

Romans - part 30

“Creation Groans”

I am so appreciating our time in the book of Romans and the job that Tim did last week...

The journey to heaven often feels like we are traveling through a desert full of thorns and snakes, in case you did not know; we are not in heaven just yet! We live in a planet that is under a curse and our bodies are still dying, we are all suffering in some shape or form. I know this is not what we like to hear, we would like to believe that we can control things that in all honesty, we have little to know control over; we live in a fallen world...

This is not to say that God has failed to protect us but it simply recognizes we are travelers and we are living as strangers in a foreign land and we are going to suffer as we travel through; God provides and HE protects but no where does HE say we won't suffer, in fact He tells we will suffer...

So I want this morning to give a recap of where we have come in our study of the book of Romans.

- **Review of Romans 8**

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh Romans 8:3

Christ cleansed the sin in our flesh so the Holy Spirit can live in us.

that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:4

the Holy Spirit lives in us so the flesh can no longer dominate us, and now we can realize God's will for our lives.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:5

The mind of the Spirit leads us to fulfill the moral requirements of the law and the law can be summarized by two commandments; love God and love our neighbors.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace Romans 8:6

Since we are now free to make choices to fulfill the moral requirements and to obey the Spirit, now our decisions and actions produce life, people coming closer to God and peace (shalom). When I obey my flesh, things die.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:7-8

Our flesh does not improve over time, our spirit needs to learn to govern by drawing on the power of God to subdue the flesh. We draw near to God through the word, worship and listening to His voice and letting His presence transform us. This isn't as hard as we make it out to be. But through repeatedly bringing the flesh into submission old destructive habits are broken and healthy habits are formed...

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. Romans 8:14-17

If we are going to be prepared for "the age to come" we need to learn to be led by the Spirit, not our emotions or old way of thinking. God's goal for us is to become like Jesus in character (holy) and body (resurrected). When I put my faith in Jesus, we become the adopted children of God, not divine, but fully

accepted and sometime in the future, glorious in appearance and endowed with authority to extend Christ's rulership.

I am not now ruling over this world, I can influence for Jesus, I can impact through the love and grace of Jesus, but right now I live in a fallen, bankrupt, corrupt world, waiting for the return and rule of the risen king of kings...

- **This present time.**

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us Romans 8:18

Now I want to tell you something, I hate to suffer!! I wish I could pray it away, cast it out and speak the word over it and it be gone, but that is not the case. Paul says, "the present time", in this already-but not yet season we have to maintain a clear perspective, hope of the promises of Christ must continue to burn bright, while at the same time we live with the tension that we live in a fallen world.

Think about this, sin has not only affected us, it has also affected the very world we live in, when we fell, creation fell too! But the curse only lasts for a season, this is good news, we look forward through the millennia of years to the day when the curse is broken and creation is restored...

- **In the meantime.**

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8:19-22

In this “now season” creation is groaning. Creation suffers because of the curse and the stupid human masters who rule over it. The word says creation is waiting for the return as much as we are...

***“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.***

***⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.***

***⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.***

***⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:6-9***

We have been given the world to steward, it wasn’t given to us as a gift, but we have invited the demonic and done a terrible job of caring for creation...

So the bible says that the sin of mankind has even spun creation into chaos...

- **Birth pangs.**

Unfortunately, it is only going to get worse. This is not some kind of sappy environmental earth first garbage, it is the effect of man and our sin, it messes up everything we touch.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8:22

I happen to believe that as believers, we should be the first to understand that we are stewards of all God has given us and that includes all of creation. Creation is not a gift, it is a responsibility to care for as much as anything, but understand, just stopping burning fossil fuels is not the answer... it is all sin!

The earth is not our mother, we don't worship the earth, we aren't going to save humanity by saving the planet and yes you can eat meat and wear leather and love on pets, just don't do it with indifference...

The Lord is going to return before we all melt the planet!

And the word says that;

- **Believers groan.**

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Romans 8:23

The truth is that there is within each of us a desire to escape the torment of our flesh, from temptation and rebellion and the misery of the world around us. We long to be face to face with our Father...

³⁸ But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

³⁹ All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

⁴⁰ There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 1 Corinthians 15:38-44

We long to never again experience pain, sorrow or death;

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and

this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

***⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?”***

***⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1
Corinthians 15:51-57***

The Holy Spirit stirs this hope in us, we are hungry to be with Jesus and to step into the next chapter of life.

In fact, I believe that the enemy corrupts this longing to be with our God and introduces suicide as an option, but it is God who sets the date of my homecoming, not me or the devil and until that day we get to serve and glorify Him with all of our resources, time and talents...

- **Application.**

What do I do with this?

- a. Stop blaming God or people around you when you suffer, we live in a fallen world and this life is a battle field not a stage. Bad things happen to good people and it is not because they lack faith or they did some special sin; we are all sinners saved by grace...
- b. Realize His protection does not mean I will not suffer. Obedience REDUCES self-generated suffering, trusting His promises releases blessings, prayer brings protection, and we are defended by angels, but in a fallen world suffering is unavoidable...

We live in a world full of disease, pollution and violence and our faith puts a target on us, we naturally age and stuff goes haywire, take care of the body, loose weight, eat well, exercise daily... but you are going to die!

So when suffering comes, I will not be fatalistic, I will learn and understand that;

1. Prayer really matters. Everything that happens isn't sent from my Father in heaven, some things are cold, brutal and painful, but God has empowered me to do battle using the weapons He has given to me.
2. No matter what happens, I will not quit serving or trusting God, hope burns bright, and the Holy Spirit is interceding for me and God will use everything to work for good for me.
3. I will choose to walk through this world with a "light footprint" I will not abuse but I will care for all that God has entrusted to me.
4. I will not take the days God has given me for granted or even assume I know how long I am going to live, so I am going to live each day like it is my last but plan like I am going to last forever. I have a limited number of days to take people to heaven with me... live them wisely.