

Wait for it. Wait for it. Have you ever heard someone say that before? It's a phrase that's found all over the place. It's a signal that something is coming, and hopefully, what you're being asked to wait for is worthwhile.

That phrase could function as a summary of Paul's encouragement to the Romans. If you believe in Jesus Christ, no matter what's happening in your life right now; there is always hope, hope that things will change, hope that things will work out, hope that even struggles have purpose for this life now and for the world to come. Wait for it. Trust that God will come through for you.

Paul says that there is "Glory to be revealed to us, revealing of the sons of God, creation set free from bondage to corruption, and an eager waiting for the redemption of our bodies." Glory, revealing, set free, and eager expectation while we wait.

Let's be clear about where our trust should be anchored. It is not in your circumstances, in your personal abilities or efforts. No, a believer's hope is in the person of Jesus Christ, the sin-cancelling power of the cross, the overcoming promise of the resurrection of Jesus in your stead, for your life. That's real hope for the real world! Even if you have to wait.

But even with this hope, we still have to deal with a messed-up, corrupted world. It's not easy to wait with hope when we see how bad things are. We even wonder at times, what good is God doing? For what is He waiting?

In Charles Colson's book, *Loving God*, he tells the story of an incredible ninety-one-year-old woman, known affectionately as Grandma Howell.

As she moved into the twilight of her life, she had more than one reason to give up hope. Her youngest son had died. Her oldest son was in declining health. Many of her friends were dying and she had begun to believe that she had nothing left to live for. One day she prayed with all of her heart and told the Lord that if He didn't have anything more for her to do, she was ready to die. According to Grandma Howell, three words came to her: *write to prisoners*. That simple task was laid on her heart and mind while she waited for the day when she would see Jesus face to face.

Now, after prayerfully arguing with the Lord about this writing to prisoners thing, Myrtle decided to do it. She wrote her first letter. It said:

*Dear Inmate,*

*I am a grandmother who loves and cares for you, you who are in a place where you had no plans to be.*

*My love and sympathy goes out to you. I am willing to be a friend to you in correspondence. If you'd like to hear from me, write me. I will answer every letter you write.*

*A Christian Friend,  
Grandmother Howell*

When the letter was sent to the Atlanta Penitentiary, the prison chaplain sent Myrtle the names of eight prison inmates. That was the beginning of an unbelievable ministry of encouragement. Over the next months, this elderly woman carried on an extensive written ministry with hundreds of incarcerated men and women; and all of it was done from her little room in a high-rise home for the aged in Columbus, Georgia.

According to Colson, writing to the prisoners was only the beginning of Myrtle's joy, for they wrote back! And their letters were warm expressions of gratitude. One inmate who signed her name, 'Grandmother Janice,' wrote this in return:

*Dear Grandmother Howell,*

*I received your letter and it made me sad when you wrote that you think you may not be alive much longer. I thought I could wait and come see you and then tell you how much you've meant to me. But now I've changed my mind. I'm going to tell you now.*

*You've given me all the love and concern and care that I've missed for years and my whole outlook on life has changed. You've made me realize that life is worth living and that it's not all bad.*

*I didn't think I was capable of feeling love for anyone again, but I know I love you as my very own precious grandmother."*

A waiting hope can do that for people when it's shared with others.

When our Lord was on the cross, He cried out Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?" It was the ultimate "wait for it" from the Father through the Son so that you and I could be saved!

Paul wants you to know this today; real hope is in a real Person, our Lord Jesus, who makes even the sufferings of this world purposeful, as we love others in His Name. If you're groaning today, be encouraged: you're groaning towards a glory that is guaranteed by the grace of Jesus, our Savior and King.