“Longing for Life” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 8
July 19, 2026

I. **Romans 8:22-23** – [22]For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. [23]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.

II. **Sometimes the brokenness of our world leaves us speechless**.

a. Recently, as many of you are aware, Pastor Phil Brandt’s wife, Stephanie passed away suddenly from an aneurysm.
   i. A seemingly healthy 60-year-old was taken in an instant.
   ii. Yesterday we went to her memorial service, and any words I had for her husband, Pastor Brandt, or her three adult children seemed completely inadequate.
      1. I was speechless from the standpoint of what to say because the brokenness of the world seemed too big compared to my feeble words of condolence.

b. Maybe you have experienced a similar situation in life, as it seems hard to express the right words to support someone.
   i. We may have a friend who is repeatedly hospitalized for health problems, and they tell us for the tenth time things are looking bad – and we feel like our words ring hollow – if we can find anything to say at all.
      1. Sometimes we use words to try to cheer them up… like, “Oh, things will get better.”
      2. The trouble is we see a bad situation getting worse, and watching someone suffer makes us want to help them… so we talk about the positives…
   ii. Another example is when a friend or acquaintance goes through a domestic violence situation… and she may have to find a shelter with her children.
      1. She loses everything from the standpoint of her home… her safety and security… and faces many years of legal issues, homelessness, and raising her young children.
      2. It’s one thing to encourage and support her in this massive upheaval – but words seem so inadequate, especially things like, “Keep your chin up,” or, “This will all be behind you one day,” or, “You did the right thing.”
   iii. A few years ago, my son-in-law’s sister was killed in a terrible car accident.
      1. She was married and had two young children, and all a sudden she was ripped out of everyone’s lives in an instant.

2. It was incredibly hard to say anything meaningful to the parents or my son-in-law, but I wanted to somehow ease their suffering….in the midst of the brokenness and death of our world.

c. Yet, the truth is, I am often speechless in the face of such tragedy… loss of life… immense struggle… and the great trials of life.
   i. Perhaps it is best to stop for a moment and realize that we are in a lost and dying world, and it takes more than cheerful words and a positive outlook to make things okay…
   ii. Because of sin, nothing in creation will ever be "okay."

III. **Paul writes one of the greatest chapters in all Scripture in Romans 8**.

a. He uses these beautiful words like hope, adoption, glory, freedom, and redemption.

b. I wonder how many people Paul had known who went through horrible experiences, deaths, illnesses, and tragedies?
   i. Certainly, Paul experienced many trials as he traveled around sharing the Gospel.
   ii. Here at Ascension, I can't say how many times bad things have happened to our members and their extended families… and Paul was involved with thousands more people than our church.
   iii. He was keenly aware of the brokenness of creation as he lived in the ancient world without proper medicine, the Roman government ruling with an iron fist, and what any of us would consider brutal conditions for the majority of the world's population.

c. In this environment, Paul tells us about something that is so much bigger than our words or our positive attitude… He expresses our hope, our eager expectation in the day of our redemption.
   i. You see, sin has messed everything up so badly that even creation is groaning for the day of its redemption! (v. 22)
   ii. We see the natural disasters… the fires… the tornadoes… the earthquakes… the floods… the diseases… the constant decay… all around us in the world, and we know that sin is not just the bad things we do… it has infested and breaks down even the things of creation.
   iii. We see death so much, that some people call it a "normal" part of life… but death and sin were never supposed to be in the original plan for God's good creation… until Adam and Eve sinned.
      1. The original sin is when Adam and Eve chose their own way over God's… they chose to walk away from the perfection of Eden and life without the chaos and decay we see all around us.
      2. The Bible says that creation itself was subjected to this sin that was brought forth through the first human beings – and now we

all face the consequences of sin… death… and satan's influence in our lives.

d. Yet, it says creation was subjected to sin or futility… in hope. (v. 20)
    i. This means that from the point that sin entered the world and began doing its part to destroy… God had in mind a Savior and a redemption that would win the day.
    ii. In those times when all hell is breaking loose in our lives or those around us… we are reminded that sin… death… and satan do not win… Jesus Christ wins… and for all of us who believe, that victory is ours.

IV. **When all seems lost, our faith longs for life… eternal life**.

a. The hope that resides in us, or the eager expectation we have comes from our faith and the assurance in God's Word.
    i. In other words, we trust in God's Word… His promise of salvation and eternal life… His power to defeat sin and death… and then we look forward to the day when all this will be complete in our own lives.

b. Yes, we currently still face many of the heartaches of a sinful world, but because we know this is not the end, our hearts long for the perfection of life to come.
    i. The Word tells us that our current sufferings are no comparison to the glory of our future (v. 18), and those are words that really mean something in terms of hope.
    ii. I look around me and see the tragedies, the brokenness, and the loss… but because I have a living God… one who defeated sin, death, and the devil… I have hope.

c. Jesus could not have been more defeated than being betrayed… arrested… abandoned… tortured without mercy… executed on a cross… and buried in a tomb.
    i. Talk about a hopeless situation from a worldly standpoint.
    ii. And yet, early Sunday morning, the tomb was empty because our Lord and Savior is risen from the dead in the ultimate victory.
    iii. The greatest victory in the history of the world took place when Jesus stepped out of that tomb in glory – as it was an announcement that nothing in this world is hopeless when we have Jesus Christ as our Lord.
    iv. When I have Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I realize that my future rests secure… and it includes peace, joy, glory… and life… eternal life in Christ.

V. **The only words that can provide true healing** and hope are the Scriptures.

a. I've often said that my words are not adequate during times of trial and loss, but God's Word always is.
    i. I don't mean just quoting Scripture to a hurting person and walking away – but pointing them to their baptism as adoptive sons and

daughters… sharing the love of Jesus with them by simply being present… reminding them of God's mercy and love – and how much Jesus cares about their suffering too.

b. So many times we feel overwhelmed and speechless in a world of brokenness and sorrow – but the Holy Spirit helps us with a connection to God too deep for words – and that connection is based on Christ.
    i. Our living Savior is our victory… a victory that we take with us in this most difficult world… as we wait in eager expectation for life and glory in the world to come. Amen