

Romans 8:17-39

Study 8

Triumphant Living – in a Groaning World

Introduction

Paul has just made the incredible claim that we have received God's Spirit, making us God's children (8:15-16). Because of that, he says, we're heirs, living with an incredible hope of a great inheritance. But that doesn't mean life NOW will be a bed of roses. The fact is, life in this world is full of suffering and hardship - although it's a suffering and a hardship with purpose, and with hope. After all - that's how it was for Jesus... why should it be any different for us?

Think About It

Some Christians claim that becoming a Christian solves all our problems of health, wealth and hardship. Perhaps we all tend to have this hope or expectation? Think about your own expectations of life, and God's care for you. **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHO SAYS, "If you're walking in God's will you'll prosper financially."**

READ Romans 8:17-39...

1. What does verse 17 tell us about suffering and glory?
2. What sort of words would YOU choose to describe the state of the world?
3. What do we learn about the present state of the world from the Paul's description in verse 19 to 23? List some of the words Paul uses to describe the way things are.

Do *we* stand a) apart from this
 b) protected from this
 c) in the middle of this

When did this happen to the world?

4. Suffering, eager longing, futility, bondage to decay, groaning, pains of childbirth, groaning inwardly, waiting eagerly, patience, weakness... those are Paul's words to describe this present life. But what makes life bearable for Paul (v18-19)?

What is God's solution to the problem?

What do you think Paul means by "our adoption" and "the redemption of our bodies"? (v23)

What is the practical day-to-day value of the *hope* Paul speaks of?

5. What encouragement to your prayer life is there in verse 26 and 27?

(How does Paul describe us in the start of verse 26? How does this fit in with your expectation of the Christian life?)

6. Romans 8:28 is a "classic verse", memorised by countless generations of Christians. If you don't know it off by heart already, write it out in the space below and try to memorise it:-

What do you think the verse means? (Particularly, what does "called according to his purpose" mean?)

7. Fill in the gaps in the chain produced by combining verse 29 and 30...

Foreknew ==> P _____ ==> _____ ==> _____ ==> _____

What point is this chain making?

Chew on this...

Christians often struggle with the idea of God's "predestination." The word simply means that God has decided the destination before the journey begins. Note that often when Paul talks about "God's elect" (as in verse 33), he's talking about the people of Israel. They were God's chosen ones from the very beginning. The fact that God has not abandoned the Jews has been a major theme in Paul's thinking through Romans... and it may be in his mind here as well.

8. According to verse 31 to 35, what is the "cash value" of God's predestination or election?

9. The big question the idea of "predestination" raises is this - "Did I become a Christian by MY CHOICE... or by GOD'S CHOICE?" Think back on your own experience. What's your answer?

Go back to verse 24. What do the words "WE WERE SAVED" hint at?

Look at verse 28. Who is doing the calling, and whose idea is it?

CONCLUSION

The fact is, God's choice of us and his provision of Jesus for our salvation is the guarantee of the security of our future glory. In the light of what God has done for us already, he's not going to let go of us now! Close by reading verses 35 to 39. Will anything separate you from the love of God?

What help can you find in this passage for a Christian going through hard times?