

Week 2: Romans 8.18-39

Small Group Curriculum

This very important passage provides some essential parts of Paul's teaching. The overall theme is that God is transforming the creation and His people. Suffering is an unavoidable and powerful part of that transformation. Along with it a glory greater than the suffering is "being bestowed on us." The personal takeaway is that God is transforming us into the image of His Son, so that He would have many brothers and sisters who represent Him just as He represented the Father.

Icebreaker questions: Do you look more like your mother or your father? Explain. If you have children, do they look more like you or more like your spouse? Which of your features do you see in your children?

Divide these verses up among people who will read them aloud: 1 Corinthians 15.49; 2 Corinthians 3.17-18; Philippians 3.20-21; I John 3.2

1. What do we see about the image of God in us from these verses?
(answers: We will be like Jesus physically. As we "contemplate" Him, or draw near to Him relationally, we are being changed into His presence. This process will be complete at the second coming when we will be like Him, "seeing Him as He is.")
2. Read Romans 8.18-39. Pay special attention to verses 18, 23, 28, and 29. These verses all speak to the transformation God is working in us. What do we learn about the image of God in us from them?
(answers: God will reveal this glory not us. We have it now in part through the Spirit "first fruits" but will have it in full at the redemption or resurrection. God has been pursuing this plan since before time.)
3. The sermon stated that the Biblical view is that sin has created a situation where there is no innocent suffering but that there are innocent victims. This is because suffering is ultimately caused by human evil, selfishness, foolishness, or ignorance. Do you agree with this? Does it answer the problem of suffering for you? If your answer is no, what is lacking in it?
4. In verse 26 Paul says that the Spirit helps us in our weakness by interceding for us through wordless groans. Some scholars believe Paul is referring to the practice of a "prayer language." Do you have such a prayer language and if so, has praying with it helped you in a time of distress? *(It should be noted that this is not the interpretation of this passage endorsed by Bob in the message. Although he did not say it was wrong he interpreted it differently.)*
5. Who in the group is facing suffering? Pray for each one asking God to reveal the glory that He is producing through the situation.