

## “Can We Avoid Suffering?”

### Romans 8:18-39

#### Sermon Series: “Suffering And Good News”

**Introduction:** We all have questions like those in the video. We look at tragedies in the world like people dying of coronavirus or whatever else and ask why or where is God. We struggle through trials in our personal lives and wonder if God really cares.

Can this kind of suffering be avoided? Why does God allow it? Is He even there? If God has all power and is a loving God, why is there so much evil and suffering in the world? Why would I even believe in God in light of all the suffering in the world and in the light of the pain I have experienced personally?

These are real and challenging questions that most of us wrestle with on some level. Is there any good news in the midst of all this suffering? That is what I want us to consider during this four week series, and all the messages really flow together so I’m not attempting to give any sort of complete answer today. But let’s address the question, “Can we avoid suffering?,” this morning.

**So, can we avoid suffering? I believe the answer is clearly no. Why? It is because the reality of sin makes suffering unavoidable. Can we have hope in suffering? Absolutely yes, that is the good news. Why? We can have hope because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.**

**The Stockdale Paradox: “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”**

### **Romans 8:18-39**

**1. Suffering is unavoidable due to the reality of sin.** This passage presents that truth to us when we understand the background of what it is saying about creation. God is too holy and too great to overlook sin. Warren Wiersbe writes of this passage, “When God finished His Creation; it was a good Creation (Genesis 1:31); but today it is a groaning Creation. There is suffering and death; there is pain, all of which is, of course, the result of Adam’s sin. It is not the fault of creation. Note the words that Paul used to describe the plight of creation: suffering (v. 18), vanity (v. 20), bondage (v. 21), decay (v. 21), and pain (v. 22).”

I believe this is true because I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and this is what the Bible teaches. However, I realize that not everyone who is listening to me believes the Bible is true so let’s reason through this briefly. Here are some reasons why I think this is true:

**A. Suffering is unnatural because God created everything good.**

**B. God created us with the ability to make choices but built in consequences to every choice that we make.**

**C. Suffering comes from the fact that we live in a world that is fallen and decaying due to sin.**

**D. We deserve to experience the consequences of sin so anything good that we get is actually the grace of God.**

**2. We can have hope in suffering because of what God has done for us through Jesus.** Our God is so good that He suffered for us in order to rescue us from our suffering. Because of what God has done for His children through Jesus, He gives us some promises in these verses that give us hope even in the midst of our suffering. They include:

**A. There's a better day coming (v. 18-25).**

**-Suffering comes to an end (v. 18a).**

**-We experience the glory of God in His very presence (v. 18b).**

**-We are glorified, which means we are perfected physically, spiritually, and every way.**

**-Creation is restored to its original perfection with the end of all decay and death.**

**B. God is personally present with us and ministering to us through His Holy Spirit (v. 23, 26-27).**

**C. God is working out His eternal plan of making us like Jesus for His glory and our good (v. 28-30).**

**D. God is working in us on our behalf right now through the finished work of Jesus (v. 31-39).**

**-God is for us.**

**-God freely gives us all things.**

**-Jesus has justified us so we do not have to live in guilt or condemnation.**

**-Jesus is going to the Father on our behalf.**

**-Nothing can separate us from the love of God.**

**Conclusion:**

**1. Place your full trust and reliance on Jesus to forgive you of your sins and give you eternal hope.**

**2. Let's be realistic about our suffering but find hope by claiming the promises of God and relying on Jesus, who is certain, in the midst of all this uncertainty.**