

All Creation Groans.

Pastor Michael Kooy

Easter season is a time when Christians remember and celebrate Jesus victory over death. This is also a time when we are more keenly aware that everything is not right with the world. Consider these things:

1. Jesus' resurrection brings hope to a weary world.

The main way to slow the spread of the coronavirus is shuttering everyone safely in their homes. But the side effect is that we may feel isolated and weary. We have no one to share our feelings. We get stuck in our lonely thoughts and fears. This response is taking place across the whole world; our country and all other countries are working to contain the virus. The whole creation is groaning.

But we have hope. We hope for something we don't yet have. We hope for a day when we can give a hug, when we can laugh and sing with deep breaths of air. We hope for a day when we can sit close and share stories with a friend over coffee. We hope for a world with no fear of sickness. It is a hope for something that is not seen. Yet.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the beginning of the new body and new world that God promised. Because he lives, by faith in him we too can live. One day, he will make everything new. Looking ahead in hope, we *consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us* (Romans 8:18). Meanwhile, our groans are carried to God by his Spirit who intercedes for us with God. Who helps us wait patiently.

2. Hope available by Faith in Jesus

Consider using the following self-guided meditation over the next few days.

Take a few moments to let your inner thoughts settle. Be still.

Reflect on these passages from Romans 8 (they are written out on the back):

Romans 8:14-17 God's child by faith in Jesus

Romans 8:22-26 Hope in Christ

Romans 8:31-35,36-39 Victory in Jesus

As you begin, ask God to speak to you through the Scripture. Read one passage slowly and focus on how through faith in Jesus we are God's child, and how Christ gives us hope in face of trials, and how nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus. Sit quietly for a minute and pray your thoughts to God.

Read the passage once more, resting in God's presence in Christ Jesus for you and with you.

Romans 8:14-17

¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:22-26

²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

Romans 8:31-5, 37-39

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.