

Sunday July 19, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

Bible Study – Romans 8:12-25

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, tell of a time you experienced suffering (it could be emotional, spiritual, and/or physical).

Romans 8:12-25. Context. Again, this week, these few verses from Paul’s letter to the Romans could be the subject of a lengthy dissertation. Here he touches on several topics, summing up his argument and introducing a couple of key notions: when we live by the Spirit, we are children of God and heirs with Christ of God’s kingdom of love, justice, peace, blessing. And our decision to live by the Spirit has cosmic implications, as well: then all creation will be set free from the bondage – read: corruption, disharmony, violence – that followed the disobedience of Adam and Eve. This is the glory to which “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing.”

Read Romans 8:12-25

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Romans 8:12-25 again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Verses 12 and 13 contrast where life according to the flesh leads (death) with life animated by the Holy Spirit, which enables us to overcome our sinful and selfish nature. (Both verses end with the verb “to live” in Greek. Also note that, in Romans, Paul uses the words translated “flesh” or “body” not to refer to our physical bodies, but to our selfish nature.) As we’ll see in the next question, Paul builds on this contrast to affirm that those who live by the Spirit are children of God, children who receive their worth as children of “Abba” and are co-heirs with Christ. What might it mean to be a co-heir with Christ? Hint: look at v. 12; v. 13, v. 15, and verses 15-16.]
- In verse 15, Paul contrasts our status as children of God with those who are slaves. In Roman times, only the children would receive the full share of inheritance. With that being the case, what is Paul’s point that we are co-heirs who share in Christ’s suffering and his glory?
- What might it mean for the creation to be in “labor pains” (v. 22)? [While there is suffering now, there is also joyous anticipation for what is to come.]

- What is the role and responsibility believers have as people of hope in what is to come?
- What is the difference between “the power of positive thinking” and the hope we have in what God has done in Christ?

Read Romans 8:12-25 again

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of Resurrection hope, we, along with the rest of the whole of creation, long for the day when your righteousness will fill the earth. May your Holy Spirit empower us to be people and a community who depend on and can discern where you are guiding us and to whom you are leading us to be in ministry with and for. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.