

Getting Started

- How do you typically respond when life hits you head on?
What has helped you maintain an eternal perspective at these times?

Discussion

- Read Romans 8:15-25 and highlight the key points in this passage.
Summarize the main point from Pastor Lee's message on Sunday.

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 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 fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

We can learn a few things about the theology of suffering from the book of Job. God ordains that His children walk in sorrow and pain sometimes because of sin (Numbers 12:10-12), sometimes for chastening (Hebrews 12:5-12), sometimes for strengthening (2 Corinthians 7-10, 1 Peter 5:10), and sometimes to give opportunity to reveal His comfort and grace (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). But there are times when the compelling issue in the suffering of the saints is unknowable because it is for a heavenly purpose that those on earth can't discern. (Exodus 4:11; John 9:1-3) (From John MacArthur's Study Bible)

- Read Colossians 3:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and discuss what it looks like maintain an eternal perspective in the midst of the sufferings and trials of life.

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

- Discuss how these truths from Job's experience can help us to maintain an eternal perspective as we wait for the Blessed Hope.
 1. *There are matters going on in heaven with God that believers know nothing about, yet, that affects their lives.*
 2. *Even the best efforts at explaining the issues of life can be useless.*
 3. *God's people do suffer. Bad things happen all the time to good people, so one cannot judge a person's spirituality by his painful circumstances or successes.*
 4. *Even though God seems far away, perseverance in faith is a most noble virtue since God is good and one can safely leave his life in His hands.*
 5. *The believer in the midst of suffering should not abandon God, but, draw near to Him, so out of fellowship can come the comfort, without explanation.*
 6. *Suffering may be intense, but it will ultimately end for the righteous and God will bless abundantly.*

Prayer

Ask God to strengthen you in your current season of trial or suffering with the mindset of 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Share your "Something Only God Can Do" cry of your heart. Begin to pray in light of how Jesus taught us to pray ...

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.