



## Week 3 of 4

### A new understanding of suffering: Romans 5:3-5

*"We rejoice in our sufferings"* is found 35 x's in Paul's writings.

Suffering produces **endurance** -- Pressure leads to staying power or an attitude of overcoming.

Endurance produces **character** -- approved metal whose impurities have been removed.

Character produces **hope** -- Final step in spiritual maturity -- not tuition we pay but the diploma we receive when we suffer the tests.

***"Squeeze (the Book of Romans) at any point, and the resurrection spills out; hold it up to the light, and you can see Easter sparkling all the way through." (N.T. Wright)***

*"My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it."*

*(Brennan Manning, The Ragamuffin Gospel)*

**ROMANS 8:28-29**

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,<sup>[a]</sup> for those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

**PSALM 139:4**

Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

**PSALM 139:16**

Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in Your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.

Suffering is a part of our story, but it's not the end of our story.

I so love how Job 1 has Satan saying, "Ruin Job's life and he'll curse you," and it ends with Job blessing God.

God directs evil that would destroy us so that it has exactly the opposite outcome.

That means the most hellish nightmares are actually your servants because the things that \*should\* break you will drive you deeper into God and your eternal happiness there.

Even the things that try to destroy you spiritually are actually serving you!

"But He knows the way that I take; when He has tried me, I shall come out as gold."

(Job 23:10)

## ROMANS 9:6-24

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, **7** and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” **8** This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. **9** For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” **10** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, **11** though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— **12** she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” **13** As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

**14** What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! **15** For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” **16** So then it depends not on human will or exertion,<sup>[b]</sup> but on God, who has mercy. **17** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” **18** So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

**19** You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” **20** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” **21** Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? **22** What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **23** in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— **24** even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

**Predestination VS. Human Responsibility? No.**

**It’s Predestination AND Human Responsibility**

The theology of Calvinism has been immortalized in the acronym TULIP, which states the five essential doctrines of Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints.

## What does Scripture say about God's plans for our lives?

Jeremiah states that God knew us even before we were born in chapter one, verse 4-5: "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "**Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart, I appointed you** as a prophet to the nations."

Isaiah 43:7 also presents evidence that God knew us before hand and had plans for us, "everyone who is called by My name, **whom I created for my glory**, whom I formed and made."

Job 23:14 declares, "He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store."

I Corinthians 2:7 says "...we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and **that God destined for our glory before time began.**"

Paul understood that he was called by God as evidenced in Galatians 1:15, "But when God, **who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me** by his grace, was pleased."

There is no book in the Bible that contains more references of predestination than in the book of Ephesians and no chapter more so than chapter one:

Verses 4-11; "For **He chose us in Him before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **He predestined us** for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One he loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. **In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.**"

## **Just look what God planned for you before the earth even existed:**

- God had planned you even before you were born or before you were in our mother's womb (Jer. 1:4).
- He planned things for you in the future before the earth or time existed (I Cor. 2:7).
- He had made plans for your life to give you His grace before you were born (Gal 1:15).
- He chose you and called you to redemption to be saved and be made holy (Eph 1:4).
- He chose you before your birth to bless you and save you through Christ (Eph. 1:3-4).
- He planned your adoption prior to your birth (Eph. 1:5).
- And according to His good pleasure, revealed the secrets things of God to you (Eph.1:9).

ROMANS 11:36

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.