

July 11, 2021 - David Baumgartner

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. We're going to be continuing in our study of Romans chapter 8, verse 26 to verse 30.

So if you have your Bibles, please look with me there, or you can look on the reverse side of your handout. In our last study, Paul's been recounting human history.

When Adam sinned, all creation was broken. And therefore, in verse 20 of chapter 8, Paul says that God subjected the world to futility.

Well, we know this. Thorns, thistles, there's pain in childbirth. And so in verse 23, as believers, what do we do?

We groan. We groan. These are expressions of grief and sadness associated with the burden that we experience of living in a fallen world.

[1 : 05] It's as things as they are. It says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 2, Paul says that for indeed in this house, in other words, in our bodies, we groan.

We long to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven. That's a great verse to keep in mind here. Not only do we groan, but Paul says in verse 22, back in Romans chapter 8, that the whole creation groans.

The whole creation. I looked that up, what Paul was meaning there. That's the sum of everything that's been created. This is kind of an interesting thought here.

I know there's a lot of talk about life on other planets. Are they included in the whole creation groaning? It's kind of an interesting thought there because if it does, then they would be included in what is broken.

And then also maybe they groan too. We also learned though in verses 20 to 21 that Paul tells us that God subjected the created world to futility in hope.

[2 : 15] He did that in hope that of a coming day. He says here, when creation itself will be set free from its slavery. Praise God.

Aren't you looking forward to that? In verse 19, he defines this as the revealing of the sons of God. Wow. How great that is.

So, friends, we look forward to that wonderful day. Paul says in verse 18, he says, I consider the sufferings of this present time not to be worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.

So we are looking to the future, friends. What great promises there are that the Bible has for us. But here's a question. How can we persevere until then?

Who or what will sustain this great hope that we have while we await our redemption? Well, there's good news here as well. We are not left on our own resources.

[3 : 20] God sent a helper. And he's a help us to help us persevere. We know in John chapter 14, Jesus said, I will ask the father and he will give you what?

Another helper that he may be with you forever. So our passage this morning begins in verse 26. Look with me. In the same way, the spirit also helps our weaknesses.

And so this morning, we're going to see three things here. How the Holy Spirit helps us. Secondly, the resulting confidence that can be ours. And then thirdly, the destiny that awaits us.

Let's go ahead and read this passage here out of Romans chapter 8, beginning in verse 26. And 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. 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.

[4 : 31] And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and to those who are called according to his purpose.

Heavenly Father, we are so glad that we can be here today.

And just to remind us, Lord, of how you are for us. How you are a good father, Lord. And that we, as your children, should remember that.

And Lord, that just not only just to know that, but the promises we find in scripture of the great hope that we have in you. That things will not always be like they are today.

But that there will be a day when the glory will be ours. Because we will be with you. Thank you, Lord, for today.

[5 : 47] We ask that through your spirit we would understand these words and be able to apply them. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, one of the things that we talked about before is how the Holy Spirit, the ministry that he has, how it's been the focus of this entire chapter, chapter 8.

Earlier we learned that through him, all of the merits of what Christ accomplished on the cross, that they're applied to us through the spirit.

That's how they're applied to us. And so, and that's not all, friends. Today we're going to see how the Spirit helps us. Look with me here at verse 26.

He says, The Spirit himself intercedes for us. Here we see the Holy Spirit himself, the third person of the Holy Trinity.

He communicates with God the Father on our behalf. We can also notice two things in this passage here. First, the Spirit intercedes with groanings.

[6 : 55] Did you catch that? We already saw, back in verse 22, how all creation groans. And then 23, how we ourselves groan. Well, Paul tells us here, though, that the Holy Spirit's groanings are different.

He says, notice here, Too deep for words. I think Paul might be referring here to a transcendent language that only the members of the Godhead can understand.

Now, I know that not everyone would agree with that. In fact, there's a debate going on in the church about the groans of the Holy Spirit. Maybe that's a proof text here for praying in tongues.

I don't know if you've ever heard that before. But some believe that because it may correspond to what's called praying through the Spirit. In Ephesians 6, verse 18, Paul says, Pray at all times in the Spirit.

So, is this talking about tongues here? I don't think so. I don't want to go into a major thing about the gift of tongues. But first of all, tongues are not mentioned here in Romans.

[8 : 05] Secondly, this verse here in Romans seems to suggest that the Holy Spirit prays for us, not through us.

And then thirdly, this section here in Romans refers to all believers. Whereas tongues seems to be referring only to some. Because Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, All do not speak in tongues.

So, anyway, I think that this is the Spirit praying for us. But here's a question. Why does he intercede for us? Well, I'll give you a very simple answer.

The Bible portrays us as having many weaknesses. We do. Verse 26, Paul says, for example, For we do not know how to pray as we should.

Now, I have the NAS here. It has how to pray, which kind of refers to maybe the method of prayer. Other Bibles, ESV, NIV, New King James, New Living Translation, they may say what to pray.

[9 : 13] So, that might be referring to the content of our prayers. The Greek text actually allows either translation there. But I think the main thing here is that when it comes to prayer, I would say pretty much all of us fall short.

Would you agree with that? I think we do. Notice here that Paul includes himself in this. Isn't that amazing? He says we do not always know how to pray as we should.

We know in 2 Corinthians, Paul talked about his thorn in the flesh. It says in chapter 12, verse 2 of 2 Corinthians, he says, concerning this, I entreated the Lord.

In other words, he prayed. And he said that this thorn might depart from me. And he said, this is the Lord, my grace is sufficient for you.

In other words, no. I'm not going to deliver it from you. He says, my power is perfected in weakness. So, yeah, Paul throws himself in here.

[10:19] One biblical commentator said that we are like foolish children, unable to understand our situations. And therefore, we request things, not knowing if they're good or bad for us.

I can relate to that. Oftentimes, what or how to pray is not always clear. And of course, we want our prayers to be in harmony with God's will, right?

Yeah, there's a verse there in 1 John. This is the confidence we have, which we have before him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Oh, I'd like to scratch that verse out there according to his will. But no, it's according to God's will. That's how we want to pray. Well, friends, the Holy Spirit helps us.

And here's how. Look with me, verse 27. He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because he, that is the Holy Spirit, intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

[11:27] All right, this is a very rich Bible verse here. We need to break it down. First of all, who is he who searches our heart? Well, that would be the Father.

We're told in 1 Samuel that man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. And we see that in other places. Secondly, it says here that the Father knows the mind of the Spirit.

Well, we know from previous passages here, the Holy Spirit indwells each and every believer. And therefore, he's in tune with us.

He knows every thought we have. He knows our concerns. He knows our memories. He knows our fears. He knows what's going on with us all the time.

And then thirdly, notice that since the Father, it says, knows the mind of the Spirit, the Spirit's intercession is according to, that is, it's in conformity with, the Father's will.

[12:29] But what this means, brothers and sisters, is that if you're a believer, the members of the Godhead are talking about you. And they're doing that all the time.

You are the subject of their discussion all the time. And based on the tense of this verb here, present tense, the Holy Spirit's interceding for us and with the Father all the time, while we're working, while we're reading, while we're eating, perhaps while we're sleeping, I would say that if you're like me, most of the time I'm completely oblivious to that.

Are you? Yeah. That's what it's, but it seems to be saying that here. Not only that, their thoughts about us are always for our good.

They are. I remember when I was in school, this was going back many days, my younger days, there were times when my parents had to meet with my teachers or maybe the principal at the school.

And at some point, while they were discussing, I'd have to leave the room. That ever happen to any of you? Yeah.

[13:47] If you have experienced that, you know how uncomfortable that is. I mean, you know that they're talking about me. You know, I wonder, will somebody stick up for me in that discussion?

Will somebody take my side? Well, maybe my dad. Well, not. There's a term for that. It's called wishful thinking.

Now, here's the main point here. In the case of the Father and the Spirit, friends, we can be assured, both of them are on our side. And if you doubt that, perhaps this next verse will change your mind.

Look with me, verse 28. He says, And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

This leads to the next truth here, if you want to follow on your handout, about the confidence that is ours. This passage here, verse 28, it's a very familiar verse.

[14:56] In fact, you could think of it as a promise. And this verse has helped many believers, usually when things are going pretty badly. Notice again, Paul includes himself in this.

He says, We know. Yeah, we know. That's quite a statement here, if you think about it. Because if my history is correct, Paul penned these words while he was on his third missionary journey.

And you might want to think about that as Acts chapter 20. Well, consider what happened before that. On his first journey in Acts 13, he was beaten and left for dead.

In his second journey, Acts 16, he was in prison. In chapter 17, he was chased out of Thessalonica. Chapter 18, he was brought up on charges, false charges.

The main point here is that even though Paul has been through all of that, he can say this. That God works together. That God causes all things to work together for our good, for those who love God and are called according to his purposes.

[16:10] God is able to orchestrate, to make all things work together for our good. This is the word synergy here. God is the great synergizer.

Notice a couple things here. Notice what it doesn't say. It doesn't say that all things are good. No, that would not be true. And that's because we live in a fallen world and there's evil in the world. Also notice that this promise does not apply to everybody. Well, to whom does it apply? Well, if you look with me, there's two criteria that Paul seems to talk about.

First, it applies to those who love God. That's that word, agape, love. Those who love God. What does that mean?

If you were to ask people on the street, hey, do you love God? What do you think people will say? I think most people would go, well, yeah, I love God.

[17:15] Of course I do. I made this list up from various commentaries regarding here's how you know that you love God. Hey, listen to these. You long to worship.

Now, some of you weren't here Friday, so taking notes. You long to worship. Listen, you seek communion with God. You love his word.

You are sensitive to his honor. You hate what God hates. You love what God loves. You grieve over sin. You rejoice over righteousness.

You seek fellowship. Do those things describe you? Do they describe me? I aspire to these, but I tell you, I miss the mark.

And at that point, that's when I say, thank you, Jesus, for the cross because I am restored. I'm forgiven because of you. But here, let's take another look here.

[18:15] Secondly, it applies to those who have been called according to his purposes. His purpose. In Paul's writings here, as we're going to see when we get to verse 30, whenever Paul talks about God's call, he's always talking about those who have been saved.

I'll just tell you that right up front. And that's because Paul explains God's calling in terms of God's foreknowledge and his predestination. So this verse here is a promise from God to his children.

And these criteria, they actually work together so that all, you know, all things are not good. Even though we live in a fallen world, Satan's there to harass us.

We make bad choices. There's consequences for these things. But God makes things work together. For our good. Nowhere in the Bible do we read that God causes evil.

No, he permits these things. He's not the cause. God is able to use these things to turn things around for our good. He allows bad times.

[19:31] How does he do, why does he do that? Well, maybe it's to help us break away from sin. Have we ever thought of that? Maybe it helps us to wean us away from the world.

Perhaps it's to help prepare us for a future ministry. In our ministry class, we use this teaching called Shape, where we look at how God uses our past pain to help prepare us for a future ministry. Just to give you an example, if a couple has a child who dies from AIDS, what am I able to say to that child?

Really, not very much. But I tell you what, a couple who has experienced that can speak to that family's heart because they know what it's like.

God uses pain and sorrow to bring us closer to him. That those who are saved would love him more and more.

[20:35] Earlier, I mentioned how this verse has helped a lot of people. Here's a question that I have for you. When does the good become a reality? Is it always in this life?

You know, many of you are familiar with the story of Joseph. And of course, a terrible thing happened to him. His brothers, what? Betrayed him.

But later in life, he was able to say, look with me, it's on your handout here. He says, you meant evil against me. That's his brothers. But he says, God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result to preserve many people alive.

Now, you all know the story there that Joseph was in Egypt and through his dreams and through his appointment, he was able to save many people's lives through the grain that they stored.

Even so, his 11 brothers and his dad would come up to Egypt to be with them. So that's a great example of this life. We had a friend in Colorado.

[21:47] She was a single mom and she was a very knowledgeable woman. She had her PhD in nursing. She had adopted a baby girl some years ago and this girl was now 13 and we were in the same Bible study group together.

Right before we left Colorado, a terrible thing happened to her and she hung closely to this verse, Romans 8, 28.

You see, she had adopted another child, a four-year-old and this little guy, he had a peculiar behavior where he kept climbing on furniture and for some reason she couldn't stop him from doing that.

One evening, she was away at a meeting. Her 13-year-old daughter was watching the boy but somehow he got away and he climbed up onto a bookcase high up on the ledge.

He fell down, broke his neck and he died. I'll tell you what, that was a very sad situation for our Bible study group, for the whole church that we were attending.

[22 : 59] To make matters even worse, afterwards, the police actually wanted to charge her with second-degree murder. You know, apparent neglect or something like that.

Friends, this went on for years. We had moved from Denver to Wichita to St. Louis here and we were still on the phone with her talking to her about Romans 8.28.

This eventually stopped. They stopped pursuing the case for lack of evidence. As far as I know, this is 25 years ago now, the case is still open.

But she clung to this verse. How do we answer that question of when does the good come? This promise of God here.

I've been thinking long and hard about it. Here's my answer. The good comes when God says so. We may not see it until much later in life, but we do know that God keeps his promises.

[24 : 08] Through the intercessory ministry of the Spirit, he's causing all things to work together for our good. And friends, some of you here today, you need to hear that.

You need to believe that. Hang on because God is not through yet. It's not until God says so. We have Jesus who is interceding for us next to his father while he's in heaven.

So too, we have the Holy Spirit here indwelling inside of us and he's interceding for us as well. And friends, these truths, they ought to have a bearing on how you and I are able to persevere in this life as we wait for that glorious day that Paul talks about.

Which leads us to the third part here. The destiny that awaits you and I. Look with me here beginning in verse 29. He says, For whom, he's speaking of the father here, he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And whom he predestined, these he also called. And whom he called, these he also justified. And whom he justified, these he also glorified.

[25 : 37] This verse here, or these two verses, they've been called the salvation chain. There are five links here and they're all connected. And here's some good news.

Each link here in the chain represents something that God does. Not what you and I do. I don't think we'd do it. But God does it.

They explain why we believers can be assured that all things will work together for our good. And here's the reason. God has always been doing good for us.

Even before we were born. Well, look at these terms with me. First of all, we see foreknowledge. Now this here is not God knowing something beforehand.

No, it emphasizes his special choice. If you look with me, this in Jeremiah chapter 1, this is the prophet Jeremiah. God says to him, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

[26 : 45] And before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations. Wow, what a powerful verse that is about God's foreknowledge.

That is, his choosing, his appointing us. Secondly, we see this predestination or this election here. This is talking about, Mike, you're hearing this, aren't you?

God chooses some before creation. You're all familiar with the passage in Ephesians chapter 1. Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him, in love he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ himself.

Why did he do that? It's according to the kind intention of his will. Wow. Thirdly, he goes on that those who have been predestined by God, he says, they're also called.

They're called to faith through the gospel. This is known here in theological terms as the effectual call. You may know that in 2 Thessalonians, it's in chapter 2, it was for this he called you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[28 : 14] Out of all the verses there was to choose about calling, I like this one because again, it's looking forward to the glory that we will receive in Christ Jesus. Fourthly, justification.

Those who are called are also justified. And of course, we know from previous studies here, this means to be declared right in God's eyes.

So if you look at calling here, that cannot merely refer to just a general invitation out there. No, it's referring to the call that creates faith that's necessary for justification.

Faith is a gift from the Lord. We see that in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8. By grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves. It's a gift from God.

Lastly, we have glorification. All those who are justified will also be glorified. Friends, he's talking here about us receiving our resurrection bodies.

[29 : 19] The bodies that we will need to be able to live in the new heavens, in the new earth. Paul will say in chapter 8, verse 18, we'll see this.

He says, we saw this. I consider that the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to compare with the glory to be revealed in us. And then he says, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Clearly, that's what Paul is talking about. One day, friends, we will be made perfect and we will receive resurrection bodies of the same order that Jesus has.

Paul speaks of this, if you notice here, in past tense. It's most likely, most people believe that it's as good as already done.

In other words, it's talking about the certainty that God will do this. He will finish the work that he begun. As Paul says in Philippians, I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

[30 : 33] What great promises that we have. God will complete his plan. If I can invite our musician up. The passage here gives us the basis for believing that everything is in God's control, doesn't it?

I hope that that's one thing that you can leave with today, leave with that so that all things work out for good for our lives. And how does that happen? The Spirit helps us.

He enters into our chaos. Yeah. Sometimes, doesn't it feel like life's a chaos?

I feel that way. There's an interesting book that's written by Alan Arnold. It's called Chaos Can't.

Tom Grass talked about it a couple weeks ago.

And the author points out how the Holy Spirit enters into chaos. For instance, in Genesis 1, verse 2, it tells us that the earth was formless and void.

[31 : 43] Well, that describes chaos. But then it says, it tells us that God didn't wait for the chaos to leave. It says that the Spirit entered it. He hovered over it.

He brought order, beauty, and life to the chaos. And so, what great promises that the Holy Spirit is active in our lives.

Secondly, we see this salvation chain that God does it all. And there's a confidence that we can have from that. Not a single person who has been called will ever be lost.

And that's a topic for next week. Finally, the destiny that awaits us. I'd like to close with this quote from C.S. Lewis. He has it in his book called Mere Christianity.

He's talking about what we experience in this life. He says, if I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

[32 : 52] Yeah. Good explanation. Yes, indeed, we were made. When we can thank God for his mercy, his grace, his involvement with us, and just the glorious day that awaits us when he comes back, takes us home, and we can live with him forever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.