

- Romans 8:18-30- "Hope in Sufferings" (on the occasion of hurricane Irma)

- Intro: What's been our attitude in various sufferings and trials? We may experience a wide array of emotions and responses such as: anger, denial, despair, bargaining, cynicism, hardening, or unbelief. How can we live through sufferings in the hope of our faith?

- Let us keep in mind the following realities:

- 1) All creation groans/suffers because of the fall/sin.
- 2) Humankind will blame God/others for the ills of the world resorting to self-justification and self-help for a way out.
- 3) God has judged the world holding it in vanity/frustration in His wrath.
- 4) The demonstration of God's judgment in the world under His wrath for sin constitutes opportunities for the hope of salvation through repentance and faith.
- 5) God's last word in judgment is the outworking of His redemptive plan to save and reconcile the world through the grace of the gospel.

- Let us consider then what we should do with or in sufferings:

- I) Put them in Eternal Perspective: eternal glory will outweigh any present sufferings.
- II) Put them in Salvation Perspective: the riches of His grace encompass the hope of creation.
- III) Put them in Judgment Perspective: the present age/order has been judged and is passing.
- IV) Put them in Confession Perspective: confessing death (the old) & resurrection (the new).
- V) Put them in Hope Perspective: looking forward to ultimate redemption/glorification.
- VI) Put them in Perseverance Perspective: strengthened in abiding purifying faith.
- VII) Put them in Prayer Perspective: comforted by groaning that turns into prayer.
- VIII) Put them in Divine Purpose Perspective: conformed to the image of Christ.

- Concluding thoughts/reflection:

Has our perspective and attitude in suffering been molded by our hope in Christ? How? Are we surprised by the trials of our lives and the upheavals of creation? Do we recognize and bow down before the evidence of God's judgment globally and personally in the world? Do the comforts of hope in Christ compel us to a more compassionate stance with a suffering humanity? Are we slowly but surely being weaned off our idols, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life to more dependence, joy, and delight in Christ? How are we finding God through trials, weakness, need, and temptation? Are we sustained by the assurance of His Grace promise sealed by the person and the work of Christ?