

**THE IMPERFECT PRAYER LIFE AND THE DESIRE FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD - Part seven - Sunday, November 10th 2024 - 5:30 p.m.
Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON**

Romans 8:26-27 - "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."

We're continuing in the same text as last Sunday night. Last week we began by looking at *why we need the Holy Spirit's help in prayer*. Then, secondly, *we considered whether this weakness is sinful or just a result of being finite and fallen*. Then third, *we began considering how the Holy Spirit helps us in this prayer weakness*. And we began to consider specifically how the Holy Spirit *"intercedes for us."*

That's where we are tonight.

- ii) ***Second, the Holy Spirit intercedes for each of us right now here on earth - Romans 8:26 - "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."***

This intercession is different in process from the intercessory humanity of Christ. This is an **internal** intercession - effecting change deep within our earthly condition. He prays from **within** our own hearts. He shapes our **minds** and **desires** as we pray. He helps us in our times of confusion and weakness.

One more interesting thing. It seems we may not always be **aware** of all the activity of the Holy Spirit as our Internal Intercessor. Notice the way Paul describes Him working with **"groanings too deep for words."** I take that to mean He is at work even when all we feel is the **sigh**. He carries us along even when His work doesn't rise to a mentally conceptual level. Learn to keep trusting in this hidden grace. More on that now:

- b) ***He intercedes with "groans that words cannot express"***
(26) Many times people take this to be a reference to **praying in tongues**. While that is a valid and important experience, this is probably not the best text to support it. The Greek words in this text mean **words that are unspoken**, rather than **words spoken that go beyond our understanding**. Tongues are words that are not understood by our own minds, but they are spoken. Paul is here referring to **words that are never uttered, in English or any other language**.

The Holy Spirit **wells up a weight, burden or desire** around some area of prayer concern that moves the intercessor in the way He feels and causes him to **linger** over a particular area of prayer. He creates a **burden** deep within the heart of the one praying, because that's where the Holy Spirit intercedes - **deep within our hearts.**

- c) **God then searches the depths of our hearts and comprehends the work of the Holy Spirit as He prays within us - Romans 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.”**

The text nowhere states we will be fully conscious of this whole process. **But God the Father and the Holy Spirit share the same mind and heart.** This is **trinitarian prayer.** A meaning and import are shared that makes those prayer times more powerful than we could ever put into words.

- 4) **HOW CAN I INVOLVE MYSELF MORE FULLY IN THIS KIND OF PRAYER?**

Clearly, we do have a role to play. Notice the text. The Holy Spirit **"helps us in our weakness" (26)**. Unlike the accomplished fact of being **"in Christ"** which we studied earlier, the Holy Spirit does not **accomplish** the entire process Himself. We have a role to play. Here are some steps:

- a) ***We must totally submit ourselves to all areas of God's will as we pray*** - Paul gives us a perfect example of this in 2 Corinthians 12:9 - **"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."**

Paul had his own ideas of what he wanted God to do about his thorn in the flesh. ***But he came to accept what God wanted to do in total patience and trust.*** The Holy Spirit can ***reveal***. Only you can ***comply***.

The test to see if you've really prayed with a fully submitted heart is a ***happy trust that will accept the way God answers*** - **Philippians 4:6-7** - “....do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

- b) ***To recognize the mind and desires of the Holy Spirit, learn how He works from the Word of God*** - Not every situation is spelled out in the Bible, but the broad ***heart and will of the Spirit of God*** can be traced and learned. Prayers that won't line up with the inner refining work of the Spirit will be more quickly spotted and filtered out. God wants to use our prayer times ***to teach us His ways and to train us in holiness.***

Notice how this process in prayer was at work even in the life of Jesus while He was on earth - **Hebrews 5:7-10** - **“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. [8] Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. [9] And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, [10] being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.”**

Being the Son of God, what could Jesus have possibly needed to ***learn*** from the Father while on earth? He came for the first time into the ***experience*** of suffering for the sins of others as a ***man***. There is great mystery here. But the text clearly links the prayer life of the man Christ Jesus to the learning and being ***“made perfect”*** as the source of eternal salvation.

- c) ***We must stay long enough at prayer to allow the Holy Spirit some time to form the Father’s heart in us.*** We aren’t instantly perceptive to His inward work. He is working within the limitations of our own flesh. Time is an absolute must. Be patient. The Holy Spirit wants to pray power and truth and life within your heart.