When We Don’t Know What to Pray

Romans 8:26-27

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Note: This slide was not shown during the sermon. It is included here to provide context for Romans 8:26-27 within chapter 8.

Romans 8: Life in the Spirit, Hope of Glory

The Spirit sustains God's children through present suffering toward future glory.

8:1–17

Life in the Spirit

Power of the Spirit:

- Frees us from sin and death (1–11)
- Leads us in putting sin to death (12–14)
- Assures us that we are adopted children, heirs with Christ (15–17)

8:18–30

Hope amid suffering

- Creation groans. We groan. We all eagerly await bodily redemption. (18–25)
- As we wait, the Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us (26–27)
- God secures our future glory (28–30)

8:31–39

Triumph in Christ

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (37)

When We Don’t Know What to Pray

I. **Honest Diagnosis**
   Our Weakness – We Don’t Know What to Pray

II. **Extraordinary Claim**
   The Spirit’s Intercession – He Groans on our Behalf

III. **Trinitarian Shape of the Whole Transaction**
   Spirit … Father … Son

IV. **Application**
   What This Means for Us Today

When We Don’t Know What to Pray

v. 22 – … *the whole creation has been groaning together …*

v. 23 – … *we ourselves … groan inwardly* …

“groaning” – Gr. *stenazomen* – a **deep, involuntary sigh** that comes from something **pressing heavily on the chest**

I. Honest Diagnosis

Our Weakness: We Don't Know What to Pray (8:26a)

> *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought …*

"weakness" – Gr. *astheneia* – sickness; **frailty**; fundamental human limitation

"do not know" Gr. *ouk oidamen* – statement of **categorical human limitation** before God

I. Honest Diagnosis

Our Weakness: We Don’t Know What to Pray (8:26a)

> *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought …*

- Elijah – 1 Kings 19
- David – Psalm 22:1-2
- Paul – 2 Corinthians 1:8-9

II. Extraordinary Claim

The Spirit's Intercession – He Groans on our Behalf (8:26b)

> *… but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

"intercedes" – Gr. *hyperentugchanei* – carries the sense of **coming alongside someone**; **advocate** (in a legal context)

II. Extraordinary Claim

The Spirit's Intercession – He Groans on our Behalf (8:26b)

> *… but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*

John 14:16-17 – *"… and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever …"*

> *"Helper"* – Gr. *Parakletos* – Paraclete – one who **comes alongside to assist**, **advocate**, **strengthen**

III. Trinitarian Shape of the Whole Transaction

Spirit … Father … Son (8:27)

> *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.*

Psalm 139:1-2 – *"O Lord, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar."*

III. Trinitarian Shape of the Whole Transaction

Spirit … Father … Son (8:27)

> *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.*

Hebrews 7:25 – "*Consequently, He* [Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest] *is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*"

III. Trinitarian Shape of the Whole Transaction

GOD THE FATHER

Searches our hearts
Knows the mind of the Spirit

Romans 8:27 / Psalm 139:1–2

THE SPIRIT

Intercedes within us
with wordless groanings

Romans 8:26–27

THE SON

Always lives to intercede
for us before the Father

Hebrews 7:25

Acts according to His
will for our ultimate good

WE WHO
CANNOT PRAY

The Spirit and Son intercede. The Father understands perfectly.

III. Trinitarian Shape of the Whole Transaction

Spirit … Father … Son (8:27)

> *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.*

IV. Application - What This Means for Us Today

1. You are **never** beyond prayer
2. Silence before God is **not** the same thing as absence from God
3. These verses are **not** a license for spiritual passivity
4. **Pray!**

Romans 8:26-27 (ESV)

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. 27 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.

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