

Title: The Best Is Yet To Come

Text: Romans 8:18

Date: June 23, 2013

Place: Decatur Church of God

It is always a joy to recognize our Young at Heart and our youth. These are some wonderful young people and sometimes just some plain old wonderful people. I have watched some of these men and women grow up and some grow older and I am excited about their next step in life's journey. I believe that the best is yet to come.

* The story is told of a woman who died and had left instructions about how she was to be viewed. She had the funeral directors place in her fingers, in the casket, a table fork.

Why would she want that? We're not even sure if we will ever need to eat in heaven. So why would she need a fork.

She left behind this explanation...

Remember at family dinners how you would eat and then the table would be cleared before bring out the desserts. We were always told to hold on to our forks because the best is yet to come. The same is true for our eternal souls, the best is yet to come.

I'm willing to believe that is true for life on this earth. My best days are not behind me, no sir, the best is yet to come.

Graduates, the best is yet to come.

Married couples, the best is yet to come.

Youth and children, the best is yet to come.

Some of you are looking for work; the best is yet to come.

Church, the best is yet to come.

Romans 8:18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

I. Our present sufferings

What is happening around us...

- A. Water – At current consumption rates, it is possible that up to 3 billion people could be short of drinkable water by 2032. And yet people enjoying improved quality water increased from 4.1 billion to 4.9 billion in the last ten years.
- B. Soil – At least 15% of the earth’s surface has already been damaged by human activities. 10% of once tillable soil has been lost to overgrazing, deforestation, and development. And yet 10% of Earth’s land is in protected areas, five times as much as 30 years ago.
- C. Disease – There are 4 billion cases of preventable diarrhea each year, causing 2.2 million deaths per year. Two billion people are at risk from malaria, with 2 million dying annually from this disease. And yet from 1970-2000 the under-age-five global mortality rate fell from 96 to 56 per 1,000 births.
- D. Pollution – Experts estimate that concentrations of carbon dioxide in the air will double by 2050. Half the world’s rivers are seriously depleted and polluted. And yet the hole in the ozone layer is being repaired because of an 85% reduction in 114 countries in the use of harmful chemicals.
- E. Resource Management – One third of the world’s fish stocks are depleted or over-harvested. One fifth of the world’s population consumes 90% of its resources. And yet in some countries the abandonment of farmlands has allowed forests to recover.
- F. Population – Worldwide, 1 billion urban dwellers live in slums. Somewhat less than one half of the earth’s population lives on less than \$2 per day. And yet while earth’s population continues to increase in terms of total numbers of people, growth rates in most parts of the world have declined since the 1980’s.
- G. Extinction of Animals – 1,183 species of birds (12 percent of the world’s total) are threatened with extinction. 1,130

species of mammals (25 percent of the world's total) are threatened with extinction. And yet a moratorium on commercial whaling since 1986 is allowing that species to recover.

My point? Yes, we have problems but there is hope. The best is yet to come.

* When I began to work on this message we had just come through the terrorist attacks at the Boston Marathon. We had the explosions at the fertilizer plant in Texas and then I read about the Canadians foiling a terrorist attack on their rail system. It almost seems like the world is deteriorating in our hands.

And yet, name a century that didn't include tragic events.

- The collapse of Rome
- The ups and downs of the Crusades
- The powerful Moslem conquest of Europe and Asia
- Civil wars
- World Wars
- The development of Atomic weaponry

How can we believe that the best is yet to come?

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The theme of this verse is the future glory of believers and all of creation.

Paul knows that we will share in Christ's sufferings. How about it? Can you say amen to this? Have you known or experienced any suffering? Was any of it on behalf of Christ?

The best is yet to come!

II. Let's talk about our physical development.

- A. If you are a child...
- a. You will gain weight.
 - b. You will get taller.
 - c. Your muscles will probably develop more.
 - d. Your balance will improve.
 - e. You will begin to get zits.

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- B. If you are a youth...
- a. You will continue to physically develop.
 - b. Sexually you will begin to mature.
 - c. You will gain greater knowledge.
 - d. You will develop an overwhelming belief in your own abilities.

The best is yet to come.

- C. If you are a young adult...
- a. You reach your peak in attractiveness.
 - b. Your wisdom continues to grow.
 - c. You have a strong passion for life.
 - d. You are continuing to shape your life's direction.
 - e. You are gaining some victory over zits.

The best is yet to come.

- D. If you are a middle-aged adult...
- a. You are growing out instead of up.
 - b. You may be making the most money in your life.
 - c. You have a number of possessions.
 - d. You are starting to forget some names and facts.

The best is yet to come.

- E. If you are an older adult...
- a. You will gain weight.
 - b. You will get shorter.

- c. Your muscles will probably deteriorate or get softer.
- d. Your balance will get worse.
- e. Victory over zits but struggling with, shingles, heart disease and diabetes.

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III. Now let's take a moment to talk about our spiritual journey.

- A. In the beginning we were totally separated from God and destined to an eternity of punishment and pain.

The best is yet to come.

- B. Then we came to Christ. We were babes in Christ. Immature, unlearned, and for the most part, clueless.

The best is yet to come.

- C. We began to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Humility, God's true humility, becomes our hearts desire. We seek to be more like Christ. Our actions are more clearly defined and begin to bring joy to the Father and that brings joy to us.

The best is yet to come.

- D. Some of us will continue to grow and become true followers of God and become real disciples. Loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength we are beginning to reach out to our world in mission and community.

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* Some of us prematurely enter a spiritual cocoon, a kind of holding pattern, waiting for God to bring about the great transformation. How is that working for you?

Are you feeling the warmth of God's blessing? Are experiencing a growing intimacy with God? Have you discovered a sense of God's glory?

The glory that will be revealed flows out of our relationship with Christ. As a result, we know, the best is yet to come. And we believe it!

But it is not an automatic.

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When the glory is revealed the best has come! When God's will is being fulfilled in our lives, the best has come! When God's love flows through us to bless those around us, the best has come! When you serve without ulterior motives, the best has come!

Our current suffering is not the end. The best is yet to come!