

Freedom from Doubt!

Last week we defined “breakthrough” as “putting ourselves in a position where we can receive the grace of Jesus to get through our circumstances.” Let’s see how that applies when it comes to the matter of faith and doubt in our every day experiences.

I. The experience of suffering is a “normal” part of the Christian Life

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)

*“Truth of the matter is all we have to do is live long enough and we will suffer...”
(D.A. Carson How Long, O Lord: Reflections on Evil and Suffering)*

II. There is purpose in our suffering

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. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:28-29)

“God’s sovereignty over people does not mean that we will not experience pain and suffering. It means that God is in control of our pain and suffering and that He has a beneficial purpose for it. There is no such thing as pain without a purpose. You may be sure no matter how irrational or inexplicable it may seem to us, all pain has a purpose” (Jerry Bridges)

III. God has purpose in our suffering for the future.

*“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the **glory that will be revealed** in us.” (Romans 8:18)*

There is great wisdom in focusing our attention in the midst of our suffering on future glory !

We have to concede in the midst of this discussion that there is an implicit **mystery** in all of this that our human minds cannot fully grasp. (Simply look at the cross of Christ!)

What is glory?

“Glory is the word best used to describe God’s magnificence and therefore also the dazzling magnificence of Heaven and our share in it” (James Montgomery Boyce, from his commentary on Romans)

“The desire which no natural happiness will ever satisfy.” So Lewis writes “So we are to shine as the sun, to be like the morning star. So what is it that we want? We want so much more. The poets and the ascetics know all about it. We want more than to see it, we want to be united with the beauty we see. We want to receive it and literally become part of it. The poets and ascetics want us to believe that we can be part of it, but indeed we cannot. At present we are on the wrong side of the door. We cannot get in. We cannot become one with this splendor, with this majesty. We cannot mingle with the splendor we see, but the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. Someday, God willing, we shall get in.” (C.S. Lewis)

Comparing our suffering and future glory

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Cor4:16)

Our current struggles and suffering are not worthy to be compared with our future glory on two points.

Their intensity. . . (2 Cor. 11:23-29 and 12:1-4)

Their duration. . . momentary vs. eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16)

Application

During the midst of our struggles, trials and sufferings, we will come through if we choose to not focus on those things, as real as they may be, but on the future glory when “Someday, we shall get in!” That focus is the key to overcoming. Grace today comes from “considering” glory for tomorrow!