

Romans 8:26-30

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[0 : 00] Take your copy of God's Word and turn to Romans chapter 8, where we'll spend our time this morning. At home, Sam and I have gotten in the habit of singing the doxology after we pray before our meal, hoping that Cade will learn it and learn it well.

We don't sound nearly as nice as you guys all do together though, so I think you guys should all come to our house for dinner every night and help us sing that song. Because my leading it just is not nearly as beautiful.

I'm really thankful today. I'm thankful first and foremost for the redemptive work of Christ on my behalf. I just feel unfettered this morning. I feel so free and unburdened because of the lack of slavery to sin this morning.

I'm incredibly thankful this morning. On this day, six years ago, I married my lovely wife, Sam. So I'm really thankful for her. Thank you.

And my family's here this morning. You guys know there's been a lot of sickness in our home. And I'm just really, really, really thankful that they get to actually be here. Both of my precious boys are here.

[1 : 19] I'm not stag this morning at church. So I'm thankful for all these things this morning. And I'm thankful that I get to preach this morning to you out of Romans chapter 8. We have, just to remind you, in Romans we've been venturing through this gospel presentation that Paul is giving to us.

And he has said to us that the curse of sin has affected all humanity. We all bear that curse. And in addition to that, we've all sinned ourselves.

So not only has the curse of Adam passed on to us, but we have brought our own condemnation because of our own sin. And therefore, none of us can escape the wrath of God on our own. Praise him for the propitiation of Christ. That he came and stood in our place. Bore God's wrath on our behalf. That if we will place our faith in that work of Jesus, we might be saved.

We've seen now the effects of the gospel in chapters 6 and 7. And now into chapter 8, we get to learn about these positive effects of the gospel. The life that the Spirit has brought us.

[2 : 26] And we're looking together at the ministry of the Spirit. And we see that the Spirit in our lives ministers to us in regeneration. He gives us a new nature.

We've been born in the Spirit. We see this in chapter 8, verse 5. I just won't read it to you. Chapter 8, verse 5. You can look at it. As well as in 1 Peter 1, 3-5, which says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again through the Spirit. To a living hope. To the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.

And kept in heaven for you. Who by God's power, which is the work of the Spirit in us, are being guarded through faith. For a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. We see also that the Spirit ministers to us in our lives through the process of sanctification.

Sanctification, that process by which we are passing from one degree of glory to another. That we are becoming more perfect as we progress in our Christian living.

[3 : 30] So he ministers to us in sanctification. Chapter 8, verse 13. As well as Philippians 1, 6. Where Paul says, We are being moved steadily by the Spirit towards perfection.

We also saw that last week that the Spirit ministers to us in our security unto glorification. So after we die, the work of the Spirit is our glorification.

But up to that point is our security keeping us to that day. You can see that in chapter 8, verse 14. That he puts in us the Spirit of adoption. That we are called sons of God because he lives within us.

As well as Ephesians 1, 13 and 14. Which reads, So last week we saw that Paul turned in verse 17 to begin to talk about suffering in the life of a Christian.

And that suffering includes all of the things we encounter as Christians along the way. As we're moving towards glorification. It's all those things.

[4 : 53] So it's from the head cold I still kind of have this morning to martyrdom. It's all those things that are uncomfortable for us as we're in this process of being made perfect.

And he gives to us the way that we bear up underneath that. Which is the hope of future glory. We saw last week a certain amount of groaning going on.

He speaks to us of the creation groaning. Waiting eagerly to be restored. To be put back in the place that it was meant to be. And we saw that we as believers groan inwardly.

We wait eagerly for the adoption of the Son. For the redemption of our bodies. That final state. And this morning's text, we're going to see the Spirit groan on our behalf.

So let's read together. Beginning in verse 26 through verse 30. I know that you may be thinking me rather ambitious. But I hope by the end of this you'll understand why I'm going to take us that far this morning.

[5 : 56] Beginning in verse 26. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of a son. In order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified.

And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Let's pray together. Father God, we thank you for your word and the ministry it is to us.

We thank you that you have planned the end from the beginning. We thank you that you're bringing it about through the personal work of Jesus Christ. And through the work of the Spirit in our lives. Father, we appeal to you this morning.

[6 : 57] That you might work in us a miracle in clear speaking and clear understanding. That you will provide both knowledge and understanding that yields wisdom in our lives.

That we might live for you and exalt Christ in all that we do, even in the midst of our suffering. We pray this in the precious name of Christ, who gives us the ability to approach you and even pray to you.

Amen. So, we see that he starts out this language in talking about the Spirit. He starts groaning on our behalf. And he speaks of our weakness.

So, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. And what does he mean by that is the first question that came to my mind as I began to study this text. Initially, I looked at verse 25.

And verse 25 says, But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. This future glory that's coming, we wait for it with patience. And so, I presume that the weakness he was talking about was when we fail in that.

[7 : 58] So, we, in his hope of glory, we are waiting. We are eagerly anticipating the coming hope of glory for us. And when we fail in that, the Spirit intercedes for us.

But that's not actually what he means in this text. The word weakness here, the Greek term, is found in Romans 6.19. And Paul refers there, and it's translated in the ESV to our natural limitations.

And John chapter 5, when Jesus is at the pool of Bethesda, there's the lame man. And in verse 5, it says, One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

That term invalid is the same term weakness here. The inability of his body to walk. 1 Corinthians 15.43 and 44, speaking of resurrection, says, It is sown in dishonor.

It is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness. Same word. It is raised in power. It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. And so, what he's talking about here, when he says that the Spirit helps us in our weakness, is the frailty of our flesh, the burden of our sinful nature that we all carry around.

[9 : 16] So, does that include our failing to wait with patience for future glory? Absolutely, it does. But he's expanding beyond that and speaking much more broadly than that.

Look at the very next sentence. He says, For we do not know what to pray for as we ought. So, in the middle of our suffering, we don't even know how to pray because we are so corrupted by our sin.

That's what he's talking about here. He starts this sentence out by saying, Likewise. He talks out by saying, Likewise the Spirit helps us.

So, what is the likewise he's referring to? Well, it's the groaning. It's referring back to verse 18, the eager longing of the creation, the creation groaning in the pains of childbirth.

It's that same groaning, which is the way the Spirit helps us on our behalf. See that at the very heart of the Spirit of God within us is a longing for us to be made perfect.

[10 : 26] He desires that. And he groans on our behalf for such a thing to take place. And he groans with words, with a groaning that is too deep for words.

Now, we in Protestant evangelicalism have really neglected the Holy Spirit. We make much of God the Father and much of God the Son, which we should do, and we should never cease doing.

We can never talk too much about God the Father and about God the Son. But we do talk too little about the Spirit. Pentecostals have elevated the role of the Spirit in life.

They have done so to the degree that they have relegated, they have diminished the Gospel itself. They talk often about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, very little about the Gospel.

they've gotten it out of balance in that direction. I think we've done the same by not talking as much as we ought to about the work of the Holy Spirit. We should put him in his proper place as part of the Godhead.

[11 : 40] If you're like me, often in my life I think of the Holy Spirit as a minion of the Father and the Son doing the bidding. He is equally God dwelling within us.

We need to see that that part of God dwells within us and grows for us, longs for us to be made perfect in the image of Christ.

What an amazing reality that is. This does not mean that when we don't know how to pray we should begin to speak in gibberish.

Should have bought a Honda but I bought a Yamaha. It's not what this text means. That's what the Pentecostals have done with it. That is not what this text means. And I hope to show you beyond that what it does mean.

So we see that the Spirit then groans for us in verse 27 according to the will of God. It intercedes for us, prays on our behalf according to the will of God.

[12 : 46] So we see clearly here that there's a conversation happening between the Spirit of God within us and God the Father. Now is that to the Spirit's benefit?

If the Spirit's groaning, longing for our perfection, for the saints' perfection, does he have this prayer time with God so that he can feel a little better about the end results?

Of course not. The Spirit of God knows exactly what will be accomplished. The Spirit of God prays, groans by the will of God. So the Spirit longing within us for perfection is not for his benefit, it's for ours.

When we suffer and we don't know how to pray, the longing in our lives for the will of God, even when we don't know exactly what the prayer should be, it's for our benefit that we know the Spirit of God is moving us toward future glory.

As I mentioned before, this is a chunk of Scripture. These verses, particularly verse 28, 29, and 30, are very expandable.

[13 : 55] Boy, can we preach some sermons out of those three verses. But keeping it in its context is why I'm going to take us that far. I want you to see that he's working these things for our good that we might hope in future glory and bear up under suffering.

So, in verse 27, he says he prays, he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. What is God's will for us?

We see in verse 28, it talks of those who are called according to his purpose, and then verse 29, here's the answer, to be conformed to the image of his Son.

And there you see again the longing of the Spirit to move us, to progress us, towards perfection. This is a Trinitarian activity, our future glory.

God the Father planned it, God the Son provided for it, and God the Spirit protects it until it comes to pass. I want you to see that this morning.

[15:04] Verse 28, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

Now, this morning I want to give to you, and I believe it's what Paul intended here, a sense of your security in Christ. But I don't want to give to you false security at all.

So, how is it that things work together for good? For whom? For those who love God. John MacArthur in a sermon on this text says, we love God.

I hope you're one of those. We love God. We love Jesus Christ. It is a love that meditates on his majestic glory. It is a love that longs to worship, to sing his praises.

It is a love that seeks the fellowship of others who love him. It is a love that loves those who love him and are loved by him. It is a love that seeks communion with God, intimate communion.

[16:06] It is a love that seeks the knowledge of God and the word of God, to know him more. It is a love that is sensitive to God's honor and God's dishonor. It is a love that hates what God hates and love what God loves.

It is a love that grieves over sin and rejoices over righteousness. It is a love that rejects the world. It is a love that longs for the coming of Jesus Christ, but mostly it is a love that obeys the scripture.

If you love me, do what? Keep my commandments. Whoever keeps my word, he it is that loves me. That's who all this is working for for good.

That's who the Spirit of God abides in and longs and groans on our behalf for future glory. Those who love God. And we see that all things in verse 28 work together for good.

All things work for good. Now I hope if you've spent any time at all as a Christian you're familiar with Romans 8. 28. Again, I believe this is a verse that's commonly taken out of the proper context.

[17:14] Very expandable. It certainly means that all things in our life, those things good, those things bad, the suffering that we experience, works together for good, that we might be able to share in the suffering of others, that we might learn perseverance, that we might deeper rely on the grace of God, certainly those are good.

That is good that these things are working toward, but ultimately what Paul is saying to us is an ultimate good for these things to work toward, an ultimate and final good, the glorification of our bodies.

So all things, including sin in our life, God is working and bringing us toward glory together. My son, my second son Judah, is here this morning.

I don't know if many of you have had a chance to meet him yet as Sam has been home with primarily Cade being sick. Please go say hello to him this morning. He's already two months old and he's been such a blessing for us.

He was born on February 17th. Sam went into labor on the night of the 16th and labored rather uncomfortably all through the night, but the contractions were only about 10 minutes apart, so we waited.

[18:30] We didn't go to the hospital. The next day, we had Cade sent off to my parents' house and figured any moment we would rush off to the hospital to have Judah. We waited and we went for a walk.

I think we walked three and a half to four miles and got those contractions speeding up and we had them about five minutes apart on clockwork and we thought, hey, let's go home and take off. And we got home and Sam said we can eat some lunch before we took off to the hospital and in that time her contractions slowed back down to about 15, 20 minutes apart.

So we waited and we waited and finally Sam just said, I'm tired of waiting. Let's just go to the hospital and see what's going on. They're probably going to laugh at us and send us home, but let's just go see what's going on with me.

We got there and they were quite busy and in fact the nurse that checked Sam, you could actually tell she was a tad agitated that Sam just wanted to be checked out and she even assumed that by Sam's telling that she was going to send us on home and she checked Sam and laughed.

Sam was six centimeters dilated and gentlemen, for those of you who don't know, that's quite dilated. It's time to be at the hospital at that point. And so they very quickly admitted us and got everything going and Sam decided to have an epidural this time and got her on an epidural and not long after she started pushing.

[19 : 46] God's grace, I believe, to us, Sam's epidural didn't take entirely so she had a rather massive pain spot on her left side and I think that it motivated her to push hard and I think she pushed through like four contractions and Judah's little head came out of the womb.

It was purple and that's not the normative thing for a child's head. Quickly, as is always the case, doctors take a little syringe bulb and they suck the gunk out of their heads and try to get them breathing as they've been breathing water up to this point.

They come out and he still didn't. So the doctor gave him a little yank and saw that the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck. I was going to crack a joke about letting him cut it.

Hey, you can go ahead and cut that if you'd like to. Before I could even process the words out of my mouth, he had go-go gadgeted instruments and snip-snip cut and had that thing around Judah's neck.

But still, Judah didn't change color. His head was still very, very purple. So the doctor said, let's give him one more push and yanked him right out of him.

[20 : 55] And his little body was lifeless, gray. His head was purple, his body was just gray. And the image of the doctor looked like a lateral to the nurse.

Judah's little body just limp, arms hanging, looked entirely lifeless. And quickly shuffled him over to the receiving nurse. She had already hit the triage button, so a team of nurses came kind of busting in the door.

There's just this kind of pandemonium breaking out. And we had, in a number of ultrasounds beforehand, Judah always looked a little funny in the womb. He looked like a bridge troll.

And so Sam and I had joked around about him being a rather ghastly baby. So I just kept, I believe at least, from what I can remember, I was just saying the same. He's beautiful.

He's so cute. Like everything's great. Definitely good. And it wasn't. And you know, you've ever seen a movie where time seems to kind of stand still. Like the characters are moving at regular pace, but everything around them is moving in slow motion or it's stopped.

[21 : 57] That's how it felt. All these nurses and doctors are running in and out and all this stuff. And all I could do was look at Judah's little lifeless body on the table. He's obviously alive, so the story ends very, very well.

They just had to get him on some oxygen. The little bit of trauma he experienced with the cord around his neck coming out, he just didn't jumpstart the way he should have. And that first little cry was so precious.

Even the doctor, I heard him go when he started to cry. I'll always remember that. But what was going on in me as this is happening was 828.

All things for good. All things for good. All things for good. I didn't even know what should have happened. I didn't know how to pray. If my life is ultimately about exalting Christ and moving in this process of perfection, I didn't know what was best for me.

maybe losing my son was the best thing. Maybe that would have been the best thing to move me toward ultimate and final glory. I didn't know what to pray, but I believe that the Spirit of God was groaning for me and reminded me of 828.

[23 : 08] All things for good. All things for good. All things for good. And I came back. But that would have been true either way, wouldn't it? There are people in our congregation who have lost babies.

It's for good. Ultimate and final good. And that can be so hard to swallow in the moment. But we have the Spirit within us who groans for us.

Then we might believe that to be true. And Paul affirms that for us. He puts that into proper perspective for us with a view of eternity.

Verse 29. For those whom he foreknew, those that he knew would be his, those that he knew would have the Spirit of God abiding within them, that would cry to him, Abba, Father.

Father. Those he knew that about in the beginning of time. There's not such a thing. But in the beginning of eternity, he predestined, he preordained that we would be conformed to the image of his Son.

[24 : 21] That we would, in fact, reach final and full glorification. It's going to happen. Because God wrote it.

In order that we might be the first born among many brothers. Verse 30. And those whom he predestined, he also called. So those that he preordained would become like his Son, he called.

And this is an effectual call. This is not a general call here. This is an effectual call. If he, in fact, preordained that they would become like his Son, the calling must have been answered.

Because those who he called, he justified. If you don't know Christ, if you don't have saving faith, this, I think, would cause you to question, how do I know?

If I'm being called, if I'm feeling a tugging on my heart to answer the call to the gospel, how do I know if it's an effectual call? Your response is the evidence of that.

[25 : 24] If you respond to the gospel in your life, you place your faith in Jesus Christ, it was an effectual call. The Spirit of God was working in you. I can make a call.

I can preach the gospel to you. But I can't give to you an effectual call. I can't make you believe. The Spirit does that.

Remember the first ministry of the Spirit? Regeneration. The Spirit gives to you a new heart.

Causes you to believe. So how do you know if the call is effectual? You answer it.

And he justifies those. The work of Christ is given to you. He has taken your wrath, given you his righteousness, and we stand right before God.

And those whom he justified, he also glorified. Now notice that the word glorified is past tense.

[26 : 22] Isn't that interesting? It doesn't say, and those whom he justified, he will also glorify.

Talking about future glory. Remember, that's the context that we're in here.

Paul is telling us the hope that we can have and what will come to pass. Why does he use a past tense version of this verb? Because it has been accomplished.

We're in the process of it being accomplished, but it has in fact been accomplished. It's already been written. God knew our eternal ending from the eternal beginning.

Because he's the one that brings it to pass. He's fully sovereign. He's fully in control. And as we suffer here in this earth, we can know, Paul's trying to tell us here, we can know that we are secure.

It does not matter what this world throws our way. And in fact, the Bible teaches us that we will suffer as Christians. If you haven't already, it's coming. In all types of degrees, you'll suffer as a Christian.

[27 : 36] You'll long for a better place. This world is not my home. I don't know about you, but I'm really uncomfortable here. I'm ready to go to where I belong.

Heaven and then the new earth when God recreates all things. is back as it should be. If I could lose my salvation, if God granted to me any control at all over these things, if I could lose my salvation, I would.

I am so utterly corrupted by sin, the weakness that we talked about earlier. I would lose my salvation. You would too. You may not think that, but you would. Praise God that he is fully in control.

from the very beginning of it to the very end. And so, those whom he justified, he also glorified. See that God the Father planned our glory.

That God the Son provides for our glory. And that God the Spirit protects our glory. Bear up under suffering.

[28 : 47] Bear up in your sin. Because our end is sure. It's pretty good.