

Romans 8:18-25

An Incredible Hope

Image Church // Romans 8 // Week 4

Intro:

Image family... Grab your Bibles, and turn to **Romans 8**!

Celebrate: We're in conversations with **9 people** about the next steps, people either getting saved or taking a step of obedience to be baptized... *Can we celebrate that?*

- We're all about ONE MORE coming to faith, one more taking a step of obedience...
- Some of you need to join them!! We want to walk with you!

If you're new with us, we're in **week 4** in our series through **Romans 8**... Where we're answering the question, *what are the implications of the finished work of Jesus on my life?*

- *And How does something that happened in the past impact me today?*

And Paul's had us on this journey...

- **Romans 7**- He starts with the problem...
- **Romans 8:1**, *there is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus...*
 - *Why Jesus was condemned in your place so that you could be set free from condemnation...*
- The way you're set free, the way that the work of Jesus is transferred to you is through the **Holy Spirit**, which Paul calls the **Spirit of Life...**
 - **Changes your perspective and your pursuit...**
 - Orients you around the things of God...

- **This is how you know you're saved...** *Not in your perfection but in your consistent orientation around the things of God in faith!*

- The Spirit not only gives you new life but new power...
 - ***Not the power to do what you want but the power to do as you ought in light of who God is and who He's created you to be...***
 - Putting to death sin, walking in the new life Christ purchased for you...
- Paul says the Spirit is also what gives us a **new identity in Christ**... We're not our sins, we are sons or daughters of God, co-heirs with Christ... We don't have to live in fear of God, we can call out to God as Children of God now...

And then here's where we left off last week, Paul says in **Romans 8:16:16** **The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, 17** and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The thing about Paul, *and I love this*, is that he always keeps it **100...** And he doesn't shy away from something that's a reality in the Christian life... And that is **suffering...**

And I told you this *suffering with Christ* that Paul's talking about is pointing us to **endurance in faith in the midst of brokenness that we face in this world...**

- **That's what it looks like to suffer with Christ** by holding onto Him in the midst of the brokenness we experience...

And here's the thing, when it comes to suffering, we need to acknowledge that there's a spectrum of suffering...

- Internet out...
- Have to fly Southwest instead of Delta
- Have to eat Zaxby's instead of CFA... *Kidding College Students!*

Seriously though... There is a spectrum of suffering...

- Sin struggles...
- Persecution...
- Loneliness...
- Conflict with people...
- **Physical suffering**, ailments, health, infertility, cancer
- **Emotional suffering**, anxiety, depression...
- The loss of a loved one, a child, a wife, a friend
- There's **circumstantial suffering**, you lose your job
- We can even suffer to a degree when things are good...
 - Anxiety over when things aren't going to be good anymore...

Have you ever been there?!? What Paul does is meet us here in the reality that we face... And in the midst of it, he's going to do is point us to that hope...

What Paul doesn't do is just say, *endure in faith like Christ through suffering... Good luck, you got this...*

What he's going to show us this morning is **how** we can endure in faith, and he's going to build out a framework for navigating suffering, and in the midst of it, **he's going to point to an incredible hope in the midst of a broken world that's ravaged by suffering...**

Romans 8:18-25

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

So, here's the first thing that we need to see here... And that is that **suffering is unavoidable in this life...**

The human experience is one with suffering... **Christian or not, you will face suffering in this life...**

- The difference is one has a **hope to hold onto in the midst of it, and the other doesn't...**
- *More on all that in just a little bit...*

But I want you to understand the **nature** of what Paul says here...

- He says: **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time**
- This doesn't leave room for suffering to be only a possibility for some... **Suffering is unavoidable...**

See, here's what a lot of people think, they think that **Christianity is a pathway out of suffering in this life...** *That's just not the case, we're going to see why in a little bit...*

But so often people take this approach when it comes to Christianity, and the problem is that it leads to **moralism...**

- Where you think, if we're not suffering, we feel like we're doing good... If we do suffer, it's on us...
- This is a confusing and oppressive way to live...

Here's the thing, **moralism is motivated by fear and not love...**

- It's not seeing God as the loving Father that He is!
- And instead of being motivated by His love that was displayed through Christ, you're motivated by fear...
 - Christianity becomes burdensome and fearful, not joyful...

***Now, to be clear, does God use affliction to get our attention and to break away idols in our lives? Yes, the Bible is clear on this that God disciplines those He loves, that He prunes and cuts away things in us to help us grow in Him... But this isn't always the case...**

- Job didn't suffer because of sin, God called Him righteous...
- Jesus was perfect, and He suffered greatly...

Here's the thing, when God does allow affliction or suffering to come your way because of sin, what we see throughout Scripture is that He will show why He's doing it...¹

- Israel knew...Jonah knew...
- When He disciplines, or when He cuts away an idol, you'll know... It's what a perfectly good Father does...

¹ JD Greear, *Hope, The Greatest Chapter in the Bible*.

But some of you need to understand that God's not up there waiting to strike you down or make you suffer every time you mess up, *if that were the case, He would have already done it...*

- I used to live under the oppression of this, thinking all suffering/not good things was my fault... No QT, 0-4 at the plate (sad view of suffering too)... *That's just not the case...*

God's not a tyrant... He is a loving, grace-filled Father...

And it's the **love** of God that should compel us **2 Cor. 5:14**... It's His **Kindness** that leads us to repentance **Romans 2:4**... *Not fear of suffering...*

*It's important that we understand that when it comes to navigating *the present suffering* that's unavoidable in this life...

Here's the point here though: **Christianity isn't freedom from suffering, it's the power to endure with hope in the midst of suffering...**

- So, don't become a Christian to try and avoid suffering in this life... Become a Christian so that you have hope through this life of suffering!

This is exactly where Paul points us here in **verse 18**... **the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.**

What Paul does is draw a distinction between our present suffering and our future glory...

- He wants to reorient us from being defined by our pain to holding onto hope in the midst of our pain...

Paul's shows us that Christians have a different perspective when it comes to suffering... That suffering isn't all that there is...

- There's a greater hope that comes behind suffering...

We have to view suffering in the light of eternity...

- I know this is hard, especially when you're in the midst of suffering...

The glory that will be revealed...

Talk about the beauty of what's to come... the glory that will be revealed:

- No more sin, no more pain physically, emotionally or spiritually, no more wondering, no more waiting, no more wanting...
- You will have it all... You will have Jesus, you will be in His midst, and you will sit at His table!

Paul shows us that our suffering should drive us to faith, not away from it...

Example:

- You do this when you work out...
- Your job...

Example: John Newton: Carriage example...

- A man has been notified that he's been left an estate worth millions... Get's in his carriage...

We have to weigh suffering against the glory that awaits us... And this is hard... But it's possible through faith!

- As we hold on, just one more mile up the road of life and I will get my inheritance, the new body, I get my health, I get my wife back, I get the child...
- I get God's Kingdom, I get God...

Why does it have to be this way? Why so much pain, why so much bad... The answer, I think, helps us hold onto hope in the midst of suffering...

This is where Paul's headed... verse 19:

19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed.

God's sons or daughters here... to be revealed... This is the return of Jesus and the restoration that He will bring...

Paul shows us that not only do **Christians** anticipate and long for this coming restoration, but **creation** also has a longing anticipation for restoration as well...

- **Anticipation:** Neck up looking for what's coming...

*Can I tell you who feels this, the **Gazelle**... Everybody's prey... Lions, Crocodiles...*

- **BTW:** what are mosquitoes going to do?!? *Nectar?*

Paul wants us to see the implications of creation itself, to set up what He's about to say next...

Verse 20:

20 For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope **21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now.

Creation... *Flesh out the harmony...*

Fall...

- *Humanity's fall into sin marred the "goodness" of God's creation, and creation has ever since been in a state of "frustration."*²
- This didn't just happen on its own...
- This comes through God's decree to Adam and Eve after they sinned...
 - Thorns and thistles... Life to death...

The suffering that we face is a result of sin... Why doesn't God just do something about it?!? He does...

And yet, in the same chapter that God lays out the consequences of sin... **A promise is given**... *Good subjected creation in hope*...

- **Gen. 3:15**

Jesus would come... Enter into our pain, into our brokenness, would endure it to the greatest degree...

- **John 11... Lazarus**
- **Luke 22: Jesus in the garden weeping before the cross...**

He went through our pain for the purpose of our restoration...

In His resurrection... He does everything necessary to save us...

Gospel connection...

- **21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

From separation to sons and daughters...

- The implications of this goes beyond just humanity, it goes to all of the creation...
- *In heaven, cats will actually come when you call them and do what you ask...*

*In the meantime, **as we wait** in the midst of the brokenness, like the groans of labor pains...*

- The hard thing you go through before labor pains and the birthing process, **but it gives way to a beautiful thing that you get after!**

Verse 23:

23 Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 515.

Eagerly awaiting our adoption... This is what we are waiting on the culmination of right now...

- This is an **already, but not yet**...

Example: The Echols and Nicole...

- She was theirs, but they had to wait...
- Had to even go there for over a month...
- Before they brought her home...

The same is true for us, when are God's but we are waiting on Him to bring us home!!

In the meantime, Paul says that we have the **Spirit as the firstfruits**...

- **Firstfruits** is a farming term...
 - Watermelon farmer

Paul says that we can bank the complete fulfillment of our adoption on the reality of the Spirit in us now!

*The evidence of the Spirit in you that's resurrecting you in your sanctification is evidence of what the Spirit will do in your total resurrection...

There will be a complete redemption of your body... In the meantime, it **groans**...

- Can I get an amen from my people over 40... *College students, you wait!*
 - *Flesh out*...

Verse 24:

24 Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? **25** Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

What do we do in the midst of our suffering, we hold onto the blood-bought hope that Christ purchased for us...

When we are saved, we're saved into a new hope that extends beyond this life... Pointing to something that we can't see...

But that we can know to be true based on the faithful hand of God through the cross and the activity of the Spirit in us...

- It's hard...

Get personal...

- Talk about my suffering... I don't say this to be a hero, but to say I walked it...

Meet people where they are...

- I don't have all the answers, but I've walked it with you...
- Hope is the one thing that gets me through...
- God's in control, He has been from the beginning... I know His timing is perfect...

Conclusion [VAMP]

Please understand this... None of this is a design to quickly-fix your pain... To dismiss it or push it to the side... Paul doesn't do that... He meets us where we are, your pain is real...

- *We do this a lot with people we try to give them the quick fix...*

**Paul isn't trying to fix your pain, he's trying to reorient your bloodshot tear-filled eyes...

***Christianity isn't freedom from pain, of a fix in the midst of your pain **Christianity is the power to endure with hope in the midst of suffering**...

Just another mile... Hold on, eternity awaits...

the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

Appeal to the non-Christian...

- **Saved** on the screen

Discuss and Reflect

- Read Romans 8:18, what is meant by the glory that will be revealed to us?
 - How can we live in hope of this future glory, even in the midst of suffering?
- Read Romans 8:19-21, what do these verses imply about the desire for all things to be made new even in creation?
- Read Romans 8:22-23, what does it mean that we were given the Spirit of adoption as a guarantee or firstfruit?
 - Read Ephesians 1:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22, what is a downpayment?
 - How does the Spirit function as a downpayment for believers?
- Read Romans 8:24-25, what does it mean that "we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies"?