

Romans 8:17b-18 If indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Verse breaks are helpful; it helps us find our place regardless of which translation we use. But sometimes they can be misleading. Verse breaks can allude that a thought is tightly connected to one part and loosely connected to another. The second half of verse 17 is closely connected to verse 18 and loosely connected to the first half of verse 17. This is the first time suffering is used in this text and the first time that any word for suffering is used since chapter 1.

This is obviously all connected as one long run-on paragraph, there are four “sun-” words in verses 14-17. So we have an obvious connection to all the “with” words and a strong connection to the sufferings and glories in verses 18-24.

This verse is also not a question or even a conditional clause. The “if indeed” is translated from “**εἴπερ** *eiper* (*eye-per*).” We saw this conjunction in Romans 8:9; 2nd Thessalonians 1:6; and 1st Peter 2:3. The word is never used to demonstrate possibility, but it is always used as an assumption of truth. This should always be translated “since” or “indeed.”

Indeed “we suffer with” — notice that the word “Him” is in italics and is a good rendering of the intention of whom we suffer with, the “Him” is implied. The verb is “**σὺμπάσχω** *sumpaschō* (*soom-pahs'-khoh*)” which takes the prefix “sun” and adds it to the verb “**πάσχω** *paschō*.” The verb is in the present indicative. Along with the “**εἴπερ**,” this indicates that Paul is stating that we are known as suffering with Jesus. This obviously refers back to Romans 6:3-5. Although suffering is not used, “**πάσχω**” is the word for Jesus scourging and crucifixion in the Gospel’s (Luke 22:15; 24:26,46; Acts 3:18; 17:3). Suffering with Jesus is accomplished by believing in Him, being identified with Him.

That being the case, the purpose of suffering is to be glorified with Him. This is a “*hina*” clause. What is interesting is that there is an “and” here as well. This indicates an idea that just as we suffer with Him, in the same way we will also be glorified. The concept here is not that we actually do suffer, but that we are sufferers with Christ because of His sacrifice.

Some look at this verse and try to place a glory scale based on the suffering scale. The more we suffer the more we will be glorified, even to the point of self-induced suffering. They will fast three times a week, they will inflict beatings upon themselves, or purposely put themselves in dangerous situations believing that if they are harmed they receive additional glories.

What this verse is saying is that because we have suffered with Him, we will be glorified just as He will be glorified. Additional suffering is grounds for reward but additional glorification.

Remembering our lessons from 1st Peter, there are two types of suffering. It is found in the words “πάσχω” and “πάθημα.” The first is suffering due to punishment; the reason is not taken into account, simply being hurt physically due to punishment. The second is emotional distress. Both words describe the life and eventual crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus lived His life in constant distress over the state of disbelief and rebellion around Him. At the end of His fleshly life, he was imprisoned, beaten, and killed.

1 Peter 4:12-16 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings (πάθημα) of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers (πάσχω) as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if *anyone suffers* (πάσχω - implied) as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

Peter, in the same letter, states that the readers should live peacefully, honoring all men, including the king and all authorities. The emotional distress of living in a fallen world is inevitable if we desire to live holy. But there is nothing in the New Testament that says we should pursue punishment; rather if God wills for us to endure punishment because we are believers, then we have been granted the greatest opportunity (1st Peter 3:14).

The resurrected Jesus Christ is the only one currently with a glorified body and we wait with high anticipation for ours. We do not know, and neither should we try to discover, what kind of body it will be or what we will look like (1st Corinthians 15:35-38; 42-44).

Our resurrected bodies will be: God’s design, after the model of Jesus Christ; immortal; imperishable; glorified; a spiritual body (1st John 3:2).

The word for glory is “δόξα *doxa*” and means splendor, radiant, honorable. According to 1st Corinthians our body is sewn in dishonor and is raised in glory. In Romans 8:18, this world, in all of its apparent glory, is all dishonor and is not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us.

Looking at verse 18, Paul switches from our co-sufferings with Christ (πάσχω) to the emotional distresses (πάθημα). Although we have been identified with Christ in regards to His sacrifice and His sufferings on the cross, we have not necessarily shared in being punished physically. Not everyone has, nor will, undergo physical persecution for the sake of righteousness, but we all should be troubled being in this world but not of

it. This is not about politics but about the lack of and declining belief that is the problem in the world — the distresses or rebellious sin, the fiber of right and wrong. Notice that nowhere is it discussed that our frustration should boil over into anger at a world gone wrong, rather our distress should result, if it is provoked from God's righteousness, in pity, grace, and desire to spread the Gospel of His grace. Self-righteousness would produce indignation, cursing, and discord.

Some have taken “πάθημα” to the understanding of just living in the flesh, distractions, or inner battle with sin. This also has a merit. Sin in general has a result of “πάθημα” in the life of the believer. Many times sin vexes the believers into submission and a believer will just give up trying to fight off the temptations.

Most of the time when we talk about giving in to temptation, it is in reference to overt moral sin. This defiantly has its place. But one aspect rarely considered is that the believer who just no longer desires to grow and follow Jesus, he wants to try to live neutrally in a binary world.

Back in 8:18 Paul states that the “πάθημα” is not worthy. The added text of “to be compared” is not there. It is not necessarily a bad thought. The literal translation, with idioms accounted for, is “the sufferings of this time are not worthy in the face of the certain glory to be revealed to us.”

The term “in the face” is the preposition “*pros*” and can indicate “in front” or “in front and facing.” In certain contexts, this can indicate having an audience with or being present with. The sufferings of the now have no audience with the glory. The NASB translators have the idea as comparison. I think this is an understatement. I think that this is better understood as not even in the same context as, not in the ballpark.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.