

ROMANS SEASON 2

HOW THE GOSPEL WORKS

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- Describe a time in your life where things really didn't go as expected (whether good or bad).
 - Describe a time when a friend's help was invaluable to you.
 - How would you respond if someone asked you, "Why do Christians suffer if God loves them?"
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

Life is a weird mix. One day you can wake up excited about life and the next you can wake up despondent. And it's not just the case that our emotions are mixed up. Our experiences in life can range from flourishing to suffering and everywhere in-between. Believing in the gospel doesn't exempt you from this reality, but you do have the Holy Spirit's help. Paul is about to show us how the Spirit's help makes us "more than conquerors," even while living in this already-but-not-yet age.

Where It's All Headed

READ: Romans 8:17-25

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

Paul likens this age to childbirth—pain now, but bringing new life. There's a "futility" to our sin-affected world, which explains why it's a strange mix and why God's children suffer. Yet those who believe the gospel have a received the Holy Spirit as "firstfruits." He is the first taste of the world to come and the guarantee of our true homecoming and our full freedom. That means that our suffering in the here-and-now isn't meaningless. It's producing something in us and in the world, and it's worth enduring.

How The Spirit Helps

READ: Romans 8:26-30

DISCUSS: What do you think it means that the Spirit "intercedes for the saints according to the will of God"?

Interceding was the role of a priest in Israel's history. He would go before God to ask for and receive God's blessing for the people. We're too weak by ourselves to navigate the futility of our world, and if it were up to our perfect prayers to live for God's purposes, we'd certainly fail. But this is exactly where the Spirit comes to help. Because he is God the Spirit, he knows God's will, and he comes before God on our behalf, receiving God's will and his goodness for us. He does all this because God loves us. He loved us before the foundation of the world, destined us, called us, justified us, and he will bring us to himself through the sustaining power of his Spirit.

GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

Our Assurance of Victory

READ: Romans 8:31-39

DISCUSS: Do you think it's reasonable for Paul to sound so triumphant in the face of suffering? Why or why not?

Many will say that suffering proves God is either incapable or indifferent. Paul sees it differently. God isn't indifferent; after all God the Spirit groans on our behalf. He isn't incapable either; suffering didn't get final say over Jesus. He sees suffering as something believers conquer, just as Jesus conquered suffering and death by the Spirit. The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead because the Father loves him and always intended to be with him. The same Spirit will give us victory through suffering and death and bring us into God's loving presence.

CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- How does this chapter impact the way you think about the world and your place in it?
- How does this chapter impact the way you think about suffering?
- In what ways have you experienced God working out all things for good in your life?

PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Spend some time praising Jesus's victory over suffering and death.
- Pray for a true perspective on the age in which we live and for a reliance on the power of the Spirit.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?