

Date: 23.08.2020

Time: 11am

Service taken by: Rev Gavino Fioretti

Reading: Romans 8

Text: Romans 8:18-28

Outline: Needed Encouragements

a) Introduction

1. The promises of God

2. The Spirit of God

3. The providence of God

Needed Encouragements

- **Introduction**

This is one of the most encouraging chapters in the Bible. Sometimes, we can misapply the promises of the Bible and seek hope from this. Sometimes we can wrongly believe that it's always God's will to heal, deliver and give financial prosperity – but this is not the case. We will suffer. Suffering is a reality and so chapter 8 of Romans provides needed encouragement.

Cosmic: (v. 19) As Christians, we suffer with and in the whole of creation. As part of creation, we suffer with it. We experience the pain and reality of illness and death.

Temporary: (v. 18) The suffering we experience with the whole of creation is real, painful and universal, but it is not eternal – for the believer, we can know that the suffering is temporary. It's for the present time only.

Subjected to futility: (v. 20) Everything in this world is futile. Every earthly relationship is futile because our relationships are not eternal and they are all damaged by sin. Even the best marriage will one day end. The relationships between spouses, between parents and their children, between Christians are damaged by sin. We work hard on earth, but bring nothing with us when we die. All of life is like chasing after the wind. All is vanity. We are subject to futility.

Bondage of corruption: (v. 21) Even the best of this world is ruined by sin. There's corruption.

Childbirth: (v. 22) There's pain in this world. As part of creation, this life is painful.

Not worth comparing: (v. 18) Suffering is real, but temporary, and not worth comparing with what's ahead.

Our weakness: (v. 26) We are enslaved by our limitations. An honest Christian will tell you that they are a mess. We're so aware of our failings and shortcomings.

Life is difficult. Suffering is real, but the suffering is temporary. There are at least 3 encouragements we can take from this portion of Romans 8.

1) The promises of God

The glory that is to be revealed: (v. 18) Life is messy and futile, but it can't be compared with the glory to be revealed. The suffering now is temporary. There's glory prepared for us. The portion for every believer is glory. Our inheritance is the glory of the Son. We will see God Himself. We'll see the glory of God in the face of Jesus. In this life, we feel the gulf between us and God. but in the future, we'll be in the light of God, in His presence.

Glorious freedom: (v. 21) Glorious freedom is promised by God to creation – freedom from sin, misery, pain, corruption and death. God will set this world free and there will be a cosmic transformation of creation. There will be no more separation from the people we love. We'll be free from sin and the misery that it brings.

Full adoption: (v. 23) We've been welcomed into the family of God and adopted into His family. We'll one day experience the full meaning of being God's children. Now, we doubt God's wisdom, power, provision and adoption. We doubt that we're God's children. But one day, all these doubts will be gone.

The redemption of our bodies: (v. 23) As we age, we realise that our bodies are growing weaker, that they are damaged by sin and in need of redemption. We're promised that one day, our body will be redeemed with the resurrection – we'll have a perfect body, free from illness, age and death. Now, God has redeemed our souls – one day, our bodies will be redeemed too. We have a glorious future as believers. So lift your eyes from the here and now and look to the future. We have a wonderful future free from all pain and suffering.

2) The Spirit of God

We cope with all that we face in life in the here and now with the Spirit of God.

He has begun to bring fruits in us: (v. 23) The Spirit's work has begun in us when we are saved; this brings spiritual fruit. Regeneration is followed by sanctification. You are the ground where the Spirit is planting and watering – there is more fruit to come as God is at work in us. The Spirit makes us more fruitful to make us more fruitful in our service for God.

He helps us in our weakness: (v. 26) We're so aware of our failures, but what a comfort it is that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We're not alone in our fight with sin or in our sanctification. The only way to overcome weakness and sin is in the power of the Spirit of God. The power of God is in us, helping us. The only way we can love, honour and obey God is by the Spirit of God.

He intercedes for us: (v. 26) Prayer is difficult, but so needed. We're aware that we can be so cold, repetitive, and lack earnestness in our prayers. We try different strategies, hoping that our efforts will make a difference. But our hope in prayer must be in the Spirit of God. The Spirit prays for the

believer, transforming our messy, cold prayers into what is acceptable to God, praying what we cannot pray. Even when we're only able to groan and sigh, it's acceptable to God as the Spirit does what we cannot do for ourselves. We worship the triune God and should praise each person of the trinity. Remember you couldn't and wouldn't be a Christian without the Spirit of God.

3) The providence of God: (v. 28)

Known by the saints: As believers, we know that there is no luck or chance. God is in control and nothing and no-one can thwart His plans or purpose. Suffering is part of God's plan.

All that happens to the saints: All that happens to us happens according to God's plan. Even the futility and corruption we see in this life can give us hope when we realise that even this is part of the divine plan. Even our weakness and failings are part of that plan.

The good of the saints: God's plan and purpose is good. Even the most awful thing that happens to us is for our good. Even if we don't realise the purpose of suffering in the here and now, it will be for our eternal good. Even those who seem to suffer more than others as believers are suffering for their good, for the church's good and for their eternal good.