**Romans 8:18-27**

Introduction

I. A high-level view of today’s passage

A. Our two-fold reality

1. Future Glory

2. Present Suffering

 B. Our two-fold response

 1. Hoping (v. 20, v. 24-25)

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking, but rather a confident expectation that something will definitely take place

2. Groaning (v. 22, v. 23, 26c)

Biblical groaning is not complaining but rather a natural and appropriate response to living in a broken and fallen world as broken and fallen people

II. An analogy: pregnancy (v. 22)

 A. Pregnancy involves a lot of hope in what is to come

 B. Pregnancy involves a lot of groaning in the process

The Passage

I. Creation (v. 19-22)

A. Creation itself is hoping/waiting eagerly

1. Waiting eagerly to see our transformation at the end of time (v. 19)

Analogy: it’s as if all creation has bought tickets to a play, and is waiting eagerly for the curtain to be pulled back to reveal God’s children in all their splendor when Christ returns

2. Waiting eagerly to experience its own transformation

a. v. 20: God subjected the creation to frustration/futility when sin entered the world so that creation itself would reflect the sin of man (thorns and thistles, decay, etc.)

b. v. 21: one day creation itself will be freed from its bondage to decay and be transformed so that it receives the same glorious freedom that we will receive when Christ returns

c. God’s plan is not ultimately to destroy the earth permanently and have us live up in heaven forever, but rather to create a new heaven and new earth where we will live with him forever.

B. Creation itself is groaning (v. 22)

 It is still living under the curse/futility

II. God’s Children

A. We are hoping

 1. We are waiting eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies (v. 23)

a. God has already adopted us, but we haven’t yet received our full inheritance

b. “the redemption of our bodies”

 1) Just as the creation will be remade, so our bodies will be remade

2) God’s plan is not to have us escape bodily existence forever but instead to be given new bodies

 2. We are full of hope (v. 24-25)

a. The whole point of hope is that involves things that we can’t yet see

b. So it requires patience

B. We are groaning (v. 23)

1. We groan physically because of our imperfect bodies

2. We groan because of our own sin and the fact that we are not yet perfected

3. We groan because of the trials and challenges of this life

 4. We groan because of persecution for Christ’s sake

C. The Holy Spirit’s role in our hoping and groaning

1. The Holy Spirit helps us hope (v. 23)

First-fruit: The Holy Spirit is God’s first-fruit to us. He is a taste of heaven, guaranteeing that the whole thing is still to come. He, thus, increases our hope and confidence in the reality of eternal life

2. The Holy Spirit helps us groan (v. 26-27)

The Holy Spirit is like a perfect translator in our prayers. When we are overwhelmed and don’t know how to pray, He comes alongside us and prays the perfect prayer that is right in line with God’s will

Conclusion

I. Let’s learn to groan well

A. There is a big difference between groaning and grumbling

1. Groaning is a very hopeful exercise that keeps our eyes fixed on eternal life.

2. Grumbling is only focused on the here and now, and it demands that God fix our lives now

B. Let your suffering draw you closer to God and fill you with hope and a greater expectation for eternal life, rather than push you away from God and keep your heart focused on the immediate situation

II. A very hopeful verse: Romans 8:18

= the extent and intensity of our suffering here is not worth comparing to extent and intensity of the joy, peace, love, and glory that awaits us

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday the comment was made that, regarding the earth and our physical bodies, the biblical story is ultimately not one of escape but rather transformation. How did that idea strike you? Was there anything new in that for you? What questions does that raise for you?

2. Explain in your own words the idea of the Holy Spirit as the “firstfruits.” What does that mean to you specifically?

3. Read v. 26-27 again. What is your response to those verses?

4. Where are you currently experiencing groaning in your life, and how are you being encouraged by God to respond in the midst of that pain?

5. How can we foster lives of greater hope on a daily basis? How can we live daily with a greater sense of “eager expectation” for eternal life?