

Promises Fulfilled

ADVENT AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Romans 8:18-25

December 17, 2023

BELONG

Get to Know One Another

In what area of your life are you struggling to demonstrate patience? How does your impatience normally show itself? *[Anger? Annoyance? Sarcasm? Judgment? Discontentment?]*

BELIEVE

Read this Week's Scripture

I don't know about you, but I am not good at waiting. Honestly, I do whatever I can to avoid it. When we are at the store, we'll choose the self-checkout almost every time. IF, we have to choose a checkout line – we will carefully look at each line in an attempt to predict which one will be the fastest. I've even been known to speed up and drive through a traffic light [I call it an "orange" light] so that I don't have to stop for the red. But, no matter how much I try to avoid it, waiting is unavoidable. Christians are a people living in advent—an in-between time, a time of waiting. You and I live in the tension between the now [sufferings of life] and the not yet [final glory through Christ]. The time between Christ's first arrival [as a baby] and His second coming [His final glory].

Today, we'll explore **Romans 8:18-25**. In these verses, Paul explains the way the world is right now - the present sufferings of life [death, sickness, disease...natural disasters]. To be honest, these are these are the same things we read about when we open up our news/ social media feed on any given day. In the midst of these challenges and sufferings, Paul encourages patience and perseverance. Paul is telling us to look up...***there is a promise of great joy*** through God's plan for redemption.

Question 1: Consider the role of patience in the Christian life. How can we grow in our patience as we await the return of Jesus?

BUILD

Engage and Apply the Scripture

Have someone in your group read **Romans 8:18-21**.

*Passages such as **Romans 8:18** show us that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us in the future. As Christians, we believe in God's promises, His mercy, and His ultimate plan for redemption provides a perspective that sees current struggles as temporary and minor in light of the greater spiritual reality. Suffering is very much like tempering steel. [See last section: "How to Temper Steel."]*

Wrestle with this Quote: *"The sovereign and utterly good God created a good universe. We human beings rebelled; rebellion is now so much a part of our make-up that we are all enmeshed in it. Every scrap of suffering we face turns on this fact... There is a certain kind of maturity that can be attained only through the discipline of suffering... The staying power of our faith is neither demonstrated nor developed until it is tested by suffering."* - DA Carson

Question 2: [Romans 8:17-18](#) shares that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. Why is suffering to be expected?

- How does this *[expected suffering]* compare with the expectations of most Christians today?
- Think for a moment - what Scripture can you think of which supports this understanding the suffering will happen but pales in comparison to future glory? [[John 16:33](#); [James 1:2-4](#); [1 Peter 3:13-17](#)]

Question 3: Who **subjected** creation? Why? [[Does Genesis 3:14-19 help?](#)]

- What does it mean that creation is subjected to **futility** [[pointlessness or uselessness](#)]?

Question 4: How does Paul describe “hope” in this passage?

- How does our redemption [[being saved from sin](#)] relate to the liberation [[set free from bondage](#)] of creation [[vs. 21](#)], and what does this connection teach us about sin?

Have someone in your group read [Romans 8:22-25](#)

All of creation has been waiting a long time - patiently waiting in the time period of “right now” and the “not yet” [Christ’s 2nd coming]. Although the power of sin has been broken, its presence persists and will continue to challenge us until the “redemption of our bodies” [Romans 8:23]. Paul uses the imagery of childbirth to communicate [[only women truly know this kind of patience](#)] the complete removal of the curse’s effects.

Question 5: In [verse 22](#), what do you think Paul uses the imagery of childbirth? [[women - is childbirth a pleasant experience? Is there typically great joy when the experience is complete?](#)]

Our Advent reading this morning was from [Luke 2:8-20](#). This was another account of childbirth and the announcement of that Child’s birth. Up to this point, Israel had not heard from God [through His prophets] in several hundred years. **We have been waiting for over 2,000 years.**

Question 6: Why is Christ’s 2nd coming essential for our hope and patient endurance?

- Do you think the news of Jesus’ birth felt like a burden or joy to the shepherds?
- Since we [[the church](#)] have been patiently waiting for over 2000 years, do you think sharing the gospel feels more like a burden or joy? What can we see it as a joyful calling?

BEGIN

Response and Prayer

What is one hope you have for yourself, your family, or your community as you begin the Advent season? How will you make it a reality?

Pray for yourself and for those around you, asking God to open your eyes and heart to what He has for you this Advent season.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blue Letter Bible: [Romans 8](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.



Precept Austin: [Romans 8](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.



HOW TO TEMPER STEEL

Step 1 - First you need to understand why steel needs to be tempered. To understand that you must understand the process before tempering, hardening. First metal is worked into the shape of what it is to become. For this article let's use a flat head crew driver as an example.

After the metal is shaped into a flat head screwdriver it needs to be hardened. To harden the metal, it is heated till its orange hot. Then the metal is quenched in clean water.

The super heating and rapid cooling make the metal very hard. However, it also makes the metal very brittle. Sometimes you want the metal hard. In our case a brittle flat head crew driver would be a bad thing. As soon as you applied to much pressure to the flat tip it would crack breaking the tip. This is where tempering is needed.

Step 2 - After hardening the flat head screwdriver, we have made it very hard and brittle. Now we must temper the point. To do this slowly heat up the tip of the screwdriver. A blue line of heat will appear on the metal as the temperature rises and travels down the shaft of the screwdriver. When you see this, you have reached the correct temperature for tempering. Place the shaft on a metal surface and allow it to cool slowly. After its cool your screwdriver is tempered.

Step 3 - The tempering process has taken most of the brittleness from the steel. Allowing you to turn a screw and not have the tip crack and shatter.