
Sermon Text Discussion Notes 3/19/23

“How the New Creation Gives Hope for Sufferers” by Drew Hunter from Romans 8:18-22

Overview

As Paul continues to show how gospel doctrine and life in the Spirit work hand in hand, we see in this text some insight into how followers of Christ can endure suffering well. It begins with reflecting on the future glory that is to come. In our present state, that helps us to:

- 1) See suffering in the context of creation (v.19)
- 2) See suffering in the context of the fall (v.20)
- 3) See suffering in the context of the hope of renewal (v.20-21a)
- 4) See suffering in the context of creation’s participation in your future glory (v.21b)
- 5) See suffering as the pain of childbirth

Quotes

“If we could see, at any given moment, one ten-thousandth of the world’s suffering happening at that moment, we would not be able to bear it. We would pass out or throw up. Only one person can bear that sight and keep going — God almighty. Why did God do this to the world? Why did he subject creation to such futility and bondage to corruption and decay? The creation didn’t do anything. God said, ‘Cursed be the ground because of you.’ The creation was subjected to futility because of us, but why? God said on the day that they ate of the fruit they would surely die. So why not just do that? Why not just simply have death? Wouldn’t that do it, just to have life and death with no eternity or hell? What is the purpose of this kaleidoscope of agony? Why so many children with so many heart-wrenching disabilities? My answer to this is that God put the natural world under a curse so that the physical horrors we see around us, like diseases and calamities, would become a vivid picture of how horrible sin is. In other words, natural evil is a signpost to the unspeakable wickedness of moral evil. God disordered the natural world because the disorder of the moral and spiritual world is so great, and we don’t feel it. In our present fallen condition, our hearts are so dull and so blinded to the exceeding wickedness of sin.” -John Piper

Understanding & Application

- 1) When you consider the greatest suffering you have faced in your life, what hope did you have in the midst of it? How would you explain your reason for hope to an unbeliever?
- 2) According to verse 18, what is the key to hope in the midst of suffering?
- 3) How does Romans 8 help us answer this question: does my *particular* suffering always result from my *particular* sin?
- 4) How does your view of suffering need to be challenged in light of this text?
- 5) How does your view of future glory (for you and for creation) need to be challenged in light of this text?