

Morning Sermon November 15, 2015

"The Spirit's Groaning" Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27 NKJ)

Last week, I had this quotation in my notes, but I think I skipped over it – "Groan within ourselves" must refer to the inward groaning in the hearts of believers, not to groaning among believers as if they groaned to one another and joined together in a "symphony of sighs."

John Murray

What Murray says is true, and though it is true, we groan alone, we do not come together for a groaning session. We also never groan alone! Remember – the entire creation groans for our revealing! For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Romans 8:22 NKJ)

Its groans are birth-pangs! They are eagerly awaiting the New Creation where we will reign as kings and priests! C.S. Lewis got it right with the Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, with his talking animals and the crowning of the children, among the noble talking animals at the end!

Here we read of the Spirit's "groanings" that are also termed "intercession" they are prayers! 2 Great intercessors Jesus Christ – Hebrews 7:25-28 and the Holy Spirit Romans 8:27!

Here we learn of a third level of groanings:

1st Level – Creation's groans for our revealing and both ours and its redemption -

2nd Level – Converted human's groans, for Heavenly Life for that which is beyond what God has already given us!

3rd Level – The Christ-exalting groans of God's Holy Spirit!

I. What we have without God and His Spirit, weaknesses –

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.

1. Jacob knew of his troop's physical weakness -

¹³ But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. (Genesis 33:13 NKJ)

2. David, who was a warrior, knew of his own spiritual and moral weakness -

A Psalm of David.> O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure. ² Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled. ³ My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD-- how long? (Psalm 6:1-3 NKJ)

3. Isaiah spoke of the Great God Who enables the weak -

²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31 NKJ)

4. With all our other weaknesses it is sad we are also WEAK about PRAYER, the very thing that would connect us to God's strength

–

⁴¹ "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41 NKJ)

A. Romans 8:26a speaks of weaknesses plural because they are MANY!

B. Romans 8:26b speaks of an IMPORTANT WEAKNESS, we do not know what we should pray for as we ought!

C. We OUGHT because Jesus taught –

⁹ "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13 NKJ)

II. If Jesus taught us, why don't we know what to pray for as we "ought?"

1. Sin hinders prayer; it keeps us from praying as we ought –

² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. ⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? ⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (James 4:2-6 NKJ)

- A. *Our lusts and desires often keep us from praying, period.*
- B. *When we do pray, we ask amiss!*
- C. *We love the world more than the word!*
- D. *The Spirit yearns "jealously." The Spirit of God would direct us to God desiring! To God glorifying! To God serving!*

2. *Satan and demonic forces battle our prayers –*

Daniel 10:1-14

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. (Ephesian 6:10-12 NKJ)

III. *The Spirit's Help –*

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also **helps** in our weaknesses –

The word "helps" here in the Greek is quite wonderful –

συναντιλαμβάνομαι sunantilambanomai {soon-an-tee-lam-ban'-om-ah-ee}

Meaning: 1) to lay hold along with, to strive to obtain with others, help in obtaining 2) to take hold with another

You are with someone, yet opposite of someone, working with someone, to lift what that person could not lift alone. The idea is a long log is lying on the ground, you lift one end and the Holy Spirit lifts the other! All our problems in this world are like this; they are TOO BIG for us.

Prayer is something that is beyond our normal human powers, the following is an outline of J. C. Ryle's advice on prayer -

In Ryle's book "Practical Religion" -

- A. The importance of reverence and humility
- B. The importance of praying spiritually
- C. Making prayer a regular business of life
- D. The importance of perseverance in prayer
- E. The importance of earnestness in prayer
- F. The importance of praying with faith
- G. The importance of boldness in prayer
- H. The importance of fullness in prayer
- I. The importance of particularity in prayer
- J. The importance of intercession in prayer
- K. The importance of thankfulness in prayer
- L. The importance of watchfulness in prayer

Now, just looking at this list I am struck first by what seems a contradiction, but is not: Letter A demands reverence and humility while G, speaks of the importance of Boldness. Reverence and humility because of the greatness of God and our humble relationship to Him as creatures and sinners! Yet, Boldness because of what Christ has done for us, He, Jesus has opened a great door for us by His death on the cross for our sins! In the darkness, in the night, it's easy not to get prayer just right ... Earnestness in prayer, D. Perseverance in prayer these are things we have only because the Spirit lends His groans, His Power to our PRAYERS!

The One Who searches the hearts is our Heavenly Father, Our God! He searches, knows and weighs hearts! He KNOWS our hearts, He KNOWS all hearts, even the hearts of the wicked ...

²² "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, (Daniel 5:22 NKJ)

²⁷ "TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; (Daniel 5:27 NKJ)

Know your weaknesses, know your need! Pray and let the Spirit plead!

⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6 NKJ)

Arnold A. Brevick