



Romans 8:18 -30 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **19** For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. **23** Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? **25** But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **29** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **30** And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Icebreaker

Tell about a time you received good news or long awaited news via a snail mail letter or email.

Conversation Starters

1. Imagine switching allegiance from Zeus, Apollo and Venus to the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What would it be like to follow Jesus as a Roman citizen in the first century without the entire New Testament, with only a letter from Paul and some second hand stories? What about when persecution began? What would help you believe and follow Jesus even in persecution and suffering, if you lived in 1st century Rome?
2. Ed says, God gives us hope even though our bodies and the earth itself are subject to decay and death, even when we are in the midst of suffering. Hope is what we wait for expectantly but hasn't happened yet.
 - a. When have you experience hope that carried you through suffering?
 - b. What is the biggest hope killer for you?
 - c. What does it look like for you to kindle or store up hope and joy in your soul?
3. Holy Spirit will help keep hope alive in you. How can you partner with Holy Spirit now, building a reservoir of hope for suffering you may walk through in the future? How can you become more aware of Holy Spirit groaning along with you and helping you in your pain and suffering?
4. **Watch Ed's teaching from 24:08 - 27:24.** Ed says **we** don't have it in us to make a bad situation work for good, but **God** does. From beginning to end it is about **God**. Why is it important to remember that God is the one with power large enough to work all things for good?