

"PATIENT HOPE"

*"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now." **Romans 8:18-22***

"Did God send the virus?" This passage of Scripture, written by Paul, grounds us in a theology that reminds us that *all of creation* is in "futility" (v. 20) and "bondage" (v. 21), and is waiting (actually "groaning" v. 22) to be "set free" (v. 21). This includes not only humanity, but *all of creation* - the very earth itself, its many structural parts, all the tiniest organisms, every animal, DNA, plants and fauna, and so on and so on. *All of creation* is longing for freedom. God did not send the virus. But creation has been subjected to it because of its dreadfully fallen state. But God did "subject it" (v. 20).

*"And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **Romans 8:23-24***

But Paul's writing doesn't stop there, with God subjecting creation to bondage and seemingly leaving it there without hope forever. Rather, there is a deep resounding tone of hope throughout Paul's writing. *Everything* is eagerly waiting, longing, groaning for "redemption" (v. 23) in this passage, specifically even the redemption of our "bodies" (v. 23). Because of Christ, and His final work on the Cross, we can know with absolute hope and confidence that He is "making all things new" (Isaiah 48:6; Rev. 21:5). So the encouragement is this - **creation will ultimately be set free, coronavirus will be conquered, and any other sufferings we have today will be eternally surpassed by a glory that is promised to come.** The encouragement and call today is to have hope... and deep *patience* while we wait. Because God is the Redeemer.

*"But if we **hope** for what we do not see, we wait for it with **patience.**" **Romans 8:25***

Groaning... but patient and hopeful,

Pastor Steven



QUESTIONS:

1. Are you struggling with "why" God allowed the virus?
2. What gives you hope today?
3. How can you practice "patient hope" as a family today?