

Divine Help!

Romans 8:26-27

- :26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
- :27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

REVIEW

- 1. “Likewise . . . also”** – Follow the flow of thought. Have we found the way of salvation? Indicators: our affections become Christ-like; our behavior changes; evil spirits and the world persecute us; we are nevertheless sustained by hope; and, now we see, we are helped by the Holy Spirit of God.
 - A. Jesus said, “I will not leave you comfortless.” (John 14:18)
 - B. Strength in trials is not a mere matter of good theology and a stiff upper lip. We shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon us (Acts 1:8).
- 2. “the Spirit”** – Our belief is that there is 1 God, but He exists in 3 Persons. See Jesus' baptism (Matt. 3:16-17), the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), or Paul's benediction to the Corinthians: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” (II Cor. 13:14)
 - A. The Corinthians seemed to have forgotten the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and had to be rebuked for their light attitude toward sexual impropriety (I Cor. 6:19).
 - B. Perhaps the Lord would similarly chide us if we faint from our suffering, for: “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” (Prov. 24:10)
- 3. “helpeth”** – The idea is He “heaves with us” as when lifting a heavy burden or “greatly assists or aids,” as in “Help me push off this fallen concrete wall which is crushing me.”
 - A. Vincent: The Greek verb consists of 3 elements: *lambano* – to take hold; *sun* – together with; and *anti* – reciprocally. It means to unite to carry a burden.
 - B. The word appears 1 other time in the Bible, where Martha complains that Mary is not helping her (Luke 10:40). The idea: “Let Mary take hold and do her part as I do mine.”
- 4. “our infirmities”** – Greek: *asthen'eia* – no strength; inability to produce results. Here, what is being described is the *weakness* of our spiritual life in its present state.
 - A. David: “I am withered like grass.” (Ps. 102:11)
 - B. “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom. 5:6)

5. **“for we know not what we should pray for as we ought”** – so we have described here a mental infirmity. At best, Paul said, “we know in part” (I Cor. 13:9).
- A. Matthew Henry: “We are not competent judges of our own condition.” “Who knows what is good for a man in this life?” (Ecc. 6:12) Jesus said to James and John when they sought a place by His throne, “You know not what you ask” (Matt. 20:22) When they asked to call down fire to on the Samaritans, Jesus said, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” (Luke 9:55).
 - B. We may not know the character of God, or the way of God, or our real need. We may not know how to interpret pain or pleasure or the purpose of God.
 - C. We may ask, is my frame of mind fitting? How much grief is allowable? Over what exactly should I grieve? At what point have I become self-absorbed? How many tears are reasonable? How do we burst the dam and have an authentic response? Show me what's behind this. Help me not to be too analytical. Lead me deeper. What part of my comfort is true Holy Ghost comfort? Please, please don't leave me half-way to victory, revelation, purging. Don't let me be restricted by cultural expectations. Is the glory of God sincerely my first burden?
6. **“but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us”** – Greek: “to be present with someone with the purpose of aiding”; “to fall in with.”
- A. This is not the same as Christ's intercession. It's not in heaven but the heart, not with Jesus' blood but with the Holy Spirit's tears, not for salvation from judgment but for sustaining of a soul compassed with trials, exposed to temptations, enfeebled by diseases
 - B. Gill: “He shows them their need, what their wants are; he stirs them up to prayer, he supplies them with arguments, puts words into their mouths, enlarges their hearts, gives strength of faith in prayer, and all the ardour and fervency of it; he enables them to come to God as their Father; and gives them liberty and boldness in his presence, which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy.”
7. **“with groanings which cannot be uttered”** – What remarkable words these are! Note: we now hear the groaning for the third time: all creation (:22), Christians (:23), and now the Holy Spirit as He commiserates with us.
- A. Described here: sighs, deep feeling, intense anxiety which exists in the oppressed and burdened heart of the suffering Christian. Some emotions are too deep for words. See, for example, Hannah in I Sam. 1:13 or David in Ps. 69:1-3.
 - B. This text admits to the crushing nature of the human experience. We have inward sighs that can't be expressed in language. At best we may only cry, “Abba, Father.”
8. **“And he that searcheth the hearts”** – This is an action peculiar to God alone. We cannot search man's hearts, angel's hearts, etc. Nor can spirits. This is a prerogative of God only.
- A. “The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.” (Prov. 17:3)
 - B. See how Solomon is told: I Chron. 28:9. Compare: “Shall not God search this out?” (Ps. 44:21)

9. **“knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit”** – i.e. with or without language. No impediment there. God knows our minds perfectly. Our words may be more or less accurate, but God does not rely on them at all. He *knows* what is in the mind.
- A. “Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.” (Ps. 139:2) Cf. Sarah: Gen. 18:13-15. Jesus “needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” (John 2:25)
- B. What comfort, how wonderful, this truth is to a praying, agonizing believer. There is One who can tell us what in the world is going on in us. “So *that's* what I'm thinking. *That's* what has been motivating me. *That's* what I fear.”
10. **“because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”** – As said, the Holy Spirit intercedes. He's present with us for the purpose of aiding. Here likewise we are assured this is the design of God. That is, the same great and all-wise God who designed the heart, the brain, and all else is the One who designed this perfect system for us to have effectual prayer.

IN SUM, Christians' affections are being shaped into Christ's, a reality which will be revealed outwardly, to which the world will react and cause Christians to suffer, but we have hope because this light affliction is not worthy to be compared to the glory in our future and because the Holy Spirit of God aids us in praying our way through. Man is feeble, ignorant, blind, pitiful, and desperately needy. The Holy Spirit of God is personal, perceptive, and passionate. Look to Him for help. It's God's design. It's the way to strength to endure all trials in the providence of God.

DISCUSSION

1. The Holy Spirit dwells in us to help us in our weaknesses. With what weaknesses do you need help?
2. The Bible says we don't know how to pray as we ought. What exactly don't we know?
3. God has the unique ability to know our minds perfectly. How does that truth impact you?