



This week at Magdalen Road Church we continued our series in Romans chapter 8. We began by thinking about the fact that it can be hard to be a Christian. We don't quite fit in, in the here and now; Following Jesus means perhaps there is an awareness of the brokenness of the world around us and within us. In this section Paul begins to speak about the glory and the hope that we have, and our need to cling onto it.

Before he jumped into the text we briefly considered the theme of glory through the letter of Romans. For example in 1v23 there is a glory that we exchanged as we walked out on God and worshipped worthless idols, in 3v23 there is a glory that we all now fall short of and yet in our passage for this morning we will see a certain glory to come in the future.

Paul outlines three groanings going on in the world and so calls us to persevere...

### **1. Persevere because you're in a groaning creation that longs for the glory to be revealed (v19-22)**

The groaning of creation is a hopeful groaning that longs for the future, that knows more is to come. The picture he uses is that of childbirth - it's not the groaning of a funeral service but rather the groaning of the maternity ward. All of creation waiting in eager anticipation for the children of God to be revealed.

Of course we are God's children now (v16) we have a new father who loves us and yet that reality will only be seen by all the world, in the future. It's amazing news because our current creation is painful and frustrated. We see that reality every single day all over the place in our own lives but also in all the lives of others. Think of the book of Ecclesiastes for example and the futility outlined there - The writer asks is there any hope at all!? Paul shouts to us in Romans 8 yes! There **will** be a day when the frustration will be over and all of creation will be renewed.

The midwife working in the maternity ward doesn't mutter that the mum has made a big mistake, but rather that it will be worth it when she holds her baby. This is pain with a purpose. Groaning because there is more to come.

### **2. Persevere because you're in a groaning church that longs for the glory to be revealed (v23-25)**

Within the groaning creation lives are groaning church who groans for a slightly different reason than the rest of the world. We groan because of God's spirit living in us with the promise of more to come. We said it was a little bit like making a big chocolate cake and the chance to lick out the bowl before the cake goes into the oven. It tastes really good and yet it is just the first fruits of the promise at the end. Licking the bowl out is not the final plan.

Hence our groaning is not the groan of grumbling or complaint - but rather the groan that cries for more. It's a groan as we eagerly await for adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. No longer will we have a body of death (7v24) but we patiently await a new body.

Patience can be hard though - we know the personal daily reality of that groaning in these bodies that are broken and decaying, And it can be easy especially in our culture to be impatient and only focused on the now.

### **3. Persevere because you have God's groaning Spirit who longs for the glory to be revealed (v26-27)**

The final groaning is that of God's spirit living within his people. Firstly, his Spirit helps us in our weakness, giving us a shape and framework to the kind of things we ought to pray for in this broken world. Secondly though, Paul blows our minds by telling us that God himself, by his spirit, is interceding for us. There is some mystery here but God himself is praying for his own people! And because you've got the Father and the Spirit talking about you - there is no possibility of a communication breakdown or misunderstanding!

Which means when we feel our weakness and our brokenness, and when we are tempted to wave the white flag and call it a day, we can be confident because our God cares and he is praying for us.

Here are a few questions to start your group off

- Would you say you are a hopeful person? What do you hope for? Do you ever feel hopeless?
- Where do you feel the reality of the brokenness of this world? What about in the last week?
- Do you feel encouraged by the three groanings that Paul outlines? Explain what they are. How do they point us to hope?
- How can we help each other to keep going?