Hope Crushes Despair February 21, 2021

*Romans 8:18-27 Series: How God Helps Us Change*

What oxygen is to the lungs, such is hope to the meaning of life. — Emil Brunner

Intro: The atheist Christopher Hitchens faces his greatest challenge

1. Creation groans in hope of our glory
2. Creation is groaning in hope

v. 22 *the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now*

1. Creation fell under a curse but with hope

v. 20 *the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope*

Genesis 3:17-18 *cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life*

1. Creation awaits its freedom and ours

v. 19 *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.*

v. 21 *creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption*

v. 21 *obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God*

Isaiah 11:6 *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat*

* Why might Christopher Hitchens have felt that worse than death itself it was “the snickering that gets me down”?
* How might creation have been different if we hadn’t have sinned? How does our sin continue to affect creation today?
* Why does creation long for “the revealing of the sons of God”?

1. We groan in hope of our glory
2. The taste of glory makes us groan for more

v. 23 *we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly*

v. 23 *we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies*

2 Corinthians 5:2 *For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling …*

2 Corinthians 5:4–5 *For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

1. Our suffering now is nothing compared to the glory to come

v. 18 *the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us*

2 Corinthians 4:17 *this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison*

1 Peter 4:13 *But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*

1 John 3:2 … *we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

1. We cling to future glory through patient hope

v. 18 *For I consider that …*

v. 24 *in this hope we were saved …*

v. 24 *hope that is seen is not hope*

v. 25 *if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience*

* What does it mean that we “have the firstfruits of the Spirit”?
* Why do our bodies still need to be redeemed (v. 23)? What will that be like?
* How do you “consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory” to come? How does that make a difference when the sufferings of the present time seem really hard to take?

1. The Spirit groans for us while we wait for glory
2. We’ll know glory later; we experience weakness now

v. 26 *the Spirit helps us in our weakness*

v. 26 *we do not know what to pray for as we ought*

1. The Spirit prays what we would pray if we knew what God knows

v. 26 *the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words*

v. 27 *the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God*

* Why don’t we know what we ought to pray for?
* Why is it so important that the Spirit intercedes for us according to the will of God?
* What one truth from this passage do you want to try and hang onto when you next feel the groaning of this life’s suffering?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Romans 8:28-30.

Notes