

7-19-20

Sermon- What the Future Holds For Us

Scripture- Romans 8:18-25, CTW Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24

Hymns- 507, 668

Theme- Our text today is introduced with some sobering words..."If indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory." (Romans 8:17) When you share something with someone you take a part of whatever it is...You share the last bowl of cereal...the last soda...you share the 20 dollar meal at Red Lobster. How do we share in Jesus' suffering... so we can also share in His glory? What part do we share?

Paul begins our study today in verse 18: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Born again Spirit-filled followers of Christ are heirs and heiresses, along with Jesus, of a future glory.

But he also talks about suffering and we might ask:

I. WHY DOES SUFFERING HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH OUR INHERITANCE?

Well, let me answer that in two parts.

A. First of all...like the Apostle Paul...we suffer because of the simple fact we live in a temporary body...a tent... Paul called it a fragile "Jar of Clay" elsewhere. One that is "dead because of sin."

This body ages...as it ages parts wear out...pain increases... wrinkles take hold. Years ago, whenever I would visit Lil Goodsell in the Middletown home ...and I asked her "How are you doing?" Every time she would respond..."Everything I have hurts...and what doesn't hurt doesn't work anymore!"

Katherine Hepburn used to say: "I've discovered that my body is like my car...something goes wrong or wears out, I take it to the mechanic and he replaces the part...until one day I take it in and he says, "Sorry we don't make parts for that model anymore!"

When Jesus, “the word of God became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (**John 1:14**), the creator of the universe entered a body, through the miraculous virgin birth and subjected himself to a body that ages...grows older...wears out...dies. Paul describes that amazing choice in his letter to the Philippians...

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8 Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Isaiah the prophet wrote the following words 800 years before Jesus came to fulfill them:

“He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root of a dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him...He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.” (**Is. 53:2-3**)

Most pictures of Jesus make Him look like a beautiful, attractive beard wearing Mediterranean masculine man. Scripture says he chose an ugly exterior so that wouldn't be what drew you to Him...“Nothing in his appearance caused us to desire Him.” Even before the scars and the swelling caused by the beating and crucifixion...He chose a body that demanded inner beauty to be the magnet...not outward handsomeness.

Every person shares in the suffering that Jesus chose...living in a body that's dying...scars easily, needs fixing and eventually...dies.

Some find hope in delaying that process...putting off the inevitable...but for the born again, Spirit-filled follower of Jesus...inside, something beautiful testifies...No, this isn't all there is...there is a forever body...there is an inheritance for you...“IN YOU.”

B. But there is a second suffering that takes place for the born again, Spirit-filled and led follower of Christ.

Suffering for Christ! Paul tells the Corinthians and us we have a treasure housed inside an easily broken earthen jar...Listen:

In 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12, Paul reminds us:

That he was pressured from every angle. He's confused, perplexed at times. He's persecuted. He's beaten down...His body constantly reminds him...its temporary...but he doesn't despair. He will not quit, because it's all for an opportunity to make others become followers of the Savior He follows.

He also says in **2 Cor. 6** "We showed you we are servants of God in every way...in great endurance, in troubles, hardships, and distresses, in beatings, imprisonments and riots, in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger, in purity, understanding, patience and kindness in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in trustful speech and IN THE POWER OF GOD." (v 3-7)

Paul and his companions suffered because of Christ...they went through all the above...because they were born again, Spirit-filled followers of Jesus whose purpose was to share Jesus.

This is very different than suffering because we live in the same body Jesus occupied...**its suffering because we've put this body in harm's way for the gospel.** You don't have a choice with the first...you have a choice in the attitude you reveal through it, but you will face trouble in this world because your sinful body wears out.

But putting yourself in harm's way for the gospel is different...stepping into the ring is different...you know you're going to get hit...it's not if, it's when.

The Spiritual battles with these individuals has us fighting for essential "Spiritual" principles of leadership and witness against an attitude of worldliness within the church. It might be the largest area of pressure, anxiety, burden and abuse for Christian leaders in America today.

We might face some judgment and hatred from the outside world because we view homosexuality as a sexual sin...like adultery...

and we believe life starts at conception and abortion murders that life...but the greatest struggle and suffering we face is similar to Jesus...from those who are religious, but not spiritual.

C. God has not called his people to comfort...He's called us to love men and women who are led by the Spirit... However, our nature desires comfort more than sacrifice.

Paul says that you will suffer..Christians and non Christians alike... because we share temporary, mortal, perishable bodies that are dead because of sin!

But suffering for Jesus? Missionaries on foreign soil will face persecution and death because of their beliefs. We here in America face something more insidious...Satan's influence, and people's happiness are more important than reaching lost souls and growing up in Christ.

The church does not need more men and women who are religious...it needs Christians who are spiritually led by the Father, suffering because of their inheritance.

II. BECAUSE OF OUR HOPE FOR A FUTURE GLORY

Let me ask a simple question...why did Jesus leave His Church here on earth? To make disciples, to teach those disciples what it means to be like Jesus...

That's the essence of the great commission in **Matt. 28:18-19**

That's the calling of every born again Spirit-filled follower of Christ...Wherever you are...wherever you go...intentionally make other disciples, and help them know "what and how I want them to live."

That hasn't changed...It still should be the mission of every Church. Don't ever forget that!

A. But why is that not obvious to all Christians? Because we started to forget that OUR hope is in a future glory, not a present comfort.

Because churches have said, "Come in our building and have your needs met"...instead of go out into the world and make disciples.

When we're together, we'll praise our Father and get better prepared...but both of those are catalysts for "going."

All because our glory is in the future...A future event will take place, that "reveals in us" what it means to be God's son...what our adoption as sons does...how these dying bodies are redeemed (purchased back) from sin, so they become "forever" bodies.

We groan for that...all creation...everything created by Jesus...aches for that future day. It's why we were saved...born once again...and see if things make a little more spiritual sense.

Folks, when Adam and Eve sinned, death wasn't just their punishment...it wasn't just their bodies that would die temporally because of sin. All creation started to run down...all creation, every part of this earth begin to decay...it had no choice in the matter like Adam and Eve, but it started dying nonetheless...

B. What started out as perfection...became flawed...it's like someone who had perfect vision going blind...I'm sure that person would long to see again...even groan for their eyesight to return.

A woman who goes through the pains of childbirth...intense labor...endures it because of the hope of a child...

One day Jesus will return as He's promised! The Savior, who died in our place on a cross to pay the penalty of our sin...the Victor who rose from the dead conquering its power will return as the almighty King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Remember **Philippians 2:6-8** which describes Jesus' attitude of humility, even to the point of death on the cross....

Worship should not be a choice...worship means to "ascribe worth" And whether you kneel and confess out of fear or out of reverence...on the day of his return you will kneel and confess His worth..."Jesus...is Lord."

III. CONCLUSION: The Day of the Lord WILL Come!

A. We are all to be in preparation for that day, while living the life He has called us to here.

Peter says, "The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare." **(2 Pet. 3:10)**

On the heels of that Peter says, "But in keeping with His (Jesus) promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness." **(2 Pet. 3:13)**

And last but certainly not least, John says in **Revelation 21: 1-5**, "Then I saw a new heaven and new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne (Jesus' voice) saying now the dwelling of God is with men and He will live with them...They will be His people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new."

God's children are made new...the first fruit of the resurrection now reveals His harvest...Our adoption is complete because our bodies are redeemed...Creation is redeemed.

This is our hope. We don't have it yet...we wait for it...even in the midst of suffering. This day has no comparison!

We need to get and stay in touch with what the Word of God ACTUALLY SAYS about our future and live it like we know it! And knowing it, we make adjustments in accordance with that knowledge.

Amen? Let Us Pray...