



UNIONTOWN
BIBLE CHURCH

Sermon Guide
November 30: Romans 8:18-30

Question: Why do bad things happen?

Key Takeaway:

1. God doesn't hide from our pain—He runs to it, enters it, and will ultimately reverse it.
2. "Good" in Romans 8:28 doesn't mean comfortable or easy—it means being conformed to the image of Christ.
3. God is not an all-powerful version of us; His ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours.
4. The Holy Spirit groans with us and prays the will of the Father over us when we don't know what to pray.
5. Bad things are actually bad—God hates the effects of sin, and it's okay to lament.

Discussion Questions:

1. How was your understanding of Romans 8:28 challenged? What does it mean that "good" is about being conformed to Christ's image rather than comfort?
2. We often treat God as "an all-powerful version of me." What does this look like practically? How does this misunderstanding affect our expectations during difficult times?
3. Read Romans 8:26-27. What comfort does it bring knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groans when we don't know what to pray?
4. The sermon mentioned three categories of suffering:
 1. Consequences of our own sin
 2. Results of others' sinful choices
 3. Situations that don't fit neatly (like the blind man in John 9)

How does identifying which category we're in help or not help? Why is it important not to assume we always know?

5. The pastor gave the example of Jesus weeping at Lazarus's tomb even though He knew He would raise him. What does this teach us about God's character in our suffering?
6. Discuss the "holy reversal" concept—how God turns graves into gardens and crosses into thrones. Where have you seen glimpses of this in your own life or the lives of others?
7. Have you ever been hurt by well-meaning Christians trying to explain your suffering? How can we better support each other without minimizing pain or offering "bad fortune cookie" theology?
8. The sermon emphasized that "lament is an honest cry of a child of God living in the tension of pain and future promises." How comfortable are you with bringing your honest frustration to God? What holds you back?
9. Where are you right now:
 1. In the middle of suffering and needing to hear these truths?
 2. In a season of peace and needing to prepare your theology for future trials?
 3. Walking alongside someone in pain and needing wisdom?

Practical Applications:

1. Read through several Psalms of lament (Psalm 13, 22, 42, 88). Write your own honest prayer to God expressing your current struggles while also declaring His faithfulness. Share it with one trusted person if you feel comfortable
2. Identify someone in your life who is suffering. Instead of trying to explain or fix, simply be present. Text them: "I'm thinking of you. I don't have answers, but I'm here and praying for you." Follow up with a specific act of service.
3. Memorize Romans 8:28-30 in its full context. Journal about what "being conformed to the image of Christ" looks like practically. Reflect on Jesus in Gethsemane as the model: "Not my will, but yours"