

KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024
“THERE’S MORE ICE CREAM”
SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 8:18-30
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Romans 8:18-30

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **19** For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope **21** that [\[h\]](#) the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. **23** Not 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. **24** For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? **25** But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

26 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 through wordless groans. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who [\[i\]](#) have been called according to his purpose. **29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Sermon: There’s More Ice Cream

When my kids were really little, and even now, I felt like they would get terribly impatient about the silliest things. One story that I often recall is of Aisha when she was just 1 year old. We were at McDonald’s, and she had an ice cream cone she was enjoying with such pure delight. My husband, Hamza, playfully asked if he could have a bite, and Aisha, being generous, handed it over. But when Hamza went in for a second and then a third bite, Aisha’s joyful sharing turned into worried panic. She started to holler, “No, no, mine! Give back!” When Hamza returned it, she clutched her cone tightly, eyeing him with newfound suspicion, though she soon returned to enjoying her treat.

The innocence of that moment always makes me smile, and Aisha still loves watching that video, laughing at how serious it seemed to her then. Why was it so funny to us? Because we knew the bigger picture. We knew Hamza was going to give the ice cream back, and we were also aware that even if he didn’t, we could easily buy her another. There was never a real risk of scarcity or loss, despite what little Aisha believed in that moment.

This memory gives us a unique window into how God might see us. Children don’t yet have the perspective to understand abundance or the value of patience. They focus on the immediate moment—how urgent their needs and wants feel right then and there. When we see them fret

about waiting two days for Christmas or worrying over a turn on the playground, it's easy to see how their anxiety, though real to them, is misplaced. As good parents, we don't shame them for their fears or impatience; instead, we nurture and guide them, helping them learn patience and trust.

Now, as adults, we might believe we've outgrown such impulsiveness. We tell ourselves that we've mastered patience and self-control. But if we're honest, how different are we, really, from children when it comes to our spiritual lives? Are we not just as prone to impatience when we're waiting for God's answers? When Paul wrote in Romans 8:18, "*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us,*" he was acknowledging something fundamental: life is full of waiting and groaning. We yearn for healing, for justice, for reconciliation, and for change *now*.

It's in these moments, when we are caught up in wanting our problems fixed *immediately*, that we are not so different from Aisha clutching her ice cream, afraid of loss. We become focused on the now—on our pain, our longing, our unanswered prayers. We forget that God, like a loving parent, sees the bigger picture.

This is where our church's story fits in. Over the past year, I know many of us have felt anxious. We hoped that by now, all of our financial and manpower problems would be resolved. We prayed for solutions and perhaps expected everything to turn around swiftly. But here's the important reminder: while we haven't seen all of our challenges vanish, great successes have indeed unfolded this year. Several new young families have joined us and are stably engaged in our community. This is not a small victory—it's a testament to growth, to seeds planted that are already beginning to bear fruit. Just as Aisha learned that her ice cream was secure, we, too, need to trust that more is happening beneath the surface than we might realize.

Paul writes in Romans 8:18, "*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*" While we may feel the strain of waiting and the weight of uncertainty, we are encouraged to remember that what God is building goes beyond our immediate expectations. We are in a period of anticipation, much like a child waiting for Christmas morning, demanding on December 23 that *Christmas should be right now!* And what would happen if that child's wish were granted and Christmas came two days early? The presents wouldn't be ready, the special dinner wouldn't be prepared—it wouldn't truly be Christmas. The joy and completeness of that day would be lost without the time of waiting and preparation.

This applies not just to our communal life but to our personal lives as well. Some of you may be facing significant trials—perhaps dealing with illness in your family, difficult relationships, or major transitions looming ahead. Perhaps you're feeling anxious about the results of our recent election. These struggles are real, and God sees them. He understands that we look up with wide, uncertain eyes, longing for resolution. And He meets us there, not with scorn but with compassionate patience, reminding us that He is working, even when we can't see it. Just as in the anticipation of Christmas, our time of waiting—our *advent*—holds the promise of joy and fulfillment that can only come with patience.

Paul goes on in Romans 8:22-23 to write about how all creation is groaning as in the pains of childbirth, waiting for what is yet to come. It's not just us—it's everything around us that waits, that aches for the fulfillment of God's promises. And yet, creation waits with hope, because there is an assurance that what's coming is worth the wait. This is where faith intersects with

patience. Just as we might lovingly tell a child that Christmas is just around the corner or reassure them that the swings will be free soon, God tells us that our current trials are temporary, even if they feel never-ending.

The challenge for us is not to dismiss our struggles but to trust in God's timing and plan. The struggles of uncertainty and suffering are real, and God doesn't dismiss our distress. Instead, God provides us the gift of the Holy Spirit to speak for us when our anxiety feels its clouding our ability to speak for ourselves. In verse 26, Paul reminds us that *"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."* How comforting it is to know that God understands our limitations. When our prayers are clumsy, when we don't even know what to ask for or how to endure, the Holy Spirit steps in, expressing our deepest longings in ways we cannot.

Just as I would never have scolded Aisha for her fear over the ice cream, God doesn't scold us for our moments of impatience. He doesn't look at us with frustration or disapproval when we feel desperate for answers or relief. Instead, He comes alongside us in the Holy Spirit, offering assurance that He sees what we cannot.

Paul's powerful reminder in Romans 8:28 encapsulates this: *"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 is not a promise that life will be easy or that our desires will be met on our timetable. It is, however, a promise that there is a purpose being woven through our waiting and that God's ultimate plan is one of goodness and restoration.

We might not always get to see that full picture while we are waiting. We might feel the pangs of disappointment and anxiety, much like Aisha felt with her ice cream. Aisha now looks back on that video with pride, knowing that she's wiser and stronger now than she was as a 1 year old – and there's more ice cream yet to come. God sees beyond those moments of panic, preparing for us a future filled with abundance that will make today's waiting seem small in comparison. So, dear friends, take heart. Remember that our frustrations and impatience are met by a God who knows our limits, who intercedes for us, and who assures us that the best is yet to come. Just as I could see past Aisha's panic and knew her ice cream was secure, God sees past our present sufferings and is holding us in His loving care, urging us to trust that His plans are for our ultimate good. Amen.