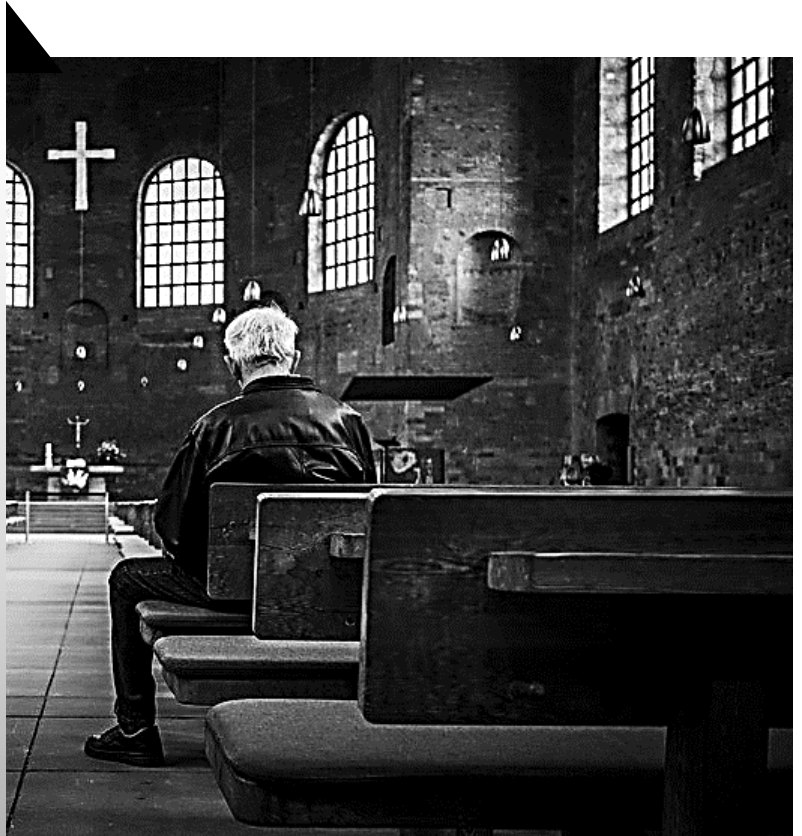




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# The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 8 Verses 18-25

In verse 18, Paul states that the sufferings of 'life under the sun' are not of equal weight with the blessings of the glory to come. But what of the sufferings in this 'Life under the Sun?' What about glory?

The present glory that we have as Christians is located in our baptisms. It is located in the forgiveness of sins. It is located in the Lord's Supper. The glory that Paul speaks of is hidden with Christ, only to be fully revealed on the Last Day. However, there are entire denominations that mess this up and wreak havoc on the faith.

What happens is that these denominations and pastors teach what is called the "health-wealth-and-happiness-gospel." Essentially this theology teaches that the future glory that we will have *after* the second coming should belong to us now. Using a simple example, these pastors and teachers expect to open up Christmas gifts too early. These pastors and denominations rightly understand that there are gifts under the tree (future glory in the new heaven and new earth); however, they believe that we are entitled to these gifts (glory) in this life under the sun.

Furthermore, they believe that these gifts under the tree can be opened early, only if we seize these gifts through strong faith, obedience, positive words, etc.

But aren't they right? Is not the Gospel *powerful*? Yes, the Gospel *does* have power. However, it is not power to enable mankind to be immune from the sufferings of the world. We will escape the suffering of this 'life under the sun' only when we are tucked into our graves and are resurrected unto Jesus. In the mean time, we will indeed suffer – especially as Christians. We will groan in this journey through life for this is reality (v. 22). We have hope in this life under the sun, for hope looks to future glory.

What is being described above is the difference between a *Theology of Glory* and a *Theology of the Cross*. A Theology of Glory avoids suffering, expects health, wealth, and happiness in this life under the sun. A Theology of the Cross expects suffering and knows that future glory awaits us after the second coming.

It doesn't take too much thought to realize that these are two completely different theological frameworks. They have the same theological pieces but use them differently. They speak the same words but use apply them differently. Frankly stated, discerning the differences between a Theology of Glory and a Theology of the Cross is one of the most important things a Christian can do.

With that stated, let us examine these two frameworks a bit more closely. Let us define them.

Theology of Glory: the glory that God promises through faith in His redemption in Jesus should be evidenced in our present life by material blessings, happiness, etc. The suffering that comes to a person's life is, therefore, deserved because of some particular sin.



Theology of the Cross: The real glory that God promises through faith in Jesus is reserved for us in the next life. In this present life, God does allow His children to suffer in order that we would cling to Him in faith.



As we can see from above, a Theology of Glory is going to set up an **if-then** type theology. This results in mankind always trying to climb, prove, grab, and manipulate God to get some sort of glory! The Theology of the Cross, on the other hand, receives God's gifts in the midst of the world, while living in hope of future glory.

