

Not Worth Comparing

4.13.25 (Palm Sunday)

Message 32

Romans Series

Romans 8:18–21 (CSB)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope ²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

Palm Sunday

A. It is the day we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

1. This day was a day full of rejoicing as Messianic hopes and expectations were running wild.
2. Surely Jesus was the Messiah who would soon overthrow Rome!
3. Unmet expectations might be the most dangerous thing on earth.

B. Of course, there were signs that this is not what Jesus was going to do.

1. Jesus came riding on a donkey's colt, a sign of peace instead of war.
2. But no matter.

3. The people, as we read in Matthew 21, laid their clothes down upon the road and cut palm branches making a covering so that even the feet of the donkey's colt would not touch the dirt.

C. The Apostle Paul is not writing with Palm Sunday in mind specifically.

1. He is writing with one eye on the Exodus story.
2. He knew the story well:
 - a. The Israelites went into Egypt as a small clan.
 - b. They came out a mighty nation.
 - c. They went in with the promises and came out as the sons of God.
3. For Israel, Egypt was a place where suffering was turned into glory.
 - a. The 400 years of suffering was intense.
 - b. But the glory of the Exodus was even greater.
4. The Apostle Paul understood that the suffering Jesus endured was intense--- but his Exodus, the Resurrection, was even greater.

D. For us today, I want to remind us that no matter how difficult and painful it may be, that what awaits the believer is not worth comparing to what God has in store for us.

1. The pain may be great, but the glory is greater.
2. The journey might be hard, but the destination is greater.
3. The attacks of Satan are persistent, but they won't prevail.

The Apostle begins today's passage by saying...

1. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time...Vs. 18

A. A Christianity that ignores pain and suffering is not the same religion taught by Jesus, Paul, and the Apostles.

1. Jesus proclaimed that in this world, you will have trouble.
2. Yes, Jesus has overcome the world, but the suffering, although temporary, is still present.
3. Notice Verse 21

²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

B. This explains why we still have floods and tornados.

1. Why bad things happen to good people.
2. Why we need surgeons and nurses, nursing homes and funeral homes.
3. Because the world, the creation, has been subjected to decay and futility.

C. Not willingly:

1. In other words, the creation was an innocent bystander going back to Genesis 3.
2. It was Adam who sinned and God who cursed the ground.
3. But, even though cursed, God placed in the ground, in the sky, and in every piece and portion of DNA a hope.
4. A hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay.
5. And that hope is tied to Jesus and to the sons and daughters of God that are being revealed.

Hear what Paul says next:

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

2. Not Worth Comparing

A. Have you ever used the wrong comparisons?

1. Americans are terrible about this.
2. The world uses liters, we use gallons.
3. When describing distances, we might say "3 football fields" to describe a distance, even though we don't have a football field.
4. Years ago, A&W Root beer came out with a 1/3rd pound burger for about the same price as a McDonalds quarter pounder.
 - a. They almost went bankrupt because Americans thought the McDonalds quarter pounder had more meat.
 - b. Fractions are hard.
5. Older generations measured their jobs and careers by the amount of money or the titles attached.
6. Younger generations measure jobs by flexibility and time off.

B. The Apostle Paul could have won any comparison game.

1. He was a Roman citizen when most of the world was a slave.
2. He had a prestigious Jewish lineage and had the best education.
3. When it came to miracles, he was used for LOTS of them.
4. When it came to suffering, Paul's list in 2 Corinthians is impressive!

C. Many times, we get into a comparison trap ourselves.

1. We compare our situations with others.

2. We compare our trauma and tragedy, sometimes trying to prove we have had a harder life than others.

3. We are constantly comparing ourselves with others and to standards that may not even matter.

D. Whatever we might endure or give up for Jesus, whatever pain there might be in the offering, Paul declares:

1. It's not worth comparing with the glory that awaits us.

2. Comparing my pain with pain is not even the right comparison.

a. Comparing our pain with the future glory still finds pain coming a million miles short..

b. Jesus used the parable of a man who found treasure in the field and sold everything he had to buy the field.

c. Because what he owned, no matter how hard he had worked for it, was not as valuable as the treasure he had found.

E. We all have suffering.

1. The Good News for believers is that the comparison is not of suffering with suffering, but suffering with GLORY.

2. No matter how great the suffering, how difficult the journey, the prize and glory that awaits us is infinitely better.

3. The writer of Hebrews said it like this:

Hebrews 12:1-2 (CSB)

12 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ²keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

F. Hebrews said that for the joy before him, Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame.

1. Despising the shame:
2. I call this “theological algebra”, where two negatives become the greatest positive.
3. The word “despise” here means:

to consider something not important enough to be an object of concern when evaluated against something else, care nothing for, disregard, be unafraid of¹

G. Does not Paul say something similar here in Romans 8:

- a. My suffering isn’t an object of my concern when evaluated against the GLORY that awaits?
- b. This does not mean the suffering isn’t real.
 1. It doesn’t mean that these feelings, this pain, this heartache should be disregarded or ignored.
 2. It means that compared to the glory God has for me, I care nothing for this suffering.
 3. I’m not afraid of this pain or this shame because God’s got this.

3. Jesus knew this from the beginning.

A. This is why He was willing to put on human flesh and be born of a virgin.

1. This is why the King of the Universe was willing to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey’s colt instead of a warrior’s horse.

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 529.

2. This is why Jesus endured the pain, the shame, the beatings, and the mocking at the Cross.

3. Because what was before Him was greater than what He was walking through.

B. That's why Paul could write letters of hope from prison cells, endure whippings and beatings, and overcome shipwrecks.

a. That's why the gossip, the slander, and the frustration could not make him quit.

b. Because he considered his present sufferings were not worth comparing with the glory to be revealed to us.

c. BECAUSE of the joy that is set before us, Paul could say, "I do not consider my present sufferings to be worth comparing."

C. Are you and I getting our comparisons right?

1. We might compare apples and oranges, but we don't compare apples with diamonds.

2. We don't compare turtles with Lamborghini.

3. We don't compare Chevy's with Fords, because they are not the same thing!

4. We don't compare our present suffering WITH the JOY and Glory that God has set before us.

D. Brother and Sister, I'm sorry for all that you are going through.

1. Time and again, my heart breaks for you.

2. It seems so many of the conversations Julie and I have together revolve around the sadness and tragedy that our church family is enduring.

a. We are sad with you, we worry with you, we feel anxiety with you, and we pray regularly for God's help and mercy in your life.

b. We pray that you won't quit, fall short, or walk away because of what you are going through.

c. We know, just as you do, that pain is never neutral.

1. We hope that you draw closer to the Lord as you go through this season.

2. We also know, that all that we endure and undergo on this earth is still not worth comparing with the glory set before us.

3. Glory and Suffering is not a fair comparison.

19 For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed.

4. Eagerly waits...for the reveal.

A. Hope is anticipation.

1. Romans 8:25 reminds us that we don't hope for what we can see.

2. Creation knows that Jesus is returning to restore everything back to rights.

3. Creation eagerly waits with anticipation:

a. More "theological algebra".

b. These are two positives that make a Big Positive.

B. It appears that Creation doesn't know who the children are.

1. I wonder if creation can guess?

2. Can creation tell by the way we steward resources.

3. Can creation tell By the way we treat animals and people.

4. Can the ground tell when I walk across the yard, "there goes a son of God!"?

C. This anticipation is compared with the groaning of child pains we will examine next week in the next verses.

Romans 8:22 (CSB)

²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now.

1. But when put these verses together, we see an incredible picture.
2. Creation has a pent-up hope and a longing anticipation for what is going to take place.
3. Creation is chomping at the bit for God to return and for the sons of God to be revealed.
4. Creation is in pain now, but just as a mother in labor endures pain for a greater purpose, the pains of today are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed.

D. What if Creation could talk?

1. What if the rocks could cry out or the tectonic plates could testify?
2. Would they be telling us to not give up just yet.
3. Don't be discouraged by the storms, the wars or the rumors of wars.
4. Don't quit in the middle of the labor pains, for what is coming is worth so much more than the pain you are enduring!
5. Would all of Creation tell even the most suffering of saints, "Oh I wish I could take your spot! Don't you know the honor, the privilege, and the glory that awaits you!"

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope ²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children.

5. Will also be set free...into the glorious freedom of God’s children.

A. Because we have been given a Spirit of adoption,

1. because we are made part of God’s family, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ:

2. Because I’m a child of God, I live in a glorious freedom.

B. The Apostle Paul says that Creation wants what we have!

1. Romans 8:21 (CSB)

²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children.

2. The Creation can see what great joy that awaits us.

Close: Don’t Stop Now.

A. Maybe the cross you are carrying feels like it’s too much to bear.

1. Don’t stop now.

2. Don’t give up yet.

B. Don’t give up:

1. On your marriage

2. On your wayward kid

3 On your relationship with Jesus.

4. Pain and suffering are temporary, but God’s glory is eternal

Psalms 30:5 (ESV)

⁵ For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

C. The Labor pains are temporary.

1. The groanings are temporary.
2. The weeping is temporary.
3. The sorrow is temporary.
4. The suffering is temporary
5. But the glory that is being revealed is forever.

D. Winston Churchill said it well: Never, never, never give up.

1. I know many of us here today are tired and weary. Don't give up.
2. I know many of us are overwhelmed. Don't give up.
3. I know many of us are at the end of our ropes. Don't give up.
4. Instead, make this statement in agreement with the Apostle Paul: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

