

Theme: The key to overcoming all of the suffering and sorrow in this life is not denying it, nor thinking on the good things experienced in this life, but rather in focusing of the immeasurable joy to be found in the glory of the age to come.

I. Intro - The Suffering Church in Egypt

- A. Meeting the families of the Egyptian martyrs
- B. Unspeakable suffering they continue to endure
- C. How do you keep hope in such suffering?
- D. Paul shows us how in this text - and this is their answer

II. Paul's Astounding Statement

- A. Suffering is nothing next to the glory to come
I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
Romans 8:18
 - 1. He states the suffering of this age can't even begin to compare with the glory that will come
 - 2. Not just that the glory will be more - they can not even be compared the glory is so much greater
 - 3. Paul uses language that stresses the certainty of this - "consider"; "will be" (not just future tense - note of certainty)
- B. He has made this statement before
For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 2
Corinthians 4:17
 - 1. Troubles are light but glory is weighty
 - 2. Troubles are momentary but glory is eternal

- 3. Eternal glory FAR outweighs temporary troubles
- 4. The same point as Romans 8:18 (see verse)

C. A litany of suffering in this world

- 1. Global poverty on a crushing scale
 - a. 1.2 billion people (22 percent) live on less than \$1.25 a day
 - b. 2.7 billion live on less than \$2.50 a day
- 2. Early death of children
 - a. Sub-Saharan children 15x more likely to die before age 5 than children in developed regions
 - b. 438,000 people died of malaria in 2014 - 70% of those were children under the age of 5 years.
- 3. Refugees - 65.3 million worldwide
 - a. 33,000 people a day forced to flee their homes
 - b. Many of these people will never be able to return home
- 4. Terrorism - ISIS, Boko Haram, Hezbollah, Al-Queda
- 5. Persecution of Christians
 - a. Paul is certainly including persecution as part of the sufferings here in the context of Romans 8
 - b. Christians are being ostracized, harassed, imprisoned, and killed in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, North Korea, etc.
- 6. Personal stories of suffering we all know and have
 - a. Friend just diagnosed with ALS
 - b. Uncle Butch - died from cancer; son died same day

- c. Andrew Vache - 33 year old husband and father - just taken too soon

D. How can Paul say this?

1. Is Paul ignoring or minimizing suffering?
2. Is he simply expressing a “stiff upper lip”?
3. Is this mere wishful thinking? Or is it more?

III. Our Present Age of Suffering and Darkness

A. Our Present Age - Suffering

I consider that **our present sufferings** are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
Romans 8:18

1. Present - speaking of sufferings common to this age
2. Paul is not denying suffering - he is saying it is part of the warp and woof of this age in which we live
3. Paul would shatter any idea of wishful thinking that we can somehow escape the suffering that is part of this age. Christians are not exempt from this suffering - in fact as we will see we can expect more, not less of it.
 - a. As Christians, we can expect extra persecution from the world
 - b. As Christians, we acutely experience the struggle with sin as we long to be free of its grip and presence
 - c. As Christians we know this is not how it is supposed to be - and we long for it to be corrected!

B. Paul's personal knowledge of suffering

1. Paul persecuted and killed Christians

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
¹⁰ And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. Acts 26:9–11

- a. Paul knew suffering - he had caused much of it himself
 - b. This fact remained in Paul's consciousness throughout life
2. Paul struggled with sin in his life as a believer
For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! Romans 7:22–25
- a. Who can recognize this struggle in their own life?
 - b. Paul struggled against sin - and he hated its pull in his life
 - c. If there is no struggle against sins deep pull - we are not Christians!

3. Paul suffered much in his life

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 2 Corinthians 11:24–27

- a. Wow - what a list of suffering!
- b. Who would want to sign up to be on Paul's team?
- c. All this not worth comparing with the glory to come!

4. How can Paul say this???

IV. The Glory To Come

A. What Paul does not say

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

1. He does not point all of the good things about life
2. Life is good - because of God's common grace
3. But that is not Paul's deep comfort in the face of this suffering

B. The comfort of the glory to come

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

1. The comfort - the glory to be revealed
2. Not speaking of our present experience - the glory that will be revealed in the future
3. The sufferings are part of this passing age, but the glory is part of the eternal age to come
4. The key to overcoming all of the suffering and sorrow in this life is not denying it, nor thinking on the good things experienced in this life, but rather in focusing of the immeasurable joy to be found in the glory of the age to come.

C. The glory of the age to come (see teachings August/ Sept 2007)

1. The curse will be removed - no more sorrow, tears, pain, suffering or death
2. No more struggle with sin - we will be free from it penalty, power and presence!
3. We will not be persecuted but rather rewarded
4. God's purposes in creation will find their fulfillment - God's blessing everywhere and ever expanding, we fully find and express our potential
5. We will experience full fellowship with one another as we join the amazing wedding feast of God and His people
6. We will see the face of God for which we were created and have longed our whole lives

7. As we see God and bask in His glory, it will penetrate our very being so that we will share in and radiate the glory of God

Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also **share in his glory**.¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with **the glory that will be revealed in us**. Romans 8:17–18

- a. The glory that will be revealed ‘in us’/‘to us’
- b. Greek could be understood either way - but note v17
- c. We will share in the glory of Christ - His glory will be revealed ‘in us’!
- d. Seeing God, our every cell will pulse & radiate with His glory, finding ultimate joy & fulfillment - and this will grow throughout eternity!

8. Paul had a foretaste of the future glory (2 Corinthians 12) and it was so incredible all his sufferings paled to nothing

D. All of this is given to us in Christ

1. All ours because of Christ and our union with Him
For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:15–17
 - a. In Christ we are given the Spirit, adopted as sons
 - b. We are co-heirs with Christ because of the Gospel
 - c. In Christ we will bear the glory of God!

V. Applying the Word

A. Realize that all of this is available only in Christ

1. Christ alone is our hope of glory (Colossians 1:27)
2. Apart from Him our future is worse - not better
3. Apart from Him the suffering of this life is just a foretaste of the suffering to come
4. But in Him we are guaranteed to share in God’s glory

B. Meditate on the glory to come

1. God gives us these glimpses to help us persevere
2. Life is hard & will harden us - unless we remind ourselves of the glory to come
3. In coming weeks - habits of grace to help us

The Glory To Come

Romans 8:18

July 24, 2016

Prayer

Jude 1:24-25

Teaching keywords: Glorification; God’s glory; hope; fall and curse; suffering; sorrow

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:24–25

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