**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | How to Make Sense Out of Suffering |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Romans 8:18-39 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1980 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. The age in which we live is filled with sickness, war, hate, riots, sorrow and confusion.
   2. Romans 8:18-19
      1. The word “reckon” here is a bookkeeping term.
         1. The apostle Paul had been doing some divine calculation.
   3. There are some things we need to get in perspective; otherwise, we will get into doubt or possibly rebellion.
      1. When tragedy hits, we might lift a clenched fist to God in defiant rebellion and accuse Him of unfairness.
      2. We might question His love for us.
      3. We might even be filled with doubt and question whether or not God exists at all.
   4. The apostle Paul, by divine inspiration, has already dealt with these questions for us.
      1. Romans 8:21
      2. Romans 8:24-25
         1. There are three words in these passages that will help us make sense out of suffering:
            1. Bondage
            2. Liberty
            3. Hope
   5. As we study these Scriptures, we will see that there is a God, and He is a good God.
2. yesterday’s curse – bondage (Romans 8:20-21)
   1. There is a curse on our world.
      1. Romans 8:20-21
         1. The word “creature” in verse 20 refers to all of creation, everything God made.
         2. The word “vanity” means “senselessness, futility, that which does not add up.”
      2. The bondage of corruption (all of the confusion, disease, war, strife and suffering) is here because of sin.
         1. God made a perfect world, but sin entered this world when Adam sinned.
            1. When Adam sinned, he dragged all of creation down with him.
   2. There are some hard questions we sometimes ask that the apostle Paul deals with in these Scriptures so that we can make sense out of suffering:
      1. Why did God allow Adam to sin?
         1. Why did God even create the potentiality or possibility of sin?
      2. Since God created everything, did God make sin?
      3. Since God is the author of everything, is God the author of suffering?
   3. God did make everything; and when He made everything, God made it absolutely perfect.
      1. God made a perfect man and a perfect woman, He put them in a perfect environment, and He gave them perfect freedom.
      2. God made them perfectly free because love is the highest good.
         1. God is a God of love.
         2. What good is love if there’s nobody to love, no love to give and no love to receive?
      3. Forced love is not love.
         1. Forced love is a contradiction in terms.
         2. God must give us freedom so that we can love.
      4. In order to choose good, we have to have the freedom to choose evil; or else the choice to choose good is no choice at all.
         1. God gave Adam and Eve the ability to choose, and they chose sin and evil.
            1. When they did, all of creation fell into the bondage of corruption.
   4. The entire creation now has the curse of sin upon it.
      1. Some people question why God does not step in and do something about it; why doesn’t He just kill the devil?
         1. God could not destroy evil without destroying freedom.
         2. If God destroyed freedom, then God would destroy love.
         3. If God destroyed love, then He would destroy the highest good.
      2. If we’re not fee to choose good, then we’re not free.
         1. There must be, therefore, the ability to choose evil.
      3. For God to destroy evil would be evil.
         1. Because God would be destroying the capability for the highest good, which is for us to choose to love Him and to serve Him.
   5. God is not going to destroy evil and suffering; God is going to defeat it.
      1. There were two gardens:
         1. There was the Garden of Eden and the first Adam.
         2. There is the Garden of Gethsemane and the second Adam.
            1. The Lord Jesus, the very Son of God, took that sin upon Himself and carried it to the cross and died for our sin.
            2. Ultimately, God through Christ triumphs over it all.
   6. Yesterday’s curse is upon everything.
      1. There’s a curse on the animal kingdom.
         1. Genesis 3:14
         2. Not only was the serpent cursed, but the entire animal kingdom was cursed.
         3. What some call “survival of the fittest” is really just creation groaning under the curse.
            1. God did not put the animals in the Garden of Eden with the law of tooth and fang and claw; that’s the result of the curse of sin.
      2. There’s a curse on the mineral kingdom.
         1. Genesis 3:17
         2. This is the reason for all of the ecological problems on the Earth.
            1. The desert, the waste places and the barren land is because of the curse.
      3. There’s a curse on the vegetable kingdom.
         1. Genesis 3:18
         2. This world, that was meant to be like the Garden of Eden, became a garden of weeds.
      4. There’s a curse on the human kingdom.
         1. Man was meant to have dominion upon this Earth.
            1. Genesis 1:26
         2. But man does not have dominion because of sin.
         3. Man is morally depraved.
            1. His mind, like the Earth, has become a garden of weeds.
            2. His imagination is evil.
         4. Man is emotionally disturbed.
            1. Psychoses and neuroses are there because of sin in his life.
         5. Man is physically diseased.
            1. Our bodies wear out.

Romans 5:12

* + - * 1. Romans 8:23

As a Christian, your spirit is saved, but your body is not yet redeemed.

When we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes into us, but we live in a body that groans.

* 1. Yesterday’s curse happened in the Garden of Eden, and we are reaping the bitter fruit of it today.

1. Tomorrow’s conquest – liberty (romans 8:21-23)
   1. There is a better day coming.
      1. The whole creation is moaning, groaning and sighing with grief and distress.
         1. To try and save this old world with ecology and politics would be like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.
      2. When Jesus comes, He is going to change it.
         1. This is called the earnest expectation of the creation.
            1. Romans 8:19
         2. Habakkuk 2:14
   2. When Jesus comes:
      1. The animal kingdom will be changed.
         1. Isaiah 11:6-9
      2. The mineral kingdom will be changed.
         1. Isaiah 35:1
      3. The vegetable kingdom will be changed.
         1. Isaiah 55:12-13
      4. The human kingdom will be changed.
         1. Romans 8:23
            1. Our bodies will be redeemed.
         2. Romans 8:18
            1. We will be like Jesus.
            2. Psalm 17:15
   3. Our great God who has redeemed us is going to turn every hurt into a hallelujah and every tear to a pearl and every Calvary into an Easter when Jesus comes.
2. today’s comfort – hope (Romans 8:18)
   1. The groans that we endure are temporary; the glory we expect is eternal.
      1. Romans 8:18
   2. Three groanings are mentioned in this passage in Romans:
      1. The groaning of creation
         1. Romans 8:20-22
         2. Everything God made is full of pain now because of sin.
      2. The groaning of the believer
         1. Romans 8:23
      3. The groaning of the Comforter
         1. Romans 8:26
   3. The believer, who is saved, cannot escape the groaning of creation.
      1. Being saved does not make us immune to suffering.
         1. Our bodies are not yet redeemed.
      2. But the Holy Spirit is there with us; the groaning of the Comforter.
         1. The Lord Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “the Comforter,” which means “one who is called alongside to help.”
   4. The groans we endure are temporary.
      1. We know suffering, but that’s not the end of the story.
      2. Romans 8:18
      3. Creation has a curse on it, and the Christian’s body is not yet redeemed; but the Holy Spirit of God knows our infirmity.
         1. He groans with intercession and prayers that cannot be uttered.
   5. The glory we expect is eternal.
      1. We are predestined for glory.
         1. Romans 8:28-29
         2. Every blood-bought child of God is going to be like Jesus.
            1. All Hell cannot stop it because it is predestined.
         3. In this passage, the apostle Paul speaks of these things in the past tense.
            1. Romans 8:29-30
            2. The glory is yet to be revealed, but God says that it’s as good as done.
            3. What’s been decreed in Heaven cannot be annulled by Hell.
      2. We are preserved for glory.
         1. Romans 8:31-34
         2. No fault can condemn us, and no foe can destroy us.
         3. Paul does not deny these sufferings; he faced them all.
            1. Romans 8:35-39

In all of these sufferings, we are super-conquerors.

* + 1. The apostle Paul does not say that we will not suffer, but he says that we are predestined for glory, preserved for glory, and that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.
    2. We know that we know that nothing can separate us from God’s great love.
       1. Romans 8:38-39

1. CONCLUSION
   1. We are sinners by nature, by birth, by practice and by choice.
      1. We have broken God’s holy law, and a holy and righteous God must judge our sin.
   2. If you die not being saved, then you will face an eternity in Hell, eternally separated from Almighty God.
      1. God doesn’t want that to happen, so He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be your sin-bearer; and Jesus has taken your sin to the cross.
         1. 2 Corinthians 5:21
         2. Jesus Christ was your substitute on the cross and atoned for your sins with His blood.
   3. Because Jesus died for you, you can receive Him into your heart by faith and He will save you.
      1. And He will predestine you and preserve you for glory.
   4. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   5. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16