



Present suffering and future glory

Romans 8:18-25

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I. SUFFERING IS UNIVERSAL

Creation ('nature') is broken:

- Frustration (v. 20), decay (v. 21), pain (v.22)

Mankind suffers

- People suffer (v. 18), bodily and mental afflictions (v. 23)



II. The FALL

- Suffering is the result of sin and God's judgment against sin (**v.20**)
- Adam & Eve, and all creation, fell into a cycle of unbreakable sin, corruption, and death.
- But there is hope (**v. 20, 24-25**)



III. HOPE

i. Certainty of new life in Christ:

Justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ (**Rom. 1:16-17**)

ii. Certainty of a new creation (v.21):

New heaven and new earth: **Isaiah 11:6-9,**
Revelation 21:3-4

iii. Certainty of a new body (v.23):

Become our true self (**Rom. 8:19; Matt.13:43**)



IV. PRESENT SUFFERINGS

Christians will still suffer in this life:

- Why do Christians suffer?
- There is no meaningless suffering for the Christian (**Romans 5:3-5**)



V. HOW SHALL CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

1. Suffering faithfully

- Greatest temptation: despair, anger at God, rejecting Him.
- “God’s goodness is meant to be received in the **midst** of your pain, not proven by the **absence** of pain” (Lina AbuJamra, in *Through the Desert*)



..... HOW SHALL CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

2. Enduring with the help of God's Holy Spirit (v.26)

3. Seeing from God's perspective

- He is in control of your life (v.28)

4. God has a purpose for you (Eph. 2:10)

- He wants to use you as you are, in your condition, now, and in the future.



..... HOW SHALL CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

5. Christ suffers with you (v.32)

■ Dorothy Sayer: *“For whatever reason, God chose to make man as he is—limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death—he [God] had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine. Whatever game he is playing with his creation, he has kept his own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that he has not exacted from himself....”*



..... HOW SHALL CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

.... He has himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. When he was a man, he played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace, and thought it was worthwhile”.



..... HOW SHALL CHRISTIANS RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

6. The best is yet to come; hold on and be patient!

- A victory banquet abundant blessings await us (Psalm 23:5)
- For the Christian, death is merely a pathway to heavenly blessings.
- John Wesley: “*The Christian dies well*: he does not die too soon. Again, the Christian never dies too late.”



SUMMARY

The secret of peace in the Christian life is to be content without knowing all the answers, trusting in the God who does know all the answers.