

Lent Day 19

Wednesday March 22, 2017

Reading: Romans 8:18-30

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Reflection

I love one comedian's reflections from a few years back. His routine had to do with our impatience with our cellular connectivity. He recognized how ridiculous it was for us to get frustrated with the 3 second delay understanding that the signal was traveling to space and back. It was pretty funny. And, there's lots of memes these days that will express the same sort of thing — earlier generations had to wait for things, like mail.

Instant gratification is a good summary of our culture today. We don't really need to wait for things. We are connected instantly with information and people. Of course, this is a great thing most of the time, however, there is a down side. We have largely lost the ability to delay gratification. We are marked by what I like to call the diva culture — we want what we want, when we want it. This has an impact on our spiritual life as well.

Paul recognizes that there is present suffering for the Christian. Now, I'm stretching the passage a bit to make the point. After all Paul wasn't thinking here about the Christian's self denial — he does that in the letter elsewhere. But the basic premise is there. Christians know they have to wait for the glory to be revealed in the future, in the present we wait and suffer.

Now, lent isn't all about giving things up, but it does tap into this idea of delaying gratification as a means of reminding ourselves that our reward is future. It keeps us looking forward to our reward rather than simply finding rewards in the present time. This discipline is needed in light of our instant culture now more than ever.

Prayer

Giver of good gifts, thank you for the glory to come and the Spirit in the present. Help us to hold onto the hope we have in Christ. Amen.