

Pacesetters Devotional Romans 8:18-23

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ 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. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

The apostle Paul experienced tremendous sufferings as a servant of Jesus: persecutions, the hardships of travel in the ancient world, ministry disappointments – the list goes on and on. In addition, he also lived with a “thorn in the flesh” – some kind of chronic and very painful physical malady (2 Corinthians 12). Yet he says at the beginning of this passage that his sufferings “are not worthy to be compared with” the magnificent beauty that will be revealed to him when Jesus returns.

What did Paul know about the next age that made his present sufferings seem minor by comparison (8:18), and that filled him with eager anticipation (8:24,25)? For most Christians, the next life is vague and abstract – mostly or completely unlike this life. Such a vague abstraction has little or no power to ignite in us the victorious hope that characterized Paul.



But Paul knew that there is a central continuity between this life and the next life: *Those who belong to Jesus will have physical bodies with which to enjoy a material world.* This is the central truth of this passage, and it is a truth that can fill us with hope as it filled Paul.

According to the Bible, creation's destiny has always been bound to the human condition. It would flourish under human stewardship as long as humans flourished under God's loving rulership (Genesis 2). But ever since the first humans rebelled against God, His creation has suffered because it cannot now be what it was designed to be (Genesis 3). Since humans are now fallen and broken by our rebellion against God, creation is also broken, groaning under the weight of human sin. It is "subjected to futility" (8:20) and "enslaved to corruption" (8:21). It groans like a mother in child-birth, longing for the day when God's children receive their new bodies (8:22,23). But when Jesus returns, He will give those who belong to Him new, resurrected, physical bodies (Philippians 3:20,21). And then the rest of His creation, under our obedient stewardship, will become what it was intended to be – beautiful and magnificent and bountiful and enjoyable beyond our wildest imagination.

For Christians, this hope is not wishful thinking – "pie in the sky, by and by." We can look back on Jesus' bodily resurrection as a historical preview of what will happen to our bodies when He returns (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). And when we notice the Holy Spirit's transformation of our characters, we can realize that this is a preview and guarantee of what He will one day do with our bodies and with the whole created order (8:23).

We understand what it is like to enjoy a material creation with physical bodies because we experience it every day. We enjoy a tasty meal, a loving hug, a beautiful sunset, the scent of spring flowers or fall leaves, the sound of birds singing, the warmth of the sun, and the caress of a cool breeze. We praise God with awe and wonder when we see a mountain range or the ocean or the night sky. What if our bodies will



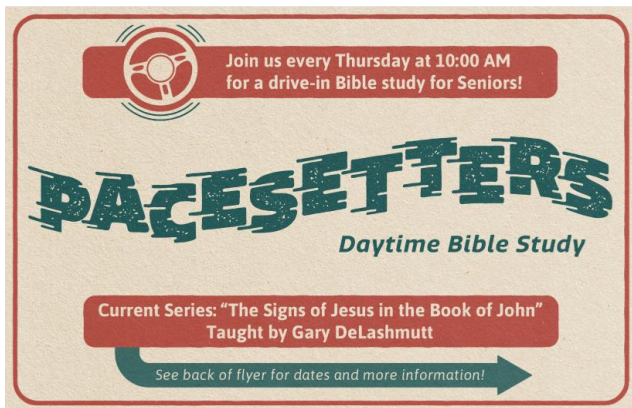
one day have not only perfect health, but also even greater ability to sense and enjoy God’s creation? What if God’s creation will one day not only be cleansed of all human pollution and exploitation, but will be even more gloriously beautiful than it is now? What if all that we love about God’s creation now will be accessible to us then – but even more awesome and enjoyable?

Then, as C. S. Lewis says, “The new earth and sky, the same yet not the same as these, will rise in us as we have risen in Christ. And once again . . . the birds will sing and the waters flow, and lights and shadows move across the hills, and the faces of our friends laugh upon us with amazed recognition.”¹ Since this is our future, we can agree with Paul: “For this hope we have been saved . . . (and) with perseverance we wait eagerly for it” (8:24,25).

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for being our great Savior and Healer. Thank You for coming to die on the cross to forgive the guilt of our sins. Thank You for sending Your Spirit to transform our hearts and heal so much of our brokenness. Thank You that You will return to give us new bodies with which to enjoy Your new heavens and earth. Open our minds and hearts to the reality of this glorious future which You have promised us. Ignite within us the hope that overshadows our present suffering, that we may serve You faithfully and joyfully until that day.

¹ C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcom, Chiefly on Prayer* (Harcourt Brace & Company, 1992), p. 124

**Come hear Gary in person at our Pacesetters Drive-in Bible Study!
10AM Thursdays at Dwell Main Campus**

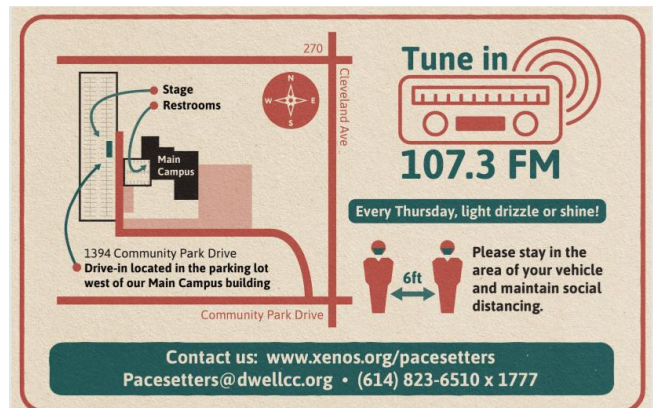


Join us every Thursday at 10:00 AM for a drive-in Bible study for Seniors!

PACESETTERS
Daytime Bible Study

Current Series: "The Signs of Jesus in the Book of John"
Taught by Gary DeLashmutt

See back of flyer for dates and more information!



Tune in
107.3 FM

Every Thursday, light drizzle or shine!

Please stay in the area of your vehicle and maintain social distancing.

6ft

Contact us: www.xenos.org/pacesetters
Pacesetters@dwellcc.org • (614) 823-6510 x 1777

1394 Community Park Drive
Drive-in located in the parking lot west of our Main Campus building

Stage
Restrooms
Main Campus

270 Cleveland Ave