

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, February 18, 2024

**Reminiscing About the Future
Week 3 in the series “Engaged”
A Study of Romans 8:18-27**

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When you don't get good service at a restaurant, do you complain to the server? Ask for the manager? Write a bad Yelp review? Or do you just keep your complaints to yourself and the others at your table?

Today is "Week 3" in our study through Romans 8. In today's study, we'll look at the subject of *discontent*. Have you ever met someone who didn't think it was ever right for Christians to express discontent with life?

There's a big gap between the way life *is* and the way life *will be* at Christ's return. Because of that gap, **creation** groans, **we** groan, and **the Spirit** groans. That's what we discover from Romans 8:18-27.

Creation Groans

Read Romans 8:18-22.

Define the word "personify." Look it up if you need to.

Identify the words and phrases in these verses that *personify* nature. (Example: "creation **waits**." Now name a few more.)

Read Jeremiah 4:28, Isaiah 55:12 and Psalm 98:8. How do these verses compare to the personification of nature in Romans 8:18-22?

According to Romans 8:19, creation is waiting for "the children of God to be revealed." What does this mean? Why is creation so "eager" for this: In other words, is there an advantage that creation itself will enjoy when this happens?

Read Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, and Revelation 21:1. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ In addition to the new heaven(s), what else is promised?
- ❖ Is Romans 8:18-22 about the new heaven(s) or the new earth? (Count how many times the words "heaven" and the word "earth" appear.)
- ❖ Why is the renewal of this **earth** part of the future?

We Groan

Read Romans 8:23-25.

What does the word “firstfruits” mean in verse 23?

Pastor Tom said it’s not that we groan *in spite of* the presence of the Spirit, but we groan *because of* his presence! Why?

Some people might think that there’s no place for groaning in the victorious Christian life. But in what way can groaning actually express faith and praise?

In Romans 8:23-25, there are two ways to wait. Identify the adverb in verse 23 (“we wait _____ly”) and the adverb in verse 25 (“we wait for it _____ly”). How are these two adverbs similar? How are they different?

According to Romans 8, there is a kind of groaning that shows we’re waiting eagerly and patiently for God. But some of us groan and complain in a way that does *not* lead to eager and patient waiting. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ What’s the difference between these two kinds of sighing?
- ❖ How can we help each other move from the wrong kind of sighing to the right kind?

The Spirit Groans

Read Romans 8:26-27.

Describe a situation where you were at a loss for how to pray. The title of this four-week sermon series is “Engaged.” According to these two verses, how is the Spirit *engaged* with us when we don’t know how to pray?

Some Bible scholars say that the “wordless groans” in verse 26 are **ours**. In other words, the Spirit intercedes as we lift up our wordless groans, unable to pray articulate sentences. Other Bible scholars say that the “wordless groans” in verse 26 are **the Spirit’s**. In other words, the Spirit intercedes by lifting up wordless groans on our behalf to the Father. Pastor Tom said he believes the second way is the better way to understand this verse. What do you think?

Read John 11:33 and 11:38. After listening to someone read those two verses in a modern translation, have someone read it in the King James Version. Use a mobile app if no one has a book edition. Can these verses help us identify who’s doing the groaning in Romans 8:23?

Why did Jesus groan at the graveside of his best friend in John 11? Why does the Spirit groan along with our groans when we face spiritual and physical brokenness?

How does it make you feel to know that God grieves *with* you?

Read Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:34. How do those verses compare to the work of the Spirit in Romans 8:27?

What do you think the Spirit of Christ is praying for **you** right now?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests