Why would Paul introduce the subject of suffering here?

- Paul was a realist. He knew that suffering is a result of living in a fallen world and we can’t ignore it or avoid it. Jesus said, “In this life you will have trouble.” John 16:33b

- Paul was also a shepherd and he wrote this passage to give us encouragement and hope. Suffering is part of living in a fallen world, but it will not always be this way. The best is yet to come.

I. The glory to come far outweighs any suffering in this present life. Romans 8:18

Glory and suffering are not even worth comparing.

Glory and suffering are different in intensity, location and duration.

- Intensity – No matter the trial, God’s glory and reward are far greater still.
- Location – Outwardly versus inwardly. Present versus future.
- Duration – Temporary versus eternal.

“I should live not for the dot, but for the line.” Randy Alcorn
“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
II Corinthians 4:16-18

When we understand what is to come, it changes the way we live today.

II. All creation will one day be set free from its bondage to decay.
Romans 8:19-21

Creation groans as in the pains of childbirth. Verse 22.

Creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Verse 19
This world will be made new – more beautiful than we can imagine.

“And the young child will put his hand into the viper’s nest.
They will neither harm nor destroy
On all my holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
As the waters cover the sea.”
Isaiah 11:6-9

“The wolf will live with the lamb, The leopard will lie down with the goat, The calf and the lion and the young thing together; And a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, “
III. We (believers) will also be changed. Romans 8:22-25

Creation groans and we, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan.

We’ve had a taste of heaven and we long for the whole thing.
We will be changed.

The day will come when this perishable body will be made imperishable and this mortal body will be immortal. 1 Corinthians 15:53

The day will come when our lowly body will be transformed and be like His glorious body. Philippians 3:20

The day will come when we will see our Savior, the one we have worshiped and loved and served from afar, and we will see him face to face. 1 John 3:2

The day will come when we will see one another glorified in heaven – free from sin, transformed and made whole. Romans 8:30

And if that day is what is coming, doesn’t it make sense that we should live for the line and not the dot?
“At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of the morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see. But the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in.

When human souls have become as perfect in voluntary obedience as the inanimate creation is in its lifeless obedience, then they will put on its glory, or rather that greater glory of which Nature is only the first sketch.”

“Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.”

The Weight of Glory by C. S. Lewis

IV. God has given us everything we need to patiently endure the trials and suffering in this life. Romans 8:26-27

God has given us His Word (His promises).

God has given us His Spirit (the Holy Spirit).

The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness in all of life – not just in our prayer life.

Conclusion

If life is hard for you right now, you are not alone. God is with you in your trials.
Keep your eyes on Jesus.
Hold on to His Word.
Let His Spirit fill you and lift you up.