

What then?

A short Devotional on Romans 8: 37, 23

John R Gavazzoni

The following, slightly edited, is the body of an e-mail sent by John to a dear brother in Christ sometime after a most intense, open, heart-connecting time of fellowship together. It very briefly attempts to get to the heart of, and very briefly summarize, what was at the core of their exchange:

It occurs to me that a primary element of our discussion there in the lobby of the motel, was very representative of something that I've become more keenly aware of lately. That is; Paul could magnificently, as it were, stand on the mountain peak of victory-revelation and proclaim that "...in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us," (Rom 8: 37 NAS) while yet acknowledging that "we ALSO (the children of God ---obviously including himself)---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. Rom 8: 23" (Emphasis and amplification, mine.)

So what is it then? The cry of victory or groanings too deep for words?

We must face the fact that the apostle proclaims an accomplished victory in Christ, and also insightfully observes the children of God groaning for deliverance WITH all creation AND with the Spirit. Obviously Paul did not consider his position to be mutually contradictory, though some today might call it an example of double-mindedness.

I want to tell my brethren that the cry of victory, fully grounded in Truth; that cry that wells up from Christ in them AND the groaning for deliverance, BOTH TOGETHER combine as the Spirit's dynamic that leads us further and further into the glory that is ours in Christ.

It is BECAUSE of the accomplished victory of Christ that we groan, NOT in contraction to it, for were it not for His victory on our behalf,

we would cease to groan and simply yield to the inevitability of despair.

Hope and groaning go together, and they will co-work until the absolute consummation of God's glorious purpose in ALL the earth. We groan because it is absolutely imperative that all earthiness shall share in the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. In Christ we, and with us, all creation, have been liberated from our bondage to decay, and now Christ in us presses upon us, from within us with that accomplished victory making us intolerant of any existential contradiction, so we groan in travail until no vestige of the lie any longer is able to stand challenging the Reality of liberty.

There is an underlying thread in much teaching today that seeks to instruct believers in how to live, as it were, above the groaning, forgetting that while we have been raised together in Christ above all the heavens, we are at the same time---yes, yes, it is true--- "in the world." The victory that is ours in Christ as we sit with Him in heavenly places, quite paradoxically is birthed into the world by the Spirit's, and by creation's, and by our groaning travail.

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