

THE BOOK OF ROMANS
"Antedotes for Suffering"

Romans 8:26-28

July 13, 1986

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul has made his point--those who suffer with the Lord will also be glorified with Him (v. 17b). Moreover, the present suffering is disproportionate to the future glory. That is a glory yet to be revealed to usward (v. 18).

2. The confirmation of the above is given in creation (vv. 19-22) and in the attitude of believers (vv. 23-25). Thus, irrational and rational creation supports the truth that present suffering is alleviated in view of future glory. This hope is patiently waited for--glory to God (v. 25).

3. Other antidotes to present suffering are given in the text. These include:

1. AID OF GOD'S SPIRIT vv. 26, 27

a. In weakness

The word "likewise" shows that Paul piles one reason for confidence on another as hope sustains God's sons (vv. 24, 25), so the Holy Spirit helps in weakness. The verb "help" is a double compound only found here and in Luke 10:40 in the N.T. It is a present middle meaning to lend a hand together with at the same time with one. Thus, at the very time of our weakness, the Holy Spirit takes hold to help.

b. In prayer

An illustration of our weakness is how to pray at all, not what it means to pray. One's heart finds it hard to define in words the deep inward longing, but the Spirit draws near to help. "Ought" means "as it is necessary," thus according to some given circumstances, one often does not know what is necessary to ask.

c. In intercession

The failure of human strength is met by the Spirit's intervention. "Intercession" means to "happen on in one's behalf." The Spirit does this in the believer with inarticulate groans (cf. vv. 22, 23 for groan). He gives shape and value to the groan! Moreover, the Spirit can do all this since He discerns the motives of the most faltering utterance and knows the mind of the Spirit. This is all in harmony with God's will (v. 27). God give us sighs too deep for words which are constrained by His Spirit in the midst of weakness, perplexity, and need.

2. AID OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE v. 28

Here is something "we know" (cf. v. 26). By personal experience, by God's dealing with others, and by divine revelation. What is known shows that present suffering has an antidote in God's infinite providential working which is:

a. Comprehensive

Not a single thread of our lives ever slips through His fingers. Nothing is outside God's direct or permissive will. There are no reservations to the "all things."

b. Harmonious

God takes the cold to harmonize with the warm. Sunshine and tears harmonize. While all of this is beyond human comprehension and is often mysterious, it is never arbitrary. God takes all, adjusts it, and causes it to be in harmony--working together.

c. Beneficent

No matter how difficult the process, all tends toward "good." There are true perplexities of providence which are bewildering and apparently insoluble, but they do work together "unto good."

d. Limitation

There are limits to God's providence. What is recorded here is for believers only. The present participle "loving" God shows this providence is for those quality people only. "Called" is a passive verbal form, but adjectival in sense. It's like "saints" or "faithful." Hence, only believers are involved.

CONCLUSION

What do you do with present suffering? Answer: You
1. Hope (vv. 18-25). 2. Pray (vv. 26, 27) with the aid of Holy Spirit. 3. Believe that all things are providential acts of God (v. 28). Amen!