

# ROMANS (8:26-27)

## *Groaning With God*

PART 35 – MAY 8, 2005

### GROANING PAINS

Two weeks ago we read that all of creation has been subjected to a judicial decree of frustration and anguish to combat and counterbalance the invasion of sin.

Creation groans like a woman giving birth:

- There is both purpose in the pain;
- And, it's pain that leads to life.

Last week we saw that “We ourselves” who are filled with God’s Spirit, groan because of our unredeemed physical bodies.

We have: “The *firstfruits* of the Spirit”; a little taste of the wholeness, holiness, and healing to come. This is our hope.

For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? - *Romans 8:24 NIV*

But “We ourselves” have plenty of problems and pain: This creation! These bodies! We need more than hope; we need help.

- Our inheritance gives us hope for the future;
- But, the Spirit gives us help for the here and now.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. - *Romans 8:26-27 NIV*

God understands the aches and pains of your heart even when you can’t verbalize it. And when you groan, He groans; this is how intensely he feels when you hurt.

And remember, *our* groaning can only remind us of where we’re at; but God’s groaning will actually take us somewhere.

- God’s groaning is sympathetic *and* powerful

## MORE THAN A FORCE

- God's Spirit is more than just a force or a power.

We treat him that way when we think of him as an "energy" that is released if/when we can get the right prayer formula going. The Spirit *is* God!

And we should love him as a person who thinks about us, has emotions for us, works on our behalf ... and even prays for us.

Q: But, what exactly does he pray *for* when he intercedes for us?

A: We can see two big clues:

- A. "We do not know what we ought to pray for"
  - He asks for things we do not know to ask for
- B. "[He] intercedes for [us] in accordance with God's will"
  - He asks for things that agree with God's will

This tells us a lot! When Paul says the Spirit asks for the things we *don't know* to ask for, it rules certain things out. We know to pray for faith, hope, love, purity, peace, all the fruit of the Spirit, and every commandment in the Bible.

So, God's *revealed* will is not in question. If God tells us (in his Word) to pursue something, we know we should pray for it.

Q: So, what don't we know that we ought to pray for?

Q: Look at "B": What part of God's will, are we not sure about?

In the same way **[that hope helps us in our weakness]**, the Spirit helps us in our weakness ... - *Romans 8:26a NIV*

Q: What weakness?

We've been studying it for the last two weeks: The bondage to futility, frustration, sickness, decay, and the miseries of life in these *unredeemed* bodies.

You and I do not know how to pray for the *unrevealed* will of God concerning our unredeemed bodies on this imperfect planet.

Q: When it comes to sickness and suffering, do we pray for healing and escape, or strength and perseverance?

## STAND OR FLEE?

- This was the question that we ended on last week.
- Both are Biblical. It's right to pray for either.

But we long to pray with *great faith*; and we *anguish* (groan) over the fact that we're not sure what God is *doing* at times.

There are remarkable accounts of Jesus clearing money-changers out of the temple with a whip, facing down demon-possessed crazies, and standing up to big-wig religious authorities.

Q: So, we don't picture Jesus *hiding* from his opponents ... *ducking out* when the "coast is clear," do we?

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus **hid** himself, **slipping away** from the temple grounds. - *John 8:58-59 NIV*

Q: Whose Jesus is that?

- Maybe God can be in the standing and the fleeing.
- When Pharaoh tried to kill Moses, Moses fled. *(Ex 2:15)*
- When Moses came back to Pharaoh, Moses stood. *(Ex 7:6)*
- When Saul sent men to kill David, David fled. *(1 Sam 19:12)*
- When David found Saul in a cave, David stood. *(1 Sam 19:3-8)*

There are few rules to follow. We're often left a bit confused. When Paul was in prison in Rome he was trying to figure out if God's will was life and ministry, or death with courage.

If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two ... - *Philippians 1:22-24 NIV*

And Paul prayed three times for the removal of a physical ailment, and was told that God's power would be manifest *not* in healing but in faithful service through suffering.

Q: If sometimes we should stand and sometimes flee; if sometimes it's best to be healed and other times not; how do we pray?

- I should pray for healing *and* faith while I'm unhealed.
- I should pray for rescue *and* faith while I'm unrescued.

We're not condemned nor criticized for *not* discerning his will.

## THE HEIGHT OF FAITH

Sometimes all we can do is cry out for help because we're not sure in what form the help should come. But the Spirit takes our flawed, misguided prayers, and straightens them out. And he translates our requests into the perfect will of God.

J.B. Phillips translates verse 26 this way:

His Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words. - *Romans 8:26b JBP*

It's fitting for trusting children to ask their father to give them relief when they're in trouble. And it's fitting for a loving Father to give them *only* what is in their best interest. And this is what our Father always does. Sometimes healing now, sometimes not; sometimes rescue now, sometimes not. But always, always what is in our best interest.

So, in my sickness and suffering, I'm given Five Assurances:

1. I'm not expected to know God's *unrevealed* will.
2. I'm not being *judged*, I'm being *understood*.
3. My mental abilities don't limit God.
4. God's Spirit is praying *for* me, not *against* me.
5. God won't reject the prayers of God.

The *height* of faith isn't having an unflinching belief that you will get the answer you desire. The height of faith is to desire that Christ be *magnified* in my fleeing *or* my standing, in my healing *or* my sickness.

- Faith is not about me, it's about glorifying Christ.

I have seen Christ magnified and exalted at many funerals (where nonbelievers were deeply moved). And I have seen many people touched by a trusting heart in the midst of chemotherapy.

"He who searches our *hearts* knows the mind of the Spirit"

*In my heart*, I must have a yearning for the decisions and circumstances that will most magnify Christ.

Otherwise, unless I'm healed or rescued, I'll walk around depressed and miserable: "God didn't answer my prayers!"

Instead, I want to persevere with the assurance that I've been *chosen* to endure for a time, for the glory of God's Kingdom.