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| **Series** | On Earth As It Is in Heaven |
| **Bible** | Romans 8:18-30; Revelation 21:1-2 |
| **Title/Topic** | Grief/Disappointment  |
| **Overview** | When we are in midst of difficult times we can get laser focused on them to the point that things become overwhelming and we can’t see anything else. We begin to feel hopeless. The scriptures teach us that there is more than the moment we find ourselves within. God is working, God is watching, God is present. We will suffer at times, but we have hope. We will suffer at times, but that is not our whole story.  |
| **Scripture Breakdown** | **#1 - We are assured that our suffering is not permanent, but our hope is – Romans 8:18-25**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* *We should clarify what we mean by* ***suffering***.
	+ It is not the things we commonly complain about in life – traffic, bad food orders, poor internet reception.
	+ We’re talking about suffering because of your love for and relationship with God. See 2 Cor 11:23-28
	+ Suffering also refers to illness, loss, hunger, financial turmoil, unfulfilled dreams, death.
* *We also need to clarify what* ***glory*** is?
	+ We look ahead to glory and for glory. It is something reserved for us as God’s kids.
	+ Like showing up at the nicest restaurant you can think of, out of your price range, giving them your name and hearing, “Oh – nice to see you, we have a place for you.”
	+ Scholar James Dunn says, “It is a much different quality of existence, an existence fully in the character of heaven.”
	+ See Rev 21:3-4
* *There’s the point where we are* **now** *– in suffering, and the point we’ll be in* **then** *– in glory. And the verse tells us to not even bother comparing the two points:*
	+ To compare them would be like me taking a toy ring out of a quarter machine and bringing it to a high-end jeweler to ask, “How does this compare to that 3-carat diamond right there? She’d say, “Really?”
	+ There’s no comparison because the two aren’t equal in any possible way.
	+ In the midst of suffering it’s like our eyes get replaced with magnifying glasses, where the suffering becomes the only thing we can see and it’s HUGE! Remembering glory takes the magnification away, so we can see that there’s more and more to come.
* *That can encourage, and I hope it does. But suffering still stinks, life until glory can be so hard.*
	+ The next few verses talk about life between our suffering now and glory then.
	+ It talks about creation being in eager longing, groaning and we as people groaning.
	+ Why are we and creation groaning in frustration and looking ahead in expectation?
		- Because sin broke creation, it’s not as it should be. The passage says it is: “subjected to futility” and that it is in “bondage to corruption”
		- Because sin broke our relationship with God, and though in Jesus we have no more condemnation, we aren’t to that Rev 21 place yet.
		- Creation longs for this present time to be over and get to how it should be.
		- Those who are God’s kids are redeemed, but long for when we are finally and literally with Him: we wait eagerly for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.
	+ So, to help us understand his point, the writer gives us the picture of a woman in labor:
		- The pain is intense, so I’ve heard. At times a quick sharp pain, a series of them, at times excruciating – but after the worst of it, the baby is held. And holding the baby is what puts the labor into perspective. If a woman wasn’t pregnant and went through all of that, it would be mindboggling and you’d just want to quit.
		- Scholar, Doug Moo says, “You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy”
* The suffering you have right now is not permanent; there is more to your story.
* The hope you have in Christ can’t be taken away from you: **24**Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25**But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
* But We still have to get through the suffering, right?

**#2 - We are assured that we do not suffer alone – Romans 8:26-27*** We’re adopted as His children, but are waiting to go home. And the waiting time can be hard.
* Suffering is inevitable and it being difficult is inevitable as well. We will feel weak, like we don’t know what to do at times. Thankfully – we don’t walk alone, we don’t suffer alone.

**26**Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. * He doesn’t take away suffering, but walks w/ us, helps us through it. Spirit comes to our aid.
* We get an idea of how the Spirit works on our behalf from John:
	+ The Spirit is referred to as the Helper – John 14:16
	+ The Spirit teaches us all things – John 14:26
	+ The Spirit testifies about God – John 15:26
	+ The Spirit convicts about sin and what is right – John 16:8
	+ The Spirit guides us into all truth – John 16:13
* Here in Rom 8 though, we’re told that we’ll have times when we don’t even know what to pray.

We’re at a loss as to what we should be praying for, what do we say to God. Vs 26 says…For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. **27**And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* During those moments, the Spirit intercedes on our behalf.
	+ When we don’t know how to pray, He prays for us.
	+ We don’t know what words to use – He knows what to say.
	+ We don’t know what the right thing to do is – He intercedes based on the will of God
* Left to ourselves – we’ll quit.
	+ We want the suffering to end, the conflict to go away.
	+ We want things alleviated, so we walk away, quit, stop – anything to avoid suffering.
	+ But those options might bring momentary relief, but they typically prolong the inevitable, can produce long-term problems.
* The Spirit comes alongside us and helps us through the suffering.
	+ That’s why knowing how He works on our behalf is important. We don’t know how to pray or what to do, so we say, “Spirit pray for me! Help me! Teach me! Remind me what I’m forgetting about God! Convict me! Guide me!”

**#3 – We’re assured that our story is has a great ending – Rom 8:28-30*** Some people have phrases that they hate. Ex: “moist” or “vacay”.
* Mine – “just saying” I HATE THIS PHRASE!!!
	+ No one is “just saying” – words don’t just happen and don’t just come out of us.
	+ Words are always, always, used for a reason. You’re being sarcastic, criticizing etc,
	+ In the same way – there is suffering doesn’t just happen. There’s always a reason.
		- Might be something we did –
		- Might be something someone else did –
		- Might be the consequences of how sin broke creation & our relationship with God
		- We may not understand or know the reason for it, but there is always a reason.
* The flip side of that is that God is not a God of wastefulness. He is a God of purpose and nothing is out of His grasp, knowledge or power. And verse 28 tells us:
* **28**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
	+ He is speaking specifically of those who have put their faith in Him. For His children – all will work together for good. Now – we have to have correct expectations for “good”
		- Having a million dollars sounds pretty good. But that may not be best.
		- Having the suffering we are in stop sounds pretty good. But that may not be best.
	+ Moo says, “God [will use trials in our lives] to produce what he considers a much higher “good”: a stronger faith, a more certain hope. But the promise to us is that there is nothing in this world that is not intended by God to assist us on our earthly pilgrimage and to bring us safely and certainly to the glorious destination of that pilgrimage.
* **29**For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30**And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
	+ Within His plan of salvation – it ends with His adopted children coming home.
		- We are no longer condemned, He gives us a life to live as His children, and along the way – as we struggle and suffer through – we have certain hope that we are not along and we’ll be home with Him.

If you’ve put your faith in Him, if you’re one of children – that’s how your story ends, but the ending is the beginning of eternity. |
| **Gospel** |  |
| **Next Steps** |  |