

## Words of Great Comfort, or Not

***"If children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17 NKJV).***

If you have been a Christian for at least one or two years, then you are very familiar with this verse. What a glorious truth! We are joint heirs with Christ! The truth of this is beyond comprehension. Have you spent much time meditating on this?

How about the rest of the verse? Have you spent time thinking about what it says? Based upon these words, the only people who will be in heaven<sup>1</sup> are those who suffer<sup>2</sup> with Jesus. This begs the question, "Have you suffered with Jesus?" If not, then you won't be in heaven after you die. I think this is important to consider because the stakes are eternal. I hope you see the importance of these words.

But wait, there's more. The NKJV rendition of this verse is similar to most of the English versions. But this translation fails to fully spell out what Paul said. A more accurate translation is, ***"If children, then heirs...heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ....if so be that we are suffering with Him, that we might be glorified together with Him."***<sup>3</sup>

The Greek verb in the phrase "we are suffering with Him" (συνπάσχομεν) is in the present tense, indicative mood which always means that the action is something that is continually going on and never stops. Then the next part of the verse, "That we might also be glorified together with Him" uses the Greek verb (συνδοξασθῶμεν) which is in the subjunctive mood which carries the idea of "maybe." This makes sense for Paul to use this subjunctive mood because he is clearly making a conditional statement (if/then). So, Paul is saying here that our glorification with Jesus is dependent on whether or not we ARE SUFFERING with Jesus (on an ongoing basis).

These words might not fit neatly with your theological views but obviously, Paul (and God) wants you to grapple with them instead of ignoring them. If they make you uncomfortable, perhaps you should ask yourself why they have this effect. When first confronted with them, most of the Roman Christians were comforted by them. You might wonder how this could be. It is because most of the Christians back then were suffering often for the name of Jesus. So, these words that might trouble many Christians these days, were greatly comforting to those early Christians. Since they were suffering for Jesus, they had full assurance that they would soon be glorified together with Jesus. Likewise, if you are suffering for Jesus these days, you have great reason to be comforted knowing that you will soon be glorified together with Him. Conversely, if you are currently not suffering for the name of Jesus, these words probably make you feel uncomfortable.

Lastly, this is part of the gospel message we must preach. Jesus said that unless a person is willing to die for Him, he cannot be His disciple. When we evangelize, people need to count the cost of being one of Jesus' disciples.

For more Bible verses on this subject, see my article, [Only Those Who Share in Christ's Sufferings will be in Heaven](#).

Thomas Bear, 1/4/2019

Οὐαί μοί ἐστιν ἂν μὴ εὐαγγελίζωμαι (Προς Κορινθίους Α 9:16)

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<sup>1</sup> By "heaven," I mean our eternal home with Jesus. In reality, that will be on the new earth that He prepares for His Bride (according to the Bible).

<sup>2</sup> The Bible teaches that this suffering is that which occurs because of our association with Jesus. He said that if the world hated Him, likewise it will hate us. Suffering could include intense things like being beaten. But it could also include smaller things like mocking, missing out on job opportunities, being mistreated by our extended or immediate family, etc. For it to qualify as suffering "with Jesus," it would have to have something to do with our being identified as one of His followers.

<sup>3</sup> Here is the original Greek wording of Romans 8:17: εἰ δὲ τέκνα καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ ἕπερ **συνπάσχομεν** ἵνα καὶ **συνδοξασθῶμεν**

I am sure that those early Christians were greatly encouraged as they read these words. But were they also comforted by the rest of the verse? Or, were they so struck by the first part of the verse that the last part of the verse didn't register? Let me suggest that many of those Christians were indeed comforted by the last part of the verse. At the same time, there may have been some people among them that became very troubled by these words, assuming they actually read them. How can this be? How can one person be greatly comforted while another become troubled? Are you comforted by the last part of the verse which reads:

Most of today's English versions of the Bible don't translate this verse as it shows above.

**"If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,** if so be that we are suffering with Him, that we might be glorified together with Him" (Romans 8:17).

Here is the original Greek wording of Romans 8:17:

εἰ δὲ τέκνα καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν **Romans 8:17**

*"If children, then heirs...heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ....if so be that we are suffering with Him, that we might be glorified with Him."*