

SERMON GUIDE

Hopeful Sufferers: Glory Awaits

Romans 8:18-25



4.21.2024

SERMON NOTES:

We're wrapping up our series today called "Hopeful Sufferers." In the first two weeks, we've looked at the reality that all people, Christians included, will experience trials and tribulations. Jesus promises us this. The Scriptures show it throughout. The reason we don't realize this is because we live in a me-centric view of the world. We think God exists to make life easy and comfortable for us. We also don't know the Bible very well. So we create opinion-based theology and hold God accountable when He doesn't go along. Last week we looked at why suffering and afflictions exist: as a part of God's plans in the world & to deepen our dependence upon Him. Knowing God is working through our pain gives us hope. Our trials are not pointless or chance accidents in the world.

Today, we're looking at how all of this is endurable because of one reality: the hope of glory. Eternal life with God awaits us.

When Kaleb got sick and had his stroke in October of 2017, everything changed for us. Life as we had grown accustomed was never the same. Kaleb lost his speech and motor skills, and even though he recovered some of those motor skills for a season, he lost them as chronic neurological pain riddled his body. These were the hardest days of my and Katrina's lives. Kaleb had to be cared for 24/7. His joyful spirit never changed, but he was in pain. And nothing was making it better. His lung issues worsened too. His ability to cough on command to keep his lungs clear was no longer possible after the stroke. Our trips to the hospital to treat pneumonia increased.

In November 2019, he went to the hospital for a few weeks of respiratory treatment. He went home on oxygen, for the first time in his life. But within a few days, we were back at the hospital. Even with oxygen, he couldn't keep his levels where they needed to be. After another week at the hospital, on the highest oxygen levels they could have him on, the doctor mentioned we needed to have bigger conversations about the possibility of his lungs not ever improving. This is when I realized for the first time there was a possibility this wasn't going to be like our hundreds of prior hospitalizations. The next day, after no improvement, and greater struggles with maintaining his oxygen on full support, we had to decide to either subject him to surgery to place a permanent breathing tube in him (meaning he would be on a ventilator at home) or let him pass.

With tears and hearts broken, we decided to trust our son into the hands of the Lord. We called our family and asked for the girls to be brought to the hospital. I'll never forget walking them down the hallway to his room then stopping short of his room and squatting down to tell them what was happening. We spent some time in his room just the 5 of us, before our family, friends, and elders of the church joined us there. We read Scripture and we sang his favorite song 10,000 Reasons as he

went home to the Lord. My son, my only son, was dead at 15 years old. All the years of wondering if I might have to experience that reality had now come to pass. We were devastated, but not hopeless.

What informed our decision-making in this absolute gut-wrenching circumstance? How did we think through preserving his life at all costs versus letting him pass? Knowing Kaleb would go to the Lord. Knowing Kaleb would be in Heaven: free from his suffering, sickness, and pain. Free from his broken body and more alive than ever.

Where did we come to believe this? This is the testimony of the Scriptures. The gospel gives us this good news and hope. Jesus promises us these things. We have something much greater than simply surviving. And though our pain was so deep...we were anchored by the reality that it wasn't the end of the story.

On December 1st, 2019, my life and heart shifted heavenward. "Come, Lord, Jesus, come" is the cry of my heart. Why?

Scripture Exegesis: Romans 8:18-25

VS 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.

Paul doesn't minimize suffering in this verse. He says that these present sufferings (which are real) are not comparable to the glory that awaits us. They don't hold a candle to the wonder and joy coming for those in Christ.

VS 19-23 -- 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

Paul then shows that the pain and suffering we experience is something the whole creation groans under the weight of. Creation longs to be put right. It groans like a mother giving birth, awaiting the release from the agony and celebration of the new life. This creation groans in anticipation of a New Heaven and New Earth. Jesus' return is the catalyst for all things made new. The Christian gospel is not just about having our souls saved, but about a new world to come. The dead will be raised in glorified bodies, the world will be restored. This is the picture of the end of Revelation. This is where history is heading.

VS 24-25 -- 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.

Paul says that it is into this hope we were saved. This becomes our inheritance at salvation. It becomes our hope and anchor amidst these present sufferings. With patience and eagerness, we await the fulfillment of this promise and hope. Hope is rooted in what is expected and ahead of us. This promised future is why Christians can suffer with hope. We know where history is headed. We know what the future will bring. And it is good news.

What hope do we have in this life with things we can't reverse or change? The victory of Christ and the promise of God is a world made new: no sin, no death, no disease, no disabilities or deformities, no betrayal, and no pain.

Heaven awaits us. The hope of Heaven fuels us with the capacity to endure trials and suffering in this life. This life is not the final word.

The days after Kaleb's death were a blur. Our hearts bore a heaviness we have never experienced. We had to make funeral arrangements and have his service. Over 2,000 people came and honored our son. The next day, in a small graveside gathering, I stood in front of a handful of our closest family and friends and read 1 Corinthians 15. We knew we were sowing his corruptible body into the ground, but we also knew we would one day behold that body raised incorruptible. Jesus is alive. And because of Him, we too had hope beyond our suffering. We told stories and laughed as we remembered Kaleb. Deep sadness rested on every person, yet hopeful optimism fueled by the promises of God hung in the air.

Because Jesus is alive, and because He has promised to return, and He has made possible our redemption from sin and suffering, we have hope. This is why our theme verse for this series is so important.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 -- 13 Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.

The crucified and resurrected Savior is the reason for our hope. Jesus died and rose again. That's how Paul grounded their hope and ours. There is no senseless suffering in this life. God redeems it all for His purposes. But one day these things will pass. So our trials and tribulations are not the final arbiter. They are temporary. He will return. Death will be overturned for eternity. And the bride of Christ will rejoice in our inheritance forever. Jesus lives. And because He lives, we know that we too will live. Jesus promised us. Glory awaits.

Until that Day, we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of our testimony. I pray this series has shown you the importance of both.

LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?

BUILD UP

- **REVIEW:**
 - Read **Romans 8:18-25** and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
 - What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
 - Additional Scripture:
 - Romans 8:16-17
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - Philippians 3:9
 - John 11:40
 - 2 Corinthians 4:6
 - Isaiah 6:3
 - Genesis 3:14-19
 - Romans 5:12
 - Revelation 21:1,5
 - 2 Peter 3:13
 - Romans 8:1-2
 - Romans 7:14-25
 - Colossians 3:4
 - 1 John 3:2
 - Philippians 3:21
 - Colossians 1:27
 - Titus 2:13
 - Hebrews 10:23
 - Revelation 21:4

- **REFLECT:**

- How can Paul consider the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us? Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 and discuss some of Paul's trials.
- What is the glory that Paul is referring to?
- Why does creation groan and long with us for glory to be revealed?
- What is the freedom that Paul is writing about in verse 21?
- What does Paul mean by, "Hope that is seen is not hope"?
 - **Once you see something that you've been hoping for then it is no longer hope. Our hope isn't in something that we can see.**

- **RESPOND:**

- What is the hope that he is referring to? How should this hope impact the way we live as followers of Jesus?

- **MEDITATE:**

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 -- *13 Brothers, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we also believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.*

- **MEMORIZE:**

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

SEND OUT

- **FOLLOW:** How will you follow Jesus this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?

- **FISH:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story, your story or the gospel?

- **PRAYER:**

- Pray over any request from your group members.
- Associate Pastor - **Brandon Sutton**
- Ministry - **Re:generation**
- **Pray for our long-term units on the field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
- **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
 - Kaesi
 - Ethan & Dustin (May 16 - June 30)
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Asian Pacific Rim Team departing on April 27
 - Southeast Asia Team #2 departing on June 15

- London Team departing June 30
- Central Asia Team #2 departing on September 27
- **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Guibei Zhuang in China



- **Population in Country:** 1,647,000
- **Global Population:** 1,647,000
- **Christian Adherent:** 1.20%
- **Evangelical:** 0.90%
- **Primary Religion:** Ethnic Religions
- **Primary Language:** Zhuang, Guibei
- **Summary:** During the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), half a million Han convicts were exiled by Emperor Qin Shihuang to the Lingnan region in southern China (now Guangxi and Guangdong). There they intermingled with the various branches of the Bai Yue nationality. The Zhuang today are thought to be the descendants of the Bai Yue.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray for boldness tempered by love for Guibei Zhuang believers as they attempt to take their precious Savior to their family members and communities. Pray for the Lord to show himself to the Guibei Zhuang, so they will know that he is the only God they should fear. Pray that this would be the decade where hundreds of Guibei Zhuang people embrace Jesus and take him to the lost in western China.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>