

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

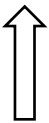
Lesson Sixteen

Romans 8:18-28

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
Romans 8:18*

Day 1

Pray: Psalm 119:18, 36-37



Father, open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things in your word. Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain. Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

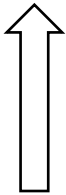
Read: Romans 8:18-28. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

Day 2- Romans 8:18-21

1. In verse 17 Paul stated that in order to be glorified with Jesus we must suffer with him. In verse 18, how does Paul assure us that suffering with Jesus, (whether through persecution, suffering for doing good, or other suffering that God allows into our lives), is worth it?
 - a. What are your thoughts about this?



Oh Father, we are so frail and our hearts break with the suffering and pain of this world. It's hard to imagine that there is something that would make this harsh suffering seem pale, yet we believe you. Hold on to us Lord and strengthen our faith; help us to keep looking at Jesus as you lead us home.

Glory- God's glory is the radiance of his holiness. The weight or devastating beauty of his manifold perfection¹—the weight or impressiveness of who God is². People seeing his greatness.³

Digging Deeper

What do you learn from the following verses about the glory that is to be revealed? How does glory that is revealed to us (v. 18) fit with our glorification (vs. 17 and 21)?

⁶ Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory...But as it is

written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him—" 1 Corinthians 2:6-7,9

¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

¹¹ To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Scholar's Note: The word *to* in v.18 *the glory that will be revealed to us*, can be translated as *to* or *in*. (Different Bible translations render it both ways.) John Stott shows how both are true: "This end-time disclosure will be made 'to us' because we will see it, and *in us*, because we will share in it and be changed by it."⁴



The solace we can grab hold of as we endure suffering is the dazzling promise of future glory. This is comfort that belongs exclusively to followers of Jesus. The pain and suffering of this world is not all there is for us. One day we will be supremely and eternally happy! So much so, that the suffering that we have experienced will seem light and momentary. How can this be? The only answer is that the glory to come is beyond our wildest imaginations. This doesn't change the pain we feel now, but it enables us to endure it and not despair as we cling to this promise in faith.

- ◆ All of us experience suffering to some degree or another and if you haven't, you will. That is the nature of life on this earth. Some of us suffer in ways no one else except God can see. Fill in the blank with any suffering you are experiencing. My present suffering with _____ is not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed to me. Continue to preach this promise to yourself until it is so close to your heart you can reach for it at any moment.

- ◆ If you are in a time of peace and joy, then rejoice and thank God! (But even the pang of knowing it won't last is a kind of sorrow)
- ◆ Spend some time reflecting on the passage below:

³All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, ⁴and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. ⁵And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

⁶So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 3:3-7 (NLT)

Picture and Ponder

“Our present sufferings are like an ugly porch which leads to the threshold of an unspeakably beautiful mansion.”⁵

2. In what way is creation “suffering” according to verses 20-22?

Picture and Ponder

“[Sin is] the reason why the entire cosmos is subject to death and disintegration. God created Adam and Eve to be the centerpiece and the pinnacle of creation. When they sinned, their disobedience of God’s loving law not only had implications on their lives, it also had implications on the entire cosmos.”⁶

3. What is the freedom that creation is eagerly waiting for?

For Discussion:

Verse 20 tells us that *creation was subjected to futility*. Other translations use the words *vanity, frustration, frailty, something that cannot fulfill its purpose*. How do we see this truth at work in nature? What do you imagine nature will be like when, as verse 21 tells us, it is set free from its bondage to corruption and glorified along with followers of Jesus?

Picture and Ponder

"There is a glory coming that will be so blindingly powerful that when it falls upon us, it will envelop the whole created order and glorify it along with us—we will bring nature with us into a renewed, restored, redeemed reality...We will be as perfectly holy as Christ, and thus as dazzlingly beautiful as he is. That is what glory is."⁷

For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isaiah 55:12

Day 3- Romans 8:22-25

1. In verse 22, Paul compares the current state of creation to labor pains. How do you think the hope or eager expectation and anticipation of a baby would affect labor pain or the response to labor pain?

2. What phrase in verse 23 describes life on this earth for us now?
 - a. How can groaning inwardly and waiting eagerly co-exist?

3. "The firstfruits (v.23) of an incoming harvest were, literally, the first batch—and they were a foretaste of what was to come."⁸ What has God given us now as a taste of the abundance to come according to verse 23?

Digging Deeper

Read the following verses to see some of the firstfruits of the Spirit. How does the Spirit work in us now? What kind of redemption does he accomplish in us presently?

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people... Ephesians 1:17-18 (NIV)

...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. 1 Peter 1:2

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26

4. What final work of the Spirit do we eagerly wait for, according to verse 23 (and verse 11)?

Picture and Ponder

"...it is *this* body that we care about and *this* world we enjoy that God promises us, all renewed. So we do not have to cling to it now. We can take risks following Jesus. We can lose all things to gain Christ, because, having him, we have all things."⁹

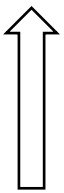
For Discussion:

Five times in two verses (vs.24-25) Paul mentions hope. Biblical or Christian hope is eager and desirous anticipation of some good with the confident expectation of obtaining it.

- a. How is this hope different from the way we commonly use the word hope in English?
- b. What is Christian hope based on?
- c. What truths enable us to wait patiently?
- d. One of the characteristics of hope that we see in verses 24-25 is that the hoped-for thing is not seen. What are the implications of this for us?
- e. People are longing for hope. How does talking about Biblical hope provide an avenue to share the gospel with others?

Picture and Ponder

"The taste of the Spirit we have now empowers us to wait patiently because the Spirit is making us more and more like Jesus."¹⁰



Father help me to be captivated by this hope of a glorious future. Help me to set my sight on the reality of unseen things and to believe your promises of eternal joy in your renewed creation so certainly that it dominates my thinking in the midst of the trials of this life.



Reflect on this exhortation by Ray Ortlund: "Whatever the condition of your heart, look to Jesus. See him there enthroned over all, the Lord of nature and history. See

him there, the lover of our souls and even of our bodies. See him there, declaring promises not too trivial for us to believe but so great we struggle to swallow them whole. Look to Jesus. Behold his glory. And whatever the world may say, say with all true Christians, 'Give me Jesus. You can have all this world, but give me Jesus.'"¹¹

- ◆ Describe how you begin to imagine the future glory that God promises to his children.

Day 4- Romans 8:26-27

Paul has been talking about persevering through the suffering that comes from living in our broken world, by the hope of God's promise of future glory. Now he moves from hope for the future to help in the present.

Scholar's Note: *Help*: to lay hold along with, to strive to obtain with others, help in obtaining, to take hold with another. Undertake to lighten a load.

1. Let's look at the implications of each phrase in verse 26.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness-

- a. What are some of our human weaknesses that hinder our praying?

- b. How does it affect you to know that the Spirit helps you in these weaknesses?

We do not know what to pray for as we ought-

- c. How have you experienced this?

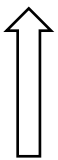
The Spirit himself intercedes for us-

- d. Write the definition of intercede-

- e. How does this truth impact you?

With groanings too deep for words-

- f. This is the third time we have seen the word groan in this passage (vs.22,23,26). Creation groans, we groan and now the Spirit groans. We sigh and groan inwardly waiting for our broken world to be renewed. What does it say to you that the Spirit is also groaning as he prays with you?



Father thank you for sending your Spirit to help me pray! Forgive me for letting my weaknesses stop me from praying when you have provided so abundantly.

Picture and Ponder

"As far as prayer is concerned, there is a profound union of our spirits with God's Spirit."¹²

- 2. Look at verse 27 in the NLT. In what way is the Spirit translating our weakness in prayer?



God never leaves us on our own, with only our own resources, even in our prayers. The Spirit himself, prays with us, transposing our jumbled thoughts, our tears, and wordless longings into a prayer language that aligns with God's heart.

- ◆ What helplessness have you experienced in prayer? How does the Spirit's personal involvement in your prayers comfort you in overwhelming weakness?

- ◆ How does the reality of the Spirit praying with you change the way you think about prayer?

- ◆ What do you learn about God from the truth in verse 26?

Picture and Ponder

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
unuttered or expressed,
the motion of a hidden fire
that trembles in the breast.*

*Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
the falling of a tear,
the upward glancing of an eye
when none but God is near.¹³*

Day 5- Romans 8:28

Paul has been assuring us that the suffering we experience now, painful as it may be, is not even worth comparing to the glory that is to come to us. Then he has showed us that God has given his children hope and help from the Spirit enabling us to persevere. Now he tops it off with one of the most precious promises that belong to us. Pray now that the Spirit would give you fresh eyes and a deeper understanding of this treasured promise.

1. Write out verse 28 in the NLT.

2. What do you learn about God or yourself as God's child, from each phrase:

And we know-

that God causes-

everything to work together-

for the good-

of those who love God-

and are called according to his purpose for them-



Romans 8:28 is an astounding promise for genuine believers! Paul shows in this verse that love for God is the defining characteristic of a genuine Christian— not churchgoing, Bible reading, rule following or even good deed doing. When you take stock of your heart, let love for God be the first thing you look for.

- ◆ What does love for someone look like in a relationship? Does this describe your relationship with God? If not, talk to him about this, ask God to cause your heart to love him.

Picture and Ponder

"... Romans 8:28 is making the astonishing claim that God is at work behind the scenes in all things, overruling the devil's malice and our own folly, so that the various experiences of our lives coordinate together to advance God's loving purpose. He carefully joins one moment with another, however distant, so that his plan succeeds. Doesn't this assurance moderate the bitterness of our regrets?"¹⁴

3. Look ahead to verse 29. What is the ultimate good God is working in us and for us?
 - a. How is this different from the good you want in your life?



Romans 8:28 is a promise for every day. Even for every hour and moment because God is working *everything* for our good. John Piper points us to the all-encompassing nature of this promise: "All the sinful states of our hearts are owing to unbelief in God's superabounding willingness and ability to work for us in every situation of life so that everything turns out for our good. Anxiety, misplaced shame, indifference, regret, covetousness, envy, lust, bitterness, impatience, despondency, pride—these are all sprouts from the root of unbelief in the promises of God."

- ◆ Reflect on the last couple days. Can you trace the sins you committed back to not taking hold of this promise?
- ◆ How does this promise teach us to look at the bad things that come into our life?
- ◆ How should we look at the good things that come into our life?
- ◆ What does this promise mean for us when we sin and fall short of what God wants for us?

- ◆ What does this promise do for your perspective on the daily circumstances in your life?

One Thing:

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

¹ Piper, John

² Burns, Scott

³ Burns, Scott

⁴ Stott, John p. 237

⁵ Stuart Oylott as quoted in Michael Kruger <https://cdn.rts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Sermon-Notes-Romans-L23.pdf>

⁶ Lin, John. New City Catechism

⁷ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (p. 35). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁸ Keller, Timothy. Romans 8-16 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series Book 2) (p. 37). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁹ Ortlund, Ray. Supernatural Living for Natural People . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ ibid

¹² Ibid.

¹³ James Boice as quoted in Ortlund, Ray. Supernatural Living for Natural People . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

¹⁴ Ortlund, Ray. Supernatural Living for Natural People . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

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