

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 9TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

SUFFERING (ROMANS 8:18-27)

PRESENT SUFFERING, FUTURE GLORY

There is a price for being identified with Jesus. Suffering is real. Suffering has its place and God will use it to bring about His purpose. We were never promised we wouldn't have to endure suffering. Christians have endured suffering for ages. What we are promised is the Holy Spirit will never leave us.

WE'RE NOT IMMUNE

Paul's reminder is that suffering is part of life but we're to look at it differently. Suffering isn't reserved just for others. In fact, suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope (Rom 5:3-4). **God doesn't shelter us from suffering because we need it for spiritual growth.**

THE REALITY OF SIN

Paul constantly reminds us we are not above suffering even as followers of Jesus. It's not a new thing. We live in a fallen world. The entrance of sin into the world affects everyone and everything. But Paul is making a comparison to our future (2 Cor. 4:17). Our focus isn't on the suffering but what is to come.

EXPECTATION

Sin caused all creation to fall and it's now subject to frustration. Paul uses the word futility. We don't have to endure this forever and what lies ahead is incomparable.

- **All creation rejoices in what lies ahead. Liberation from bondage, futility, addictions, fear and decay give way to glorious freedom.**

THE WAITING

Waiting is hard especially watching society crumble all around us. As followers of Jesus, it should break our hearts to see the bondage of humanity all around us. **Does it break your heart over the tragedy and despair present in so many of the lives of those around us?** Too many of us have been anesthetized to the brokenness of humanity.

GROANING

There is groaning everywhere. Paul says, "the whole creation is groaning... We groan within ourselves... The Spirit of God is groaning." There is so much pain around us. As the light of the world, shouldn't we be taking that light into the dark places? (Matt. 5)

- **We have this treasure but too often we want to keep it for ourselves (2 Cor. 4:7).**

THERE IS HOPE

For the believer, our future is secure. Even though all of creation groans, and we along with it at the moment of our salvation, we have hope of a new future. This isn't like the hope we usually think of. Paul says what is seen is not hope, who hopes for what he sees?

- **Our hope is not in vain but in the promises of God.**

WHERE THERE IS HOPE, THERE IS FAITH

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." NIV We are saved by faith (Eph 2:8-9), and even though faith sees nothing, we have confidence and assurance of God's promises.

- **Hope gives stability to our faith and sustains us with assurance of what God promises tomorrow.**

THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT

This is one of the most intimate of scriptures as Paul describes how the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. The Holy Spirit is the forgotten one of the Trinity. **Prayer is a Trinitarian activity.** When we pray, we ask the Holy Spirit's assistance because so often we don't pray rightly. Thank God we're not left to our own resources to cope with our problems.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (ROMANS 8:28-30)

IN ALL THINGS?

There is a great promise in verse 28 but it's not for everyone. God doesn't just work in isolated incidents and everything that happens to us isn't good. There is evil in this world. But God can turn every circumstance around for our good.

- **God is not working to make us happy, but to fulfill His purpose.**

HIS PURPOSE

God's ultimate goal is to make us like Christ. We were created in the image of God, but since the fall we've been on a quest to become our own god. "In the beginning God created man in His own image, and man has been trying to return the favor ever since." - Voltaire.

- **Our purpose is found in God's plan for our lives, not the other way around.**

"THOSE HE FOREKNEW HE PREDESTINED"

There are great theologians who have debated this text for centuries. The point is we were not an afterthought. His plan was settled before the foundation of the world.

- We can easily fall into the trap of trying to understand a God that is beyond our comprehension.

What we must know is that God is sovereign, and He is good.

DON'T MISS THE POINT

The point isn't in arguing what "foreknew" and "predestined" mean exactly or which came first, but to focus on the fact that God has a purpose. Ordo Salutis – order of salvation. This passage is about God, not mankind. **The key element is God. He knows, He calls, He justifies (declares innocent), and He gets all the glory.**

GOD FOR US (ROMANS 8:31-39)

THIS ISN'T HYPOTHETICAL

Do we really know God is for us? This is a reality. When we understand the implications of God being for us, we begin to live differently. The world, opposition, false religions, suffering, nothing can stand against us. We can live with boldness in our faith. There's no fear of failure when the Sovereign, Creator, Maker of heaven and earth is on our side.

WE ARE EQUIPPED

Paul asks some incredible questions to assure us. God has given us His Son for salvation and the Holy Spirit for holy living. We have all we need for life and godliness. The understood answer to most of these questions is, "no one." Good news!

- **We are assured of God's love even in the midst of pain, suffering, or persecution.**

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US

Vs. 35 has to be one of the most comforting promises in the bible. Paul has known hardship and will see it again. No matter what happens or where we go, we can't be lost to God's love. Nothing can stop God's presence with us, nothing can stop His love for us (Ps. 139). It is impossible to be separated from the love of Christ!

A TOUGH TRUTH

After this great encouragement Paul reminds us we are going to suffer persecution. We must have a willingness to endure trouble or hardship, famine or even death. But because we know our destination, even these things seem trivial. This is where many check out.

- **We want all the blessings of God without the hardship (Luke 12:51-53).**

CONQUERORS

Paul shares this unshakable confidence in the love of God. He is persuaded. Even though we walk through hardship, persecution, unseen forces of evil, attacks from demons or Satan himself, life or death, nothing can separate us from God's love.

- **As a child of God, we are secure that nothing can separate us from God's love.**

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

- This is a reality. Theologians have said Romans 8 is the greatest chapter in the bible and here's why: for those who are in Christ Jesus there is freedom from condemnation and all the fears that accompany it, and a new life in the Spirit that guarantees our eternal place in the presence of God.

AN INVENTORY

- Do we really know God is for us?
- Do we understand nothing can separate us from God's love?
- When suffering or hardship come are you ready to bail?
- Is your hope in what the world offers or the promises of God?
- Are you still living under condemnation?
- Does your heart break for humanity?
- Do you trust in God's sovereignty?
- Are you fully persuaded?