

4. How does comparing our present suffering with our future glory help in times of suffering?

5. What are some of the ways you can taste and savor the firstfruits of what God will do at the return of Christ, not just thoughtlessly enjoying them or even neglecting them?

6. Write your own paraphrase of Romans 8:18-25.

Gospel Resilience (A Series on Romans 5 – 8)

“How to be Resilient in Suffering”

Romans 8:18-25

“When the tension eases between your earthly identity and your heavenly identity – that’s the biggest threat. ...Persecution helps [keep that tension]. Even cancer tells you that earth is not your home. Hardship reveals reality—that we are bound for another home, another life.” (Chinese House Church Movement Leader)

The message of Romans 5 – 8 is that a **tested** faith that remains resilient is made possible by God, and our role is to cooperate with him when we’re tested.

This chapter is filled with really personal, strong words we ought to take to heart (Romans 8:26,28,31,35), but the words are **weakened** by a “what’s in it for me” posture that misses the grander of God’s future plans and misses the bigger picture.

(N.T. Wright Translation) Romans 8: 18 This is how I work it out. The sufferings we go through in the present time are not worth putting in the scale along side the glory that is going to be unveiled for us.

How to be Resilient in Suffering

1. **Compare** your present sufferings to your future glory.
What is the word “glory” all about?

Glory = **High** renown or honor. Or beauty and magnificence.

“Creation itself is on tiptoe with expectation, eagerly awaiting the moment.” (N.T. Wright Translation of Romans 8:19)

In the Garden it was humanity's moment to shine. But humanity got dead **drunk** and the creation had to wait for us to sober up. It's still waiting.

Everything will be **renewed** and restored. That's the gospel story. Not just our salvation but a whole new creation. And we'll return to the glory God intended as creation's vice-rulers under God, the ultimate ruler.

Compare your present sufferings to that...to an eternity of that!

2. **Taste** from the hope you've been given.

Romans 8: ²⁴ For **in this hope** we were saved.

If you enter into suffering with a hopeless faith, suffering will kill your hopeless **faith**.

Biblical faith is focused on future glory while enduring present **suffering**.

There is a future to our relationship with God that far outshines what we're experiencing **now**.

But we do have, right now, an experience and reality and a status and identity in God to enjoy. We have a taste (the firstfruits). It's only a taste, but it is a taste. And the taste is **incredible**.

- When we take the time daily to read and reflect on the Bible and pray, we're getting a taste of our future, perfect communion we'll have with Christ in his **kingdom**.
- There's a day coming when our relationships will be pure and love will be perfect. We can taste that now by savoring and enjoying and prioritizing our family and our **friendships**.
- In the new heaven and the new earth we'll be given work to do that will be fulfilling and enjoyable. Experience the joy of doing your work now **for** the Lord and his glory.
- The church—God's people—will be presented as a **bride** to Christ. Value and prioritize fellowship with other believers now.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Romans 8:18-25. How is what is said in this passage weakened when we look at it individualistically, focused on ourselves and our salvation alone?
3. How would you define our future glory according to what Paul says in this chapter?