is immutable, so with faith there need be hesitation neither in the channels nor in the objects of this grace, as we see here. He chose them from the beginning unto salvation. This He effectuated in time for the saints in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, not by a law curbing the lusts and passions of a fleshly people under the elements of the world. And then the end, how high and holy as well as excellent! How worthy of God and suitable for His children! Speculative men wonder and judge after their puny way that the apostle should call the saints to steadfast adherence in ways and words to the truth [v. The mere mind of man regards this as logical inconsistency, conscious or not: Is not all sure and settled on divine grounds? But it is the elect, the consciously blessed and happy children of God, whom scripture everywhere urges to vigilance and prayer, to reading the word of God and all other means of spiritual wellbeing; never do we find such calls to the unbelieving and the fearful. Those who owe all, and who own that all is due, to sovereign grace, are the very persons to show diligence in their responsible services day by day. And how can this be known save by the revelation of His mind? To faith alone all is plain and sure. The reasoning that sets His grace at issue with our responsibility is seen at once to be of Satan. Subject to the word

we believe both, go forward in peace, but acknowledge the need of all He lays on us.

*The Believer's Present and Future Glory Introduction -We were created in the image of God to reflect the Glory of God but that image was distorted by sin, an image now renewed through God's salvation.*

Future Glory, Present Sufferings 8: When our true status is finally and fully revealed, it will have cataclysmic implications for the entire creation and ecosystem. Paul is talking about our resurrection when he refers to "the redemption of our bodies" 8: We share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. In contrasting his ministry to that of so-called apostles, he recounts his life to his Corinthian readers: Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Recently I have been reading the story of Christianity in China. How do we cope? How did Paul cope? We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. We are to look ahead. But suffering is not unique to us. All human beings endure some kind of suffering -- alienation from one another, pain, poverty, famine, war, sickness, and death. Global warming is just one of the sufferings of our world. The Fallen Creation You know the story. God created the world and all that was in it -- including humankind -- good. But the perfect world that God had created fell and changed when Adam and Eve sinned. Genesis just hints at this cataclysmic change, this curse upon the earth and all creation: Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return. Later in the Old Testament, the sins of the inhabitants affect the land itself Isaiah Before the Fall, the world God created was apparently one where man and beast were vegetarians Genesis 1: When you eat of it you will surely die" Genesis 2: Apparently death and decay also came to the rest of creation, beginning with the animals from which God made skins to cover Adam and Eve Genesis 3: I wish we knew more about the Fall of Man, but the scripture only hints at it. Much of our theologizing about it is little more than speculation based on limited scriptural evidence, too few data points from which to draw a conclusion. However, the passage we are studying today is one of the most important passages in scripture that sheds some light on the Fall. Frustration, Bondage, Groaning, and Travail 8: In our passage there is "a triple sighing of creation, Christians, and the Spirit. Creation, in deep agony, groans in deep travail waiting to be delivered by the birth of a new era. Why do we suffer? Why does all creation seem to be suffering? What will signal the end of that downward cycle of suffering, decay, and death? Is there anything good to look forward to in this present life?

### Chapter 4 : What does it mean that Christ in us is the hope of glory?

*Second, the future will be marked by glory for believers as God fulfills all His promises to us. The practical conclusion is, if we keep our eyes on the future promised glory, then we can endure present sufferings with perseverance and hope.*

On Monday I was asked to call one of the parents whose daughter did not come out last week to let them know that the season started. During that conversation I realized I knew her grandmother. She was bearing the family likeness. We were originally created to reflect the Glory of God in motive, attitude and actions as we carried out His mandate to rule creation on His behalf. I rejoice this morning as I stand before this Communion Table because this Table testifies that through the death of Christ my sins have been forgiven, and I have been given a new nature in Christ, and I am empowered by His Holy Spirit to once again reflect the Glory of God in this world. That is your testimony today as well if you truly belong to God in Christ. I also rejoice that God has given those who belong to Him the great promise and hope of one day seeing His Glory and even more the promise of sharing in His Glory. I want you to know this morning that as a Christian you have a great hope before you. As Paul says in Colossians 1. For me there is no greater motivation for obedience and perseverance in the Christian life than bringing Glory to God and the promise of seeing and sharing in His Glory. As believers we reflect the Glory of God to the physical and spiritual world. Our salvation from sin in Jesus Christ reflects the Glory of God. The fact that you are spiritually alive because of the work of God in Jesus Christ glorifies God for it is God who saved you. The very fact that you are saved glorifies God. The disciples glorified Jesus and Jesus glorified the Father so that God was glorified in the disciples. God is glorified in His people. My fellow believers, it is your honor and humble privilege to glorify God in your salvation. Not only do we reflect the Glory of God as believers but we will also see the Glory of God and will live in the presence of the Glory of God forever. Be encouraged by that truth as you think about it each day. Rejoice in the hope of the Glory of God. Today we reflect the Glory of God, and in the future we will be in the very presence of the Glory of God. But the Bible tells us of something even greater than this. You are destined for glory if you truly belong to God. Your glorification is as sure as the call of God on your life. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. Physical suffering and pain, no job, depression that beats you down, relationship problems, lack of purpose, bills and more bills with no money to pay them, a sinful addiction? Paul says, compare what you are going through now to the glory that awaits you very soon and get a right perspective on your present sufferings. Find in your future hope of glory the strength to go on today and tomorrow because an eternal weight of glory awaits you that is beyond all comparison. Go on for another minute, another hour, another day and one day you will be there in the presence of the Glory of God and in your glorified body. Learn to look more and more at those unseen eternal things for the things of this world are passing away. Trust and obey with that prize in view.

### Chapter 5 : Glory! – The Future of the Believers (CD)

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