

When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

The hymnwriter Fanny Crosby gave us more than 6,000 gospel songs. One of Miss Crosby's hymns was so personal that for years she kept it to herself. One day at a Bible conference in Northfield, Massachusetts, Miss Crosby was asked by D. L. Moody to give a personal testimony. At first she hesitated, then quietly rose and said, 'There is one hymn I have written which has never been published. I call it my soul's poem. Sometimes when I am troubled, I repeat it to myself, for it brings comfort to my heart.' She then recited while many wept,

*Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, oh, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King!*

*And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace.*

At the age of 95, Fanny Crosby passed into glory and saw the face of Jesus. That's the sure hope of every child of God!

*What must it be like to step on shore, and find it—heaven;
To take hold of a hand, and find it—God's;
To breathe a new air, and find it—celestial;
To feel invigorated, and find it—immortality;
To rise from the care, the loneliness, and turmoil of earth into one unbroken calm;
To wake up and find it—glory?*

CONCLUSION

Rom 8:18 ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

OUR HOPE IS NOT IN VAIN Romans 8:18-25

INTRODUCTION

Our hope is not in vain.

A dog fell into a farmer's well. After assessing the situation, the farmer decided that neither the dog nor the well was worth the bother of saving. He'd bury the old dog in the well and put him out of his misery. When the farmer began shoveling dirt down the well, initially the old dog was hysterical. But as the dirt hit his back, the dog realized every time dirt landed on his back, he could shake it off and step up. "Shake it off and step up; shake it off and step up!" he repeated to himself. No matter how painful the blows were, the old dog kept shaking the dirt off and stepping up. It wasn't long before the dog, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well. What seemed as though it would bury him actually benefited him — all because of the way he handled his adversity. The adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them the potential to bless us. Forgiveness, faith, prayer, praise, and hope are some of the biblical ways to shake it off and step up out of the wells in which we find ourselves.

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THE PRESENT TROUBLE

The apostle Paul has been talking about how wonderful it is to belong to Christ. We are led by the Holy Spirit, we are God's children, who know God as Father and can address him as such in the most intimate terms. **Abba** is the word used by a little child – Daddy! With so much going for you, why would anyone not want to be a Christian? But following Christ does not mean we are free from trouble. In all these positive benefits of being a Christian, Paul says we also need to *suffer* with Christ.

The highest joy to the Christian almost always comes through suffering. No flower can bloom in paradise which is not transplanted from Gethsemane. (Ian MacLaren)

All the saints have had their troubles. Joseph experienced being sold as a slave, falsely accused of a crime he did not commit, imprisoned and forgotten by a man he had helped, leaving him in prison for years. Job lost everything he had. Even his wife said he should **curse God and die**. For the first Christians, persecution was an ever recurring threat. Paul can give lists of troubles he had endured. These included hunger, thirst, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, sleeplessness, cold, exposure.

These are not just the experiences of long ago.

A clergyman was stabbed to death at his vicarage. The Rev John Suddards, 59, was found with multiple wounds in Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, England. A senior clergyman said the murder should act as a warning - that when clergy open their churches and homes to people, they become "vulnerable". "Sadly, this event highlights the vulnerable nature of parish ministry in some of our communities today. Many clergy on a daily basis open their homes and their churches to people and clearly that can put them in a vulnerable situation."

Here in USA a directive issued this month states that all women, even if they are employed by a Catholic organization or charity, will have free access to contraceptives, in direct violation of the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Christians, especially young people, are ridiculed for taking a stand on moral and spiritual issues. Church-going has been relegated to a leisure activity. This is in countries where Christianity influenced the laws, traditions and way of life. There are still many places today where to be a Christian is to put your life in danger. The Christian life can be full of troubles.

Paul is not just talking about humanity. It is humanity within the whole of creation. We live in a world that has gone disastrously wrong. We have chosen to live in ways that can bring terrible consequences upon us. These ways have contaminated the whole of the creation. Paul says, **the whole creation has been groaning together**. All creation is futile and frustrated as a result of the fall. Earthquakes, floods, storms, volcanic eruptions are natural occurrences. But they are the occurrences of *fallen* nature. Nature is "red in tooth and claw". In a sense the state of nature is worse than the state of man. Man sinned deliberately, but nature involuntarily because of man. God said: **cursed is the ground because of you**. For man and nature there is the trouble of futility and frustration. All this is in spite of the faith we hold.

THE CONTINUING HOPE

Despite all the troubles, we have a hope that things can be better and will be better. We must cling to our hope. We have the promises. God keeps his promises. We can rely on them, and we can go on hoping. Remember, we are God's adopted children.

Rom 8:15 ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

The difference is not that we are like freed slaves – freedmen – but that we are adopted sons. **You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons**. So why is Paul now saying that we are eagerly awaiting our

adoption of sons? Christians live with the tension of the *already* and *not yet*. Paul uses two phrases:

The firstfruits of the Spirit (the first of God's gifts – GNB)

When we became Christians the Holy Spirit came into our lives. The Holy Spirit is God just as much as the Father and the Son. Yet he is often referred to as the **firstfruits**. In OT the firstfruits were the first of the crops at harvest-time and were given to God. The farmer could give the first fruits because he saw them as a guarantee of the full harvest. So, for us, the Holy Spirit in our lives is the guarantee that there is yet more that we shall one day experience.

The redemption of our bodies (set our whole being free – GNB)

Rom 8:23 ...we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Adoption has already occurred in a legal sense. An adopted child is legally the child of the parents who adopted him. As such the child enjoys the privileges of being his parents' child. The same is true for us as God's adopted children. Because the Holy Spirit is also the guarantee of more to come, so there is still the fullness of our adoption for which we eagerly wait. That fullness is **the redemption of our bodies**. Because of what Christ has done – dying for us, conquering death through his being raised – we have eternal life. Yet, one day we shall die. The not yet, that for which we wait, that for which we hope, is the greater privilege of receiving perfect resurrection bodies.

THE FUTURE GLORY

Hope is not something anticipated in a vague or fearful way. We say, *I hope is doesn't rain*. Hope in NT is the expectation of something good. Our hope is for GLORY!

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We may have to face troubles but beyond the trouble is glory. We know that beyond the cross there was resurrection and ascension. We are promised that we shall have troubles to face, because Jesus did. Jesus said that what they did to him they will do to us. Beyond the trouble there is glory – we are promised that.

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.
O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;