

Romans Session 115

The Holy Spirit Guarantees Our Glory The Groaning of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:26-27 (NASB)

²⁶ *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;*

²⁷ *and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

In the same way, refers back to the groans of the creation and of believers for redemption from the corruption and defilement of sin.

Here Paul reveals the immeasurably comforting truth that the Holy Spirit comes alongside us and all creation in groaning for god's ultimate day of restoration and His eternal reign of righteousness.

Because of our remaining humanness and susceptibility to sin and doubt, the holy **Spirit also helps** us in our **weakness**. In this context, **weakness** doubtless refers to our human condition in general, and not to specific weaknesses.

The point is that, even after salvation, we are characterized by spiritual **weakness**. Acting morally, speaking the truth, witnessing for the Lord, or doing any other good thing happens only by the power of the Spirit working in and through us despite our human limitations.

Several times in his letter to the Philippians, Paul beautifully pictures that divine-human relationship. Speaking of his own needs, he said;

Philippians 1:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ *for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,*

The Spirit supplies us with all we need to be faithful, effective, and protected children of God. In the following chapter he admonishes,

Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB)

¹² *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;*

¹³ *for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

The Spirit of God works unrelentingly in us to do what we could never do alone, that is bring about the perfect will of God.

To make clear how the Spirit works, Paul turns to the subject of prayer.

Although we are redeemed and absolutely secure in our adoption as God's children, nevertheless, **we do not know how to pray as we should**.

Paul does not elaborate on our inability to pray as we ought, but his statement is all encompassing.

Because of our imperfect perspectives, finite minds, human frailties, and spiritual limitations, we are not able to pray in absolute consistency with God's will.

Many times, we do not even know that spiritual needs exist, much less know how best they should be met.

Even the Christian who prays sincerely, faithfully, and regularly cannot possibly know God's purposes concerning all of his own needs or the needs of others for whom he prays.

Jesus told Peter,

Luke 22:31-32 (NASB)

³¹ *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;*

³² *but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*

Fortunately for Peter, Jesus kept His word despite the apostle's foolish bravado. Not only was Peter no match for Satan but he soon proved that, his devotion to Christ could not even withstand the taunts of a few strangers.

Luke 22:54-60 (NASB)

⁵⁴ *Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance.*

⁵⁵ *After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.*

⁵⁶ *And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."*

⁵⁷ *But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."*

⁵⁸ *A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"*

⁵⁹ *After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too."*

⁶⁰ *But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.*

How wonderful and glorious it is that our spiritual security rests in the Lord's faithfulness rather than in our vacillating commitment.

Even the apostle Paul, who lived so near to God and so faithfully and sacrificially proclaimed His gospel, did not always know how best to pray.

He knew for example, that God had allowed Satan to inflict him with an unspecified "thorn in the flesh."

That affliction guarded Paul against pride over being "caught up into paradise"

After a while Paul became weary of the infirmity, which doubtless was severe, and he prayed earnestly that it might be removed.

After three times of asking, the Lord told Paul that he should be satisfied with the abundance of divine grace by which he was already sustained in the trial.

2 Corinthians 12:2-9 (NASB)

² *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.*

³ *And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—*

⁴ *was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.*

⁵ *On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.*

⁶ *For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.*

⁷ *Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!*

⁸ *Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.*

⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Paul's request did not correspond with the Lord's will for him at that time. Even when we do not know what God wants, the indwelling **Holy Spirit intercedes for us**, bring our needs before God even when we do not know what they are or when we pray about them unwisely.

Paul emphasizes that our help is from **the Spirit Himself**. His divine help not only is personal but direct.

The Spirit does not simply provide our security but is **Himself** our security.

The Spirit intercedes on our behalf in a way, Paul says, that is totally beyond human comprehension, **with groanings too deep for words**.

The Holy Spirit unites with us in our desire to be freed from our corrupted earthly bodies and to be with God forever in our glorified heavenly bodies.

Contrary to the interpretation of most charismatics, the **groanings** of the Spirit are not utterances in unknown tongues, much less ecstatic gibberish that has no rational content.

Paul says that the groanings are not even audible and are inexpressible in **words**.

Yet those groanings carry profound content, namely divine appeals for the spiritual welfare of each believer.

In a way infinitely beyond our understanding, these **groanings** represent what might be called inter-trinitarian communications, divine articulations by the Holy Spirit to the Father.

Paul affirmed this truth to the Corinthians when he declared,

1 Corinthians 2:11 (NASB)

¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God

We remain justified and righteous before God the Father only because the Son and the Holy Spirit, as our constant advocates and intercessors, represent us before Him.

It is only because of that joint and unceasing divine work on our behalf that we will enter heaven.

Hebrews 7:25 (NASB)

²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus work of redemption in a believer's heart begins at the time of conversion, but it does not end until that saint is in heaven, glorified and made as righteous as God is righteous, because he possesses the full righteousness of Christ. That is guaranteed by the heavenly high priestly work of our Lord and by the earthly indwelling Holy Spirit., which also make secure the divine adoption and heavenly destiny of every believer.

If it were not for the sustaining power of the Spirit within us and Christ's continual mediation for us as High Priest our remaining humanness would have immediately engulfed us again in sin the moment after we were justified.

If for an instant Christ and the Holy Spirit were to stop their sustaining intercession for us, we would, in that instant, fall back into our sinful, damnable state of separation from God.

If such a falling away could happen, faith in Christ would give us only temporary spiritual life, subject at any moment to loss.

But Jesus offers no life but eternal life, which by definition cannot be lost.

To those who believe, Jesus said;

John 10:28 (NASB)

²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

John 17:2-3 (NASB)

² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

³ “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Acts 13:48 (NASB)

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

To have faith in Jesus Christ and to have eternal life are scripturally synonymous.

Were it not for the sustaining and intercessory work of the Son and the Spirit on behalf of believers, Satan and his false teachers could easily deceive God’s elect.

Matthew 24:24 (NASB)

²⁴ “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

They could easily undermine the completion of their salvation.

Now if they could do that then God’s election would mean nothing.

So, Satan wars against those two processes, Christ’s advocacy and the Holy Spirit’s intercession.

If he could somehow interrupt either of those processes, he could then count on the fact that man would again be his to control.

But the never-ending work of Christ and the Holy Spirit make that impossible.

“And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is.”

Paul continues, the **He** refers to God the Father, **who searches the hearts** of men.

If the Father knows the hearts of men how much more, does He know the mind of the Spirit.

He knows exactly what the Spirit is thinking as He intercedes for the Saints,

In this passage Paul emphasizes divine intercession that is necessary for the preservation of believers to their eternal hope.

We can no more fathom that marvelous truth than we can fathom any other aspect of God’s plan of redemption.

But we know that, were not Christ and the Holy Spirit continually on guard on our behalf, our inheritance in heaven would be reserved for us in vain.