

# Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: GOD is for You

Week 3: Holding on to Hope

Barna poll: *"If you could ask God one question, what would you ask?"* Top response: *"Why is there pain and suffering in the world?"*

Related to the question of *why* there is suffering is the question of *how* to process our pain. The Christian life is not about the subtraction of suffering, but rather the addition of grace to go through suffering.

Romans 8 presents in detail the 3 major doctrines of the Christian life.

- Justification deals with the past—we were saved from the *penalty* of sin (8:1-4).
- Sanctification deals with the present—we are saved from the *power* of sin (8:5-17).
- Glorification deals with the future—we will be saved from the *presence* of sin (8:18-30).

So, how do we hold on to hope when we're hurting? That's exactly what's addressed in Romans 8:18-25...

*To get through your groaning, focus on the glory to come.* I see 3 ways to hold on to hope:

1. Focus on future glory more than your present suffering.. Romans 8:18. *"Consider"* means, *"to reckon, to think about, to calculate."*

*"Sufferings"* is plural, meaning we will have a variety of problems. *"Glory"* means heavy, or weighty and refers to all of God's presence and promises.

Compared to the weightiness of glory, our sufferings are relatively short and light. 2 Corinthians 4:17.

Problem: We tend to gaze upon our sufferings and only glance at our future glory.

2. Recognize the curse on creation will be reversed. Romans 8:19. *"Waits"* refers to *"looking for with expectation."* *"Eager expectation"* (used 7x in NT referring to the return of Christ) means, *"to stretch out the neck and thrust the head forward."*

Notice all of creation is longing *"for the children of God to be revealed."* Creation itself is straining to see the coming restoration when Christians will be made complete at the return of Christ. This brings out 3 truths to grasp:

(1) Creation has been cursed in the past. Roman 8:20.

(2) The curse will be reversed in the future. The last 2 words of Romans 8:20 go with Romans 8:21

(3) Creation is groaning in the present. Romans 8:22. *"Groaning"* means *"to sigh with affliction"* and was used for groaning under a heavy burden. *"Pains of childbirth,"* is a good picture of what the world is going through.

3. Wait with hope and patience while you groan inwardly. When you groan (not grumble), God hears you.

Romans 8:23 ... we've been given the *"firstfruits of the Spirit,"*—the 1<sup>st</sup> installment & pledge of the final delivery.

Adoption was used in 2 ways. (1) to described how an orphan was moved into a new family with all the rights & privileges of that family. (2) it referred to a Roman family publicly acknowledging the child as a full heir.

This groaning is a deep, intense, universal, and inward response to sin and suffering that can't even be put into words. Groaning is a prerequisite to glory.

*"Hope"* is used 5x in Romans 8:24-25 ... When we're groaning, God wants to develop the qualities of hope and patience within us. *"Hope"* in the Bible is very different from how it's used in our culture, where

most equate hope with “*I wish*” or “*I want.*” The Bible uses hope as “*an assurance based on a conviction; a deep settled knowledge grounded in the promises of God.*” God invites us to trust Him as our hope.

Hope is the settled confidence that God will keep all His promises. Patience is the ability to endure pain & problems because we’re on the way to Heaven.

1. Focus on future glory more than your present suffering.
2. Recognize the curse on creation will be reversed.
3. Wait with hope and patience while you groan inwardly.

*To get through your groaning, focus on the glory to come.*