

Men to Men Bible Studies

A study in Paul's letter to the Roman Church.

Session 22

Romans 8:18-28

Preamble:

In the world of division and argument, as Christians, we need to get over ourselves and stop throwing out roadblocks at fellow believers.

One of the things that inhibit fellowship between Christians is theological beliefs that are simply non-essential. Don't get me wrong here non-essential does not mean something that may well be important to you and your belief structure, all I am saying is we don't need to emphasize them in every conversation.

Three quick things to define non-essential:

1. Non-essential beliefs are those things that, if held, do not change your status with God.
2. I am not saying that you should not stand firm in your beliefs. A non-essential belief you may have should never break fellowship with someone else who believes differently than you. You should be able to agree to disagree without disrespecting one another in conversation and come back together again and celebrate the things that you all do have in common. In conversations or even in Bible study you should have a level of maturity to love and listen.
3. We need to learn to distinguish between three things: heresy, error, and disagreement. Each of these has a level of personal responsibility.

- a. **Heresy:** I could say that I don't believe Jesus was God. He was just a good man. An acknowledgment that Jesus is who he said he is a basic core tenant of the Christian faith.

Your personal responsibility to Heresy. If you ever hear me teach that, you have permission to slap a heretic label on me and walk right out. It is not your responsibility to confront heresy. It is best to make yourself absent or like one preacher called it, "A silent resignation".

Further, "***Do not entertain (consider) an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses***" I Timothy 5:25. If it is only you never confront leader in the church.

- b. **Error:** in Acts 2:1 KJV "***When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one accord.***" If you think that means all those in the upper room had arrived in one Honda Accord, you simply are in error. It is a joke. A humorous play on words. Don't get your shorts in a bunch. That's not heresy because it is not a rejection of one of the core tenets of the Christian faith. It is an error, I am incorrectly interpreting the scriptures. Another example would be I Timothy

5:23, ***“Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.”*** You may well take this as an excuse to drink wine at every opportunity to prevent illness. You could think that but it is in error.

Your personal responsibility to error: In a civil and proper place start a dialog. Discuss the error in a calm and loving manner. If there is still a lack of agreement. Then as in I Corinthians 12:38 ***“But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”***

- c. **Disagreement:** We have come to something in our belief system that is not heresy and is not a blatant error but it is a part of our belief structure can and often does cause disagreements. To say the sacrament of the Lord’s supper must include actual wine would be disagreement. To say you believe that you are a pre-millennial raptureist with tendencies toward deterministic perseverance as it ties to total depravity does not mean you are not a Christian.

Your personal responsibility: Don’t kick me to the curb because we disagree on this non-essential belief. We have a greater responsibility to unity than any non-essential disagreement. Keep in mind I Corinthians 12:40 ***“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*** A disagreement should never separate.

Chapter Eight of the Book of Romans provides a large amount of fodder for disagreement. We encounter words like: foreknew, predestined, called, groans, and hope. There are many places of disagreement in Christianity, but none of them raise to the level of separation.

Romans 8:18-30 NASB

18 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.

19 For the eagerly awaiting creation waits for the revealing of the sons and daughters of God.

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

23 And not only that, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of our body.

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, through perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

26 Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Outline tonight

For better understanding of the logic of Paul, this section is easily outlined in four ideas

1. The Who of Suffering (CREATION) - ktis'-is
2. The what of suffering (SUFFER) - páthēma
3. The why of Suffering - (HOPE) - elpís
4. God's response to suffering– (WORKing together) synergéō

Study comments

Reports had come to Paul about what was going on in Rome. The biggest problem was a lack of unity. The five groups did not agree on much of anything. Paul addressed this unity problem in the first six chapters of this long letter.

He had also heard about the physical situation of the church. He had heard of the house churches and how they had become segregated mostly on Jew and Gentile lines.

One of the reasons for this segregation was the cloud of persecution that was started by Rome and pointed toward the Merchant Class Jews. But in reality, just being associated with the Jews was subject to suffering.

The church was suffering.

Romans 8:18

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.

Stop a moment and think of the things (consider) that have happened to us which has landed us in this place of Bible Study. We must consider our sufferings. Especially the trials, and the suffering that things I have experienced. The tough times, the difficult times, the bad times, and the simple not-so-good times.

It is our Suffering that has driven us to the grace of God. Here Paul speaks and the scribe Tertius the faithful writes. Paul has a long list of things that he had suffered and comes to a screeching halt and through it all it has been worth it. No matter how bad it was, better days are coming.

It is simply not worth comparing all these sufferings we have gone through to something much better. They are so small they don't even show up as a bump in the graph of life. They were but noise in the wilderness. Humorous thought here: "Not worth comparing, then Paul continues comparing.

When God reveals to us in glory is the reason we are not to compare the sufferings at the present time. A great word for Paul is glory. There are twenty different variations of the word glory in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Depending upon the context. It means giving, splendor, majesty, holiness. It's experiencing God's presence. Revelation of a heavy dignity.

Have you ever felt it? Have you ever experienced it? That holy cloud, that holy presence in worship, that perfect sense of peace, that overpowering wave of joy. Like Isaiah in the 6th chapter. Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is filled with His glory. And it will be in **US**.

Not in the church. Not in some weekly TV series. Not in some momentary height. But in **US**. All that splendor, all that majesty, all that holiness. As part of **US**.

Romans 8:19

For the eagerly awaiting creation waits for the revealing of the sons and daughters of God.

The word creation is difficult here. It is found four times.

NOTE: If a portion of scripture includes one specific word without qualifiers, it means the same thing. There must be consistency to Paul's use of this word.

What was Paul talking about when he used the word "creation"?

The only way to understand this portion of scripture is to understand this idea of creation. We have to decide for ourselves what is **creation** in Paul's mind.

This thing

Thayer's concordance defines ***Ktesis*** or creation as:

- 1) the act of founding, establishing, building
 - i) the act of creating, creation
 - ii) creation i.e. thing created
 - (a) of individual things, beings, a creature, a creation
 - iii) anything created

"I can Ktesis or create an apple pie."
- 2) after a rabbinical usage (by which a man converted from idolatry to Judaism)
"AJ is a new creation when he was saved."
- 3) the sum or aggregate of things created
"God created the heaven and earth."
- 4) institution, ordinance
"Jesus is the head of the church and it is his creation"

So the logic here whatever Paul meant was one of these definitions. Taking this as a guide we must decide which one applies here. To do this we have set context to the use.

Paul's Context of Creation

1. Verse 18 -
 - a. Consider (means to bend your head and listen intently)
 - b. Suffer
2. Verse 19
 - a. Waits
 - b. Expects
3. Verse 20
 - a. Subject to frustration
 - b. Has the ability to choose
 - c. Can hope
4. Verse 21
 - a. Can be subject to something else
 - b. Can be liberated
 - c. Can be bound
 - d. Can decay
 - e. Brought to freedom and glory
5. Verse 22
 - a. Can groan
 - b. Can have pain
 - c. Can understand time

The definition we use must be carried out throughout the entire section and be a logical application.

There are four possibilities: 1) All created things including the smallest piece of sand to the entire universe, 2) angels, 3) all people and 4) the saved.

1. The most often meaning of Ktesis. Is the whole of creation. If so then it is this whole creation including the dumb rocks suffer, consider, bend their heads forward to listen, hope, expect, and knows. (don't think it applies.)
2. How about the angels? Both fallen or not fallen. Yes, the fallen are subject to bondage and corruption but those who did not rebel have already seen the children of God. (I don't think it is angels).
3. All people. The unrepentant don't care. They would not groan waiting for redemption.
4. Paul is writing and using this word KTESIS as a descriptor of the justified.

Conclusion: The only definition that could be consistently applied in our section is when Paul uses the word KTESIS, he is referring to saved people, those who have been converted! To choose any of the other three Paul was not consistent within the section, nor was he being consistent in the overall train of thought in the last five chapters.

Therefore the converted, the saved, the justified are subject to suffering. You, me, Mother Teresa, everyone.

But that brings us to the real question for tonight:

WHY DO CHRISTIAN'S SUFFER? _____

If we are not even to consider the suffering because of the “glory *that is to be revealed to us*”, why do we suffer.

Wouldn't it be great the moment we become KTESIS, a new creation, if God would either stop all my troubles, cares, suffering, frustration, pain OR just rapture us up to heaven and bestow our crowns and reveal all our splendor to the world that they might see the revelation of the Sons of God? Two great options for me. But God does neither.

Instead God asks us to:

1. To not consider
2. Resign yourself to suffering
3. To wait on God
4. To expect
5. Don't let frustration get to you.
6. Choose to carry on.
7. Hope.
8. Be liberated from the chaos.
9. Move toward freedom and glory
10. You will groan
11. You will have pain
12. But in time KTESIS again

Embrace the Chaos.

There is a purpose to suffering.

- In Luke 13:1-5 it says that suffering will bring **repentance**.
- In II Corinthians it says that suffering will bring **reliance**.
- In Hebrews 2:6-12 it says that suffering will bring **righteousness**.
- In II Cor 4:11-18 it says that suffering will bring **reward**.
- And here in Romans 8:18-23 it says that suffering will bring **revelation**.

In every one of us here has had times of crushing situations that would well be called suffering. No matter how we try to keep a good attitude for those around us. We want everyone to see us in our sinless and perfect robes.

Life is not always fantastic. It is not even “I'm Fine” all the time. Life is not always easy, life is messy.

MY ADVICE HERE.....

1. DON'T WASTE THE HARD TIMES AND EMBRACE THE CHAOS

2. NEVER LOOSE HOPE

Suffering is not optional. As long as we are on this side of heaven there will be bad times in our lives.

We don't get a free pass because of our justification. Jesus never said that suffering was going away. He healed hundreds, but every healed person grew old and died. Jesus fed thousands. But every hungry person who was fed ultimately was hungry again

Even if you live making every decision right.

Even if you love everyone around you.

Even if you keep fit, eat your veggies.

Even if you go to church and never miss a Sunday.

Even if you study hard. Even if you teach God's Word,

Even if you pray constantly.

You still will suffer.

There is no "Get out of Jail" card for Suffering.

BUT WHY? Are not we children of God? Are we not the adopted family of God?

Why are we subject to suffering, futility, corruption, groaning, pain, lack of prayer, and inner torment?

Why do we as the saved, who already have the first fruits of the Spirit, are a part of the waiting.

Why did God subject us to this? The creation, we the created to be Children of God are suffering. AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW THE WHY IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL.

Two weeks ago we found three parts of the ANTHROPOS.

- Our spirit which was created to communicate to God and be communicated to by God. It is the realm of our altruism and wants to do good things when we don't want to. It is the place where we feel bad when we see someone in want. It is the inner specialness that wants to be better.
- Our Bodies which we perceive the world. It is the physical shell. It also communicates its needs, desires, and wants to the soul. For the body it has feelings of hunger, pain, suffering, longing, and appetite.
- Our soul which was created to determine through thought and mind the attitudes and the incentives of action. It is the decision maker. It listens to the Spirit and the Body and determines the next step in life.

Because of this body we suffer, we sense futility, we understand corruption, we groan from the inside, we feel pain.

BUT WE HAVE A HOPE

Romans 8:24-27

24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, through perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

26 Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

In our imperfect triune nature, where is HOPE? _____

Where is salvation and justification? _____

REVELATIONS:

When we are justified:

- 1) The Spirit is changed to listen to God all the more. To understand the will of God.
- 2) The Soul is forgiven of all the previous bad decisions our sins by the Blood of Jesus.
- 3) But the body has not changed.
 - a) We continue to need, to desire, to want.
 - b) The spirit is willing to change but the body is weak.

Why do we suffer: our bodies have not changed. The body must be redeemed. It needs to be given a new one.

That is the hope. **Suffering causes hope.**

V26 the Holy Spirit helps in our weakness. Even when we are so far down we can't even pray.

HOPE ALWAYS has a context. Hope in the good times is just too easy. Hope in the not-so-good time is much more difficult. It appears Paul is telling us there will be times of crushing situations. Our lives are not always fantastic. Life is not easy. Life is messy.

But Jesus meets us there.

My brothers do not waste the hard times.

V26 God helps when our weakness drives us to our knees to pray and nothing comes out.

HOPE has a context. V24

In hope we are saved. Our hope for salvation is entirely based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus. But hope that is seen, hope that is already realized is not enough. Hope that has done its work is not enough for today's travail.

Hope is a waiting patiently. V25

V27 AND God who knows the mind of the Spirit, SEARCHES our hearts. (Soul) intercedes for us. In accordance to the Will of God.

- Hope in the good times is easy.
- When we get to heaven there will be no need for hope.
- Hope in the not-so-good times, not so much.
- There is HOPE in suffering.
- From frustration to liberty
- From Groaning to adoption
- From pain to an eager expectation
- From suffering to revelation
- From subjection or constraint to liberation.
- From decay to eternal life in freedom and glory.
- From agony of childbirth to Redemption of our bodies.
- AND WHEN WE REACH THAT PLACE OF HOPE in the middle of our suffering. When we come to that perfect accordance with the will of God.

V28

WE KNOW ALL THESE THINGS

All this suffering and pain and groaning, and futility, and frustration,
HAS A REASON.

God has subjected us to this environment of chaos because HE works for the good of us
WHO love him

Who have been called to this life of chaos and live in hope

THAT IS HIS PURPOSE.

Assignments for next week:

- READ Romans 8:28-29 at least four times.
- Write down any repeated words and look them up in a dictionary
- Write down any words that are new to our study.
- Pray about our responses to heresy, error and disagreements. These were outline in the preamble of this lesson.