

Transformed, Part 11, Romans 8:17-18 “Suffering and Glory”

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 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.

Last time we left off in v.17 considering the glorious reality – We have a standing today as joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Today I want to begin by considering a few Popular misconceptions of Christianity.

A) These are ideas and statements that many pp believe are in the Bible.

“God helps those who help themselves.” – The Bible teaches God helps those who can’t help themselves.

“God will not give me more than I can handle.” – God is always giving us more than we can handle – that is often how He moves us from being self dependent to God dependent.

Can anyone say – Red Sea – Jericho – Goliath – Gideon – 300 men up against 185,000 – Cancer –

“If you had enough faith you could be healed.”

Paul the apostle – greatest Christian suffered the most – had an ailment that he was not healed of.

“If I’m a Christian, God will protect me from pain and suffering.”-

A) Why do Christians suffer – why do bad things happen to good people.

It was about 20 yrs ago a rabbi named Harold Kushner published a book that became a best-seller. The book sold millions of copies and is still popular today. Rabbi Kushner and his wife had suffered the loss of a child to a terrible disease. Out of the pain of that loss they began to examine the question: **Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?**

One of the reasons the book became an instant best seller is it touched a universal chord.

A) Everybody sooner or later wrestles with the one-word question Why? Why, Lord? Why me? Why now?

B) Usually the thinking goes something like this: if God is for us - shouldn’t everything be working out for good in my life?

C) Isn’t that what the Bible says? Romans 8:28

1){Not exactly – we will see when we get to Rom 8:28

D) Today we want to consider the subject of suffering.

1) Many here are – many have – chances are you will.

Now the apostle John wrote in 1 John 3: 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

A) This is the great hope of the believer - one day we are going see to Jesus !

1) We will be like Him / when we get to glory

B) In V. 17 Paul reveals what is the ultimate end of what it means to be Heirs of God and Joint heirs w/ Christ

1) Paul says we are going to be glorified together w/ Christ –

2) Oh what a day that will be ! Most of us here can't wait -

D) But we also notice in this passage that Paul links 2 themes together that we would probably not put together / sufferings & glory

1) HURTS & HALLELUJAHS

And notice the way that Paul puts this: We suffer with Him- that we may be glorified together.

“provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” ESV

“we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.” AMPLIFIED

Paul seems to be indicating that the process of being glorified is going to involve suffering. There is no escaping that.

A) Suffering and glory go hand in hand.

B) Now before we consider how God uses suffering in our lives let's consider Different kinds of suffering

First of all, there is that suffering which comes to us as a result of our own foolishness & our own sin.

C) We share this, of course, with all other human beings -- the pain, the heartache and grief, the tears and misery that we cause ourselves.

1) because of our stubbornness, and our selfishness, and our rebellion.

D) Often times the only benefit in this is, it can cause us to be broken to the point that we are humbled to the extent we see our need for the Lord.

1) Like the prodigal in the pig pen, we come to our senses and finally surrender to the Love of our heavenly Father.

Then there is that suffering which comes from circumstances over which we have no control –It is what we call accidents .

A) Unforeseen circumstances that come crashing into our lives/ sometimes they are the results of others' actions. {Car wreck

There is the suffering we can endure that is the result of another person's sin where we are victimized. –

A) We Have to learn to deal with the ramifications of living in a sin plagued world.

There is the suffering that comes from believing in Christ!

A) Which I think is the primary suffering Paul has in mind as He writes this.

B) The believers he was writing to were enduring the harshness of the Roman emperor Nero –who had gone on a rampage against believers in Jesus.

There is the suffering which comes from involving ourselves deliberately and willingly in the problems and heartaches of others –

A) Shared suffering -- when we deliberately get ourselves involved in somebody else's need and suffer along with them.

Suffering that comes from health issues –
Suffering that comes from financial issues

God can use all these forms of suffering for His purposes in our lives!

A) That is Bigger picture that we must embrace if we are going to be healthy believers living in the midst of a fallen world.

So I want us to consider today 5 ways God can use suffering for His purposes in our lives.

#1 It can Deepen our love for Jesus.

A) If there were no afflictions and difficulties and troubles and pain,

B) Our fallen hearts would fall ever more deeply in love with the comforts and securities and pleasures of this world

1) instead of falling more deeply in love with our inheritance beyond this world, namely, God himself.

C) Suffering is appointed for us in this life as a great mercy to keep us from loving this world more than we should

1) and to make us rely on God who raises the dead.

"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

#2 Suffering gives us a unique union with Christ. if indeed we suffer with Him

A) In Phil. 1:29 Paul said that our suffering for Christ was a Privilege *29 For to you it has been **granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,***

B) Jesus told His disciples to not be surprised if the world hated them – because the world hated Jesus.

C) “The light came into the darkness, but the darkness hated the light because the light exposed the evil deeds of darkness.” John 3:20

D)The early part of the book of Acts records that the first Christians actually rejoiced in their sufferings

1)They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the sake of the Lord .

E) In suffering we enter into a special union w/ the Lord - we are able to better understand what He went through for us .

1) Also reminded of how He understands what we are going through

Remember what Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus when Saul was going to persecute the Church

A) Jesus met Saul & said *Saul Saul why are you persecuting me*

B) There Jesus was signifying that because He is in us & we are in Him, the things that we go through He goes through w/ us

1)Our suffering is w/ Him & through suffering we enter into a special union w/ the Lord.

C) Martyrdom of Stephen – Jesus is seen Standing in heaven at the right hand of the Father – not sitting – standing in honor of this fallen saint.

D)Here is a Bible Promise we don’t like to claim. – “Those who desire to live godly in Christ will suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12

#3 Suffering is preparing us for eternity!

Paul says in v. 18 that *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

A)Paul put it this way in 2 Corinthians 4

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Now, that statement would sound like a bunch of hot air if it didn't come from a man like Paul.

Here is a man who suffered immensely

A)No one in this room has gone through even a fraction of the suffering that Paul endured. He was stoned with rocks, he was jailed,

B)He was shipwrecked and left afloat on the sea; He was beaten with rods many times; beaten with 39 stripes five times,

B) He was beset with physical infirmity that bothered him all of his life;

1) In light of all that Paul says **it doesn't compare to the glory that awaits us**

C)The problem is when we are suffering that tends to be all that we see!

1)The greatest trial is always the trial that I am going through.

D)We tend to make careful note of our suffering. We make detailed reports of what we go through in our sufferings.

We like to sing the blues - *No body knows the trouble I have seen* *No body knows my sorrow* - That is us !

But Paul desperately wanting us to see the bigger picture beyond the immediate when he says:

A)The suffering we are going through is not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with the glory that is to follow."

B)To put it another way – the apostle is saying **that the intensity** of the suffering we experience is not even a drop in the bucket compared **w/ the intensity** of glory that is coming.

D) The suffering might look bad, the situation you are in might seem - horrible but remember -it doesn't compare w/ the glory that awaits

1) In other words see the big picture & understand the trials are to prepare us for glory .

King George was visiting a Potter – / saw a woman working w/ the China that was being prepared for the Palace

A)He was surprised by what she was doing – painting the inside of the cups black –

B) He questioned her concerning why she was doing that, as no black china was ordered for the Palace .

C) **This is what He was told** – Underneath the Black was gold & when the cup came thru the fire, the black was **burnt off** & the gold was **Burnt in**

D)That friends is what the Master Potter is doing w/ you & me /

1)He puts us thru the fire so that the black can be burnt off / the gold burnt in

Don't lose sight of the goal!

In the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, a Japanese gymnast, Shun Fujimoto, was competing in the team competition. Somehow, during the floor exercises, he broke his right knee. It was obvious to all reasonable observers that he would be forced to withdraw (from competition).

But Fujimoto was a fierce competitor .

On the following day, Fujimoto competed in his strongest event, the rings. His routine was excellent, but the critical point lay ahead - the dismount.

Without hesitation, Fujimoto ended with a twisting, triple somersault. **There was a moment of intense quiet** as he landed with tremendous impact on his wounded knee.

Then came thundering applause as he stood his ground.

Later, reporters asked about that moment and he replied, **"The pain shot through me like a knife. It brought tears to my eyes. But now I have a gold medal and the pain is gone."**

When we get to Heaven we are going to see Jesus and see that we have become like Him & receive a glorious crown - and the pain is going to be gone !

See there are Three Things You Can Do in the mist of suffering !

A) In the face of suffering, you can either: Break out, Break down, or Break through --

B) If you break out, you rebel, you break out of the boundaries; you run away from the problem

1)you grow bitter and hateful and hard.

C) Or, you can break down; there is much of that happening today – people becoming neurotic, being filled with self-pity,

1)running away from life, withdrawing from society.

What would you think of a man who was informed that His great uncle had just died and left him a 40 million dollar inheritance.

A)On his drive to pick it up –his car broke down a mile from the bank where he was to pick up his check.{He had to walk the rest of the way.

B)Now if during that mile walk he was cursing his car the whole time –wouldn't you think – what a fool – big deal car broke – buy 100 cars

C)Break out- Break down – or

D) Or, by the grace of God, the Christian can **break through** & accept the suffering with joy, realizing that God is using it to prepare you ..glory

1) We realize there is a work being done in us - this is God's training school / training ground in preparing us for eternity

#4 The suffering is producing something in us now.

Romans 5:3-4

“We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

James declared in Ch. 1: 2 *“Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”*

This is the BIG PICTURE that always needs to be before our eyes / the trials & the testings / the suffering is producing - working something even now!

Big picture- Make you more like Jesus!

A)A silversmith was asked - "Do you sit while the work of refining is going on?" The silversmith replied, "Oh, yes, I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace because if the refining time is exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be damaged."

B)**Where is God when it hurts** – Answer: right there!

1)Jesus watched as His disciples strained against the storm – came to them when it seemed hopeless.

C)He is there, watching the pain we go through – loving father – knowing it is necessary for our growth.

1)Our development

Teaching Amy to ride a Bike – down to the local middle school – dirt track – fall grass or dirt not the asphalt – good plan.

A)Like most kids she fell a few times and Denise couldn't handle it – stop for today. – Go home – **today or no day!**

B)Now I wasn't jumping up and down when – she fell. –But I knew it was necessary if she was going to learn to ride.

C)**Our heavenly father is the same way** – He is not jumping up and down when we suffer – but He knows – it is necessary – produces patience. Perseverance, character and hope

The Silversmith was asked how do you know when the silver is refined, and he answered, that is easy – it is when I can see my reflection.

Sometimes – I wonder –Lord how much more patient do I need to get?

D)Then He reminds me of how patient Jesus has been with me and I think – ok, a lot more.

#5 Suffering forms a special bond in believers.

A)Opportunity to show love

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

C) There is a shared camaraderie – Suffering.

1) Root canal – Hard labor –

D) Relatability – we can share how Jesus got us through.

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

Special community – We have this family! Suffering brings us together in a special way.

A) You guys are so good at that!

B) Love the fact that – someone is going through it – home group rallies, friends support.

C) **Sign of a healthy body!** – Many churches the tendency is to call the Pastor - Superman – or call the church office – you guys need to do something.

1) **You guys just respond.**

D) I often hear about someone's situation days after it has happened – only in the context of – this is the situation – this is what is being done.

love that about this church. – Willing to invest in each others' lives – willing to share in the suffer. of your brothers and sisters.

A) Not a rich church financially – Rich in love – rich in service.

B) That is why it is so important that you get and stay connected – don't live on the fringe.

1) The church is not an organization, but a **living organism** – people connected by blood – the blood of Jesus doing life together.

C) Struggling together, suffering together, loving together, rallying together.

1) I love being a part of this body!

D) As we close today – opportunity to rally around those who are struggling – suffering -