

19.9.21 evening

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Date: 19 September 2021

Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, and a warm welcome to the service this evening. Those who are visiting with us, I see one or two are especially welcome, and those who are joining online as well as those who are in the building.

It's good for us to come together again and to worship God. I'm not going to take time to go through the notices. I went through them this morning, and you can scroll back to the morning service if you want to check any of the details.

But I just want to highlight that after this service, immediately after this service, we'll have an informal time of fellowship, and Thomas will share a word of testimony or something.

I'm not quite sure what at the After Church Fellowship, so be encouraged to stay for that if you're able. And just on behalf of the congregation, Thomas, I want to thank you for your ministry over the course of this weekend.

It's been a great blessing to have you with us once more, and we pray that as you continue ministry in Carlia, again, that God will continue to bless you and use you as he has done thus far.

[1 : 0 8] So I'll hand over to you now. So thanks again. Thanks again, David, and to you all for your warm welcome and fellowship over this weekend.

It's been a real blessing for me to be with you, and it's such a blessing and privilege for us to end our weekend gathering together again to worship in the name of our risen Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We're going to begin singing in Gaelic from Psalm 100. Sian ish an eich aum clu in here now, an san kiat tu salam, agus sian ish an eich aum clu in here now.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 0 6] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 3 6] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. and might when they were not tied out.

Or in your children. And they had to put in wait, get in wait on the first meeting to the school.

They had to put in wait on those young guys. and they are now funding for lunch and they have lots of cultural issues that's going to be living in life They care about many things and myself ■■■ ridd durchs love and thank them again they are sending all donations and putting on and on This is what he heard, exclusively as a murderer.

[7 : 51] It sounds that he heard in the AULT, but it sounds like you said, he's Kafka, what he'd have done with you.

This is true, perhaps the Greek Al ■■■ ■ ■ ian Anth upstream did that. i saw uneanne of ■ are in ■ ■ ■ ■ i have to go toirool and the rain leaves a few inside and the rain is snapping And what you like related to ■.

Is it going always to be part of the prison prison?

she savior sethered at the church, but we used to have been centered only looks like because we were the people from the church and the people so saddened.

And at the same time story of our children. I had to and a community to investigación people at the time.

[9 : 28] It was a wonderful time before you came. It was to and become friendly, and work very well, and everything but 2018.

And perfect trumps itself, and does not work. Dioonich do rhaas gawin agus bianich ar syddwysinach agus haisim gornig myn gloriaidz ar skathriast.

Amen. We're going to sing again now the hymn 10,000 Reasons. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Worship his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O my soul. Worship his holy name. Sing like never before.

[10 : 38] O my soul. I'll worship his holy name. The sun comes up.

It's a new day dawning. It's time to sing your song again. Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me.

Let me be singing when the evening comes. Bless the Lord, O my soul. O my soul.

Worship his holy name. Sing like never before. O my soul.

I'll worship your holy name. You're rich in love and you're slow to anger.

[11 : 38] Your name is great and your heart is kind. For all your goodness. For all your goodness. I will keep on singing.

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Sing like never before.

Oh my soul. I'll worship your holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And on that day when my strength is failing. The end was near and my time has come. Still my soul will sing your praise unending.

Ten thousand years and then forever more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

[12 : 44] O my soul. Worship this holy name. Sing like never before.

O my soul. I'll worship your holy name. I'll worship your holy name.

Our reading this evening is from the book of Revelation, chapter 21. So all the way, the second and last chapter of the Bible. We'll read the whole chapter together.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

[13 : 59] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people.

And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more.

For the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I'm making all things new. Also he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

And he said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

The one who conquers will have this heritage. And I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

[15 : 10] Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed. On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.

The city lies four square, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits, by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.

The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysos brace, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

[16 : 47] And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day.

There will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Amen. This is God's word, and we pray that he'd bless it to us all. We're going to sing again to God's praise, this time singing from Psalm 61.

Psalm 61, verses 1 to 4. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend.

[17 : 59] Let's stand and sing to God's praise. O God, give ear unto my cry, unto my prayer attend.

From the almost corner of the land, my cry to thee I send.

What time my heart is overwhelmed, and in perplexity, do thou be lead unto the roar, that higher is than I.

For thou hast for my refuge be, a shelter by thy power, and for defence against my foes, thou hast been a strong turn.

Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, and on the cover of thy wings with confidence me hide.

[19 : 55] As we turn to God's word, let's just pray for a moment. Father, we thank you so much that your word is open before us.

Please, may we all be open before you, and may we hear your voice speaking to us. And Holy Spirit, we pray that you'd be at work in our hearts and in our midst.

Amen. Well, I'd like us to turn again to Romans 8.

I'm sure you know by now where we're going. Over our four services this weekend, we've been looking together at some of the verses that we have in the middle of this chapter. Romans 8 is just one of the coolest chapters in the whole of the Bible.

There's so much for us to see and learn and discover. And even in the short section that we've been looking at, there's just an abundance of amazing theological truth for us.

[21 : 10] Over the course of this weekend, we were looking on Friday night, we were thinking about mortification of sin. Paul speaks about that in verse 12 through to 13 and 14.

And that's such an important thing for us to remember as Christians. We want to go ahead into the new week every day, actively seeking to put sin to death and instead for God's fruit to be cultivated in our lives.

We thought last night about the amazing reality that God is adopting us, has adopted us into his family. So for everyone here who's a Christian, you're now a child of God.

And that God himself gladly declares that through the testimony of the Holy Spirit. And for anyone who's maybe not yet a Christian, that's exactly what God wants to do with you. He wants to bring you into his family as well.

And then this morning we were thinking about the fact that not only is there amazing stuff now for us as Christians, there's an amazing future. And in fact, the whole universe is longing for the future restoration that Jesus has secured for us on the cross.

[22 : 23] So there's so much wonderful teaching in these verses for us. But I missed out a verse in our study that I want us to come back to.

And it's a crucial verse because it's the verse that deals with the fact that very often life is rubbish. Very often life is really hard.

And so I want us to turn to verse 18 of Romans chapter 8 where Paul speaks about suffering. And he says, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

As we said, Paul has been speaking about the wonderful privilege of adoption. The fact that through our union with Christ, we become children of God. And not only that, we are now heirs of all the blessings that God wants to bestow on us now and that he promises towards us for the future.

But alongside speaking about all these wonderful privileges, Paul also reminds us of the reality of suffering. If we bring up the verse before this, verse 17, you'll see that he talks about that.

[23 : 40] He talks about being heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ. But he says, But we're going to suffer with him, provided that we suffer with him in order to be glorified with him.

And it's a really important reminder that the gospel, which is explained to us so beautifully and powerfully in this letter to the Romans, the gospel is not a message of blind optimism.

It's not some kind of like, you know, airy-fairy, fluffy, smiley, you know, everything's going to be great, just pretend everything's fine nonsense.

Instead, it's a message that's so real. And Paul tells us, here and in many other places, that suffering is a very real experience in the life of the child of God.

And I'm sure every single person here, whether you're a Christian or not, can agree with that. I'm sure you can all think of times in your own life when you've suffered a lot. Maybe even right now, you're suffering as well.

[24 : 45] And all of that raises the key question, how do we cope with suffering? In the pain, pressure, frustration, and hurt of life, how do we cope?

What do we do? And this is one of the most relevant questions that we can raise at church because it's a question that the world around us and the culture around us is constantly trying to find an answer to.

And there's lots of different attempts made to answer this question. Probably the most popular one is, you know, if you ask someone, how do you cope with suffering? Well, we just aim for distraction.

So, we try to either bury ourselves in work or we look for constant fun and entertainment. We just pick up our phones to look at the next thing on Instagram or whatever it may be.

We throw ourselves into an interest or a hobby. Whatever we do, we just don't think about stuff too much. We just bash on and just keep distracting ourselves. Other people maybe try to cope with suffering by finding something that makes them feel better.

[25 : 59] So, for some people, that actually can lead them into desperate addiction where alcohol or drugs or pornography or whatever gives them that short-term high that helps make things seem better.

But, it doesn't necessarily need to be as extreme as that. It might just be buying more stuff or gossiping or criticising people. All these things can actually make us feel better.

In fact, I was reading a thing on the BBC News website last night talking about the, you know, the conspiracy theories that are on the go in America just now and they're getting hugely popular, all these online conspiracy theories about COVID and Trump and everything else.

and it was talking to a psychologist who said, one of the reasons why people like, are drawn to these so much is because it gives them a sense of feeling like, you know, they are more knowledgeable than everyone else.

So, they know the real story, they've got the knowledge, they've got the insight and it kind of makes them feel better about themselves. So, even all these crazy, I just thought to myself, don't use the word crazy and then I just did use the word crazy but anyway, never mind.

[27 : 05] All these conspiracy theories, you know, all of that's part of trying to make yourself feel better because life is hard. And it's a great reminder that, you know, when you see someone who's maybe wrapped up in that, we mustn't just look at them as nutters, they're actually people who are really trying to fill a hole in their lives and they're struggling.

Some people try to cope with suffering by just trying to make sure it never happens. So, that can be in terms of a health and lifestyle. You think, well, I'm going to make sure I'm really healthy so that I never suffer in terms of illness.

Sometimes though, maybe more so in terms of relationships, people are like, well, I don't ever want to get hurt so I'm just not going to let anyone get close. And so people avoid any kind of vulnerability.

Others cope by trying to make themselves the centre of attention. Others cope by just trying to be stoic and just accepting what happens and putting on a brave face. I'm sure you can think of other examples as well.

I'm sure we've all done these things ourselves and I'm sure you can see people around you trying to cope with suffering in these kind of ways. But what we really need to think about is what's the biblical answer to that question?

[28 : 13] What's the biblical answer to that question, how do we cope with suffering? Well, there's actually various things that the Bible tells us. The Bible tells us at times to cast our care on God, to trust him, to pray to him, to pour out our hearts to him and also to get support from one another and all of these things are things that we should and must do.

But here, what I want to focus on is the fact that Paul gives us a very important, a very helpful and a beautifully simple way of coping with suffering.

What does he tell us to do? He tells us to think about the future. Look again at verse 18.

There's two really important phrases in this verse. The first one is what you have there in red. I consider. It's a fascinating word because it's actually a word that's used in the world of accounting.

So it conveys the idea of setting out your account, of working things out in a logical, coherent, maybe even mathematical manner. So when it comes to suffering, Paul is basically encouraging us to all think like accountants.

[29 : 33] Now that might all sound, that might sound a bit strange to many of us. You think, well why is Paul doing that? Well, that brings us to the second key phrase that you have in here. He says that it's not worth comparing.

And so Paul is conveying this idea of a comparison. So in other words, if you think in terms of an accountant, he's thinking of putting one list and comparing it to another list.

Now we do that all the time in terms of accounting. So every year you'll get your congregational accounts and you'll get a whole pile of figures that if you're anything like me, you can't make any sense of.

But to those who are able to decipher these things, you can look at one column for 2021 and then you can look at 2020 and you can compare it that way. And those of you who work with budgets, who work as accountants will understand what all of that is like.

All of that means that Paul is telling us to tally up our present sufferings and then to see if there's a comparison with the future that God has for every single person who puts their faith in Jesus.

[30 : 50] And so tonight I want us to do exactly that. So, first of all, let's think in terms of present sufferings, the sufferings of this present time. Here's ten examples.

I'm sure there's more but I want us to just go through ten things that we could put in our present suffering column. Number one, disasters.

You only need to turn on the news to see that that's a regular experience for humanity. Sometimes these are natural disasters so we've seen things like that in Haiti recently with an awful earthquake.

Others we see man-made disasters. You only need to go to Afghanistan to see one of them. We live in a world that's beautiful but it's also cursed and all around us there are tragic disasters which cause devastation in the lives of millions.

As we said, sometimes they're caused by natural events, sometimes they're caused by accident, sometimes they're caused on purpose. Either way, the suffering is horrendous.

[32 : 02] Then there's physical pain and illness. We live in quite a stable climate in terms of fault lines and earthquakes and tornadoes and all that kind of stuff.

Maybe natural disasters is not quite so relevant to us even though it's a threat to so many parts of the world. Physical pain and illness is right on our doorstep. In fact, it's probably long since come through your door into your house.

It's a daily reality for so many people, probably for you or for people in your family or people you know. Chronic illness, physical weakness, painful injuries, old age.

I've got no doubt that all of you know something of those sufferings. Even the boys and girls, you know, sometimes when you feel sick, sore tummy, tummy bug, something like that, it's horrible. It's not nice at all.

And so many people carry these things with amazing patience, but it's still really hard. Then there's sadness.

[33 : 10] So suffering is not just physical. In fact, I think far more often it's emotional. When I look back at my life and when I think of the times when I have suffered most, which I acknowledge is not that much compared to many people, but for the times in my life when I have suffered, I don't think of times when I was physically sore or unwell.

I think of times when I was sad. And so often life can bring things along that can just make us really sad.

And maybe you're carrying that burden today. Maybe no one else knows that inside there is huge pain for whatever reason.

Number four is worry. Worry is a massive cause of suffering. Sometimes we don't suffer because of what has happened, we suffer because of our fear of what might happen.

We worry. very often it's impossible not to. Especially at night, especially when we're tired, all these thoughts and worries and fears can come over us.

[34 : 33] And I think that if you look across Scotland today, I think one of the biggest sources of suffering is the worry and anxiety that comes through the stress that life brings.

So we've got so many blessings today that means that we don't face sufferings that the generation before us had. So before us, in the generations before us, people, it was a genuine worry whether you had enough food.

You had worries about all sorts of illnesses that we get vaccinated for before we're even old enough to realise. People who didn't, who had to worry about how they would heat their homes. A pregnant woman seriously worried whether she would survive child birth, worried about clothing, all that kind of stuff.

We don't have those things that generations before us would have worried about so much. But I think today, I think you all face more stress than ever.

Monday morning is so often just the thought that just sends tension down the back of our neck. You think of the things you've got to deal with, what might happen, even a phone call or an email can just put the weight of the world onto your shoulders and all of that can cause us to feel tense, stressed and worried.

[35 : 56] It's a big cause of suffering for us all. Number five is rejection. Sometimes some of the greatest, sometimes one of the greatest causes of suffering in our lives is other people.

And particularly if we feel rejected by them, it can be incredibly painful. And that can happen at any stage in life.

You can suffer that as kids. At school, maybe you're playing and there's a nice group and then all of a sudden you get maybe shunned to the side. Somebody who was your friend one day is not the next. And there's that feeling of rejection.

Maybe it's with colleagues at work. You think that you're getting on really well and then something happens and all of a sudden you feel that sense of rejection. Maybe it's a boy or a girl that you really like, but they don't feel the same and you feel crushed.

Maybe it's rejection from a job or a position that you'd really hoped for. Rejection can be a huge source of suffering. It can be a very bruising thing to experience.

[37 : 06] Coming on past that is number six, loneliness. Sometimes that sense of rejection can make us just drift back into ourselves, keep other people at arm's length and we end up isolated.

Or maybe there's other reasons, whatever it may be, so often we can find ourselves cut off from others and feeling immensely lonely. And there's loads of different causes loneliness.

Singleness, longing for a husband or a wife and yet for whatever reason it's not happening. Illness, where you're not able to do the things you used to be able to do, to be involved with the things that you used to be involved in.

Maybe working anti-social hours, maybe those of you who have to do awful shifts, maybe everyone else, maybe you're at work when everyone else is having fun and then when you're off it's something hopeless like half past ten in the morning when everyone else is at work and at school.

Or maybe it's old age, when you're just on your own a lot of the time. It's a really hard thing to be lonely.

[38 : 28] Number seven is futility. What I mean by that is a lack of purpose. So we have that, we mentioned that a wee bit this morning. Sometimes our suffering is not a result of what we're doing, it's a result of what we're not doing.

So you find yourself thinking my life hasn't worked out the way I wanted it to. I thought I was going to achieve this, that and the next thing, but it hasn't worked out.

And that can easily lead into a sense of failure or lacking a sense of purpose or satisfaction. And that can be really true in terms of our jobs. Maybe if you have a job that you don't particularly like, or maybe things just didn't work out in terms of the career you wanted or the house or the marriage or whatever that you'd hoped to have, and the result can leave us feeling frustrated and disappointed and maybe even bitter.

Number eight is paranoia. I think what I mean by that is the fact that we can suffer a lot when we worry about what other people think. Do you ever do that?

Find yourself imagining that other people are thinking the worst. It's something that I struggle with a lot. you worry what other people think.

[39 : 47] I'm prone, you'll be astounded to hear this, that I'm prone to talking too much. So when I go places and I talk and you're in meetings and then you come away thinking, oh man, I spoke too much and what will everybody think?

All these thoughts can run through your mind. You think that people will think badly of you and you can read the wrong things into situations and it can eat away at us and make us feel really low.

And sometimes we can even be paranoid about what God thinks. And we spoke a wee bit about that last night that you think, well, you know, God would just have a long list of criticisms of us. Another huge source of suffering is poverty.

Again, for many of us, you know, we are so thankful to God that we have what we need, but even in our communities there are people who struggle and definitely around the world.

this is a massive source of suffering. It's so fascinating. The world has made so many advances and yet the world is more unequal than ever. And you see the greed of the powerful leading to the exploitation of the poor.

- [40 : 57] And that's something that's, you know, just is such a massive reality for so many people. And the inequality, the suffering, the poverty, whether it's in, you know, even in our local communities, but whether it's in the schemes of our cities or in the vast unequal distribution of wealth in many countries in the world, it's a huge source of suffering.
- And it's all kind of summed up in number 10, which is heartbreak. All of these realities mean that very often in life our experience is one of heartbreak.
- Heartbreak over the loss of loved ones. Heartbreak at the failure of dreams. Heartbreak at the rejection of friends.
- Heartbreak over regrets about things we've done. Heartbreak at the pain of illness. Paul is never, ever pretending that life is a doddle.
- He's reminding us that very often life is tough. That was true for Paul, it was true for the Christians in Rome, it's true for us as well. Never, ever forget that God knows that.
- [42 : 24] Never forget that God knows all of that. And the fact that this verse is here in the Bible and many others like it is an amazing reminder that the Bible doesn't pretend that life is easy.
- It's not a self-help book of positive thinking. It's constantly reminding us that suffering is real. And I think that highlights a very important point about the credibility of the Bible.
- Because if you came in here, I don't really know all of you that well, but if you were coming in here not knowing much of the Bible and we were trying to make out and say, you know, the Bible says that life is wonderful and you become a Christian, life is wonderful and it's all rosy, I think you could stand up and say, you're talking rubbish.
- That's why the Bible doesn't say anything like that. The Bible tells us that life is very often hard. The Bible is totally in tune with what life is really like.
- There's three great examples from the book of Proverbs that I just want to put on the screen for you. Do you know how that feels? By sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed. Do you know how that feels?
- [43 : 40] There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts. Have you ever been stabbed in the heart by people's words? Probably a dozen times in the last week maybe. The poor is disliked by his neighbor but the rich has many friends.
- Is that true? Of course it is. The Bible speaks so powerfully into the reality of our situation. So all of that means that in terms of accounting we've got a long list and a lot of suffering.
- And all of these are a reality for us and these things are really hard. You know it's funny. You know it's funny like suffering is one of these things that you talk about a lot.
- You know you talk about suffering and you say you know suffering is really hard and you know but you don't really realize just how hard it is until it actually happens. And then when you suffer you're like oh my goodness this really is actually awful.
- Because suffering is exactly that. And looking at that list we might have to go back one slide. Looking at that list I'm sure that all of you are somewhere on that list.
- [44 : 57] Maybe you're in lots of places and if you're not then I can guarantee you will be one day. Suffering is real and suffering is hard.
- So how do we cope? What are we supposed to do? Well Paul is saying to us in this verse that the way to cope with suffering is not to ignore it neither is it to play it down but the key is to compare it with what God has got planned for your future if you trust in Jesus.

So often suffering is like taking a kind of it's like taking a selfie or a screenshot of your life at one particular moment and things are low and things are bad and you take that screenshot at that moment and it's like yeah that's the sum and substance of my life it's rubbish but the Bible never takes just screenshots of life it's never just about that one moment when things are great or things are awful the Bible's view is much much bigger and much more long term than that and the Bible is making it clear to us that God has got a future and that we need to think about that future when we face suffering today so let's put Paul to the test how do our present sufferings look alongside the future that God has for us well if we go forward again we can compare in our present sufferings we've seen disasters in our future

God is promising a new creation that's the great goal of the Bible not just renewed individuals not just a people of God but a whole new and restored creation we thought about that a little bit this morning we read about it in Revelation chapter 21 a new universe where all the effects of the curse will be gone so that means no disasters no pandemics no shortages no calamities no hostilities as we said as we said this morning heaven is not clouds and harps heaven is a complete renewal of the universe a restoration of the world to everything that it was created to be and it will be full of everything that is wonderful in this world and there will be nothing of all that is awful nothing of the damage that the curse of sin has brought so just now we have disasters then we have a new restored healed creation in our present sufferings now we have physical pain and illness in our body in our future we'll have resurrection bodies now that's a crucial biblical doctrine the fact that just as Jesus rose from the dead and is now at the father's right hand in a resurrected immortal body so too our bodies are going to be raised and if we are trusting in Jesus then it means that these mortal fragile perishable deteriorating bodies are going to put on immortality and imperishability that means that if you're sore right now if you're sitting here and you've got a sore hip or a sore wrist or sore whatever you in the new creation you will be able to look at that same wrist or hip or foot or whatever it is and be like it's not sore anymore it's better and it's never going to hurt again now that might sound sort of all superficial it's not the pain and suffering that we feel the deterioration in our bodies is a direct result of the fall

God's plan is for a new creation where we have resurrected bodies where all that damage and deterioration is undone and it's a great reminder that chronic pain pain that lasts for months and years and years chronic pain in the Christian is never permanent because the day will come when your body is better again in our present sufferings we have sadness in our future God promises us abundant joy I want to bring up Psalm 16 that speaks of this you make known to me the path of life in your presence there's fullness of joy at your right hand our pleasure forevermore I love that word fullness because it conveys the idea of satisfaction it's like having a full tummy if you're anything like me right now you've got a full tummy because we had a wonderful meal this afternoon and it's like I had wonderful food my tummy's full I don't need any more

[50 : 03] I'm just satisfied we can get that feeling in terms of food in this life in the new creation we'll get that feeling in terms of our joy so full of joy that you won't need any more because you don't need any more and that's what God wants you to have joy that fills you so that every part of your being that has been left empty because of suffering now is filled with his joy in our present sufferings we have worry in our future God promises us peace even now as Christians we can have peace Jesus said peace I leave with you my peace I give to you and so at times now we can have peace from God and that is such an amazing thing to experience but it doesn't happen all the time but in our future in the future we will know the perfect complete peace of God that passes all understanding right now it feels impossible not to worry it seems impossible to avoid stress but when

God takes us home it will be impossible for anything to take away your peace in our present sufferings we face rejection in our future God will bring us home into his family sometimes we wonder what's heaven going to be like what will it feel like to get to heaven and sometimes we can almost be so I don't want you to accuse me of heresy for saying this but sometimes we can almost sort of think what will it be like will it fit in will I actually like it and that's sometimes those thoughts have gone through my own mind especially when I was younger you kind of thought well what will it be like and will it feel a bit weird what will heaven what will it feel like to arrive in heaven well I don't think I can tell you every detail of what heaven will be like but there's one thing that I can absolutely tell you that when you get to heaven it will feel like coming home and the reason it will feel like coming home is because it is the place where you belong more than anywhere else and that's because children belong in their father's house and if you're a Christian or if you become a

Christian that's what you are children of the father and so that means no more rejection no more no more feeling like you're an outsider just a perfect welcome a perfect welcome from Jesus Christ himself in our present sufferings we experience loneliness in our future God is bringing us all together that this is another kind of one of those questions that you sometimes hear people ask will we know each other in heaven some people sort of almost give the impression that our focus will be so much on Jesus that we won't even really be aware of people around us and we won't really know each other and it's completely theologically rubbish sorry I shouldn't really say that but it's true it is it's nonsense it's not true because the biblical picture is so so clear that it's a place that we are going to be together as a family and it means that you're not going to just see

Jesus by looking at him you're actually going to see the glory and beauty of Jesus by looking at each other because we'll be restored to the image of God to the image of his son and I think that's one of the reasons why Revelation 21 describes the new creation as a city we read that verse it says I saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband you know when I was wee I didn't like that kind of verse because I was a Yose well I am a Yose and I don't really like the city you know I kind of it's like I want heaven to be like Carlsway which it will be obviously but but because you know you think oh a city that's like busy and shops and cars and traffic and all that kind of stuff of course that's not what it means when Revelation calls the new creation a city it's not saying it's going to be a concrete jungle the whole reason it's described as a city is because it's a place of community a place where people are together no one will ever be lonely in the new creation ever in our present sufferings we lack purpose in our future

God is promising us fulfilment so heaven the new creation will never be boring a day will never be long a project or activity will never be pointless a person will never be surplus everyone will be restored to bear the image of God in a way that Jesus himself does as Paul says we're predestined to be conformed to the image of his son and that means that we will be able to worship and serve and enjoy God forever every day in the new creation will be a brilliant day a day of excitement adventure satisfaction laughter achievement fun togetherness it will be just brilliant and the days of wondering what's the point will be gone forever in our present sufferings we can be paranoid in our future we'll have perfect fellowship with God and with each other what are the two most important commands to love

[56 : 43] God and to love one another and I think it's amazing to think that in the new creation these two commandments will never be broken again so you'll never fail to love God you'll never fail to love other people and they will never fail to love you and for all eternity you'll never have another reason to feel paranoid again it's a wonderful reminder that no one will ever be bad to you in heaven our friendships will be so strong so secure so kind so gentle so deep none of the awful cruelty and backstabbing that you get in the world around us the jealousy the gossip the envy the rivalry the backbiting none of that nonsense in the new creation just imagine you look at the news headlines just now it's just a one way ticket to depression imagine what the news headlines will be in the new creation not that they'll maybe have newspapers

I don't know but imagine there were wouldn't it be amazing it's just all positive wonderful encouraging we've gone we've climbed a mountain together we've we've we've seen more flowers and fields and pastures together all the news headlines will be wonderful it all means that in the new creation you will be able to make friends knowing that because of the transforming power of God they will never ever let you down love and even if you've been hurt now and and even if that hurt has come at the hands of other Christians even those wounds will be healed as well in our present suffering there's poverty in our future

God promises us perfect provision so in the new creation there will be no inequality no exploitation no greed no lack you have a great description of this in Isaiah where he speaks of just come everyone who thirsts come to the waters he's got no money come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money and without price it's just an amazing description of just the free and full blessings that God pours out that we will never earn but that we don't have to the new creation will be a world where righteousness dwells where justice is always maintained where everything is always fair where every need is fully met so in all these ways the new creation is promising us something amazing but what's perhaps most amazing of all is that right now we experience heartbreak in our future there is perfect perfect love

Psalms 103 says the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him God's new creation your future as a Christian your future if you become a Christian is a glorious place where the broken hearted will be healed through the perfect love of a perfect God that's what lies at the heart of God's glory we think about the glory of God being revealed in terms of the future this verse talks about the glory that's going to be revealed to us well at the heart of that glory lies God's love and where the scars and the bruises and the pain of broken hearts will be healed one of the things I love about Revelation 21 I didn't put this verse on the screen but let me just read it when talking about the new heavens and the new earth it says that he will wipe every tear from their eyes now I think that's such an amazing verse because it's talking about the new creation creation and it's telling us that when you stand on the doorstep of the new creation you may well be standing there with tears so you might arrive there actually bruised hurt sorrowful suffering it might have been a tough journey to get there you don't stand on the doorstep of heaven you know all smart and think oh yeah I'm sorted I better make myself look the best for God you can stand on the doorstep with tears of sorrow and pain and suffering and you know what he'll do he'll wipe every single one of them away and there will be no more crying no more pain all that former stuff has passed away and so

Paul is asking us in this verse to consider and he's asking us to compare and if we just pop the list back up again I think I went the slides too far there's your two accounts so even if you're not an accountant which I'm not I hope that's simple enough for you to understand there's your two columns the sum total of our present sufferings and the sum total of the glory that is to be revealed to us and Paul's conclusion is that the blue column is so utterly bigger and better than the red column that they're not even worthy of being compared our present suffering is not even worth comparing with the glory that's to be revealed in us now the crucial point in all of that is that when

[63 : 22] Paul says that he's not playing down the sufferings he's not saying oh you know sufferings it's not that bad so it's not actually really worth comparing it's not that bad the bible makes it absolutely clear that suffering is massive and it's horrendous and it's awful but the hope of your future is just so much bigger and so much better so rich so generous so wonderful it just blows the sufferings away that is what God has prepared for you and that means that if your present sufferings seem big and I'm sure they are big please just remember that it's nothing compared to the wonder and joy of what God has planned for you if you trust him so how do we cope with suffering in this life well if you're a Christian Paul is telling us that the way to cope is to think to think of your future to think of the new creation to think of all that God has promised you to think of your perfect saviour

Jesus and your perfect father in heaven for the Christian the suffering is always worth it because the future is beyond compare and I heard this I heard somebody say something that I've never forgotten which I think sums this up so perfectly and one of my favourite preachers is Malcolm McLean who's ministering Greyfriars in Inverness and I enjoy listening to Malcolm very much and I was listening to Malcolm preaching once and those of you who know Malcolm will know that he's got a lovely long Invernesian twang in his accent and so he speaks quite slowly and he was talking all about this and he was talking all about suffering and he was saying you know I want you to think about all your sufferings in this life all the things that have gone wrong all the things that really bother you and that cause you so much pain he said then he said you'll only have to be in heaven for ten seconds to say it doesn't matter and for anyone who's not yet a

Christian here tonight Paul is asking you to think as well and I'm asking you to think as well I want you to think like an accountant I want you to weigh up the sufferings that you endure compared to all the blessings that God promises you and I want you to ask yourself if you're tempted to say no to Jesus I just want you to think like an accountant and I want you to ask yourself is it worth it is it really worth it and I tell you that that no matter how many times you may have rejected

Jesus in the past no matter how many times you may have let opportunities slip by no matter how many times you might think I've jiggered it and my time is gone that is theological rubbish as well because right now Jesus is holding out his hand to you and he's saying I want to give every ounce of this to you as well so just trust him amen let's pray father we agree that the sufferings of this life even though they're real and hard yet they are not worth comparing to the glory that you've promised to us and that you'll reveal to us in your son help us all to see that and help us live lives that declare that to others amen we're going to close singing mission praise number 582 rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee let the of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flowed be lost in the double pure cleanse me from its guilt and power for the rivers of thy hands can fulfill thy

Lord's demands good night heal no respite no good night tears forever flow all all your sin do not atone thou must sin and thou alone a faith in thy hands I bring simply to thy cross I bring make it come to thee for rest helpless look to thee for grace fall to the mountain fly wash me saviour or

[70 : 21] I die why I draw this bleak in breath when my eyes shall close in death when I store through jacks and know see thee on thy judgment throne roll all creatures clad for me let me hide myself in thee the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen