

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

39 - So What's at the End of All My Suffering?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Nov. 2, 2014

Biblical groaning is a three-fold cord of groaning, hoping, and waiting. That's what sets it apart from the raw suffering and groaning that's going on all around us.

Romans 8:18-19 "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. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God."

It is characteristic of all of God's people to look weak.

2 Corinthians 10:10 "... his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." [Referring to the Apostle Paul]

1 Corinthians 1:26-28 HCS "²⁶ Brothers, consider your calling: Not many are wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. ²⁷ Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world — what is viewed as nothing — to bring to nothing what is viewed as something."

Even the Son of God Himself – Jesus Christ – was described this way by the prophet Isaiah who was predicting His arrival and said...

Isaiah 53:2 NIV "He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

You would never guess that we're going to rule and reign with Him! You would never guess what we're going to look like! It would blow your mind if you could see it today.

"... remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare... There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal... it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." *Readings for Meditation and Reflection*, C. S. Lewis, page 38

All of creation is eagerly waiting for this great day when the children of God will be revealed for who we really are... and will actually appear for what we are in glory!

This sense of waiting is not a passive sense of resignation. It's an eager and anxious hopefulness.

Romans 8:20 "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope"

Romans 8 is telling us that the best marriage in this world is still going to be frayed and flawed with some evidence of futility or frustration. The best children, the best jobs, and the best health scenarios all have a measure of futility or frustration that bleeds through at times, leaving you with the 'Oh, if only...' feeling that we so often have – because God Himself has subjected creation to futility.

But don't draw a wrong conclusion from this! God is not a cruel God. He has intentionally designed this life right now to NOT fully satisfy. You were made for another world and another person – Jesus Christ!

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." **C.S. Lewis**

Right now this futility serves the purpose of helping us to loosen our grip on the things of this world – and to look for and hope for something better and beyond!

There's hope that there's a day coming when our bodies are going to be redeemed... there will be NO MORE groaning!

Romans 8:23 "And not only they, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

Paul is telling us that it's OK - in fact it would be odd if you didn't find yourself groaning and eagerly waiting for the redemption of our bodies.

The God that subjected all of this to futility is the same God that's going to release it with an explosion of redemption and light – and there's nothing in all the universe that can stop it!

I Corinthians 15:50-57 "Brothers, I tell you this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption. Listen! I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal must be clothed with immortality. When this corruptible is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place: **Death has been swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?** Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Philippians 3:21 "He will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself."

Nothing in all this universe can keep Jesus Christ from making your body like His body!

There is a glorious freedom and celebration that all of creation is waiting for – watching us and looking forward to seeing what we're going to be when we are finally delivered from these sinful bodies of death and set FREE to glorify God with our perfect bodies forever!

Revelation 21:1-4 "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

That's an amazing picture of what is coming – a new earth and the people of God living with no more pain or sorrow or sickness or death. And best of all – God will not be far away... but will pitch His tent, so to speak, right in the middle of us – where we'll live together forever!