

Morning sermon series – Life in the Spirit

"Experiencing Suffering" (Romans 8v18-30)

The tension of living in the “in-between zone”, both in this creation and in the Spirit. The Kingdom of Jesus is “now but not yet complete.” We feel that tension perhaps most keenly and painfully when we suffer. Three strong sources of comfort in our suffering:

1) Not Just You (v19-22)

We are in a creation that is groaning. Suffering is deeply woven into the fabric of this creation and this epoch (v20, 22). It will end in glorious transformation and unimaginable freedom (v19, v21), but for now the children of God also groan and long for full salvation (v23).

The importance, therefore, of sharing what we are going through, praying for one another, loving one another and mourning with those who mourn. We are not alone!

2) Not Without Hope (v18, 23-25, 29-30)

We are also in Christ and in the Spirit. God is calling us to lift our eyes to him in the midst of the pain and tears. He is calling us to patiently endure as we look forwards in hope (v25). Waiting will be swallowed up in eternity, and suffering will be swallowed up in glory (v18). We have the certain hope (v24) of full deliverance from suffering and decay, and of being made like Christ to be with Christ (v29-30).

3) Not Abandoned (v26-28)

The Spirit is in us; and the Spirit helps us in our weakness (v26).

The personal story of Pierre Darcourt: “kissing the chains.” Our God is the God who works sovereignly in all things (v28), chains included. He has the power to work in the midst of those chains and sufferings for your eternal good and to draw you closer to himself.

We have a God who is FOR us in all circumstances. Christ intercedes for us continually (8v34; Hebrews 7v25). And the Spirit prays with us (v26): wonderfully, the Spirit participates in our prayers (v27). The important thing is not exactly what we pray (v26), but to open up to God and to the work of his Spirit, so that we can know more of his strong comfort. We can experience peace and power in weakness by placing the chains in Christ’s hands as Pierre Darcourt did.