

Romans 8:26-30  
Hope in the Tension

I. Intro

**A. Read Romans 8:26-30, ESV**

B. Stories

- I love stories. Books, songs, movies...
- Approx 130 millions books in the world.
- Story: Stacey and movies (she needs to know the end)
- **the components of a great story - there is always a tension: beginning, middle, end.**
- What's your story? Where do you find yourself today? (Beg, mid, end)
- We're all here in the middle.
- The title of the sermon today is "Hope in the Tension"
- Think about your story as we walk through the text.

II. Scripture

**A) [26] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. 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.**

B. Weakness

- our human condition - our need for Jesus
- inability to pray rightly is tied to the reality that we can pray (And should!) but we need God's intercession.
- The encouragement we are to find in this is that we are not to despair even when we don't have the right words to express or even if we don't pray for the right things - the Spirit perfectly ministers on our behalf to God for us.
- **PROBLEM: We don't like weakness. [our view vs. Paul's]**

C. v.27 confirms the work of the holy spirit in v.26

- **[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.**
- We are to be encouraged at the activity of God on our behalf in our troubles and weaknesses

**D. v.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.**

- arguably the greatest verse in the bible?!
- but we need to make sure we understand this verse and not overstate or understate anything here
- It can be easy to just throw this verse out there
- Here is where tension is addressed in our stories - what are we do to with it?
- tension and suffering is inevitable
- Paul already told us this.

- We must be careful about three things when we hit tension in our story

**1. We shouldn't be surprised**

- we see it v18 says: [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
- V22 + 23 - the creation and ourselves suffer
- Jesus tells his disciples - you will have trouble / tribulations

So we have to deal with hard things.

### **2. Suffering doesn't always mean I've screwed up somehow**

- sometimes it is (Psalm 119:67 - "before i was afflicted I went astray")
- Our context here doesn't put specifics on what someone has done wrong so we need to be careful to not assume it's always a response to something we've done.
- We see in the story of Job - he didn't suffer because of sin it was said of God' that he was a righteous man!

### **3. We won't always know exactly why we're going through this.**

- why did our miscarriage happen?
- Why did my parents die when I was young?
- Why did I get cancer?

We can be tempted to think that this verse will provide us a type of silver lining. We can understandably think we will receive some explanation to all of our suffering.

But that's not what Paul is saying here. He is promising there is a purpose - a good one, and it is making us more like Jesus.

Sometimes we get chances to see how God is using our hardships - we can see how it has prepared us for something later on, etc.

But Paul is really pushing us to see ahead. So,

## **E. What is the hope we have in the tension now?**

We have a God who understands our tension and sufferings in every way. Hebrews 4:15-16

**[15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

### **1) We have an advocate in the Spirit on our behalf (v.26)**

### **2) Suffering has a purpose (v.28, 29)**

it will never leave us the same - it is transformative, we grow in one direction or the other.

It'll make us trust God more or less.

the point I am trying to make isn't that tension, pain, and suffering should in the words of CS Lewis, be palatable.

No, I don't think we should ever minimize pain, suffering, and hard things. Jesus doesn't.

instead Paul is

- Just like Stacey needs to know the end of the story - God knows that we do too. Really, when you look at Paul's words to us, we see this. His entire encouragement to the romans is based on what is ahead.
- primarily to make us more like Jesus
- A Christian view of life holds space for all things being used by God but equally as important is the reality that God himself has entered into pain and suffering.

### **3) We have a glorious future ahead**

This is where Stacey has it right! She gets it! Instead of being frustrated with her wanting to know how a movie/story ends but it's exactly what Paul is doing!

V.29+30

**[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.**

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- These verses are here as assurance!
- we don't always hold on to God (Jude 24-25) - God keeps us!
- we are loved and chosen by God not bc of what we've done but bc he loves us.
- So the basis of God's love isn't our behavior or choices - it's bc of his!

Paul presses our future in Christ as hope for today's struggles.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

**[16] So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] 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.**

E.A.Closing

Story of a friend and suffering.