

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
  - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
  - C. All those that God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
    - 5:1-11 Having been *justified*, we rejoice in hope of *God's glory*
    - 5:12-19 Adam failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
    - 5:20-7:25 The law failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
    - 5:20-21 The law failed because of sin; Christ succeeds by grace
    - 6:1-7:25 Answering questions. *Since the law cannot justify...*
      - 6:1-14 *Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*
      - 6:15-7:6 *Shall we sin because not under law but grace?*
      - 7:7-12 *Is the law sin?*
      - 7:13-25 *Is the law to blame for my sin?*
    - 8:1-39 All those whom God justifies, these He also glorifies
  - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith" (12-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

## The Sufferings of this Present Time

*Romans, Part XXXIX*

Romans 8:18-30

Stuart W. Bryan

### I. The Trouble with Love

If God truly loved us, wouldn't He relieve us from all pain? The Christian answer directs us to the life of our Lord Jesus. Did God the Father love His incarnate Son? Most certainly! (Mk 1:11; 9:7; Col 1:13). Yet Jesus was "*a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" (Is 53:3). Though "*He was [God's] Son,*" Paul tells us, "*yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered*" (Heb 5:8) and was "*made perfect through sufferings*" (Heb 2:10). He who was "*in the form of God*" and "*equal with God*", "*humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*" (Phil 2:6,8).

#### Romans 8:18-30

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; <sup>21</sup>because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. <sup>23</sup>Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. <sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup>Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. <sup>28</sup>And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup>For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup>Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

### II. The Sufferings of this Present Time

#### A. The Problem of Suffering (8:17, 18, 35 cf. Job, Habakkuk esp. 1:2-4)

The presence of natural evils and moral evils in the world often causes us to question God's goodness, power, and even existence. C.S. Lewis explains the basic problem:

*If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both." (The Problem of Pain, p. 16)*

The atheist philosopher William Rowe pressed this problem even further:

*We must then ask whether it is reasonable to believe that all the instances of profound, seemingly pointless human and animal suffering lead to greater goods. And, if they should somehow all lead to greater goods, is it reasonable to believe that an omnipotent, omniscient being could not have brought about any of those goods without permitting the instances of suffering which supposedly lead to them?... In the light of our experience and knowledge of the variety and scale of human and animal suffering in our world, the idea that none of these instances of suffering could have been prevented by an omnipotent being without the loss of a greater good seems an extraordinary, absurd idea, quite beyond our belief.*

## B. God's Promise in Suffering (18-30)

But Paul gives us hope. Though much suffering is profound and though it is *seemingly pointless* at times, no suffering is \_\_\_\_\_ *pointless*. Paul assures us in Romans 8 that:

1. *Our present suffering pales in comparison with our future glory (18)*
2. *Our present suffering is like unto the pain of childbirth (22 cf. Jn 16:21)*
3. *Hence, we may have hope in our suffering (23-24)*
4. *Furthermore, in our suffering, the Holy Spirit assists us to cry out to God (26)*
5. *So all suffering is for our good, our glorification (28-30)*

All suffering serves the glory of God and our good. Gazing upon Christ, we are assured that God shall vindicate all those who suffer in faith. *All those whom God freely justifies through faith in Jesus, He shall most certainly glorify.*

## III. Love and Suffering: Insights from C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, chapter 3

But why is such suffering necessary at all? How can love permit the beloved to suffer?

### A. An artist's love for his art (cf. 1 Pet 2:5)

The artist who loves his art takes pains to \_\_\_\_\_ it. *But we would often that God love us less. If we are in Christ, suffering reveals not that God loves us little; but that He loves us much.*

### B. A man's love for an animal (cf. Ps 95:7; 100:3; Jn 10:14)

A man who loves a dog will not leave it to itself to squander its potential and be a nuisance to itself and others. \_\_\_\_\_ to the dog is not love. The man who loves a dog takes it to his home; he feeds and trains it. Love takes the potential that is in the dog and helps it to realize that potential.

### C. A father's love for his child (cf. Pr 3:12; 29:15; Heb 2:10; 5:8; 12:5ff)

A loving father trains his child to have good character; he sees nothing so important as their training. *"The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother"* (Pr 29:15). *"Whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a \_\_\_\_\_ the son in whom he delights"* (Prov 3:12).

### D. A lover's love for their beloved (cf. Jer 2:2; Ezek 16:6-15; Eph 5:25-27)

Love longs for the beloved's fidelity and growth. Christ *"gave Himself for [His bride] that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish"* (Eph 5:25-27).

## IV. Conclusion

*"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but \_\_\_\_\_ in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world"* (Lewis, 91).