

Romans 6... 7...8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

We are looking forward to the redemption of our bodies. Whether we die and are resurrected or we are raptured, our physical bodies will be transformed into glorious eternal bodies.

The creation, in its fallen condition due to our sin, also looks forward to its redemption. After the Millennial Kingdom on earth, and after the Great White Throne judgment of all nonbelievers, God will make a new heaven and a new earth.

In the mean time we groan. Creation also groans. We saw last time that **groan** means we *sigh* from the pressures we're under.

In these next verses we learn that Someone else is groaning with us!

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Likewise means *similarly or in the same way*. Not only does creation groan. Not only do we groan. In the same way so does the Holy Spirit.

He doesn't groan from being pressured. He is God; He is perfect. He groans with us. He sympathizes with us.

I offer this very imperfect example. In my role as Chaplain I have delivered death notifications. The folks receiving notice are often

overwhelmed. They groan, as it were, and don't know what to say. I can sympathize with their loss but I'm not overly affected by it. So I become to them a source of help. I can represent them to the authorities. I let them know what is going to happen and why. If they have questions they might ask me to ask them. You get the idea.

Weaknesses could be specific times of trouble but is probably a reference to our condition in general. It reminds me of a tense scene in a movie where the hero is trying desperately make the phone call that will alert the authorities and avert the disaster. We can't quite make it on our own... But the Holy Spirit is there to **help us in our weaknesses**.

How does He help? In our specific weaknesses we pray but because of our overall **weakness we do not know what we should pray for as we ought**.

It should come as no shock that we don't know what we should pray for. We don't know the future. Will that job I'm praying for be a blessing or a bummer? Will the healing I'm praying for draw me closer to God or cause me to fall away from Him once I have no more suffering?

The Holy Spirit groans with me. He feels my pain and confusion. He sympathizes with me. Then He begins to pray for me to the Father. The Holy Spirit **makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered**.

This is *not* speaking in tongues. It is not me speaking at all; it is the Spirit. And these sighs **cannot be uttered!** They are His private sighs on my behalf to my Father.

The Holy Spirit takes my groanings and brings them before the Father. But He does something to them. According to verse twenty-seven He edits them according to the will of God.

Romans 8:27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

Only God can **search the hearts** of men and women. But here I think what is meant is that our Father searches our hearts to know **what the mind of the indwelling Holy Spirit is**.

Here is what is happening. We are under some intense pressure. We are forced to pray from the pressure and our prayers are like sighs or groanings. We don't really know what to pray for since we don't know God's will in the matter. The indwelling Holy Spirit, Who is God, **does** know the Father's will in the matter! So He edits our prayers to the Father in a way that fully represents our pressure but remains in submission to the Father's will for us.

This amazing relationship leads to the inevitable truth of verse twenty-eight:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

We know means we understand that because God has begun in us a good work He will continue to perform it every day until He completes it when our bodies are redeemed. Thus **all things** – not just some things – **work together**. God is sovereign and is managing the universe in such a way as to complete His work in us.

All things is a lot! It involves **all things** in the material universe as well as **all things** in the supernatural realm. **All things** are innumerable and reveal that God is capable of limitless providence on our behalf.

Even when **all things** include bad things they **work together for good**. God can use them to grow us, to further us, to mature us.

Think of Joseph in the Old Testament. Hated by his brothers... Thrown into a pit by them... Sold into slavery by them... Thrown into jail by his Egyptian master... Forgotten in the jail... He eventually interpreted Pharaoh's dream and became second ruler of Egypt. God used him to save his family, and the line of the Messiah, from the drought and famine. He would say of it all, "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." It worked together for good.

The only ones who can claim that life has such purpose are **those who love God... those who are the called according to His purpose.**

Those who love God in this context refers to believers in Jesus Christ. The apostle John wrote, **we love, because He first loved us.** He loved us on the Cross and died to forgive us our sins. We must realize and respond to His love. Only when we do are we **those who love God.**

The next phrase, **the called according to His purpose,** is going to be expanded in the following verses. It is the teaching of God's election and of His predestination. We'll tackle it next time.

Do you love God? Then all things in the universe are working together by God's sovereignty and through His providence for your ultimate good.

When the work God is doing is causing you to groan you can be certain that the indwelling Holy Spirit groans with you. The Father knows how you're feeling and what you're going through. When you don't know even what to pray for, or when you pray wrongly, the Holy Spirit edits your prayers to help you stay in the will of God.

This side of Heaven it doesn't get any better!

- being changed to bring change -