LIFE IN THE SPIRIT MAKES US ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND ENDURE SUFFERING

1. (Romans 8:18) Paul’s analysis of the present suffering and our future glory: they cannot be compared to each other.
   a. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared: Paul was not ignorant or blind to the sufferings of human existence; he experienced more of them than most any of us today. Yet he still considered that the future glory far outweighed the present sufferings.
   b. The glory which shall be revealed in us: Without a heavenly hope, Paul considered the Christian life foolish and tragic (1 Corinthians 15:19). Yet in light of eternity it is the wisest and best choice anyone can make.
   c. Revealed in us: This coming glory will not only be revealed to us, but it will actually be revealed in us.

2. (Romans 8:19-22) All of creation is awaiting and anticipating this coming glory.
   a. The earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits: Paul considers that creation itself is eagerly awaiting the revealing of the sons of God.
   b. Him who subjected it in hope: Only God could subject creation in hope. This was not ultimately the work of either man or Satan.
   c. The glorious liberty of the children of God: This benefits not only the children of God themselves, but also all of creation. Until that day, creation groans and labors with birth pangs.
   d. The revealing of the sons of God: Certain groups with a “super-Christian” mentality take the idea of the revealing of the sons of God to say that all creation is waiting for their particular group of super-spiritual Christians to be revealed in an incredibly powerful fashion. This is a purely egotistical fantasy.
   e. The whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now: “Creation is not undergoing death pangs… but birth pangs.” (Morris)

3. (Romans 8: 23-25) We also groan and wait with perseverance for the coming glory.
   a. Who has the firstfruits of the Spirit: This means we have a taste of the glory to come. Can we be faulted if we long for the fulfillment of what we have received in the firstfruits?
   b. Eagerly waiting for the adoption: We are waiting for our adoption. Although there is a sense in which we are already adopted (Romans 8:15), there is also a sense in which we wait for the consummation of our adoption which will happen at the redemption of our body.
   c. We eagerly wait for it with perseverance: The fulfillment of our redemption is something still distant, yet we hope for it in faith and perseverance, trusting that God is faithful to His word and the promised glory will be a reality.