

HOME GROUP QUESTIONS FROM SERMON

Sermon – Romans 8 v18-27 – Personal / Group Study and Reflection

The best is yet to come

Romans 8 v18-27 (English Standard Version)

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. 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 first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 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. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The following questions relate to the morning 8.30 and 10.30 services on Sunday 6th July 2025 (available on the church website).

Feel free to **pick and choose questions / sub-questions as appropriate** for your group's interest, preferred study style and time available. They are simply there to facilitate good discussion / reflection. Do **NOT** feel you need to go through them all.

(1) Suffering - us.

- (a) To what extent do you see pain and suffering as inevitable and how do you typically respond to it?
- (b) To what extent are you able to see pain and suffering in a wider perspective as nothing compared with the glory to come (v18). And does this make any difference to you in practice?

(2) Suffering - creation. Paul's focus in the preceding chapters, and this chapter 8 v1-17, has been very much on humanity. Now he focuses on creation in v19-22.

- (a) Why do you think Paul introduces the plight of creation into his argument – its suffering and ultimate liberation?
- (b) To what extent do you think this offers any insights about our care and stewarding of creation? Was Paul in any sense 'green' 2000 years before the green movement took off?

(3) Living with suffering - groaning. Paul recognises that a natural response to suffering is groaning. And he now writes how creation, us and the Holy Spirit all groan in response to suffering. But he also depicts the groaning in a particular almost optimistic way.

- (a) What is the significance of creation groaning as in the pains of child birth (v22)?
- (b) What is the significance of his saying that "we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (v23)?
- (c) How might knowing this strengthen us?

(4) Living with suffering - Holy Spirit. Paul stresses that in our darkest times, we are not alone.

- (a) How does the Holy Spirit help us cope with deep pain and suffering (v26-27)?
- (b) How does knowing this impact / strengthen you? Think perhaps of anything you are going through right now.

(5) Hope - glory. Paul stresses that we have a great eternal hope (v24), glory, to look forward to and this is so much greater than any suffering we might experience now.

- (a) What do you understand by the 'glory' (v18) Paul refers to?
- (b) Paul's purpose in writing the whole Letter to the Romans was to encourage a very young church facing persecution and a precarious future. It was meant to be relevant and build them up.

How helpful / relevant for you is his statement in v18, together with the role of the Holy Spirit in 26-27, ... versus being something theoretical and which you struggle to relate to?