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Scripture

Jeremiah 22:21

21 I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, “I will not listen.”

Romans 8:12-27

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Devotional

When my son Alex was a little boy one of his favorite books was Judith Viorst’s *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Poor Alexander! He woke up with gum in his hair, and his day just got worse – stubbing his toe, going to the dentist, no dessert in his lunch box – sheesh! While my son may have outgrown the book, no one outgrows the experience of having that kind of day. In fact, I’ve been feeling as if I swallowed an extra-large dose of terrible-horrible lately. Poor me! But guess what: There is a special gift that comes with suffering. While I am often tempted to go it alone during times of smooth sailing, suffering brings out the cries of “Abba! Father!” an acknowledgment that I am weak and powerless, a realization of my need for God, a reminder of God’s suffering on behalf of the world.

Prayer

Abba, Father, hear our sighs for the suffering of the world you love. Amen.