

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Grace: God is For Us

5. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray

October 8, 2023

Romans 8:18-27 (NIV)

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

1. Creation Waits

"...chapter 8 famously turns to life in the Spirit, life that enables human beings to cry out to God as their Father because they are themselves heirs along with Christ.

Paul goes on to contend that all creation longs for redemption. Paul writes confidently about hope and the intervention of the Spirit and the way in which God has already acted on humanity's behalf."

- Beverly Gaventa, *When in Romans*

2. We Wait and We Hope

...but not passively! (John 12:23-26 NIV)

"We are in the middle of two things that seem quite contradictory: in the middle of the heart of God, the ecstatic joy of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and in the middle of a world of threat, suffering, sin, and pain. And because Jesus has taken his stand right in the middle of those

two realities, that is where we take ours... growing out of that, the prayer of baptized people is going to be a prayer that is always moving in the depths, sometimes invisibly - a prayer that comes from places deeper than we can really understand." - Rowan Williams, *Being Christian*

3. We Pray (Matthew 6:9-13 NIV)

- The Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

"...prayer...is about fidelity, faithfulness, sticking to it. I may not quite know what is going on; as prayer deepens in me I am less and less likely to know what is going on. I may be baffled, I may be depressed, and I may feel absolutely nothing is happening: fine. Just stay there and if in doubt say, 'O God, make speed to save me.' Prayer is your promise to be there for the God who is there for you. And that, essentially, is where prayer for the Christian begins and ends." -Rowan Williams, *Being Christian*

NOTES

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

October 8, 2023

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Select one of the below practices or choose the practice from the previous week)

- **Breath Prayer:** "Take a few minutes to become settled, still, and silent. Detach yourself from the thoughts and feelings that crowd in on you. Slow down your breathing and, as you gently breathe in and out, repeat to yourself: 'O God, make speed to save me.' Do that for as long as you need to slow the rhythms of your breathing and heartbeat, and then continue with the rest of your prayer."
– Rowan Williams, *On Being Christian*
- **Prayer of Examen:** During these next 5-10 minutes, you will practice a version of the Daily Examen of St. Ignatius, a contemplative prayer practice "led by memory." Follow the five steps below and reflect in silent prayer or journaling.
 - **Thanksgiving:** Recognize God's presence right now.
What are you especially grateful for today?
 - **Petition:** Ask the love of God to be with you as you review your day
 - **Review:** Recognize any sources of joy, love, and hope from your day and then recognize sources of trouble, darkness, or loss in your day.
Have you noticed the presence of God in any of this?
 - **Respond:** What is my response to God as I remember and review my day?
 - Look with hope for a new tomorrow.
How do I want to wake up tomorrow?

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Read** Romans 8:18-27.
- **Journal** (5-10 minutes)
 - » Reflect on the tension that is present in Romans 8:18-27. An example of this tension could be Paul's description of waiting, or of suffering and hope.
 - » What do you notice about the tension?
 - » Where do you observe tension in your own life, relationships, in your community or even in society as a whole?
- **Reflect together (in pairs):** Spend 5 minutes sharing your journal responses, reflections, or questions.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE (Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.) **Read** Romans 8:18-27 and the additional scripture passages from the message outline.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- Which stories, quotes, or questions from the message have stuck with you this week?
- How does Romans 8:18 connect to the preceding verse (v.17)?
- How is suffering and hope both cosmic and personal in Romans 8:18-27?
- What is the connection between our redemption and creation's own liberation (v. 21-23)?
- What does the Holy Spirit do for us in our weakness?
- How does Romans 8:18-27 shift your own framework for how to pray?

CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION IN THE WORLD (select one question for discussion)

- Read the below quote and discuss together as a group:

"Prayer is the life of Jesus coming alive in you, so it is hardly surprising if it is absolutely bound up with a certain way of being human which is about reconciliation, mercy, and freely extending the welcome and love of God to others." -Rowan Williams, *On Being Christian*

PRAYER

Pray the *Lord's Prayer* together (Matthew 6:9-13). Make room to pray it slowly and more than once! I'd suggest praying it once individually and then praying it once or twice together as a group.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

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