

“So, What About... The Holy Spirit?”

Part 6: Where is God in my pain?

Romans 8:15-30 - [watch online](#)

Summary:

Suffering is a primary part of what it means to be human. No matter what we do to avoid it, ignore it, or overcome it... suffering is always right beside us. So, where is God in our pain? And even more, what can we do about it?

Main points:

[01:07] Life is pain.

[02:22] Suffering allows us to fully experience God's presence.

[05:52] Suffering needs to be seen through the full story of God.

[08:04] Jesus' resurrection is a preview of the future of creation.

[08:24] We suffer because we are NOT YET.

[11:08] Living with the Holy Spirit is living in hope.

[14:19] Sometimes we see the power of the Holy Spirit through his healing. Most of the time we see the power of the Holy Spirit in his comfort in the middle of pain.

[16:16] The Holy Spirit converts our pain into prayer.

[17:49] We can either fight and ignore pain... or we can face it and use it.

[20:26] Holy Spirit transforms our suffering into purposeful hope.

This week [18:29]

Goal: Allow the HS to give your suffering meaning and purpose.

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

Then, take time to sit and pray.

Discussion questions:

1. What questions / push backs do you have from this week's message? Helpful takeaways?
2. Jon said, "Living with the Holy Spirit is living in hope." Explain what you think that means. Have you experienced this kind of hope at any point?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-10. What stands out to you?
4. What suffering do you see that breaks your heart, but also might lead you to prayer (with and through the HS)?
5. How else can your group pray for you this week?

Transcript:

IN: So often Xianity is presented as this happy pappy life. If you're doing it right you'll be happy and you'll know it

So when we face the real pain of life we often feel the need to hide... feel like don't have enough faith, must have sinned if we're suffering...

God must be mad at us or at least ignoring us...

Dealing w/ two of the most fundamental questions of humanity... Why do we suffer and Where is God when we are suffering?

The answer is one of the most amazing aspects of the HS. So let's talk.

WE: We try to reject and avoid pain/suffering at all costs...

But the reality is WE ALL SUFFER. In large and small ways every day.

As the great philosopher [Cary Elwes said](#)... **Life is pain.**

- Whether it's physical death or the death of a relationship or dream
- Whether it's physical pain of sickness/weakness or the pain of loneliness/anger/rejection.

We all suffer... and it's in those moments we often ask... where is God?

- If we can even pray at all... We ask why is this happening? Where are you? What are you doing?

Can seem hopeless... But in the KoG there is a way forward...

We don't have to just try to avoid/ignore it... downplay our pain/suffering... just try to get over it... feel guilty that we don't have more faith... pretend to be happy... or just slap quick answers and bible verses on our pain.

If someone is a JF... The HS allows them to joyfully/confidently/peacefully live real life while experiencing real pain...

Truth that seems so counterintuitive but is really one of the most amazing parts about the HS...

Suffering allows us to fully experience God's presence.

In his theological masterpiece Paul explains this whole idea...

GOD: Romans- 56 AD Ethnic diversity/tension- Jew v. Gentile... Paul- UNITY

Persecution from Emperor- One themes is exploring suffering as a JF

Rom 8:15-17a Review of everything we've said so far.

So that sounds like an amazing life.

We are heirs of God's glory... princesses/princes of the high king... should experience a life like it... Wealth/success/ease?

Like if we really are God's children and were obeying him/have enough faith... why would we suffer?

Paul, "What are you talking about? That's one of the dumbest things I've heard... Pain is real/necessary..."

17b... one of my least favorite sentences in BW's

Fact: Jesus lived a real life w/ real pain/suffering.

Not just on the cross... he was human... he fully lived the full human experience

- Loss (Joseph), Loneliness, Sickness, Rejection, Injustice, Poverty, Hunger, Misunderstood

Why would we be different?

V. 18 Not saying just ignore it, suffering is real... but it needs to be put into perspective of the bigger picture that is at work in the world and in the lives of JF's.

Suffering needs to be seen through the full story of God.

Paul is talking about a JF's Already-Not Yet existence.

Yes, as he said earlier, JF's are the fully adopted beloved children of God... but they are not yet experiencing the future glory he has promised.

We are still living in a world that suffers... why?

Paul is alluding to the entire story of humanity's relationship w/ God.

God created the world "good..." perfect for his ultimate creation- humanity.

Humanity created to enjoy the relationship/dance triune God has enjoyed for all eternity...

God put this good world under the management of humans

But these humans broke the dance/chose not to trust the goodness and love of God- chose to decide what was "good" for themselves.

As a result of that break the entire world/universe is subject to/under the curse of decay...

BUT there is a future hope of restoration.

Everything was created good -> it is now suffering -> but in the promised future we will experience the glory of God and restoration and all creation will be remade as it was.

So to put in perspective... JF's are still in the suffering time but have the promised/secure hope of the future glory.

V. 19-21 Creation is waiting/under bondage

Through no fault of its own it has suffered the consequences of humanity's rebellion... BUT there is a future hope...

Jesus took the consequences of that rebellion with him to his cross... killed the power of sin/death...

And his resurrection has opened a new chapter in human history... a chapter that we can just see the first few lines of now... His resurrection is a preview of what will happen for all creation.

Jesus' resurrection is a preview of the future of creation.

Everything/everyone made new in/through him/for him.

But right now... Both creation and JF's suffer... we have a sense of incompleteness, even frustration that we are not yet where we want to be.

Why do we suffer?

- Not b/c God has left us
- Not b/c of our lack of faith/sinfulness
- We suffer b/c we are still in this broken world...

We have a foot in suffering and a foot in glory... **We suffer b/c we are NOT YET.**

V. 22 Powerful metaphor... I've never given birth... But I know someone who has.

One of the most painful/intense experiences... Don't even know what to say/think- "just get it out"... but in the middle of it there is still a hope of what will be.

Ideally, sadly not always, but ideally at the end this process it gives birth to new life

And what Paul is saying is that God is birthing a new creation/new life out of the pain/labor of this one.

It is painful... it's intensely/overwhelmingly painful at times... but there is also hope.

V. 23 And even though we have the HS and hope for our promised future, JF's are broken and we too are groaning

We are already not yet... we are the first fruits/first poppers... the HS has invaded our world of suffering and he dwells in the hearts/minds of these suffering first fruits

V. 24-25 Part of being a JF is learning to live in hope... we are groaning, we don't ignore tragedy/suffering but we are also holding onto the hope that this isn't the ultimate end of the story.

Giving birth- This hurts! But the future is coming/worth it.

Living with the HS is living in hope.

Think about it...

Everyone suffers. But the difference between what the HS provides those he dwells in is that Not everyone can have hope in their suffering.

And while we live in this hope we must wait patiently/confidently. **But how?**

In these intensely painful/overwhelming moments, how do we *do* any of this?

How do we wait?
How do we hope?
What do we do?!

... sure we pray... but have you ever been in that moment where the pain is so intense you don't know what to pray, you're not even sure you want to pray.

This is a crucial moment... this is the moment where often we can see/feel/hear/experience the actual personal presence of God (HS) living in and w/ us.

V. 26-27 Weakness- life in the Not Yet.

The HS helps us in our weakness- he is joining w/ us/bearing our burden along w/ us.

- He is not just next to us in our suffering... he is literally IN it w/ us.
- When we don't know what to do/say/think... He does.
- HS does it for us w/ his own groans that can't be expressed in words.

These groans are the Spirit's own work on our behalf that takes place in our hearts and which we aren't even aware of.

This is huge... The moment we start feeling God is furthest away... Paul invites us to realize this is the exact moment God is MOST with us.

- Carrying us/caring for us
- He is right there w/ us- Groaning/interceding/praying on our behalf.
- We can see that in our groaning/that gut wrenching angst... that is the HS.
- We want it fixed, we want to help... we want to pray the right thing... but we don't know what to say/do...

But the Spirit knows... and he works w/ that desire in our hearts.

- He takes our anguish/longing/groaning and somehow turns that into an effective prayer to the Father.

Sometimes we see the power of the HS through his healing.

Most of the time we see the power of the HS in his comfort in the middle of pain.

The Spirit turning our deepest groanings into prayer is effective b/c God knows his own mind and the Spirit knows ours.

We're treading into the beautiful waters of the Trinity.

Jesus (God the Son) has given us his Spirit The personal presence of God (The *Ruach* of creation) to seal/mark us as his... he knows our hearts and intercedes on our behalf to the Father... who knows the hearts of his people b/c he is dwelling there.

CS Lewis

"An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to pray his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows

that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers."

So when we feel that groan/that "where is God in this" ... that is actually the Holy Spirit agitating us/ moving us toward the kind of prayer that will bring God into it somehow...

Jesus is using JF's to pray for the world through the HS.

The HS converts our pain into prayer.

And the more we look forward to his promise of our final future and immerse ourselves in the thinking of the Not Yet, the more the current state of things will bother us/pain our hearts... and it will draw us more and more to this kind of prayer...

We will hunger and thirst for righteousness.

And as we hunger and thirst... and groan we can trust that our future is guaranteed by the HS.

V. 28-30 And this is what gives us the hope/peace/courage in the here and now as we wait for the not yet.

We know that he works all things together for good... We know that he is making us like Jesus

When we don't have the answers to WHY we know that he is still with us b/c he chose us and gave us a perfect relationship w/ him and has and will give us his glory.

As the rest of the chapter explains... nothing can separate us from God's love. Not even ourselves. Not even our pain.

YOU: **We can either fight and ignore pain... or we can face it and use it.**

The HS invites us to use it to both experience his presence in our lives daily and to be part of his work in the hearts and lives of the rest of humanity.

FF Bruce- Prayer is the ultimate expression of our life between the times.

It shows that we are looking forward to our future... That we trust God... have hope in Jesus... that we know God hears us/sees us/ lives in us... but that we are not yet there and in our weakness need him to work in the world.

Goal: Allow the HS to give your suffering meaning and purpose.

Read: 2 Corinthians 12:8-10

Take time to sit and pray.

- Don't even have to know the right words/or what exactly you are praying for.
- What pain are you experiencing? What suffering do you see that breaks your heart?
- Let the HS use it!

Don't ignore the bad news... Don't stuff down your emotions... face them b/c you are not alone.

If JF- Jesus gave you the HS. So allow him to change the world through your groans/prayers.

WE: We don't have to fight, live in fear of, run from, ignore the pain/suffering that is a natural part of our human existence.

We might not always know the WHY of suffering...we will rarely get an immediate fix to our problems... but we can know that our suffering isn't unseen or wasted.

Suffering is turned into something that points us to our ultimate beautiful and imminent re-creation.

The HS redeems all of our suffering.

He comforts us in it and uses it to bring God's Kingdom to earth now.

The HS transforms our suffering into purposeful hope.