

Our Eternal Destiny is Assured

Romans 8:18-39

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” (Romans 8:18-25)

The ultimate end and object of our salvation is our glorification (‘the glory that will be revealed in us’). Sanctification is not the end and forgiveness is but the beginning. Glorification means full and entire deliverance from sin and evil in all effects and in every respect – body, soul and spirit. We shall become like the Lord Jesus. This is the result of being joined to Him or being in Christ – we are children of God and co-heirs with Christ. We are justified, we are being sanctified and we will be glorified.

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

“So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power....And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44,49)

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (Philippians 3:20-21)

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10a)

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:2-4)

Creation itself is as it is because of the fall of human kind. It is no longer fully fulfilling or measuring up to the function God originally intended and it has a **tendency to deteriorate**. It is in a state of bondage to corruption and it **cannot free itself**, no matter how hard it tried. Paul personifies creation here as moaning in desperate, anguished anticipation of the revealing of the sons of God. **When God glorifies those who are truly His sons, creation will be restored to its former glory**. Until then, creation is like a mother in labour groaning, but expectant of something glorious.

Have We Really Got To Suffer?

Many people come to Christ in the hope that all their troubles and suffering will evaporate once they believe and begin to follow Him. Unfortunately for them, **suffering is one of the means used by God to prepare us for the glory that awaits us**. The Bible often links suffering with glory.

“Now 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 8:17)

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Philippians 3:10-11)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Peter 1:3-7)

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (James 1:2-4,12)

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” (2 Corinthians 4:17)

We don’t pay for our glory with groaning or purchase our sanctification with suffering. However, **if Christ suffered in this world**, then we should **expect similar treatment** as we have broken ranks with evil. **“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”** (1 Peter 2:21)

Don't go looking for suffering. Just living authentically in the Spirit in this fallen world, as Christ did, will bring suffering. [Suffering tells us we're in relationship with Jesus.](#)

What can suffering, persecution, trials and tribulations do for us:

- [Awaken us from complacency and show us the truth about ourselves.](#)
- [Develop perseverance](#) (see below).
- [Taking away our false self-confidence](#) and the mask of bravado behind which many of us hide our insecurities, failures and sin.
- [Drive us back to God](#) and help us to appreciate just how [dependant on Him](#) we really are – we cannot do this Christianity without God's help.
- [Helps us grow in the grace and knowledge of God.](#) One of our greatest problems is our [ignorance of God Himself](#) – who He really is, how big He is, what He is to His people and how He can help us in this life. Getting to know Him and conforming to His will is our best preparation for eternity.
- [Humble us](#) – humility being one of the greatest safeguards to spiritual life.
- Teach us that we should be [more detached from worldly things](#), rather than just get lost in them and live for them, as most people do. As Christians, we should store up for ourselves treasure in heaven and live for the glory to which we are going.
- [Show us](#) how much we [trust God](#) and just how [deep our love for Him](#) really is.

Don't assume your suffering is the [result of God's punishment.](#)

Do expect that when the suffering ends you will [be better for it](#), [if](#) you let God do as He intended through it.

Don't assume the Lord has [abandoned, rejected or forsaken you.](#) The enemy and our sinful nature will try to convince us of this.

Do confess your [fear and doubt](#) and ask Him for the strength to press on.

Don't assume your [prayers are not being heard.](#)

Do [continue to pray](#), even though you don't know what to say.

Don't assume that your suffering gives you [permission to give up.](#)

Do trust that the Lord will [magnify His strength through your weakness.](#)

We [don't like suffering](#), but it should never make us doubt that God loves us. He does have the [power to alleviate suffering](#), but He would [rather let it achieve His purposes in us.](#) He knows what is best for us and we need to trust Him.

[“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”](#)

(1 Peter 4:12-13)

“So we’re not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There’s far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can’t see now will last forever. For instance, we know that when these bodies of ours are taken down like tents and folded away, they will be replaced by resurrection bodies in heaven – God-made, not hand-made – and we’ll never have to relocate our ‘tents’ again. Sometimes we can hardly wait to move – and so we cry out in frustration. Compared to what’s coming, living conditions around here seem like a stopover in an unfurnished shack, and we’re tired of it! We’ve been given a glimpse of the real thing, our true home, our resurrection bodies! The Spirit of God whets our appetite by giving us a taste of what’s ahead. He puts a little heaven in our hearts so that we’ll never settle for less.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5 – the Message)

Why Do We Groan?

We groan when we suffer at the hands of trials and tribulations. However, God promises that **no pain** that we endure, as His sons, will **go to waste**. **What the world and the enemy intends for harm, God will use for our good making us more like His Son and preparing us for our glorious eternal future.** Whatever God allows us to go through, **no matter how much we suffer and groan, it is all worth it if we allow God to do His work in us.** The more you rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, the more you will groan within yourself while you are still left in this world as your heart will be for heaven. Like Paul, we will know that it is better by far to be with our Lord in glory (Philippians 1:21-24). We groan because of the turmoil of life and its inevitable heartaches and we groan because of the sinful nature (flesh) and its continual drag on the life we long to enjoy.

Where Does Hope Fit In?

The Greek word for ‘hope’ is *‘elpis’* which means **‘assured expectation’**. **We can be assuredly expectant that our eternal future is going to be glorious.** Hope eagerly looks forward to the things that Christ has purchased for us. It lives for them. It is **living with an eye on our eternity to come** and the good God has in store for us there.

“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us.” (Romans 5:2b-5a)

Perseverance is the daughter or offspring of hope. **You cannot practice perseverance or patient endurance when you are suffering, if you don’t have something to hope for or look forward to.** We have our glory with and in Christ for eternity to look forward to and it doesn’t get any better than that. **The true Christian has their heart and affection in heaven, but their feet firmly planted on the earth.**

Romans 8:26-27

“In 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 with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

Christians are to face their trials and tribulations, not only by means of the hope that we have, but also with the **further aid of the Holy Spirit**. The Spirit not only convicts us of sin and teaches us truth, He **endures suffering with us**. He has been **‘called alongside’** (Greek term *‘parakletos’*) to help us endure. God loves us far more than we love ourselves and, therefore, when we suffer, He groans with us.

Prayer is an essential part of our Christian life. Many of us know that we can approach God to pray by the blood of Jesus, but what do we say to God that is fitting or necessary at a particular time. Unfortunately, we often **don’t really know what is best for us in godly terms or what God really wants in a given situation**; and we are, therefore, **afraid that we may pray the wrong thing**.

If you don’t know what to pray or how to pray, we should **not be ashamed to admit it** to God and **ask for His help**. The Greek word for help is *‘sunantilambano’* which means **‘to take instead of or in turn’**. It has the idea of one person carrying a load that is too heavy for them and another coming to take the other end of the load so that both can carry it comfortably – **sharing the load**. So what Paul is teaching here is that the Holy Spirit of God comes and gives us a helping hand when we don’t know how to pray. This is not the Spirit doing all of the work, it is Him helping us.

So, the Holy Spirit is our enabler or helper teaching us what and how to pray. The Spirit within us groans on our behalf because, like the Son, the Spirit has taken up our cause. He is our comforter, teacher and advocate and He empowers and enables our service for God and our transformation into Christlikeness. He intercedes on our behalf in a way that is in line with God’s will, requesting for us what we are too short-sighted to perceive. This may take the form of groaning without words, but God understands and He approves of the ideas conveyed. The Holy Spirit knows exactly how God feels about something and what is God’s best in any situation. He also knows what is best for us in every situation, so we need to learn to be sensitive to His prompting and to go with it when He does. The Spirit of God enables us to pray God’s will into being, whether for ourselves or for another person or situation. It is vital that we learn to pray in the Spirit.

Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

This passage is aimed only at those who love God and who have been called according to His purpose, i.e. born-again believers. The term Paul uses in the phrase

'works for' ('work together' – AV) conveys the idea of a weaver carefully interlacing strands of coloured cloth into a pre-planned pattern. Greek writers frequently used the term 'all things' to refer to the universe – all things, both seen and unseen, good and bad, real and even imagined. Further, God understands 'good' as is that which pleases God because it reflects His nature and conforms to His original created order. Finally, this verse is not teaching that all things that happen to us are good in and of themselves – it is what God does with them that turns them to our good.

Do you know that God is over-ruling everything in the created order for our good? Our omniscient, all-knowing God is omnipotent – has the power to do whatever it takes to accomplish His will – and His will is that He will utilize everything – including the evil deeds of evil people – to weave His good purposes into our lives.

God is not discovering or learning. He is not watching and then adapting His plan to fit around decisions we make that surprise Him. His plan is set and His knowledge is complete. God has planned all that has happened, all that is happening and all that will happen to us in life. He gives purpose to every chaotic circumstance that we endure in this fallen, corrupt world. When God does us good, it may not give us immediate happiness, but it is always a good which is for our eternal best. God loves us and He is in control of all things. We need to learn to trust Him with our lives by keeping in step with His Spirit no matter what happens to us. Some of the apparently negative ways that God works in us for our good:

- Discipline: God disciplines us for our good, because He loves us.

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons....God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:7a,10b-11)

- God can withhold or withdraw His blessing from us in order to bring us up short so that we realize that we are harming ourselves eternally.
- Many Christians are taken through a wilderness experience so that they realize their depth of need for God and just how dependant on Him they really are; and to create a longing within them for more of God.
- Suffering, trial and tribulations (we looked at before).
- Even our defeats and sin can be used by God for our ultimate good, as often the best way to learn is through our mistakes.

God has a specific purpose for each of us and when God purposes something, He carries it through. God's greatest purpose for us is that we are conformed to the image of His Son, thus bringing glory to God by who we are and what we do. The trouble is that we tend to be so subjective. We start and end with ourselves and our particular problems and needs. We get so pre-occupied with overcoming sin or our need for healing or being a success in worldly terms that we lose sight of the ultimate goals – to be conformed to the image of Christ and to bring glory to God.

Our purpose for our life in this world should be to **prepare ourselves** for the glory of our eternal life with God. If our eternal future depended on ourselves and our faithfulness – we would be in trouble. Praise God that He calls, keeps, and preserves us. God will never change and He will never leave or forsake us. ***What matters is not our frail grasp of Him, but His Almighty grasp of us.***

We need to be people who are **certain about our ultimate destiny** even though we may **not be certain about what is happening to us at the present**. We may not (and probably will not) **understand the mind of God** fully and **why He permits** certain things to happen to us, but we do know the purpose of God in respect of us and that is to do things for our eternal good and that these purposes cannot fail. We need to learn to trust our God and His love for us, no matter what.

Romans 8:29-30

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

The Greek word ‘foreknew’ is ‘*proginosko*’ which means ‘to know before’ and it describes a scrutinizing knowledge that goes beyond mere awareness. **The plans for God’s salvation and our ultimate destiny in Christ were conceived before the foundation of the world was formed. God knows everything and He knew before the creation of the world what we would be like.**

‘Predestined’ is the Greek word ‘*proorizo*’ which means ‘mark out before-hand, to determine before, fore-ordain’. It has special reference to those who are the subject of God’s foreknowledge. So in these verses Paul is teaching that **those God knew intimately and actively, He appointed in advance to become like Jesus. Because God knows what we are like, He has predetermined a salvation and sanctification plan that is tailor made for each of us to enable us to reach our maximum eternal potential in Him. Our glorification is the climax of this plan, where in body, soul and spirit we will be like Jesus, our elder brother.**

Jesus said, **“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”** (Matthew 25:34)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves....In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”
(Ephesians 1:3-6,11)

“When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)

I like to think of God as outside of time and looking down on the whole of our life as one event. He doesn't force us to do anything, but He sees all the choices we are going to make and all the situations we are going to go through and He chooses the best possible path for us to get the best possible result for us at the end. For some, our choices mean that we scrape into glory, but that is the best He can do for us given who we are and the choices we make; for others, we will achieve much and have great benefit and reward in glory.

God knew us before the foundation of the world and mapped out a particular destiny for us – He foreknew and predestined. He orchestrates everything to achieve the best possible result for us and His Kingdom. He knew what we would be like and exactly what we would need in order to be glorified. He knows what is best for us and how to get the best out of us. He knows our heart and He knows what we will choose to do in life. The Father began this purpose and He controls its outworking and He also guarantees that His grand purpose will be brought to completion.

We should be “confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:12b-13)

“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Calling is the point, as far as we are concerned, where God's purpose is applied to us. Called means that God has laid His hands upon us and apprehended us and drawn us to the cords of His love by inviting us to partake of the blessings of Christ's redemption. He then will justify those who heed His call and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, because their debt for sin is paid in full and He sees them as righteous in Christ. And God doesn't stop there; He then completes us by glorifying us, i.e. changing us to be like our risen first-born brother, Jesus Christ.

“That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.” (Romans 8:28-30 – the Message)

Romans 8:31-32

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He 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?"

Jesus' death on the Cross was God the Father's action – He was in control of this event. If God was willing to do this to His Son so that we might know His salvation, will He not also provide us with every grace that we shall ever need so that for all eternity our life may bring honour and glory to His Son. We are in Christ and have His righteousness, and this is our guarantee that God will complete in us what He began and bring us through to glory.

Even though the world, the flesh and the devil are immensely powerful and they are trying to prevent this from happening, God is for us and He is not going to let His purposes fail. God is on our side fighting for us – the result is not in doubt.

Romans 8:33

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies."

We are not merely a person who has decided for Christ – we are someone whom God has chosen and set apart for Himself. Who will bring any charge against us? This is talking about a legal challenge. God created the Law, and anyone anxious to accuse us has to be able to establish their charge in terms of what His law says and bring their charge before Him as judge. God looks at the accusation, no matter what it is, and sees that we have the righteousness of Christ accredited to our account, so we are justified before Him. Because of this, we are cleared of every charge that could ever be thought of to bring against us – past, present and future.

Romans 8:34

"Who is he that condemns? 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."

Satan is the chief accuser, but there is never a danger, even with all his cleverness and wiliness, that he will come forward one day and produce a clause that will bring us under condemnation. In fact, God as Judge and Law giver would throw out the case, because we are now not even subject to the Law – we have died to it in Christ.

Jesus, who has every right to condemn us, because of His mistreatment in this world, will bring no charge against us. Jesus took the condemnation that was due for our every sin upon Himself, so why would He then be the instigator of our condemnation. In fact, He is the one who speaks on our behalf when anything or anyone tries to condemn us and He is now making intercession for us before the Father so that we can live the best possible life while on this earth.

When we **sin as Christians**, we should **not think** that we are back **under the wrath of God** (as the enemy would want) and **inadvertently condemn ourselves**, but rather that we have hurt our loving heavenly Father and ourselves. We still need to get right with God by **keeping short accounts of sin with Him** to avoid hurting God and ourselves more. BUT the truth is that the justice and righteousness of God now insist that, **at the judgement seat of Christ**, we are **pardoned completely**. Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for all our sin and God is satisfied with the punishment. It would be **unjust to punish the same sin twice** and God cannot be unjust.

Jesus is also our **High Priest offering up His blood** to God in heaven for our eternal redemption and it was **accepted, without reservation, by God the Father**. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God and has received **title to the entire universe** ruling it as king and ultimate judge. He has all authority and power and He is using all this **authority and power for our benefit** – our salvation, sanctification and glorification – **no one and nothing can ever rob us** of this as there is no one and nothing more powerful than Him.

Jesus is a **sympathetic High Priest** who **cares about the details** of our lives and **listens** to our prayers and **wants to help us** in the best way He can. Jesus is also **securing for us**, His chosen ones, the **benefits of His death**. When the **Father** looks upon the Son and He **sees us in Him**, He sees all our needs and He **willingly provides everything necessary** and more – we will lack nothing we need for our Christian life and for our glorification. **Jesus is there for us and fights on our behalf** for our good and welfare and He will continue to do this for all eternity.

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3)

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

Romans 8:35-39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither 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.”

We are going to face trials and tribulations as Christians. Paul is asking here: 'If these tests are severe enough, will this cause our salvation to fail?' The answer is that it is only through Him who loves us that we can triumph and overcome. It is not our weak, frail, fallible love for God that enables us to pass this test; it is Christ's love for us. Jesus has set His heart on seeing us glorified and He will not allow anyone or anything to rob Him of that result. Nothing will be permitted to stand between Him and His purpose for the church and every member of it which He loves.

For the chosen ones of God, the love of God will never let them go, no matter what happens. We must not look to ourselves, or to the church, or to religion or other imperfect Christians for our salvation. Our eternal destiny is not even dependent on the strength of our faith; it is dependent on the fact that God loves us and has taken hold of us – that is all that matters! His love enables us to do far more than just hold on and scrape a victory – we are more than conquerors – we have the power in Him to demolish the trials and overcome them completely.

Whatever happens in life, the ultimate product of our salvation – our glorification – is assured, because Jesus has delivered us from the power and dominion of all the things that would pull us down – our five main enemies: sin, Satan, the Law of God, death and hell – He is triumphant over them all; and He is also the Lord of creation and time. In fact, He is the King of Kings and Lord of All. *It is not our frail grasp of Him that matters, but His strong grasp of us!*

“So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us – who was raised to life for us! – is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think that anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture: They kill us in cold blood because they hate you. We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one. None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing – nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable – absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.” (Romans 8:31-39 – the Message)