

I KNOW part 6: "Creation Groans" 01.15.12

Scripture: Romans 8:19-22 NIV

Video: "Redemption Theology" by 8 Track Productions [2:00]

Intro: Very early in life we learn the concept of brokenness. Sometimes its just small things, like a child's broken toy. **III. -When I was a youngster my curious younger brother liked to take apart his toys to figure out how they worked. When he couldn't put his own toy back together, Todd would proceed to take my toy apart.** Sometimes, though, it's much more life-changing. Like the death of a loved one. **I lost my grandpa when I was 6.** We learn early on that this world is not perfect, not all good. Most of us learn to accept the concept of "brokenness."

Somewhere deep inside us, though, we know this isn't right. In order to learn "brokenness," we first must know and believe in "rightness." The world as we experience every day - the accidents, the evil, the sickness, the dying, the wearing out - isn't "right." Somehow we know deep inside us what right SHOULD BE and that the world doesn't measure up.

There's a lot of groaning going on! We are in a series of talks, "I KNOW," from Romans 8. It's important that we know things about our faith and the world in which we practice our faith. Last week we talked about suffering. *Let's put today's talk in context.* Within this context of suffering, we learn of 3 groanings:

- (1) Today we study about CREATION'S groaning. (v. 22)
- (2) Next Sunday we'll study about OUR OWN groaning. (v. 23)
- (3) On 2/5, we'll study about THE HOLY SPIRIT'S groaning. (v. 26)

Romans 8 is remembered by most of us for the victorious message at the end. Nothing separates us from God's love. Paul paints a vivid picture of words before he gets there. The world's not right. **There's a "wrongness" to this place, a wrongness that causes even the inanimate creation to look forward to when things will be made right.**

We learn 3 realities of creation...

#1 - Creation CAN'T WAIT for everything to be made right.

Remember our context. Paul is writing about our own suffering and then he says, "It's not just you!" Even creation can't wait!!!

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God."
Romans 8:19 ESV

"eager longing" ESV = "eager expectation" NIV = "can't wait" MSG rarely used in ancient literature. Only one other time in NT, Phil 1:20 apo - karo - dokia. Karo is word for "head." Dokia is "to take," "to spy on," "to give heed to." So we have the head straining forward to look at or to see. Apo at beginning is intensifier. One commentator suggests it's as if Creation itself is on its very tippy toes looking ahead with eager longing! For what? ***The revealing of the sons of God.*** Meaning when Christ comes back. A NEW EARTH!

"But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13 NLT

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away," Revelation 21:1a ESV

Paul personalizes creation - as if it could think and feel. Creation itself can't wait for things to be better because it knows things aren't right now. **And creation, it would seem, knows WHY!**

#2 - Creation IS NOT RIGHT now because of man's sin.

Remember creation story, Gen. 1 & 2. At the end of every creation day, God said "It is good." We look around and say sometimes "not so good!" Even creation does that. But, according to Paul, creation knows that it isn't right and it isn't the fault of creation...

"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it." Romans 8:20 NIV84

This is a passive sentence. Creation *was subjected*. Active verb later, ...WHO *subjected it*. Let's remember the story. Who is this one who subjected it? Adam. Gen 3:17 "Cursed is the ground because of you... produce thorns and thistles." Paul's readers would have known this "one." In other words, man's sin is responsible for more than just his own consequences... and more than just human's innate sinfulness. Adam's sin infected all creation! (*Consider this wide ranging consequence the next time you think your sin could not hurt anyone but you.*) **The good news? Won't always be like this!**

#3 - Creation WILL BE SET FREE when God's children are.

Creation knows it is in bondage. It knows who is responsible. AND it knows that when God's children are set free so will creation!

"The creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay." Romans 8:21 NLT

It's not just people who get sick, who wear out, who die. All creation suffers from something scientists call "entropy." Decay is everywhere and in everything. That's not the way it's supposed to be. Not the way God intended. It's as if Creation is serving the same sentence that mankind is serving, but eagerly, on tiptoes, looking forward to it's release date. **Paul compares to childbirth.**

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now." Romans 8:22 NIV

Anyone who has given birth knows the pain of childbirth. Anyone who has ever been with someone who is giving birth KNOWS that the mother is NOT THE SAME - groaning! **Illustration** - Nice, sweet, loving Mary Kay giving birth to Jillian, in wheel chair, checking in to secretary: "You can either put me on that elevator so I can give birth upstairs in Labor/Delivery or you can deliver the baby down here!

Why use the childbirth analogy? (1) Because it is intense. (2) it is not normal. (3) it is transitory. Women are taught to “breathe” through the pain. The Bible, in a sense, is telling us to “breathe” through this world’s “un-rightness.”

3 Reasons It's Important "I KNOW" this!

- * Because it explains **WHY**: the world is the way it is. Science would have us believe that creation around us is normal. The way it always has been and always will be. Christians though know this world to be “other than it should be.” We see this GOOD creation as WARPED as a consequence of our own sin. It helps us deal with the evil and with the difficult, because WE KNOW it won’t always be this way.
- * Because it explains **WHEN**: this world is suffering from death and decay *only for a period* and then will be made right when Christ comes again. Even we can forget this idea of a limited period. We should remember *the first two chapters of the Bible (Genesis) and the last two chapters of the Bible (Revelation)*. Everything else - all history and our present lives as we know it, falls into this period. Knowing the limits of this WHEN helps us with the evil and with the difficult, because WE KNOW it won’t always be this way.
- * Because it explains **WHO**: the world is suffering because of man’s sin. Adam is the first man, but all of us have sinned. All of us share in the responsibility. But - Praise God! - we also know the WHO that will change this. Jesus! Not only died, rose again, and lives today - so we know our sins forgiven and can live a better life today. BUT ALSO we know JESUS WILL COME AGAIN for God’s children. When he does this there will be a new earth, a right earth, that things will be made right. Helps us to KNOW this with the evil and the difficult because WE HAVE HOPE in the new - the way things will be made perfect.

Conclusion: Remember the words that Jesus gave his disciples before his death. Those words are for you and me as well:

*² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
John 14:2-3 ESV*

Those words take on added importance for every Christ-follower. The master teacher and creator - the One Who spoke all creation into being - has now taken 2,000 years to prepare the new place for you and me. Stop and imagine what it will be like. Where there will be no pain, no tears, no sin, no wrongness - where everything will be made right!

This is the day you and I look forward to *with great longing!* In the meantime, we take up our Lord’s work here on the broken planet earth, feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, loving the unlovable.

Let’s pray.