

July 4, 2021 - David Vinyard

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Preacher: David Vinyard

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. It's great. It's great to have this many people on the other side of the room.

Usually, when I'm getting ready to have a conversation like this, it's just me and that guy in the mirror. And he's kind of a yes man, you know. This happens to be a pretty significant weekend, actually.

Eleven years ago, this weekend, I was able to convince a nice young lady to be my wife. A lot of you guys witnessed that, you know, her moment of regret. This weekend is another anniversary, one that we celebrate together as a country, right?

I think it's the 245th, if my math is right. Anybody? Double check that? Just trust me. Our history as a country, right?

Being a nation, a new entity on the face of the planet, the United States. And it's interesting to think about anniversaries. You know, looking back on history helps us appreciate what we've done.

[1:13] You know, and I was kind of thinking about that in light of the passage today. And taking us back there for a moment, imagine even before the Declaration of Independence in April of 1775.

Anybody knew what happened in April of 1775? The shots heard around the world? Yeah. A little bit of musket fire in Massachusetts, depending on what your flavor of that is.

Which escalated, right, into the Revolutionary War. And I kind of got down a rabbit trail of this. You know, what happened? Why did we even do this? And, you know, how did things begin? In the first battle, did you know this?

There was only 77, approximately, U.S. militiamen against almost 700 trained British soldiers. Is it Indiana Jones that says, never tell me the odds?

Who is that? Han Solo? Same guy. Yeah. So it's an interesting concept, right? You've got trained soldiers fighting for a paycheck versus untrained citizens but fighting for quite a bit more, right?

[2:17] Their freedom. And it got me thinking, you know, what would life look like here today had that not happened? How would our families look? How would our citizens look? How would our families look like here today?

You know, 1775. So, and I promise this relates to Romans in a roundabout way. But consider this. So imagine you were living right then instead of now.

I mean, it's almost hard to imagine what that would be. But think about being there. Think about the battles in your streets, your neighborhoods. You know, it was your neighbor. It was your husband who left to go join the fight.

Maybe your father never came back home. Maybe you lost a sister to disease or, you know, some sort of challenge with medical supplies, right? And the whole point of that is what we call a holiday really wasn't that at the time, right?

I certainly prefer barbecue and friends over, you know, war and separation. I'll be honest. But picture this. Picture being there 250 years ago about.

[3:48] And you're headed to church on a Sunday morning. You're a believer. And you bring those that are left in your family. And after you sing a song or two, the preacher opens up to the book of Romans.

How about that? And just like today, he says, turn with me to chapter 8. Okay? And you sit there. Imagining the state that you're in. You sit there. And you hear as he starts to read from our text today, which starts in verse 18.

Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. And it says this. It says, For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Imagine hearing those words in 1775. And what's neat about that is I have to speculate that there have been Christians across history who have benefited from hearing that exact truth from the Apostle Paul in our text today.

Faithfully trusting God without really knowing, you know, what's to follow. Without knowing what's on the other end of the next day, the next week, the next year. And so I share all that just to put a little perspective in for the 4th of July.

[5:01] But also, you know, we have an opportunity today to do the exact same thing. We may not be at war, but we have a chance to appreciate the letter from Paul, the truth from God, divinely inspired, speaking into the life of the believer.

So with that, let's pray and then we'll dig into Romans 8. God, I thank you for what you've done. Thank you for what you're doing.

Just out of respect for the accomplishments you've outlined for our nation on our behalf. We say thanks for that. We say thank you for all the brave men and women who've endured a harder time than this.

And just the great things that we have as a result. So I pray for this message, pray that you would speak truth into our life and that you would encourage us today. Amen. All right, so I know it's summertime and I know that means that people tend to be hit or miss in summers and Sunday mornings.

And there's no fault. I'm guilty of that too. But what I want to say is if you've missed a couple weeks prior, the study of Romans has been great. It's really, it's helped me, I can say at the very least.

[6:06] It's been very relevant, very helpful. So feel free to go back and catch up. But it's an interesting book, right? We've got a picture from the Apostle Paul.

And he's just articulating truth. And it's sort of wide sweeping, right? I mean, he talks about sin and its effect on mankind. Declaring that we're all a part of that.

And we see what God thinks about that, right? But the good news is that he declares, hey, there is a path to being saved from God's wrath against sin.

And so Romans has declared that. Paul's letter to the Romans has shown that hope. That simply by believing that God, as Jesus died in my place, now I have all these benefits that follow.

I have all this opportunity that Paul's going to talk about in the second and third part of Romans. How to operate as a believer is really where we're at today in this part of the text. So let me read it for us.

[7:07] We're going to start in verse 18. I'll read that again. And we're going to go through verse 25. Paul says, For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together until now.

And not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope.

For why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. It's quite a text. Are you ready to be challenged today?

I'll be honest, studying this text has changed me. I know that's hard to believe for some of you. Like, yeah, you've got quite a ways to go, Vineyard. Figure it out. But after being saved 30 years, like, there was something in this study that actually impacted my day-to-day.

So I'll preface this whole coverage with that. And just like last week where we heard that not only are we saved through our faith, but that we're adopted into God's family and offered an inheritance.

[8:44] Similarly, this week is still written with another round of good news. It's another promise. It's another positive expectation that we have as believers.

And that's important, right? Because taking things out of context, I just want to make that distinction. What we'll talk about today, these things that we can rely on, they are not for the lost.

They don't get that. They, you know, the sufferings of this present time will not necessarily turn into anything better after this present time for those who are not believers, for those who reject Christ.

But that's for another time. This text is not about wrath. Instead, it talks in verse 18 that for us, for we who believe, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared.

So that word, the words used in your Bible there, can refer to a calamity or an evil or an affliction, like an ongoing thing.

[9:48] It could be, it's a very broad term, right? So it can mean quite a bit. It could be the big stuff in life, which I know many folks are going through, the enduring pains. Or it can be the time you punted your baby toe on the leg of the coffee table, you know.

Teddy. Teddy and I are brothers in toe agony lately. Paul says, Altogether, it can't be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Some of your translations say, to us. I believe that's a lesser option. Revealed in us. Think of it this way. Loose example. We've got a friend that buys a brand new car.

It's called a Lamborghini. He wants to show it to you. His car is glorious. Drives it to your driveway. Shows you that car. Reveals the glory of that car to you.

But then it goes home and parks in that friend's garage, right? You're getting the newness in this example, right? Paul says, revealed in us. So not only do we witness this glory, but it will outshine all of our sufferings.

[10:55] We become it. It's actually a primary particle, as if on a cellular level. More on that in a bit. But just think about that. So these words, again, this promise, this hope, this redirection is given to believers here in Rome.

But it does apply specifically to us by extension. And really, just the first point of this text, I mean, I know this is one of those verses that you see on bookmarks in Christian bookstores and everything else, right?

It's definitely the most popular text, the verse of the text. But really, that should infect every piece of our day as believers. It really should. It should give us something in any moment that we can fall back on, that changes our demeanor, that changes our attitudes, our mindsets, our perspective. And I honestly think that's why Paul takes a quick aside from, you know, living by the Spirit and says, here's seven verses, understanding life on how to get through this thing.

And verse 18 is paramount to that. I've learned over the years that brevity is good, and I was tempted to cut it there.

[12:07] But I feel like you guys, you know, the price of the admission wouldn't have merited that. So, but, you know, I almost posed a question. Should we just snip it there? Should we just focus on one verse? Close it up, you know, as we say, go with God's blessing and head on home.

KJ is going to roll the clip for us here in a little perspective as to why we shouldn't. Kenny, I need 50 pounds of roast beef.

Sorry, Pat. We're all out. No, don't give me that. What, did your wife wolf it down for breakfast? That came out wrong.

Look, she's not, she's, look at me. I mean, we're probably, we're probably way to. Singular's name is now AT&T.;

All right. Now by any phone. So what does that have to do with Romans? It's, it's, it's one of my favorite ad campaigns, honestly.

[13:11] But it offers an illustration for us to remember. If you noticed, right, the butcher dropped after the first verse. And because he did, he was subjected to quite a bit of unnecessary hardship, right?

Things he didn't understand, things that didn't make sense. He missed vital information that would have changed his day. And, you know, even though the outcome remained the same, right? Kenny still didn't have 50 pounds of roast beef.

It is what it is. But he's now lacking the peace and the joy that was waiting for him otherwise. And it's kind of a loose example. I wanted to keep it light as we transition to the rest of the text.

But it's important, is my point, that we continue onward. That we don't drop after just a paramount verse. Lest we find ourselves scrambling over body weight and appetite, right?

So, keeping going. Look at the verse, the 4 in verse 19. Paul's going to explain further what this life and our dealings can look like, right? It says, for all of creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of

the sons of God.

[14:14] And there's sort of a theme in the next couple verses that just things aren't operating as originally intended. Do you pick up on that? Would you agree with that for today?

Notice the subject, right? It's sort of, he says all of creation or creation in your text. You know what I really like about that? It's non-discriminatory. It's not biased.

It's not gender-based. It's not where your family tree is rooted. It's not, you know, what you identify as or how old you are or how much money you make. It's all of creation. It's everything together. And it's broken. Paul says this creation was subjected, this is verse 20, to futility, or your Bible might say vanity. Which really, you know, the meaning of those words, we're looking at emptiness. We're looking at profitlessness or an inability to achieve your outcome. This is the condition of the creation. And this describes who? Not just the bad people in the world.

[15:14] Which, what does that mean? It's everything. It's all of it. It's everything. And if you're anything like me, you hear those words and it's like nails on a chalkboard, right?

The idea of spinning your wheels, wasting your time, not being able to accomplish what you set out to accomplish. That keeps me up at night. Or wakes me up early in the morning, depending on, you know, how you operate.

But before we go from optimist in verse 18 to pessimist by verse 20, again, we have to continue on. Let's keep reading. Paul's not dismissing the sufferings of verse 18 here.

And he's not issuing a license to give up and sulk either. What he's giving us is divine insight to the why. And it's a little tricky here, right? Living in this age of the church and living as a Christ follower, it's taken on some new complications.

So we get this additional clarity. Look at the end of verse 20. Why has this condition come upon creation? How did it happen? It says, not willingly, didn't ask for it, but because of him who subjected it in hope.

[16:26] So again, not by accident, not just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why does all of creation fall apart? Why is there suffering and difficulty every single day? Yes, it's because of sin, but here's the million dollar answer.

Because of him who subjected it in hope. Don't drop the call yet. Look at verse 21. In hope that creation itself should be delivered from corruption into liberty.

And this whole piece of it, right, it's all given under how to live as a believer, how to walk in the Spirit. So Paul says, hey, believer, living through the struggles, resisting the flesh, get this.

All of creation is hopelessly flailing around you. But it's for a reason. Yeah, I observe that waste and that frustration and that loss all the same.

But there's a hope. It's been allowed and to be used in God's purpose. That the broken might always look for a fixing.

[17:35] And that the wasted might find a purpose. Verse 21, if you read that, it's actually a great verse as well. It says that the creation might move from this corruption, this present state of corruption, into liberty.

I don't think we timed that out for July 4th, but it works out, right? Somehow God knew. And it's not a liberty like we celebrate with fireworks. I mean, it is a real liberty.

Liberty from sin. And futility and loss. And so if you're here as a believer, again, I mentioned earlier on, this part of this text and this study really changed my life, my perspective.

But it's freeing, isn't it? Understanding how it works, how it operates. I mean, there's a temptation to say, well, gosh, that's kind of bleak. But at the same time, do you see Paul's prescription to believers in this?

I've already shown one commercial, so I won't do it again. But just think about, picture Paul's voice coming through the airwaves, right? In 65 AD. You know, if you experience mild to severe discomfort, or shortness of breath, or if you notice signs of aging and fatigue or memory loss, or have symptoms of bloating or diarrhea or frequent urination, ask your doctor if Romans 8 is right for you.

[18:50] And it is. It's good. In fact, Paul says it again in verse 22.

He says, For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Which, not that it was over then. The actual phrase is, even until this day. In other words, it's unending. It's still going. It's still going. You know, there are pieces of scripture, in fact, a lot of it we know is offensive. But there are pieces that are embedded in instructions to Christians that just the world cannot take. They don't want it. It doesn't help. They don't appreciate it. It offends them. This is one of those texts. You can almost hear. Think about people in your life who would vote this way. Think about it. Well, that doesn't sound fair. I don't want to be made to suffer. [19:46] I don't want birth pangs. I mean, let's be honest. Nobody really does. I'd like an option other than waste and futility, please. I want a neutral playing field. Let me make up my own mind. Those sound like objections or thoughts of friends and family who are among the lost that you know? Despite all of mankind's efforts to play God and right their own path, this is how the creator established it. Not originally, but post-fall, right? I mean, we're looking at what it's like today and how God is using this circumstance. And, you know, Jesus kind of addressed this back in Mark 8. If you think back on his conversation with that crowd on the hill, he said, What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet loses his own soul? In other words, would it even be worth it? If you could zap the pain away, if you could just skate through, but you missed your single biggest need, are you better off? Is that worth trading? [20:53] And so Romans 8 really gives us this, what I think is a fantastic understanding of just the realities, right? So we don't trip up in this. It's messy. It's a little hurtful at times, you know? But we don't need to be knocked off. We need to understand exactly what and why things are going the way that they are. To help us cut through the noise. And have you ever noticed this? We were actually talking about this in our prayer session this morning. Have you noticed how badly the culture around us wants to fix this? Hey, the earth is deteriorating, but we can change it. We can fix it. You know? Save the planet. You can't. Yeah, mankind is sinful. We're violent. We're destructive. We do things wrong. But you know what? Just be kind. Coexist. You can't. You can't. The natural man wants so badly to fix the challenges in Romans 8, and it's not going to happen. [21:59] And so the wisdom here for us is to know that. It's to give us the appropriate perspective in going about our day. So the next time you walk past the coffee table, Teddy, you know, if you do happen to punt that baby toe, you'll probably talk to God at the moment. But, you know, at least you'll understand why bones break and why the agony exists. All kidding aside, right? I mean, accepting these truths offers us some relief. It helps us to learn to live by the Spirit as believers. Even more so in verse 23, which is where we're kind of at here in the text. Because it's about to get personal. Right? This is the part that hits me. When I'm studying this and I'm thinking about, okay, now what do I do with this information about all of creation? Watch what Paul says. And not only the creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit. We groan inwardly as we wait. Okay. So before it was all of creation. It was big picture, right? It was, we're in this together, standing in solidarity with everything else, you know. [23:11] But, Paul, you mean on top of that now, we have something else. We who believe have another challenge. It says we who have the first fruits. We groan inwardly. I'd rather talk about the world struggles, to be honest. But there are lies. And I referenced this earlier, but there are things that we convince ourselves of, even as believers, that are not necessarily true. Myself included. I mean, this is where I get these examples from. Here's what they sound like. Hey, you know, now that I'm saved, I think things should get easier. You know, I know the truth. I know it, right? So somehow, maybe I think I'm exempt from whatever's coming down the pipe for me. You know, whatever challenges are in my exact life. You know, I know God, and I'm going to do my best to live accordingly.

I'll take a pass on the next one, you know, the next hit, the next frustration of life. And you know what? The better I do, the easier it gets. Here's the reality.

[24:18] That's not in Romans 8. In fact, it's not in Paul's prescription to believers operating and aiming to live by the Spirit. In fact, as Paul would have it, and as the Spirit is enlightening us here, believers have an additional struggle to partake in.

How about that? Because we're no longer ignorant. Paul says you want to live, you want to walk by the Spirit, you want to do this thing right, it's going to be hard. You're going to not only be in the all of creation bucket, but now you're also going to have this.

And what is this? You know, it's an understanding of all the things we have to look forward to. But it's going to cause something new, a groan. Because we know the things of God.

We have experienced a glimpse of the goodness to come through our salvation. We know the truth. God gives us an added measure of wisdom in that. But now the awareness is there.

The contrast is there. Everything seems that much more, you know, abrasive with how things ought to be. Which is honestly why I think Paul kicks off this new thought with verse 18.

[25:26] And we see that, don't we? Do you ever find yourself frustrated by what's around you as a believer? Do you get disappointed in your own flesh?

Do you get discouraged by others? Or do you just, I mean, right? Groan. To be honest, groan is like the perfect verb in that instance.

You're like, ugh. But aren't you grateful we have this insight to help us know why and how to intersect that?

And the challenge for me, what's really impacted me is just to see that broadly speaking, that's how it's going to be.

Rather than let these things hit, consume, knock me off my track, groan louder, which I'm known to do. You know, the challenge is to let it go. I will not sing that song for you.

[26:26] At least not right now. For my Disney princesses in the room, you know where I'm going. Again, I struggle with this, right?

If you're anything, if you can relate to the mindset here, you know, you wake up and you think, how can I minimize my losses today? How can I do things right to sort of scale back that pain? I'm going to think ahead.

I'm going to work hard. I'm going to plan. That futility is not coming my way. That loss, that pain is not for me today. Nope, I got it. But you know what that type of thinking leads to?

Kind of abstaining from Paul's outline here? It leads to more groaning. It leads to more frustration. It kind of feeds even the pride of life. And I'm describing myself here in that, you know, if we sell ourselves this idea that we can dodge it, that we usurp what God has sort of used.

Romans 8 is telling us flat out. This not only applies to you who believe. It applies especially to you who believe and have the first fruits. Fruits. And this has changed me.

[27:35] It really has. It's adjusted my mindset. It is reflected in my attitudes. If you could ask my wife honestly and I was out of the room, she would say, yes, David is now slightly less miserable to live with than he was before.

And hopefully it gets better from there, you know. And I know we're almost out of time, but again, you know we can't stop there.

Not after that commercial. So look at verse 23 into 24 and finally 25. What's our final play? What do we do in light of this reality for both the creation and the believer?

It says we wait eagerly for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. In this hope we were saved, even though we don't quite see it yet, it says.

And verse 25 really tells us exactly how to manage. It says, but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait eagerly for it with perseverance. In other words, we look forward to our adoption into that glory, into that state.

[28:45] That's a funny phrase, isn't it? Wait eagerly with perseverance. Wait harder, you know. If anyone masters the art of waiting eagerly with perseverance, I'd love to take you to lunch.

I mean, that's a challenge there. But you know what? I've kind of chewed on that piece of it. Like, what's the application? And I really think it's indicative of the excitement that Paul has looking ahead to what to come.

What's to be given to the believer. Remember, the promise of this new body, this glorious condition that we're going to be, that we are going to be it, right?

As it was originally intended. It says the redemption of our bodies. You can't have it now, unfortunately. You know, it was in the prayer time. We just talked about how quickly things decay. How quickly just this body that we're in just doesn't hold out. Look at this verse from Philippians, chapter 3, verse 20 to 21. It's, again, Paul writing a letter.

[29:55] But he says, For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait. There it is again. For the Savior, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body.

1 John 3 tells us this. He says, Beloved, we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him.

For we shall see him as he is. Here's the deal as we wrap up today. It's July 4th, 2021. If you're paying attention at all, you agree with 98%, maybe 99% of what Paul is saying in Romans 8.

It is the fact of life. It is what we see around us. The question is, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do with that? If you're here, and you are not a believer, there's really only one thing to do.

And that one thing is to go ahead and redeem that future body on hold for you. It's to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And what I mean by that is that the Son of God would arrive on the planet, give his life for the sake of yours, conquer death and coming back to life, proving that he's God, and saying, now come follow me.

[31:19] Believing in that as a replacement for your sins. That's all to do. If you're saved, and you're here this morning, how will you spend the time?

How will you embrace these things? That's the question. Will you fight the trend? Honestly, and I'm right there with you. Will you take the lumps to heart? Will you question?

Will you defy? Will you wrestle it down? Or will you arm yourself with the truth from Romans 8? Will you keep your perspective in light of the creation, and in light of ourselves?

Will we keep it on center, right? We have this future blessing that will far exceed the trippings here. Futility and groanings turned into newness of life incomparable, right?

It's like Paul says in the beginning of this chapter, even if you look at Romans 8, verse 6, and this is what we'll end on. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

[32:23] And he says to the Ephesians, as we close, I didn't invite the musicians up. You guys are welcome to, sorry. Hustle. Ephesians 5, 15.

It says, look carefully then how you walk. Tom, I think you mentioned this verse this morning. Look carefully then how you walk. Not as unwise, but as wise. Making the best use of the time because the days are evil.

I hope that encourages you. I mean, it's just, to me, this was a perspective that I needed in my life. And just Paul, and just the gift of revelation that he was given to declare to the believers throughout time how to take this thing, how to view it, how to operate.

It's been super helpful for me. Let's sing this song and I think we'll wrap up this morning. Thank you.