

I KNOW part 9: "The Spirit Helps My Weakness" 02.05.12

Scripture: Romans 8:26-27 ESV

Intro: Today we come to one of the most important and one of the most insightful of all of these "I KNOW" messages. One difficulty of the Christian faith is the high calling to live a righteous life - that means to live in the "right" way, the way God intended and in a way that pleases Him. Yet for many Christ-followers, our walk rarely comes close to our talk. While some like to point to Christian hypocrisy, for most of us, we ourselves are our greatest critics. We "KNOW" what to do, how to live, how to walk, but often find ourselves unable to do what we want to do. Accordingly, we fall to all kinds of sins - sexual, health, relational.

Here's the good news AND bad news of today's talk: YOU DO NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO LIVE THE RIGHTEOUS LIFE. YOU ARE TOO WEAK. It's good news because when we can admit this, we can get help for ourselves. And God is all too willing to provide this help. It's bad news because way too few of us take advantage of this help.

Likewises of the Spirit: By the time we come to 8:26, Paul starts us with a "Likewise." (1) Set you free from sin v. 2. (2) Walk according to... v. 4. (3) Set our minds... v. 5. (4) gives life and peace v.6 (5) God in us v. 9 (6) evidence of Christ v. 9 (7) is life v. 10 (8) will give resurrection life v. 11 (9) put to death deeds of body v. 13 (10) those led by Spirit of God are sons of God v. 14 (11) adoption by Spirit v. 15. (12) we know God as Abba v. 15 (13) the witness we are God's children v. 16 (14) heirs of God v. 17 **Illustration - My blue-marked Romans 8, first Bible.**

Four Glimpses Inside Our Prayer Life

Glimpse #1 - Handling our WEAKNESSES.

NT 45 mentions! Can we just admit right up front that we are weak? We intend one thing, but do another. Paul - for all his power, for all his accomplishments for the Kingdom, was right up front with his own weaknesses. Why should we expect to be any different?

"I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead I do what I hate." Romans 7:15 NLT

Admitting our weakness - that we don't live up to our own standard of rightness, let alone God's - is the first step to getting a handle on our weaknesses. We will never ask God for help for what we think we can handle on our own. Each morning - with all sincerity - I pray that God would help me to avoid sin. (Part of Lord's prayer - "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.") Paul admitted weakness.

"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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." 2 Cor. 12:9 NIV

Do you see the connection point between Paul's admitting his weaknesses - even his boasting gladly about his weaknesses - and Christ's power? **How exactly does this happen?**

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought...” Romans 8:26a ESV

We shouldn't be surprised - after all we've studied about the HS in Rom. 8, that the strength to handle weakness comes through the Spirit. He is our strength. What IS amazing is that we learn that we don't even have a clue as to just how weak we really are! We don't even know how to put into words our predicament, our weakness. Our uniqueness as one of God's creatures is that we can put words to things. We can communicate. But when it comes to talking to God about our weaknesses, we really are just like the dumb animals!

Glimpse #2 - The Holy Spirit INTERCEDES for us.

We should think of this as our own translator. We don't know God's language, but the Holy Spirit does. And the Holy Spirit knows us. So He intercedes on our behalf.

“... but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” Romans 8:26b ESV

Illustration - YouVersion estimates 6,000 languages and dialects. UN translators. 6 official languages. 160 translators on permanent staff + many more freelancers. Translate 50 million words per year! This doesn't begin to reach the work the HS does for us when he intercedes on our behalf. We're told that there is a “groaning too deep for words!” 3rd time we've seen this groaning. Creation groans. We groan inwardly. HS groans to God on our behalf.

To round out this INTERCEDING concept between us and God the Father, we have one more person we must talk about. That's the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. We're also told He intercedes on our behalf. Fast forward to Rom. 8:34 ESV:

“Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

We're talk a lot more about this verse - in fact we're dedicating our entire talk on March 11th just to this verse! - But let's get the big picture now. When you pray to God the Father, you have the Spirit of God beside you and inside you interceding on your behalf. At God the Father's right hand, we find that God the Son is also interceding! Can it get any better? More powerful? What is your weakness compared to the entire Trinity on your behalf? **Let's talk Father God.**

Glimpse #3 - God the Father is the One Who SEARCHES HEARTS.

This is often confusing to us, the way this verse is written. Because in most English versions - and in the original language the subject is “he.” 2,000 years later, without Jewish mindset/education, confusing!

“And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, ...”
Romans 8:27a ESV

For the original audience - the Roman Jewish listener - they would completely know Who is the One who searches hearts!

“God judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; God looks into the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7 MSG

“God would surely have known it, for he knows the secrets of every heart.”
Psalm 44:21 NLT

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!”
Psalm 139:23 ESV

“But as for me, Lord, you know my heart. You see me and test my thoughts.” Jeremiah 12:3 NLT

So let's put this together before we see the end of Romans 8:27. We have THE Holy Spirit interceding and translating for you in a God-language that sound more like groans... words too deep to understand. We have THE God the Son, Jesus, at God's right hand interceding for us. And we have God the Father, Who is the One who knows our hearts, our innermost beings, more and better than we even know ourselves. How does this then work out for us?

Glimpse #4 - Holy Spirit's Interceding Priority: WILL OF GOD.

How does the Spirit of God help us in our weakness? What is the extent that God intercedes for us if we are Christ-followers? (*This is the same word as "saints - God's holy people," not just someone who has done outstanding God work, who receives extra credit - but all God's children in the NT are "saints."*) What's the end result?

“...because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”
Romans 8:27b ESV

This means that God's will is accomplished on your behalf. God's will is good. God wants the best for you. God wants you to be strong. He wants you to live successfully for Him. He wants you to make it! He's rooting for you! God's will is always good!

“Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2b NLT

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” Philippians 2:13 NIV84

To really understand the power of this, consider it is God the Father Who searches your heart and knows you better than you do yourself. It is God the Holy Spirit who prays for you on your behalf, about your weakness and needs, with groans that words cannot express. It is God the Son who died for you, rose again, lives and advocates for you at the right hand of the Father, pleading your case for you - NOT condemning you. How could it be better, more powerful or positive?

Conclusion: This is the lead-in to your most favorite verse, **Rom. 8:28**, that “**for those that love God, all things work together for good.**” That verse by itself (and we will spend all next week on it) is remarkable. God - in all three persons - is working on you, working through you. He loves you. He wants the best for you. He wants to strengthen you - even in your weakness. He is not only your greatest cheerleader - not on the sidelines, he is with you at every level in every action of your life! So how are you praying? Proud? Strong? Or weak and dependent on God?