***Romans 8:23-25 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.***

The last few weeks, we’ve studied the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. Those that are in the flesh desire the things of the flesh, focus on the things of this world. Those that are of the Spirit focus on the things of the spirit and the things that are everlastingly meaningful. The flesh clouds the Spirit. The flesh darkens the soul. Like a cataract clouds the vision of our eye, so the flesh clouds our vision of God. Let’s pray continuously to have the cataracts of flesh fall from our spiritual eyes that we might see God and His Kingdom ever more clearly, day by day.

 This morning, we are with Paul again in Romans 8. Last week, we learned that we dwell in the Spirit when the Spirit of God dwells in us. If we have never received the Spirit of Christ, we are not His and we are dead in sin. In verse 23, it starts *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit****.*** 1 Corinthians 15:20 names Christ as first fruits - *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* We know from Exodus that the first born and the first fruits are holy to the Lord God. We must be born again. John 3:5-6 *Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.****6****That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*In Christ, we are born of the Spirit, and our desires lock onto the spirit.

 Does this mean everything becomes cotton candy and unicorns in life? No. Verse 23 finishes - *even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* When we are born again, our spirit desires to be home. What’s the old saying – Home is where the heart is? We become sojourners, strangers in this strange land, no longer desiring the things of this world, dissatisfied with the things of the flesh. We groan within ourselves, as we look at the deception and filth we witness all around us. We eagerly await adoption. John 1:12-13 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* When we are born of the Spirit, we are grafted in and become adopted sons and daughters of the most High God. Until that time, let’s not be surprised that we groan, just as all of creation groans, as we wait for our redemption to draw near, as Luke 21:28 says.

 Verse 24 - *For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?* Saved in this hope – what hope? *1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,****4****to an inheritance* (sounds like adoption doesn’t it?) *incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.* Reserved in heaven – and we groan, as we eagerly await. But hope seen is not hope. If I hope Amazon will deliver my package by days end, when I see the UPS truck coming down my drive, I no longer hope… I see. 2 Cor 5:7 says *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.* Until we meet Jesus face to face, we groan in the body, but we rejoice in the Spirit, knowing that, one sweet day, we’ll no longer see dimly, but face to face, as 1 Corinthians 13:12 assures us. We will know as we are known. As we sing, What a day that will be when my Jesus I will see, when I look upon His face, the One that saved me by His grace. What a day, glorious day, that will be.

 Verse 25 - *But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.* This verse holds the idea of “But since we hope, if we have been saved in Christ”. Since we hope for what we do not see, it only comes naturally that we wait in perseverance and eager anticipation, groaning in the flesh, while we scan the skies for our Savior’s return. Every morning, we wake thinking – maybe today will be the day when my Redeemer draws near, and I see my Hope appear. Maybe today is the day I see Jesus Face to face, and I tearfully fall at His feet, thanking Him for saving a wretch like me. We wait, we endure, we hope, and we persevere.

 This week, let’s focus less on the groaning in our flesh and more upon the redemption drawing ever nearer, and the adoption that is our eternal destination. We hope and eagerly await. While we wait, let’s seek whom might we serve and bear witness of Jesus so they too might draw near, believe, pass from flesh to Spirit, and gain the Hope of eternal salvation? Let’s pray that the cataracts of flesh, the filth clouding our vision in this life, be removed and that God will give us eyes to see and ears to hear, love to reach one more soul before it’s everlasting too late. Let’s see Jesus clearly so we might witness plainly, bringing Light to others still wandering in darkness.