

Romans 5:2-4

Student Notes:

Continuing a theme: Statements that are prefaced by “We”. A third benefit of our new situation in Christ: **“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”**

- **“We Rejoice In The Hope Of Glory Of God”**

Reiterating the New Testament meaning of the word “hope”. In the common Greek of Paul’s day, the word, “hope” was “elpis”. It described something that was certain -- something one could put their confidence in.

John Stott: “Christian hope... is a joyful and confident expectation which rests on the promises of God.”

In Abraham's case: He was confident that: 1. God gives life to the dead. 2. God calls those things which are not – as though they were.

In our case: **“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”** In other words: The end point of our hope is that God’s glory will be fully displayed in our lives.

What we should consider:

1. God’s glory is currently being displayed through nature: Psalm 19:1 -- “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. “ - Psalm 19:1

2. God's glory has been more specifically displayed in Jesus Christ -- most notably in his incarnation and His resurrection: John 1:14: “The

Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 12:23: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." --

The fuller glory to be revealed because of Christ's Resurrection: a. Jesus Christ himself will appear with great power and glory: Mark 13:26. b. We will be changed into that glory: I John 3:2 (See Romans 3:23 & 8:17)

3. Creation, which groaning under the weight of sin and the desire to be restored will, "...Be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God". -- Romans 8:21

The Christian hope is much larger than an individual life. It is much larger than a limited display of God's glory; it is an entire scope of restoration.

One day, in the future, God will be fully glorified in our lives and in His world. All of this sounds pretty idyllic -- until we read the next, "We also" in verse 3.

- **"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope."**

When Paul speaks here of "our sufferings" -- he not meaning the normal aches and pains, or fears and frustrations, which occur because we are living in a fallen world. Instead, he uses the Greek word, "Thlipseis" -- which literally means, "pressures".

"Thlipsis": The kind of suffering we experience because of the opposition and persecution of a hostile world.

John Stott: "Thlipsis was almost a technical term for the suffering which God's people must expect in the last days before the end."

Jesus warned his disciples, that, “in this world they would have trouble” (John 16:33). Paul used the same word, “thlipsis” when he warned his young converts that they “must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” -- Acts 14:22

It is all too easy for us to imagine that every problem we encounter is some kind of worldly persecution -- The only uniquely Christian problem is attack and persecution brought on because of our faith in Christ.

What attitude should Christians adopt when they face these (Thlipseis) “tribulations” brought on because of faith in Christ?

- **First, we are to rejoice in them.**

This isn't some kind of emotional sickness in which we derive pleasure from being hurt. Instead, it's a recognition that experiencing suffering for our faith is not pointless.

Example -- Acts 5:41: “The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”

Paul tells us that if we truly experience “thlipsis” -- we can rejoice because we know there is a divine-rationale behind it. Four things in this kind of suffering: “... because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

1. This Kind of Suffering Is The Path To Glory.

As Paul sees it, suffering is the one and only path to glory: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” - Romans 8:17

2. This Kind Of Suffering Leads To Endurance/Perseverance: "... We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."

In past ages, God's people could not truly learn perseverance or endurance without "thlipsis" -- the pressures of troubles. Paul says this kind of suffering develops endurance. He uses the Greek word, "hypomone" -- which means perseverance, endurance, or patience.

Other passages where "hypomone" appears: Titus 2:2; Hebrews 10:36; Hebrews 12:1; James 1:3-4; James 5:11.

Each of those verses all describe endurance or perseverance as being the byproduct of "thlipsis" -- godly sufferings. And each one produces something that God considers commendable.

3. This Kind Of Suffering Leads To Spiritual Maturity:

Endurance produces "godly character". Greek word: "Dokime". It expresses the quality of a person who has been tested and passed the test. ("Dokime" is "a mature character").

John Stott: "Dokime is the temper of the veteran as opposed to that of the raw recruit".

4. This Kind of Suffering Leads to Hope:

"Character Produces Hope": Here we find that Greek word for confidence again (elpis) -- but this time in the sense of confidence that God will complete our character.

It's a commentary on the fact that we can depend on the God who is developing our character right now, will be the same God who develops it in the future.