

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 8

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through Romans

We have pitched out tents on the mountaintop – this amazing chapter in this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome about the fundamentals of Christianity –

The Gospel of Grace

About how our justification is a work that God has already done for us.

About how our sanctification is a work that the Holy Spirit is currently doing in us as we lean on Him – He is transforming in us from the inside out.

He is leading us

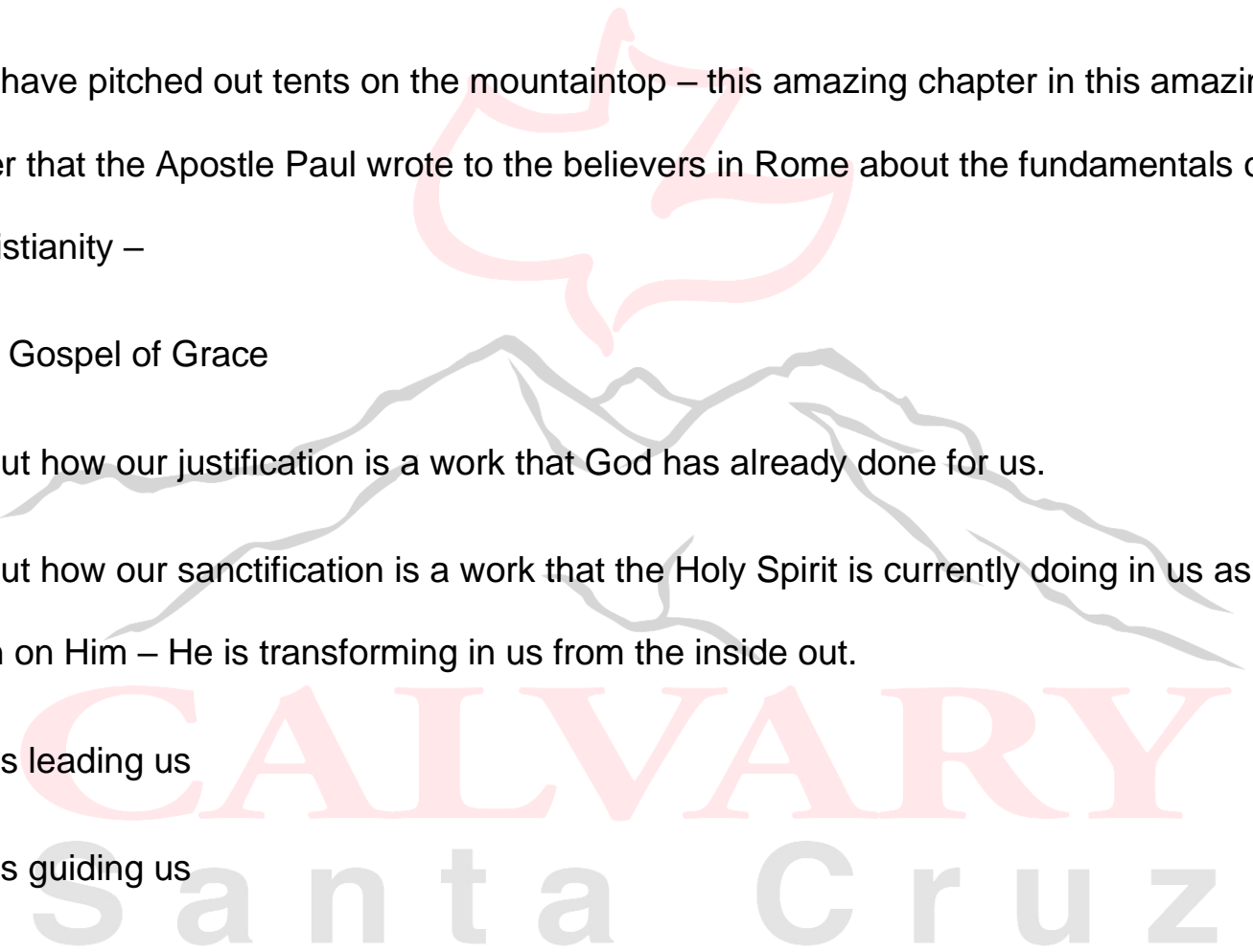
He is guiding us

He is empowering us

As we are being led by Him, He leads us to life and peace

we are being led away from sin, which only leads to death

He is making us more like Jesus.



We begin to grow spiritually, as He bends us and stretches us and straightens us and sometimes breaks us.

I have said this over and over again in our midweek study as we are going to the book of Job.

God's will for us is not to comfort us – it is to conform us into His image.

And so – one of the ways that His will is accomplished in the life of the believer is through suffering.

So the Lord laid it on my heart this week – to do one single verse –

About how the Christian – as we live in this fallen world, we will suffer.

And in the same way that it is important for us to grasp that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ – it is important for us to grasp that Christianity without the cross is not Christianity.

Because we serve a Suffering Savior – we will suffer

Let's pray...

**[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 18 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.**

Repeat –

**[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 18 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.**

So far – in chapter 8

Paul has detailed for us the amazing freedoms that we have in Christ

Freedom from condemnation in verse 1

Freedom from discouragement – verse 2

Freedom from defeat – verse 12 – we no longer have an obligation to live according to the flesh.

But Paul also introduced a problem -

One of suffering –

**[Rom 8:16-17 NKJV] 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], that we may also be glorified together.**

**if indeed we suffer with [Him],**

Paul reminds us of the paradox – that knowing and loving the Lord is also going to sometimes include difficulty, pain, suffering.

None of us here this morning enjoy suffering.

We don't enjoy suffering because it is so hurtful and so painful.

Yet some of us this morning may either be going through a period of suffering or just finished going through a period of suffering or will be going through a period of suffering.

Suffering is something we all want to avoid.

And because we live in a place and time where we have experienced tremendous blessings and relative freedoms and greatness –

There is this thought among some believers that

I shouldn't have to suffer – because I am a Christian

I shouldn't have to go through things – I love Jesus

I have given Jesus my life

I surrendered everything for Him

I shouldn't have to suffer – I shouldn't have to go through things.

I go to church every Sunday

I serve in church.

I served in ministry

I read my bible every day.

I listen to sermons – I laugh at pastor’s dumb jokes.

I am no longer rebelling against God – I am living for Him

Therefore, I shouldn’t have to suffer.

We are Christians, we are a blessed people

We should be immune to suffering.

Unfortunately, this is the mindset of many believers.

This is what is being taught this Sunday morning in many churches and throughout social media.

But the truth is – that none of us is immune to the pains and problems of life.

We will suffer.

Because everyone everywhere suffers.

Especially to those who desire to live a godly life.

Please write these verses down.

**[2Ti 3:12 NKJV] 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**

“I want to live a godly life” – expect suffering.

**[Mat 16:24 NKJV] 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

The cross speaks of suffering and sacrifice.

Sometimes the suffering that we experience will be because of the faults and failures of someone else.

It will be someone else's sin that will cause us great pain.

It will be someone else's words.

It will be someone else's actions and carelessness that will bring great grief into our lives.

But sometimes the suffering will be the result of our own foolishness.

Our own sins

It will be the result of our own depravity and bad decisions.

Our own rebellion and disobedience

And one of the things that we have learned through our study in Romans is that the root of all suffering and pain is sin.

Human suffering exists because sin exists.

Let's look at our verse again -

**[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 18 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.**

When Paul uses the word consider here –

Because a lot of times when we use the word consider we think about wrestling with a decision –

I consider my choices looking at the menu

Do I want a tacos for lunch or a burger –

But when Paul uses that word consider here in the original language, he is saying – I know that I know that I know.

I reckon -

Paul is saying that he understands this to be true.

That the present suffering, the things that I am going through right now – the things that are in my life right now –

The things that have happened because of what someone else did

Or the things that have happened because of the choices I made,

Because of my connection to Jesus Christ – I know that they do not even compare to what is up ahead.

They do not compare to the glory that will be revealed in me.

The changes that God is making in me and through me.

The question that is often asked is –

How does Paul know?

How can Paul make a statement like that?

Paul doesn't know the pain or suffering that I am going through right now.

Turn with me to 2 Cor 11

Paul as he is writing this second letter to the church in Corinth.

As he is pouring into them –

He is being attacked

The church in Corinth where Paul served so faithfully – and loved so greatly,

These false teachers had come into the church and had started to make a bunch of false accusations against Paul.

They started to make false accusations that Paul didn't care about them, that Paul was just taking advantage of them.



And unfortunately, the church is believing the accusations that were brought upon by these false teachers.

And so part of what Paul is doing here is defending himself.

He is letting the church know that – he has gone through seasons of pain and suffering too.

**[2Co 11:22-28 NKJV] 22 Are they Hebrews? So [am] I. Are they Israelites? So [am] I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So [am] I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I [am] more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes] minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 [in] journeys often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils of [my own] countrymen, [in] perils of the Gentiles, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**

Paul is saying – I know what it is to suffer.

I know what I am talking about.

I have been there.

I know what it feels like to experience physical pain.

I know what it is like to experience emotional pain.

Paul understood what it meant to take up ones cross and follow Jesus.

He wanted to serve Jesus, and if these hardships were part of serving Jesus, he would accept them.

Because he knew that he knew that he knew that the suffering was only short term and in no way comparable to what awaited him.

Looking at Paul's list –

There is no way my suffering can compare to Paul's suffering.

I could never write a list like Paul's

Yet there are brothers and sisters in Christ in parts of the world right now who are experiencing great suffering for their faith in Christ.

Suffering is real church.

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

This is how Paul exhorted the early church to continue in the faith.

There is going to be times of suffering.

**[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 18 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.**

The word that is used here for sufferings can refer to three things

- The sufferings of Jesus Christ
- The sufferings of the believer
- The sufferings of the believer in the name of Jesus Christ.

These are the things that we face as believers

And the bible tells us -

**[1Co 12:26 NKJV] 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with [it]; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with [it].**

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Peter 4 –

Peter – another one of the Apostles who understood suffering for Christ

In fact, church history tells us that he was crucified upside down because he said he was not worthy to die like his savior.

Look at verse 12 –

As Peter is writing to us and those who are suffering –

He reminds us that in this life, we will experience suffering

**[1Pe 4:12-14 NKJV] 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed [are you], for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.**

I had you make a note of the phrase where Peter tells us to rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings

Our Savior was a Suffering Savior

In Isaiah 53 – it speaks of our Suffering Savior and it says that He is a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief

And as we partake of our Saviors suffering – guess what that means, that we are going to be men and women of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

The problem that I find in my life and in your life as well is that – we do think it is strange when we fall into various trials.

And we start to have all these questions and thoughts about how – these things are not supposed to happen to me.

I love God – why am I suffering?

My neighbor doesn't love God – why isn't he suffering.

My boss doesn't love God – why isn't he suffering?

We do think it is strange.

There is that sense in our flesh where we think that we should suffer at all.

That we should have to go through anything

It seems strange to us that the righteous suffer while the ungodly seem to have it all.

It seems strange to us that after all we have done in the name of Jesus Christ that our time would be rewarded with pain.

Turn your bible with me to Psalm 73

Because I am going to show you someone who also thought it was strange –

**[Psa 73:1-2 NKJV] 1 A Psalm of Asaph. Truly God [is] good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.**

The Psalmist begins – by acknowledging God's goodness.

But he is troubled that God has extended His goodness to the wicked.

Look at verse 12

I am going to read it from the NLT

**[Psa 73:12-14 NLT] 12 Look at these wicked people--enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. 13 Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? 14 I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain.**

This is what Asaph is saying

These guys are better off than I am

They are ungodly yet God rewards them

I have sacrificed my life to the Lord, I have served faithfully and my reward is pain and suffering.

The psalmist – as he is looking out at those wicked, arrogant people who are prospering –

Do you see what is coming out of his mouth – arrogant words.

I have been so perfect – no we haven't

I have been so pure – no we haven't

The bible says that if God was to hold our sins against us – Who could stand. (Psalm 130:3)

And so often, the pains and the suffering of life because of the attitude of “I shouldn't have to suffer” – it begins to shipwreck our faith.

And we begin to sound like the psalmist.

**Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?**

Was it for nothing that Jesus died a sacrificial death for you and me?

No, it wasn't

His sacrificial death was not for our success in the business world.

His sacrificial death was not for our continued success in marriage

His sacrificial death was so that your sins and my sins can be forgiven and we might be made right with Him.

Church, we suffer

We all go through things

Good things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people

Bad things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people

For those that teach – that the Christian can somehow bypass the pains and suffering of life – and live healthy and prosperous.

What they are claiming is that we can bypass the cross

And loved ones – please understand – that no true Christian bypasses the cross.

We need to guard ourselves from the foolishness of this world

That people will come into our lives when we are the most vulnerable and say stuff like – you don't have to suffer.

And they say it to take advantage of us.

Pain and suffering will cause us to start to question God's goodness.

We will begin to question whether God has abandoned us,

Peter reminds us - don't think it is strange.

**[Rom 8:18 NKJV] 18 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.**

We have looked at Paul and Peter – but since I am an OT guy –

I don't think there is a more perfect illustration of Romans 8:18 – than the life of Joseph.

His own brothers, sell him into slavery

They brothers throw him into a pit. Suffering

God delivers him from the pit – and is taken to Egypt and ultimately to prison – where he served 13 years in prison for something that he did not.

He was discarded and forgotten in prison – experiencing suffering and pain



But it was from the prison that God delivered Joseph to the palace

Turn with me to Genesis 50

Joseph is reunited with his brothers –

And when Jacob – their father died, the brothers think that Joseph is going to take revenge on them.

**[Gen 50:18-20 NKJV] 18 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we [are] your servants." 19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for [am] I in the place of God? 20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as [it is] this day, to save many people alive.**

Joseph – was the 13 years as a slave and prisoner worth it?

Yes it was.

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

Those who don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ – they have no hope when they suffer.

It makes no sense to them as to why they go through pain

But the believer – we have hope

And the sufferings in our life produce spiritual fruit

Brothers and sisters – we have hope today

That soon, our afflictions will end.

And all of our wrongs in our life will be made right in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Every wrong will be made right

And every pain will be removed

God is working in us and through us right now to bring about great changes for His great glory

And we have hope that our suffering will add to our eternal glory

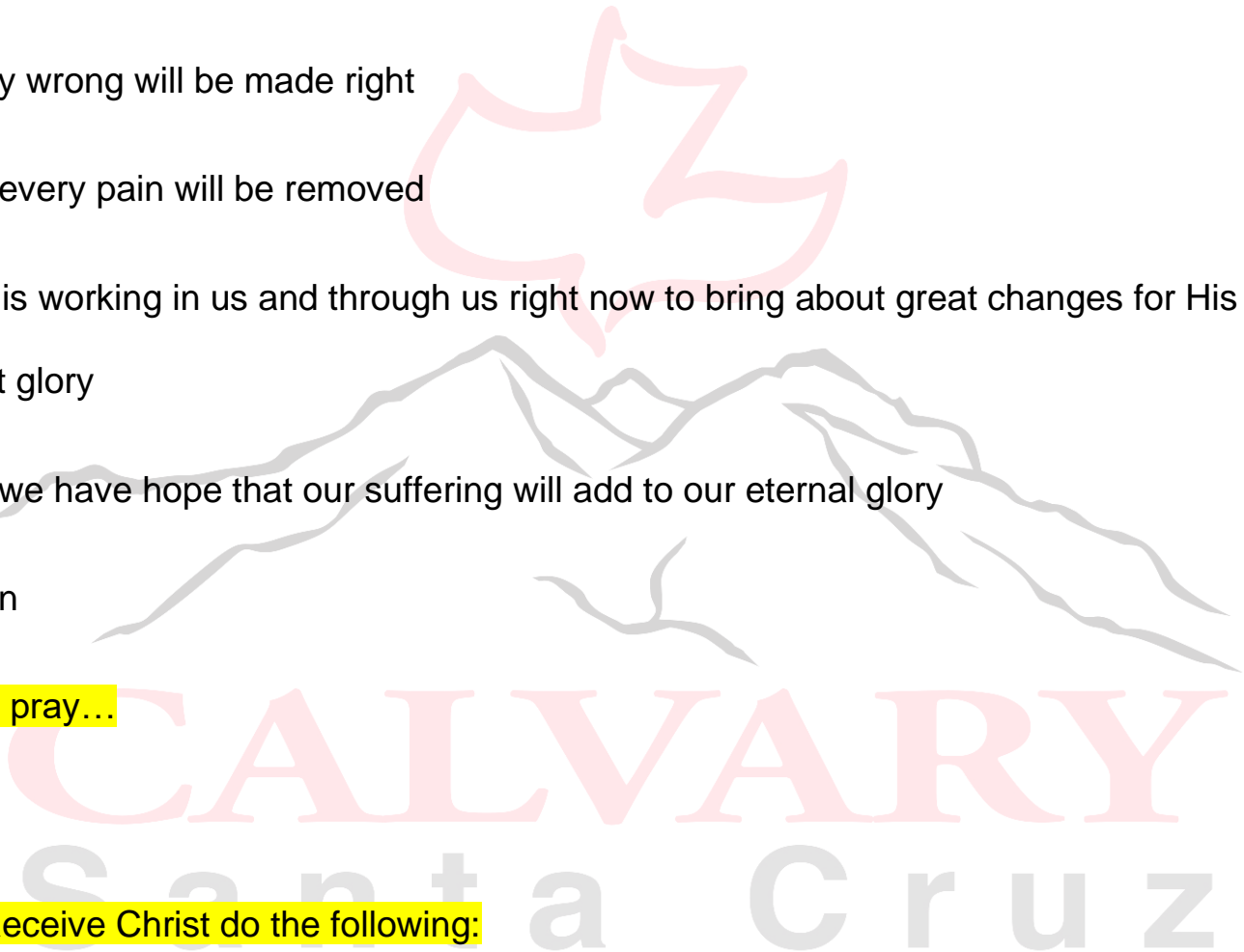
Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.



Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

It is very difficult to receive a message on suffering

Because everything in us and everything around us cries out for us not to suffer.

I love this quote from an old wise dead dude

**“Take away my capacity for pain and you rob me of the possibility for joy.”**

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

