

Present Suffering and the Hope of Glory (Romans 8:18-30)

I. Present Suffering Doesn't compare to the Future Glory (v. 18)

- A. The suffering Paul talks about here is the suffering of life in general.
 - 1. Believers walk in the same path as their Lord – first suffering then glory
 - 2. Life is full of suffering (Job 14:1; John 16:33)
 - a. Pain, trouble, disease, tragedy, natural disaster, accident
 - b. If suffering has missed you so far, it is coming
 - c. The woes of life are universal for creation
- B. Paul asks important questions in this section
 - 1. How can God's Children suffer if they are free from bondage?
 - 2. How can those free from death still die?
 - 3. How can I be victorious in Christ but still going through the same trials as all of the rest of creation?

II. Present Suffering is the Reality of the Fallen World (v. 19-25)

A. All Creation Suffers and Awaits the Coming Glory (v. 19-22)

1. Creation is Awaiting Future Glory (v. 19)

NOTE: *in verse 19 the word "creature" is the same word as "creation"*

- a. All creation is suffering because of the sin
 - i. You aren't suffering by yourself
 - ii. You shouldn't think it strange that believers suffer too
- b. All creation is waiting for the believer's "revelation"
 - i. "Revelation of the sons of God" – means their unveiling
 - right now we look like everyone else – we get sick, we die, etc.
 - One day our true nature will be revealed
 - One day we will be transformed externally into what God has already made us internally

2. Creation Was Cursed at Man's Fall (v. 20)

- a. At the fall, all of creation was cursed
 - i. "subjected to vanity" – it was cursed to suffer, it was cursed to emptiness and futility
 - ii. creation was not subjected willingly
 - creation didn't have a choice
 - Creation suffers for what Adam and Eve did
 - iii. creation was subjected to judgment by God
 - "him who subjected it" – God judged all of creation because of the wickedness of the ones God put in charge of creation
- b. At the fall, creation was also given hope
 - i. Creation was cursed along with Satan, Adam, and Eve
 - ii. Creation (and Mankind) was also given a promise. God told Satan:

- Genesis 3:15 - *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

- this is the promise of Christ's coming

- God judged the world but also gave it a promise of hope – Christ

3. Creation Hopes in God's Promise (v. 21)

- a. In Christ, creation will be set free from the curse
- b. In Christ, creation will enjoy the freedom of the saved
- c. In Christ, the heavens and earth will one day be remade in perfection

4. Creation Suffers as a Woman Giving Birth (22)

- a. The whole creation is groaning in suffering right now
- b. The suffering is not as one who is dying
- c. The suffering is as a woman bearing new life
 - i. Creation is not dying it is giving birth to new life
 - ii. At Christ's coming the creation will be made new

B. All Believers Suffer and Await the Coming Glory (24-25)

1. Suffering As we await our full redemption (24)

- a. We have the firstfruits of the Spirit
 - i. The Spirit is our down-payment of what is to come (Eph. 1:13-14)
 - ii. We have the first indication of the promise
- b. We groan as we wait for the final fulfillment
 - i. Everything is not as it should be yet
 - ii. We still get sick, we still die, bad still happens
 - iii. Internally we are new creatures, we wait to be made new externally and completely.
 - iv. The redemption of our body – is total transformation – new bodies without sin and death

2. Living by Faith as we await our full redemption (v. 25)

- a. We have been saved with a hope for the future
 - i. we have already been saved (past tense)
 - ii. our salvation includes a future hope
 - iii. "Saved in hope" is better translation than "saved by hope"
- b. The nature of a "Hope" is something we can't see
 - i. If you already have something you don't hope for it
 - ii. If it is already a reality, you can't hope for it
- c. We patiently wait with endurance
 - i. We trust in what God has promised
 - ii. God's word is our hope for the future.

III. God Provides For Our Present Sufferings (26-30)

A. The Holy Spirit Aids us In Our Suffering (26-27)

1. The Holy Spirit Intercedes For Us (v. 26)

a. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities – though we are waiting for the coming of God’s promise, through much suffering and hardship, we do not wait alone.

b. The Spirit is not a thing, it is a “He.” It is God Himself. The comfort we have is that God Himself (the one who made the promise is praying for us)

c. The point of the verse is that because the creation is fallen and sinful, we often have difficulty seeing God’s purpose and plan working itself out through all the tragedy and hardship we see around us. Even when we are at a loss as to how to pray and what to pray for, we need not despair because the Spirit Himself is busy interceding for us. (Even when we pray for things that God knows are not good for us)

2. The Holy Spirit Intercedes According to God’s Will (v 27)

a. The intercession of the Holy Spirit is always 100% effective

i. There is never a time when the Spirit intercedes that the Father does not answer positively.

ii. This is because the Spirit always prays “according to the will of God.”

iii. “He that searcheth hearts” (Father) always knows what “the mind of the Spirit” is. No matter what is going on in this fallen world or in your life, God is working for your good and orchestrating things for His glory.

b. Even when you feel that everything is falling apart – its not

i. The Spirit and the Father are using trials to mold you into the image of Christ.

B. God’s Purpose Aids Us in Our Suffering (v. 28-30)

1. God always Uses the Believer’s Suffering for Good (v. 28)

a. “All things” – includes the trials and the hardships believers experience because we live in the fallen world affected by sin.

b. Even these hardships are working for the believer’s good.

c. What is the “good” toward which God is working?

2. God is Conforming Believer’s Into Christ’s Image (v. 29)

a. The good toward which God is working is to make us like Christ.

b. God’s predestined plan is to make all believers like Christ.

c. God’s plan is unstoppable. Therefore, anything that happens is in God’s purpose to move us into Christlikeness.

- YES sometimes being conformed to Christ’s image is very painful

- YES sometimes it takes learning hard lessons

3. God’s Purpose For You is A Sure Thing (v. 30)

a. Paul presents the whole range of God’s activity in the believer’s life.

i. The first three “predestinate, called, justified” are all past actions in the believer’s life.

- ii. What is surprising is that Paul also speaks of believers having been glorified in the past tense.
- iii. The purpose of this section is to answer questions about how the believer lives in the victory of Christ even though the whole creation is filled with sin and suffering. – Here he shows us that God's plan to bring many sons to glory is so sure that, in God's mind, it is an already established fact.
- iv. Nothing in this world or the next can change the purpose of God who is working to conform us to Christ and glorify us with Him. – It is so sure that it is spoken of as if it has already happened.