

Meditation #39

Romans 8: 23-25:

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? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (ESV).

Christians love life. We know it is a gift from God. We also love the prospect of eternal life. So, how can we go wrong? What do we have to worry about?

To be human is to have the capacity for conflicting ideas and conflicting emotions. Paradox: we want to have a long life, but we do not want to grow old. Another paradox: we want to go to heaven, but we do not want to die.

Does God understand our mixed-up feelings? We can be sure that he does, for in John 11:35, we read "Jesus wept." Jesus was a man as well as the Son of God. He felt the full range of human emotions.

While even the strongest and most faithful among us might feel anxiety at the prospect of disease, injury and pain, think of the stark fear that some of our atheist and agnostic friends must go through. They have no hope of the kind discussed in Romans 8 (above). Moreover, as they reflect on the past, they will agonize over wrongs they committed for which they cannot obtain forgiveness. They will agonize also over wrongs that were committed against them that they are unable to forgive. It is painful to dwell even briefly on these ideas. We can pray for such people and hope that perhaps in the last minutes of their lives their hearts will open to God.

How much better it is to lay the foundations of faith throughout the course of this life and to be ready for anything at any time. How much better it is to feel the joy and love of the Lord every day! How much better it is to let the words of the Psalms speak for us:

So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

Psalm 63: 4-7.

In faith and fellowship,

Patrick McKittrick