

QUESTION #5 FROM ROMANS PART 3 SUFFERING

WHAT THEN DOES GOD HAVE IN STORE FOR ME?

INTRO: Question #5 What is our future?

- The purpose of Paul's writing in this section is to do 2 main things.
 - Encourage the believer.
 - And to bring them an assurance of their eternal salvation.
- Inheritance, Suffering, Glorification, which are to produce in the believer a God given, unshakable assurance and desire for their glorious future.
- Today I want to pick up a few fragments my last sermon which was on the first of 3 priorities that Paul brings to the forefront for us in this section, Inheritance.
- Then move into our second priority, every one's favorite, "Suffering."

READ ROM. 8:12-18

OUR INHERITANCE IS FUTURE BUT YET MORE REAL THAN SIGHT:

- This is a subject we seldom think of, perhaps I'm too earthly minded.
- It is seen often in scripture but somehow, we seem to miss it...
- Let's look at what the Apostles have written for us regarding this subject.
 - Acts 20: 32, 26:17, Eph. 1:11, 15-18, Col. 1:12, 3:24, Tit. 3:7, Heb. 1:4, 9:15, 1 Peter 1:3-5, 13.
- Notice how often inheritance appears and this is not all.
- We can see from these verses that the early Christians thought often of eternity and their coming inheritance or reward, and I believe it affected the way they lived, the choices they made.
- In our lives this thought, this anticipation and focus of mind seldom appears. But it should be much greater.
- We should not be so consumed with this life, or the blessings of this life, but on that which is to come.
- Future inheritance was the great motivation to live faithful lives we see in our Patriarchs.
 - Heb. 11:8-10, 13-16, 23, 27
- Looking off to this inheritance is a distinguishing mark of the early church and the man and woman, those whose eye and hearts have been trained to consider eternity.

Now let's move on into the second subject Paul brings out here; Suffering.

SUFFERING: VS. 17b. and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

- At the outset we need to understand the meaning of a phrase in this verse; If Indeed.
- The verse looks like Paul is saying that in order to be glorified with Christ we must suffer.
- That suffering is a condition a qualifier of coming glory, no suffering, no pain no glory
- However, this is not the correct interpretation. We must understand Paul's meaning; we must really get ahold of this.
- We will find this small word 4x in within this section. Vs. 9, 16, & here, 17 twice.
- Normally "if" would be a question, or a qualifier, but not so here.
- Here the word "if" introduces a fulfilled condition, not a question.
- Here it is used in a way where it is not conditional, it is not a question or qualifier, it is an affirmation actually saying or meaning, "Since."
- Let's see how Paul uses it in vs. 16; This will clear up our meaning.
- In verse 16 Paul has already established the fact that we are Children of God.
- The Spirit witness that we are (present tense) children...
- Vs. 17b and because we are children, the word "since."
- Our heirship, or glorification is not conditional to suffering, being children of God, it is more, our suffering is proof of our sonship
- Our proof of birthright, and our union with Christ and the certainty of our coming glory.
- There is nothing conditional about the statement, the apostle is saying, since we, are suffering with Him we shall also share in the coming glory with Him.
- Another thing to notice, we are told that the Christian suffers with Him. These are not self-inflicted trials, ones of our own making,
- They are the sufferings we experience as we walk with Him, in Him. We suffer with Him, where He has taken us, led us, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. He did not presumptuously run off to it.
- Sufferings of obedience, discipline. Heb. 12?
- Present suffering with Him will result in future glory. Glory at the return of Christ and the resurrection of our bodies.
 - **1 Peter 1:3-7**
- Next, I want us to notice the tender, pastoral heart of Paul which is displayed here.
- Paul was not just a theologian or a professor of theology; he was also a caring pastor.
- He so loved the saints that he would not hold back the truth from them even if it was not pleasant or what they perhaps did not want to hear.
- Paul knew so well that the soul grows best and is conformed in the furnace of affliction.

- **Samuel Rutherford**; "O what I owe to the file, the hammer and the furnace of the Lord Jesus! I know that he is no idle husbandman, He purposes a crop."
- Paul knew from a shepherds point these things are needed, they enlarge, equip the whole man, not just the ears or the ego.
- He taught Timothy;
 - For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine *and* accurate instruction [that challenges them with God's truth]; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled [with something pleasing], they will accumulate for themselves [many] teachers [one after another, chosen] to satisfy their own desires *and* to support the errors they hold, 2 Tim. 4:3
- What a contradiction the happy, shallow, self-centered self-pleasing, man centered, easy believism gospel is to this.
- What injustice a pastor or teacher does to his congregation if the hard things are not preached.
- We need at times to listen to things we don't find comfortable or are not our favorite doctrine. We do want to be well rounded in all scripture and truth.
- If the world has treated Christ with contempt, they will treat those in Christ with contempt.
- Paul, more than any knew the Christian life is not always easy.
- He knew the truths of Jesus's words; in this world you will have tribulation. (JN. 16:33)
- Or again, if anyone would be my disciple, let him take up his rocking chair, no, take up his cross.... (Mt. 16:24-25)
- So, Paul again prepares his readers, Christians in every age, that there will be trials, struggles, sufferings, but be not surprised, be not cast down, you are not abandoned, or outside of the love and care of Jesus.
 - **1 Pt. 4:12-16.**
- Paul, in spite of all his sufferings and persecution, knew God as a comforting God.
 - 2 Cor. 1:3-4: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- Notice how quickly suffering and persecution show up in the infant church. (Acts 4:1)
- See what the Spirit speaks through the pen of the Apostles;
 - Acts 14:22, 2 Cor. 4:8-12, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 1:8, 2 Tim. 2:12, 2 Tim. 3:12, Rev. 7:14
- What are some of the sufferings we may go through. To each of us they may be different, God is the Sovereign Engineer.

- One may suffer poverty, another illness, another trials at work, trials in the home, troubles in the soul, the stresses of life, persecutions for the gospel's sake.
- But God will make then all work for us, if not here, for sure in eternity. Count on it.
- The devil may bring doubts of God's goodness, faithfulness and love.
- There may be doubts of one's salvation, or of God's character.
- There may be doubts that the bible is true, or what we know of God is not real, or Christianity is a fairy tale. Or the devil may come with all of the above.
- But faithful Paul fore tells us that these things, suffering, hardships, trials are part of the Christian life, part of the race that has been set before us.
- And correctly understood, this statement tells us that sufferings or trials "with Christ" are proof that we are God's children and sharers of the promise of glory to come.
- We must come to understand in mind, heart and spirit that we are united with Christ, where He goes, we go, we are sharers of His inheritance, His sufferings, and His glory.
- All these things are tied up together; they are all one in Christ, and we are in Christ.
- As we are united with Him, it reasons that we share in the all things that are His, this not only includes inheritance, but also sufferings.
- The body receives the same treatment as the Head, the disciple follows in the footsteps of the Master.
- All of Christ's sheep are branded, and the brand is a cross.
 - Amy Charmichael: hast thou no scare?
- The path to glory leads through the valley of the shadow of death. Suffering.
 - 2 Cor. 4:8-12
- Jesus said about Himself in LK. 24:26; Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"
- The knowledge of our coming glory which is birthed out of our suffering with Christ is to be an assurance to the suffering believer, a balm in time.
- An answer to the devils accusations, an comfort to our troubled souls. A strengthening of our hearts in times of trouble.
- To be able to look forward to this great

CONCLUSION:

- From this verse and what we have studied today we can say that the scriptures identify suffering as a distinguishing hallmark of the Christ followers.