

Groaning and hoping

Romans 8:18-25

Environmental concerns

- Green Peace, Climate change, Renewable energy, Recycling...
- Reason to be concerned; Is God also concerned?
- Romans 8
 - Wonderful salvation
 - But present reality: Suffering

Suffering

- Romans 8:17 – “suffering with Christ”
- How do we respond to suffering?
 - On the one hand: We are children of God
 - On the other hand: We still live in this world
- Paul gives us important perspective

Romans 8:18-25 (ESV)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing 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 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The tension:
Saved and yet suffering

Facts that help us cope

Christian suffering anticipates future glory

- Rom 8:18 – we continue to experience suffering
- But, suffering pales in comparison to future glory
- “Glory” = magnificence, high value, great beauty
- God’s glory & new earth/heaven (Is 65:17; Rev 21:1)

Christian suffering does not happen in isolation

- Rom 8:19-22 – we are not alone in suffering
- Creation too is suffering...
 - Eager longing for release from bondage (v19)
 - Subjected to “futility” (v20) “corruption” (v21)
 - “Being subjected” (by him or Him - v20) – the Fall (Gen 3)
 - Groaning in pains of childbirth (v22)
- Isaiah 11:1-10 *“the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD”*

Christian suffering stimulates hope

- *Rom 8:23-25 – Christian status and attitude*
 - **Assurance.** “Firstfruits” of the Spirit (Eph 1:14)
 - **Patience.** Eagerly await our final adoption
 - **Expectation.** Final redemption of our bodies (Rev 21:4)
 - **Hope.** Suffering deepens our hope (Heb 11:1)

Summary: How do we bear suffering?

- We know there is a **future glory** waiting to be revealed
- We know we are **not the only ones** suffering
- We know it **increases our hope**

Response

- **Salvation**

- Confirm our salvation, present and future

- **Living in the present**

- Expect suffering: Not health & wealth
- Live with wisdom and love
- Look after God's creation

- **Live with hope (expect the future)**

- Is our hope (expectation) strong?
- Do we wait in patience on the Lord?
- Are we ready to meet Jesus when He returns?

Prayer