

Putting Suffering in Perspective

Romans 8:18-27

Introduction

I God's Perspective on Suffering

A. Suffering in the believer

1. It is an **expected** part of the Christian life
 - a. Jesus suffered - Heb 2:10; 5:8-10
 - b. **Paul** suffered - 2 Cor 11:23-27; 2 Cor 1:8-9
 - c. We will suffer - Jn 16:33; 1 Pet 4:12-14
2. It is not worth comparing to our future **glory**
- 2 Cor 4:16-18; 3:18; 1 Pet 1:6-7

B. Suffering in creation

1. Creation waits for the sons of God to be **revealed**
 - a. With eager expectation - Is 65:17; 2 Pet 3:10-13
2. Creation was subjected to **frustration**:
 - a. Not by its own choice
 - b. But by the will of **him** who subjected it - Gen 3:17-19
3. Creation hopes to be:
 - a. **Liberated** from bondage to decay
 - b. Brought into the glorious **freedom** of God's children
- Acts 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2; Rev 21:1; 22:3

II The Effect of Suffering

A. The whole **creation** is groaning

1. Like a woman in child birth - Jn 16:21-22
2. Up to the present time - Lev 18:24-25

B. **Believers** are groaning inwardly: - 2 Cor 5:1-5

1. We have the first fruits of the Spirit - James 1:18
2. We wait eagerly for our **adoption** as sons:
 - a. The redemption of our **bodies** - Phil 3:20-21

III God's Provision in Our Suffering

A. God provides us with the **hope** of redemption - 1 Pet 1:13

1. It is **unseen** - Heb 11:1; 2 Cor 4:18
2. It is not yet realized - Rom 4:20-21
3. It is to be **waited** for patiently - Lam 3:25-26; James 5:7-8

B. God provides us with His **Spirit**

1. He helps us in our weakness
 - a. We don't know what to pray for - Eph 6:18; Jd 1:20-21
2. He intercedes for us with inexpressible groans - Rom 8:34

C. God provides us with "**connection**"

1. He searches our **hearts** - 1 Sam 16:7; Ps 139:23-24
2. He knows the mind of the Spirit - 1 Cor 2:10-12
 - a. Who intercedes for us in accordance with God's **will**

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time to consider the following questions:

1. What frustrates you most about living in a sinful, fallen world?
2. Is all suffering commendable and beneficial? [Hint: Read 1 Peter 2:19-23] Is most of your suffering the result of unjust suffering or the result of doing what is wrong?
3. The Bible warns us that we should expect suffering in this life. Are you suffering in some way right now? How have you been responding? According to the following scriptures, what is the purpose of your suffering and how should you respond? [Read Rom 5:2-5; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet 4:12-13; 2 Cor 4:16-18]
4. Some have suggested that overpopulation (people) and greed (industrialization) are the cause of the earth's present state of decay. In what respect is this view right and wrong at the same time? What is the ultimate solution to the earth's problems?
5. According to Romans 8:22-27, what has God provided for your comfort and encouragement in the midst of your present sufferings? Are you relying on these resources? What steps can you take today to benefit from these God-given resources?
6. Take a few moments to pray back to God some of the scriptures that were most meaningful to you during this study. Ask Him for a heart that rejoices even in life's present sufferings as you anticipate your final redemption at His second coming.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Copyright, Bob Hallman, 1996-2021, All Rights Reserved.