

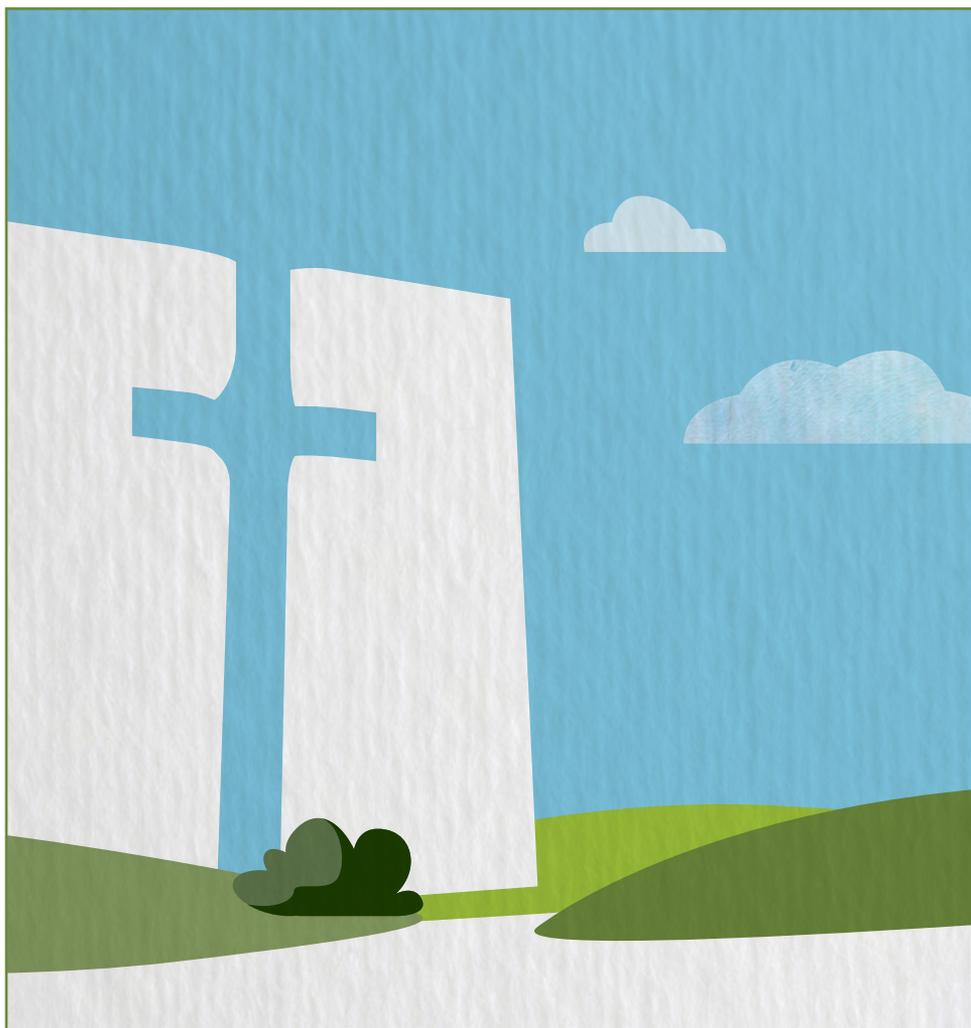
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

DEVO

APRIL 20 - 24, 2026



MONDAY

Read **Romans 8:18-21**; **1 Peter 1:3-9**; **1 John 3:1-3**

Paul's reference to "*the sufferings of this present time*" (Romans 8:18) prompts a question touched upon in last Thursday's devo: Why do we suffer and how can God permit it? At a global level, the evils we endure in fallen Creation trace to Adam and Eve's rebellion against God in Eden (Genesis 3). Such explanation, however, brings little comfort to one experiencing acute pain or loss.

In several Eastern religions, "gods" or the "divine state" ("*Nirvana*") are unmoved by earthly pain, death, etc. Note, however, that "the opposite of love is not hate; it's indifference." (Elie Wiesel) The true and living God is deeply concerned for humankind and present suffering, having created us for loving relationship with Him. God loves us so much that He came to earth on a mission of sacrifice and salvation as Jesus of Nazareth. Scripture indicates that even Jesus Himself was refined via suffering (Hebrews 2:10). So, strange as it may seem, there must be some divine, eternal usefulness in suffering.

"Imagine a world in which human beings suffered no pain, ... in which human experience is only pleasurable. ... There would be little or no sense of morality, of ... good and ... evil. There would be little sense that our [behavior has] consequences. There would be no ... [reasons] to help others, ... no courage or heroism, ... no reason for moral growth or improving one's soul. There would be no longing for moral excellence or for a better world. There would be little felt

reason to love and obey God. There would be no growth (or love) through suffering." (Stephen T. Davis)

Note Paul's expression at the end of the quote above: "*of this present time.*" As Romans 8:18-21 reinforces, present evils are temporary. Upon Jesus' 2nd Coming, He will reverse the curse, heal Creation, judge evil, and make all things new. This promise—along with grasping our present salvation in Christ, God's goodness, and believers' adoption into His eternal family—fuels hope and joy amidst present challenges.

Whom can you comfort amidst their present suffering? Do they know the Lord and the healing He alone offers?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is a profound way in which Yahweh, the true and living God, differs from Eastern "gods" or the "divine state"?
2. Which elements of Davis' quote do you find most helpful?
3. How does the promise of Jesus' return bring hope amidst suffering?

PRAYERS

Loving Father, help us to endure joyfully present sorrows and challenges and to walk alongside others who are experiencing heartbreak. You are the Great Physician—please help us faithfully assist others needing the healing knowable only in Christ Jesus.

TUESDAY

Read **Romans 8:18; Daniel 12:2-3; Colossians 3:1-4**

Paul's expression ending Romans 8:18—"the glory that is to be revealed to us"—is curious on several levels. Firstly, what is "glory" as used here? The Hebrew word for "glory," "kavod," literally means weight, heaviness, substance, importance. In Paul's usage here, "glory" entails the fullness of life, wholeness and restoration in Christ, perfected and completed upon Jesus' return. Such "glory" involves sharing in the divine life, the very everlasting life of God Himself—not becoming divine, but brought into God's presence and purposes in ways that heal, restore, and elevate human existence.

A perceptive Bible reader might challenge, "Wait! Doesn't Scripture teach that true 'glory' is God's alone (Isaiah 42:8, etc.)?" That is correct: God does not share the "glory"—His divine status—which belongs to Him alone as God. He doesn't give His worship, His throne, or His divine identity to another. However, God shares the "glory" of His presence, life, and restoration with His people. In Christ, we don't "become gods" (contrary to what some cults teach), but we are becoming increasingly glorified humans—healed, renewed, radiant with God's abundant life.

Note Paul's use of the word "revealed" in Romans 8:18, suggesting the "glory" is already there—the Apostle does not use "manifested" or "produced," but "revealed." This is something present while hidden, awaiting revelation. Romans 8:11 says the Spirit who raised Jesus—God Himself—lives in believers. Thus, we are "temples of the

Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). As we are progressively shaped into Christlikeness via sanctification, the original "image of God" in which we were first designed (Genesis 1:27) is increasingly restored and exhibited.

Jesus—the perfect Man—is our Template, the Goal, "the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 22:13). The "glory" of the age to come upon Jesus' return is already present in God's people through the Spirit, but it is veiled. The final resurrection is when what is already true becomes visible and completed.

How are we to live this out? Daniel 12:3 nicely summarizes: "[be] wise ... [and] shine like the brightness of the heavens, ... [leading] many to righteousness." What could be more glorious?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Which characterizations of "glory" as used in today's devo do you find most helpful?
2. How does God share His "glory" with believers?
3. Why does Paul emphasize "the glory ... to be revealed"—how do we possess such "glory" already?

PRAYERS

Our glorious God and Father, please forgive us when we corrupt Your glorious image in us upon sinning. Please restore us in Christ. Help us to be Your faithful image-bearers, reflectors of Your glory to a world desperately needing Jesus.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Romans 8:19; Psalm 96**

“For the creation waits in eager expectation ...”—interestingly, in Romans 8:19 Paul characterizes God’s Creation as if it was a conscious being. Paganism literally embraces such notions, maintaining that plants, animals, stones, rivers and stars possess a spirit or an awareness. Pantheism holds that nature collectively is divine and self-creating. Popular expressions like “the universe is telling you ...” lean this way.

While Paul uses the language of personification, he is not suggesting that creation is divine, willful or self-existent. Instead, he illustrates that the world around us is not indifferent to God’s redemptive work. Creation “waits” because it has been swept up into the consequences of human sin and will one day share in the freedom and glory God gives His children. Creation’s longing is not the yearning of something conscious or transcendent, but of something God made “very good” (Genesis 1:31) and will restore.

God’s first command to Adam and Eve was “*be fruitful and multiply,*” after which He called them to steward Creation (Genesis 1:28-30). Christians maintaining that environmental concerns are misguided forget that upon Jesus’ return, God will use the existing earth and universe in re-creation, melding the cosmos with heaven in forming our eternal home, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21).

Scripture, however, does not call us to *worship* Creation nor radical environmentalism, but to recognize that Creation itself awaits the One who will make all things new. The “*groaning*” (Romans 8:22) of the world is not the voice of despair—it is the echo of our own hope. As God’s people are renewed, Creation will be redeemed with us. Paul’s imagery invites us to see the natural world as a fellow participant in God’s great story of redemption.

In a fallen world desperately needing renewal—many of its people struggling increasingly for purpose and peace—we are invited to live as those already tasting the coming glory. And we are called to help others know the Lord and eagerly anticipate His return. We rest in Jesus’ sacrifice and God’s faithfulness and promises. As we await the Redeemer’s return, may our lives reflect the salvation and restoration He alone provides.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How might Paganism corrupt and misapply what Paul writes in Romans 8:19?
2. What mistake do some believers make regarding environmentalism?
3. How does Creation itself participate in God’s plan of redemption in Christ?

PRAYERS

Almighty Creator, thank You for the beauty and wonder of Your Creation! Enable us to be good stewards of this earth, along with our time, treasure, and talents. Help us to share lovingly the glorious hope of Jesus’ return with all we know.

THURSDAY

Read **Romans 8:20-25; Revelation 21:1-7, 22:1-5**

Yesterday's devo characterized Creation as an "innocent bystander" also cursed as humankind fell in Eden. Thus Romans 8:20, "... Creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, ..." Paul's reference to Creation's "groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (v. 22) together with believers awaiting Christ's return (v. 23) paints this picture. But take heart! Present discomfort and pain are not aimless, but productive in God's economy.

Ongoing frustrations—indicated by the "groaning" that G.K. Chesterton called "divine discontent"—are actually the Spirit's way of keeping us from becoming too comfortable in a broken world. They are reminders that we are citizens of another Kingdom. However, God is not discarding the old Creation to start over from scratch; He is birthing the new out of the old, the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. This parallels the Holy Spirit's work in every believer upon accepting Christ when we are "born again" in Him (John 3:3).

Paul's attributing this to "him who subjected it" sparks ongoing debate. Some interpret this "him" as Adam, others as Satan. But I believe this "Him" should be capitalized, indicating God Himself, the Creator working all present evils for ultimate good.

Paul follows this with "in hope"—evidently eliminating Adam or Satan as "him who subjected it." When Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, "cherubim ... [were posted] to guard the way to the tree

of life" (Genesis 3:24). Were they permitted continuing access, the first humans could have "eaten" from "the tree of life" and lived on unendingly as their bodies progressively decayed per their rebellion's invoked curse. God had a better plan, an ultimate "Tree of Life" (Revelation 22:2) as the Means to everlasting life: the coming Redeemer. "In hope" speaks to saving faith in Jesus and God's promise to redeem fallen Creation alongside Christ followers.

It seems reasonable to ask, "Why, God? Why go through all of this, putting up with fallen humankind's rebellion and evil?" Israel's King David pondered similarly, "What ... are ... human beings, that you care for [us]?" (Psalm 8:4). I find a David Guzik quote helpful here: "God wanted more than innocent man; He ... [wanted] redeemed man."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is "divine discontent" and why should believers experience it?
2. How does the New Jerusalem parallel how believers are "born again"?
3. What is God's "better plan," supplanting Eden's "tree of life"?

PRAYERS

All-Knowing, Loving LORD, Your ways are infinitely beyond us. Yet You reveal Yourself through the Savior, the Bible, and Your ongoing work in and through Your children. Thank You for loving us! Thank You for Your redemption in Jesus Christ!

FRIDAY

Read **John 8:34-36; Romans 6:1-23, 8:21**

If you asked the average unbeliever, “Are you a slave?” most would look at you like you are crazy. Yet the Bible indicates that every fallen person is a “*slave to sin*” apart from Christ (Romans 6:6).

Sin is not merely a behavior, but a power—a tyrant dominating fallen humanity. Sin is not just a personal mistake or character flaw—it is a systemic infection. When humankind fell into slavery to sin in Eden, we did not just lose our own freedom—we dragged the entire natural world into a state of “*bondage to corruption*” (Romans 8:21). If the steward (humankind) is in chains, the estate (Creation) falls into ruin. The world is broken because God’s image-bearers who were meant to manage it are broken.

The physical world is stuck in a loop of entropy, death, and futility. Everything that lives eventually dies—this is the physical manifestation of spiritual slavery. Just as Creation cannot reverse its own decay, humans cannot break sin’s dominion by moral effort or self reform. Creation is “*groaning*” because humanity is likewise. Creation waits for humans to be what God originally designed and intended.

Romans 8:21 indicates that humankind’s liberation from sin will trigger the universe’s deliverance from decay. The text suggests that when the children of God finally step into their intended glory, the rest of the world gets to breathe again. There is a certain cosmic

irony here: humans often try to “save the planet” while remaining enslaved to their own destructive impulses. Paul’s argument in Romans is that you cannot truly fix the environment until you fix the inhabitant. The planet is “*groaning*” because it’s waiting for its stewards to finally get their act together through divine intervention.

From the vantage point of a “*slave to sin*,” Scripture tells us that pain is purposeful—yesterday’s devo also touched upon this. If you feel the weight of the world’s brokenness, your faith is not failing; you are actually in sync with the Spirit and Creation itself. The groaning is proof that we were not made for this current state of decay and its associated pain and strife.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are fallen people “*slave[s] to sin*”?
2. Why does Creation’s redemption rely upon humankind’s redemption?
3. How is our present pain purposeful in God’s economy?

PRAYERS

God Almighty, You are the only true Sovereign One. We bow to You in worship for Your holiness, goodness, love, and wisdom. Forgive us for doubting when feeling pain or fear. Renew our hope in Your salvation, enabling us to encourage others for Your glory.

Sources



- Elie Wiesel's quote is from his "One Must Not Forget," interview by Alvin P. Sanoff, *U.S. News & World Report*, October 27, 1986.
- Stephen T. Davis' quote can be found in "The Problem of Evil," within the book, *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 3-19.
- G.K. Chesterton's quote is from his book, *Heretics* (London: John Lane, 1905), Chapter VII: "Omar and the Sacred Vine."
- David Guzik's quote can be found at "Genesis 3—The Temptation and Fall of Man," *Enduring Word Bible Commentary*, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-3/>

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Caitlyn Schan at CSchan@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Caitlyn.

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