

ROMANS SERIES SIXTEEN
THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY
Dr. Roger Barrier
Romans 8:17-30; I Jn. 3:2-3; Rev. 21:3-4

SLIDE: “Do dogs go to Heaven?”

Ricky: “All dogs go to heaven but cats go to Hell.”

That is not right. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat

Most people either dog lovers or cat lovers:

Hands of all you dog lovers. Some of you enjoyed that: Shame on you.

Hands of cat lovers: I apologize.

SLIDE: I owned a cat once. Got a cute little kitten for the girls.

Lost tabby. Jogging next morning near my house and came upon a stopped car and a lady had just run over a cat and was dragging it to the side of the road. “Lady, you just ran over my cat!” She was mortified. I told her not to worry about it. It was just a cat.

I borrowed a cat once.

Julie opened the closet door and a mouse ran across the clothes hanger.

Borrowed Julia from Ellen George to catch our mice.

I didn’t use to like dogs—or cats! See people travel with dogs. Thought they were crazy!

Asked to do a funeral for a dog. I was incredulous! It was just a dog.

SLIDE: Got Becky.

SLIDE: Surely Leave on trip. Surely waits at the door for two days until we return.

SLIDE: Goody and the cross between a pit bull and a piranha. Goody ran up and bit the mongrel in the leg. Big dog just looked and said, “I can’t believe you just did that to me.” We quickly separated the two.

Return and Goody won’t leave my side for days. Can’t keep him out of my lap!

When Becky died, I did her funeral. I love those dogs: Surely, Goodness, and Mercy to come in a year or two.

But, do dogs really go to Heaven? If there is any passage that teaches it, this is it!

SLIDE: ROMANS 8:19-21: *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.... in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

There is a lot of suffering and pain, devolution and decay, injustice and war in our world.

Not hopeless. The good news, everything is moving toward a great day of restoration.

In Christ, the Groaning will one day replaced with the Glory.

SLIDE: WE ARE GROANING (Romans 8:17-18, 23).

Early parts of Romans 8 find our security in Christ. Comes to Romans 8:16 – sons of God.

READ ROMANS 8:16 – We belong to God, and since sons – we’re heirs!

READ ROMANS 8:17a – Praise the Lord. Then Paul suddenly says...

READ ROMANS 8:17b – “If indeed we suffer with Him...”

“If” is first class conditional sentence – translate “since” – it’s a sure thing.

During World War II when bombs were falling on London and when so much of the world was in turmoil, H.G. Wells looked around himself in despair and said,

SLIDE: [Write on slide] “Either God has the power and does not care, or God cares and does not have the power.”

Never seen carnage of war. Tread softly here.

There is a third option.

[Write on slide] God has the power and He does care. The world is broken—and God is working out an eternal plan to fix it.

Genesis: sin entered the world and corrupted it.

Revelation: God will redeem it all back.

SLIDE: ROMANS 8:18: I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

(Write glory and groan over the verse.) And God makes it clear that the Glory will far outweigh the Groan.

But we still have suffering.

Bobby Dean: college roommate: Both planned to preach. He is pastoring in Dallas.

*Adopted child – problem disease.

*Pregnant, child early, intestines into lungs – shunting blood.

*Adopted child – world of horrible disease – dwarfs, mental problems, fatal.

Great testimony – God’s in total control; trust Him implicitly!

Those of you who have suffered greatly know the truth of the intimacy of fellowship with Jesus in times of suffering and pain. There is nothing like the comfort and care and closeness with Jesus when you’re in pain.

And there’s nothing like suffering to make us more like Jesus.

But, we wish the world were not so Fallen and Broken. We long for God to restore it all.

SLIDE: ROMANS 8:23: Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Makes it very personal. Right now we are groaning – “even we ourselves” – not just for the creation. Even we ourselves who have first-fruits of the spirit – even we are groaning.

We all have troubles – We groan inwardly, we wait.

SLIDE: WE ARE GLORYING (Romans 8:18)!

READ ROMANS 8:18: I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Mom is suffering: thyroid cancer; esophagus closing up. Hard to swallow. Has to soak food in water to swallow it: “After all these years of serving Him, how could he let this happen to me?”

How do you answer that?

“Well, Mom, it is a fallen world”—that doesn’t seem to help much.

“The answer is in the glory!”

Hang on mom—the glory is coming. It will be here soon.

Smiled’ “that helps.”

WHAT IS THE GLORY?

Mention several dimensions:

SLIDE: 1. CHRIST LIKENESS

READ 1 JOHN 3:2-3: *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

Can’t imagine what this will be like.

“Calculating God” Science Fiction to demonstrate that an Intelligent Designer is behind the complex plans for creation.

Alien arrives in Toronto, Canada to meet with a paleontologist. Interested in the 5 cataclysmic destructions of life on earth. Visited four planets in other solar systems to discover that the same sort of cataclysms occurred on the other planets at exactly the same time in the universe. Interested to know if earth was the fifth. God is speaking.

Three of the planets had no life on them at all now. Discovered atom fission and blew themselves up.

Julie was drinking this all in. Then I described the alien. Eight legs like an octopus—mouth on two legs alternating words. Slit in chest where food went in.

Julie: “That is enough. That can’t be!”

Couldn’t comprehend alien creatures I like that.

Who can conceive what it will be like to be like Jesus?!!!

That’s enough for me! Be like Christ! That’s enough – That kind of glory can never be compared with any kind of suffering.

SLIDE: 2. NO MORE—NO MORE PAIN, NO MORE SORROW, NO MORE DEATH

READ REVELATION 21:3-4: *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.... 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain,*

SLIDE: 3. GOLDEN CROWNS

The Victors Crown: perseverance (2 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 3:11)

The Crown of Glory: pastors (1 Peter 5:4)

The Soul Winners Crown: evangelism (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19)

The Crown of Righteousness: those who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8)

The Crown of Life: martyrs crown (Revelation 2:10; James 1:12)

SLIDE: 4. OVERCOMER REWARDS

Revelation 2:7: To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11: He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Revelation 2:17: To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

Revelation 2:26-28: To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations ... just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give him the morning star.

Revelation 3:5: He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Revelation 3:12: Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God

Revelation 3:21: To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Glory not revealed to us. It's to be revealed in us.

Glory is not some spectator sport whereby we sit in cosmic grandstands and watch some beautiful performance – we will be on the stage. We will be part of it! It's glory which will be revealed in us!

UNTIL THEN

SLIDE: NATURE IS GROANING (Romans 8:19-22).

Visionary poetry.

READ ROMANS 8:19: The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

READ ROMANS 8:20: For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

You mean the world and dirt and trees and animals are waiting for us to be liberated?

Absolutely.

“Waits in eager expectation” = stands on stretched tip-toe to see what's going to happen.

In other words, the whole world suffers from the curse of Adam. World never sinned. No tree ever sinned.

It's not their fault that they groan and travail. God didn't ask trees to vote on whether they wanted to groan or not. “All in favor of having a time of corruption say ‘Aye’!” No! Earth was created beautiful beyond measure. When man sinned, world was cursed.

We're in a groaning creation – distress of nations – impossibility of agreement – different languages – political conflict – cry of pain from the slaughter of dumb animals- trees combat disease and insects – flowers struggle to exist among weeds – hospitals filled to house sick and dying- our creation is groaning.

BLACKBOARD: World War three begin in Lebanon? No. Perhaps: probably not.

Explain 2nd coming scenario.

Armies from North and south (before 7 years)
Security from Western coalition of nations—peace for 3½ years.
Instability caused by reversal of policy by Western coalition against Israel: Public opinion will change.
Israel will enter another holocaust.
Nuke here? Land impure for 7 years.
Invasion of armies of the East into Middle East leads to the Battle of Armageddon.

One day, when Christ is revealed it will be reversed.

Hospitals closed – “Christ will come with healing in his wings.” Ravenous nature of wild animals will be changed as lion lays down with lamb. Trees no longer stricken. Game of politics will be over because of one world ruler – Jesus Christ. Peace on Earth – wars cease – swords to plowshares – all men will be neighbors – whole groaning creation will be flipped in reverse and world is waiting for that to happen!

SLIDE: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GROANING (Romans 8:23, 26-27).

READ ROMANS 8:26-27: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

How often in our earthly groaning we do not know how to pray. Feelings are so deep and intense we are unable to express them in words. So deep is the pain. All goes inside. Try to express feelings but my vocabulary fails me.

Holy Spirit goes deep within my spirit and communicates those feelings to God as prayers.
The Spirit puts our feelings into a form which God the Father understands.

Jessie's birth: Appealed to the Spirit. I just couldn't handle the overwhelming emotions.

SLIDE: Pain knocked upon my door
And said that she had come to stay
Though I would not welcome her
And bade her go away – she entered in.

SLIDE: And like my own shade
She followed after me;
From her stabbing, stinging word,
Not a moment was I free.

SLIDE: And then one day another
Knocked most gently at my door.
I said, “No, Pain is here.
There's not room for more.”

SLIDE: Then I heard His tender voice,
“It is I, be not afraid.”
And from the day He entered in,
what a difference He has made.

SLIDE: For many of us it is time to stop waiting for people to ask us about our groanings. ASK ME ABOUT THE GLORY.

READ ROMANS 8:22: *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

I suppose there is not a man here this morning that can understand what the pains of childbirth are like, even though you go through that natural childbirth procedure with your wives. You can stand there and look sympathetic, hold her hand, and smile and wink and sing and do all kinds of things; but there's nothing that really helps.

When we had our children the doctor wanted to know if my wife would have anesthetic. I said, "I don't know if she would or not, but frankly I would love one."

But you go through the labor and pain and screaming and crying because you want the baby.

Only insensitive men take pictures of their wives in labor. I've never seen a picture of a wife in labor. "Look, this is my wife. She was in labor."

There are bumper stickers that say "Ask me about my grandbaby." If you do they have thick folders of pictures of little treasure that they open up on you, and they go on forever.

There's never a bumper sticker that says, "Ask me about my daughter's labor." Who wants to remember the groaning? You want to remember the glory, don't you?

I think that the perfect sign to hang on the hospital door of a Christian is one that says, Ask me about the glory."

Hey, Christians, we focus all the time on the labor. We walk around as though we're going to be spending eternity in labor. And God says, "Look, that's when the glory happens."

SLIDE:: Jan Yancey's groan and glory.

SLIDE: ROMANS 8:18: I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.