

# NOTES FROM PASTOR TIM'S SERMON 30th April 2023 pm

## "The cross and the crown"

### Series "Life in the Spirit" Pt 5

#### Scripture references from the ESV

**Romans 8:1-18** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you<sup>[b]</sup> free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,<sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus<sup>[d]</sup> from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

<sup>12</sup> So then, brothers,<sup>[e]</sup> we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons<sup>[f]</sup> of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

<sup>18</sup> 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 have been considering what it looks like to live life in the Spirit. The Spirit works in us to assure us that we are God's children (v16 above). Nothing is more reassuring than to know that God is our Father. We have these assurances:

- Relationship – we are rightly related to God through Jesus Christ.

- Security – God will always be our Father and we will always be his children. He will never unadopt us.
- Wisdom – God knows better than any earthly Father what is best for us, and what we need to do. He knows the end from the beginning.
- Protection – good fathers protect their children, and God is the best Father

These are assurances we need as we live out our lives as believers in a world that is fallen and under a curse. The work of the Spirit is to give this internal assurance, witnessing to our Spirit that God says ‘You are my child’.

We are most in need of that assurance when we go through suffering, especially suffering that is uniquely Christian.

In **v16-18**, Paul seeks to encourage us if we are currently going through suffering for Christ, and

to equip us to suffer well, even if we are not currently in that position.

The purpose of Romans Chapter 8 is to assure God’s people that **v1** is true for all of us. God will always be for us.

**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus**

Can you still have that assurance when you are suffering? Suffering can be seen as a sign of God’s disapproval. The book of Job gave an example of that train of thought. Good things happen to good people. Bad things happen to bad people. If bad things are happening to you, you must be a bad person!

This view of suffering is simplistic and wrong.

How does Paul show us that suffering is not a sign of God’s displeasure or condemnation of a believer in Christ?

**1. Suffering with Christ is inevitable.** There is a view that a good God would never allow his children to suffer, and Paul’s opponents were saying that Paul could not be a child of God because of his suffering. However, Paul links suffering to God’s children (**v17,18**). He wants us to know that God’s children do suffer and will suffer.

- Suffering does not mean that you are not a child of God, or that God disapproves of you, or that he has thrown you out of the family.
- Suffering with Christ is a sign that you **are** God's child.

Paul says that suffering with Christ is necessary to prove that we do belong to the family. How can we know that Paul is right? Jesus answers that for us, showing us that suffering with Christ is evidence that we belong to the kingdom of God.

**Matthew 5:10-12: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

In **1 Peter 4:14**, we read: **If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory<sup>[b]</sup> and of God rests upon you.**

We see this in the life of Jesus. Jesus is THE Son of God, not an adopted child as we are. He is one with the Father for all eternity. His sonship was not in doubt as he proved throughout his life. Yet no one has suffered more than he did.

- He suffered all that is common to humanity – hunger, loneliness, pain, sorrow, rejection, death
- He suffered as the sinless son of God, experiencing the hostility of state and church, and of Satan
- He suffered at the hand of his Father, as he bore our sin in his body, condemned in our place. (**Is 53:10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him**)

Even in that deepest suffering, he remained the beloved Son of God. He is the evidence that suffering is not a sign that you don't belong to God.

**If we are going to follow Jesus into sonship, it will mean following Jesus into suffering.**

**Suffering is inevitable, even for God's children.**

- 2. Suffering with Christ includes temptation.** We can wrongly assume we are suffering **with Christ** when we are sick or have other troubles, but those things are common to all humanity. We need to ask:

## How did Christ suffer?

a) **He endured hostility from those who hated him because of his righteousness.**

Jesus made enemies because of his claim to be the Son of God and to be speaking God's word. **This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:18)**

Suffering with Christ is the kind of suffering we experience when we say that Jesus is God come in human flesh and that he is the only way to God. It is the suffering that comes from standing by what God says in his word:

- Marriage is between a man and a woman
- God made male and female (two genders only) and a person cannot change gender
- There are distinctive roles for men and women

**When we tell people who Jesus really is and what he really said, and are hated because of it,  
then we are suffering with Christ.**

b) **Jesus suffered because he forsook the temporary pleasures of sin.** One of the temptations of Christ was to

shortcut the cross in order to have the inheritance of nations promised to him by his Father (**Psalm 2: 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage**). Satan offered to give up the nations to Jesus if he would bow down and worship him. It was a hollow promise, as all Satan's promises are. Rather than dying to secure the salvation of the nations, Satan tempted Jesus with an apparently easier route. However, Jesus would not be tempted away from the plan he and the Father had agreed in eternity.

**Jesus forsook the temporary pleasure of sin and went the way of the cross.**

**To suffer with Christ means forsaking the temporary pleasures of sin and embracing  
the cross,  
taking the road of dying to self.**

Sin promises so much but only delivers death.

Take covetousness as an example. It promises comfort, ease and entertainment now but delivers slavery to material possessions. We become workaholics in order to acquire more and then worry that someone will steal it or it will get damaged. It makes us selfish with our possessions and we become a slave to the stuff instead of a bond-servant to Jesus Christ. Our hearts are drawn away from Christ and away from eternal life.

The person who has aligned themselves with Jesus will say no to sin, with all its tempting hollow promises, because they see that sin leads to death but Jesus promises life.

**3. Suffering with Christ leads to a crown.** The statement on suffering (v17) is sandwiched between two wonderful promises.

- We are fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him
- We suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him.

By setting our eyes on those promises, we can learn to say no to sin, with its temporary pleasures.

- By setting our focus on the glory that is promised to us, we can embrace the suffering with Christ that will inevitably come.

That is what Jesus, Moses, Paul and others did as we can see in these passages:

- Jesus, ... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame (**Hebrews 12:2**)
- Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. (**Hebrews 11:24-6**)
- For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (**2 Corinthians 4:17-18**)

Suffering is preparing the glory for us and making it ever more precious.

**Suffering with Christ in this life not only leads to glorification but actually enhances the glory.**

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Suffering with him does NOT mean we do not belong to the family of God. In fact, the opposite is true. We can be assured that we are in the family when we

- Endure hostility because of our stand on the gospel and
- Forsake the temporary pleasures of sin because we have our sight set on glory

**Then we can have the assurance that God is our Father, Christ is our elder brother, every Christian is our brother or sister and glory awaits us.**

As we stay true to Christ and kill sin in the power of the Spirit, we will experience the witness of the Spirit with our Spirit that we are God's children. If we are children, then we are also heirs with Christ.

Suffering will come. We are not immune from what is common to all, but as believers we have added suffering.

However, we will **never** experience what Christ experienced on the cross. He was forsaken by God.

**We will never be forsaken by God and that is solely because of what Christ has done.**

**Instead, we will hear the Father say 'Well done, good and faithful servant'.**

**We can live in the assurance of our inheritance as we look to the Spirit for help to endure suffering and kill sin.**

## Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth and forevermore.