

THE GROAN

INTRODUCTION

Because we have a groaning God, we have great hope.

DISCUSSION

What are you hoping for right now?

EXPLANATION (ROMANS 5:3-8)

What does it mean for you to have hope?

Are there any differences to how scripture would define hope verses how our culture defines it?

How does “hope not put us to shame?”

APPLICATION

Read Romans 8:26-39

Before the message on Sunday, how would you have defined a conquerer?

How would you define it now (“more than a conqueror”)?

MISSION

How would you encourage someone to have hope when their world is falling apart?

How could you groan with someone in need?

How could you let someone know that God groans as well?

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Genesis 38

Is there anyone you were ever surprised by that become a Christian? Why?

Is there anyone you have ever wished *wasn't* saved?



GENESIS

THE FINAL CHAPTERS

THE GROAN PART 57 GENESIS 37:12-36

Psalms 102:18-20
Genesis 37:12-36
Romans 5:3-5

Proverbs 24:10
Proverbs 17:3
Romans 8:22
Romans 8:21-23

Romans 8:26
Romans 5:3-8
Romans 8:37

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

CINDERELLA'S CLOSET
This Saturday

YOUTH WIDE AWAKE
All Nighter -Friday (3/15)

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS
Next Sunday - Clocks ahead

EKIDS! BAPTISM CLASS
March 17th, 1pm

LOMPOC GC STARTS 3/12
email alf@ourelement.org



THE GROAN

Psalm 102:18-20 Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord: that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the Lord looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die...

Joseph becomes the dominant figure through most of the rest of Genesis. When we first meet Joseph in Chapter 37, he is a young cocky 17 year old kid that thinks he is the center of the universe (as most 17 year olds do). He is his dad's favorite, he has probably never been spanked, grounded, or told no. His father, Jacob, also gave him a coat that set him apart from his brothers.

God gives Joseph dreams that indicate that everyone will eventually bow before him. Joseph's first response is to tell everyone how they will bow down to him. No one takes that information well.

Joseph's father sends him out to check up on his brothers and report back. Joseph gets lost on the way. The purpose of this small account of Joseph's seeking his brothers can be seen by comparing it with the brief and similar prelude to the second part of the story where he meets his brothers in Egypt (chapters 42-44). The symmetry of the two passages (and the verbal and thematic parallels) serve to reinforce the sense in the narrative that every event is providentially ordered.

The details of the brother's plans are given as well as their motivation. Behind their plans lie Joseph's two dreams. Little did they suspect that the very plans that they were then scheming were to lead to the fulfillment of those dreams. In every detail of the narrative Moses' purpose shows through, demonstrating the truthfulness of Joseph's final words to his brothers: "You intended it to harm me, but God intended it for good" (50:20).

Still, even though God is sovereign, it never lessens the blow when someone we love goes missing or dies. The brothers sell Joseph into slavery and tell their father, Jacob, that an animal had killed Joseph. The coat that Jacob had given to Joseph provides the narrative link in the story. The symbol of the brothers' original hatred for Joseph becomes the means of the father's recognition of his loss. In the end the blood-stained coat is all that remains of Joseph, and upon seeing it Jacob tore off his own coat and exchanged it for sackcloth. He lets out a groan of pain.

How do you hold on when everything around you says give up? Thinkers in Greece and Rome would write what were called "hardship lists." Paul wrote some of these in the New Testament. They would write down difficult experiences they had been through and then talk about how difficulties will make them wiser, stronger, and better.

1. Hardship has a way of revealing, and making evident, our character. Throughout the scriptures you see people respond to trials in different ways. Proverbs 24:10 *"If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!"*

Everybody has a hardship list going every day, and God is at work in this. God is interested in our hearts. Trouble, by itself, doesn't produce growth, but if we learn to trust God in it, then God can use trouble to bring growth.

2. Hardship reveals the truth about the human condition. *Dallas Willard says, "God's address is at the end of your rope."* Self-sufficiency is the great illusion.
3. If deliverance is all we desire God for, then when trouble disappears, our desire for God will disappear.

In times of suffering, people's minds and hearts turn toward God. *"O God, help! O God, save! O God, deliver!"* But when the pain goes away, the oddest thing, we think about God less.

Romans 5:3-5 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Greco-Roman world thinkers often spoke of the connection between suffering and growth of character, but they would never use the word HOPE. If you hope, they believed you were giving up control. Hope was a sign of weakness. In fact, some ancients actually wrote that hope is what they called a "moral disease" because it causes what should be a strong, self-sufficient person to trust a power beyond yourself. *Paul is inviting us into a different world.*

The word that the ancient world had for the kind of suffering, the kind of grief they looked down on that was weakness, was the word *groaning*. Groaning was the word they would use for someone who was so weak in character that he allowed circumstances to disturb him. Groaning is what they believed weak people did.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The truth is that God groans. Nobody in the ancient world talked about a God that groans, but Paul did. We are told that Jesus groans over our sin. Our God is a God who suffers with us. God is on the cross, God is at the end of the rope.

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