

Read: Romans 8:18-25

We Are “Eager Expecters”

Romans 8:21,23b

Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God . . . as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Did you know that when your mom and dad found out they were going to have a baby they began telling others, “Good news everyone! We are expecting!” They shared the date when you were to be born, and everyone waited eagerly for the day of your birth. They were “eager expecters”! But would you call a woman in labor an “eager expecter”? Even as she’s experiencing the pain of giving birth, she’s eagerly expecting a child.

In today’s reading, our natural world is also pictured as waiting for the “sons of God to be revealed in us.” No one on earth really knows who the true believers are. That will be revealed on judgment day, and that’s what the entire world is waiting for. The world God created is described as a person filled with hope—hope “that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” Someday, the creation will be set free from pain—no more floods, no more forest fires, no more droughts, no more pollution. On judgment day, nature will be freed. Finally, it will be able to glorify God the way it was supposed to before the fall into sin.

In a way, nature is an “eager expecter” of judgment day, and so are we! Just like the world, we also are groaning, because of all the problems we face. But it’s also a groan of hope, “as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” It means you as a Christian—have a lot to look forward to on judgment day. On that day, everyone will know that you are a child of God, a true believer. Your body will be redeemed—in other words, your body will be raised from the dead—all the problems you experience will be gone, and you will be restored to perfect condition. Then you will be able to perfectly glorify God without any sin, without any problems getting in the way. Guess what—it means we *are* “eager expecters” of judgment day!

Here’s what an “eager expecter” sounds like: “I know that I am a sinner, and that I deserve to be judged for it on judgment day. But I eagerly expect that God will forgive me. I *know* he will, because Jesus has taken my sins away at the cross, and he rose from the dead to prove it.” That is real hope!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is your favorite part about celebrating your birthday?
- What celebration are we looking forward to when Jesus comes on the Last Day?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Discuss whether judgment day sounds: 1) Scary. 2) Happy. 3) Or both.
- How does Jesus take away our fears on judgment day?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Discuss if you think Jesus' final coming will happen during your lifetime or many years later.
- In light of the above discussion, why is it so important for us to live every day as an "eager expecter"?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for completing our salvation so we can eagerly expect your return on judgment day when we will live with you in glory forever. Amen.