

Title: We Don't Know How to Pray

Text: Romans 8: 25-27

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Place: SGBC, New Jersey

What should I pray for? When the love for your unsaved child becomes so burdensome you are at a loss...what is your prayer? When faced with such a trial with my husband what should I ask God for? With my health like it is should I be asking God to remove this affliction from my life or not?"

These are the kinds of questions believers often ask. I have been asked these exact questions. The passage of scripture that most often comes to my mind is Romans 8: 26-27.

Romans 8: 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.

Proposition: We have in this passage the comfort of every believer concerning our feeble petitions to God.

I. OUR INFIRMITIES

As believers we know some things concerning prayer. The object of prayer is God, for his glory. We know we come to God through Christ who everlives to make intercession for us; We know something of who to pray for: ourselves and fellow saints, even our enemies; We know it is a great privilege to approach his throne of grace; But "**we know not what we should pray for as we ought**"—

The infirmity of our flesh causes us to desire things that, were they granted, would not be for God's glory or for the good of his saints.

- The Mother of the Sons of Zebedee--Matthew 20: 20-22
- The Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12: 1-10.)

II. v26. LIKEWISE THE SPIRIT ALSO, HELPETH OUR INFIRMITIES....

To you who have been given some understanding of your own depravity—how comforting is this word is—*the Spirit helpeth our infirmities...*(v26) But the SPIRIT itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The infirmity of our flesh is so great that we need the grace of the Holy Spirit to even approach Christ's throne of grace to ask for grace to help in time of need. God the Holy Spirit puts true prayer in the believers heart.

Our flesh is so taken up with the form of things, so flattered by our own selves, that only the Spirit of God can waken us to our true needs. It is only when the Spirit of God has made us see our sin, that we ask God to forgive us our sin. Only when the Spirit of God makes us behold the cloud of darkness we are under that we beg God for the light of his countenance.

These are "Groanings that cannot be uttered!" Sometimes we cannot utter a word.

- Hezekiah said, "like a crane or a swallow did I chatter."
- The Psalmist said, "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." (Ps 77:4)

- David said, Psalm 38: 8: I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. 9: Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

And sometimes the depth of what the Spirit is doing is beyond us. Supplications created within us by the Spirit of God which are so heavy that all we can do is groan, concern details too great for we ourselves to even know. Our appreciation of what Christ has done for us and of what the Spirit does in us is so shallow!

But when we are brought to the place where all we can do is groan, “Lord, thou knowest”...that is a good place to be...FOR HE DOES KNOW!

III. The Lord knoweth—v27: 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*.

God searches the heart—Christ Jesus our Intercessor—knows the hearts of his own. He knows what is the mind of the Spirit, God does not rely upon our expressions in words to cause him to hear; he knows the heart--he sees the inward most desire of the soul, and is ready to aid and to bless.

He knows the mind which the Spirit of God has put in our hearts because the Spirit of God stirs up the child of God to ask according to the will of God. I wouldn't dare tell a child of God ‘what to pray’ but the Spirit teaches his children what to pray. These are not the exact words—not to be copied—there may not even be words—only groaning that cannot be uttered—but this is the spirit of prayer:

1. Father—hallow thy name

Matthew 6: 9: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven....13: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

2. Father, Glorify your Son

John 17: 1: These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4: I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

3. By guiding us into all truth by the Spirit of God—God the Holy Spirit is glorified!

So the prayer put in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is in harmony with the will God--FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT.

Application: The purpose of prayer is not for the believer to turn God to our will it is God turning his child to God's will. It may be the burden—

- Our own sin
- A weak brother in the church,
- A great trial in our home,
- Even an unbelieving child

All is to bring the believer nearer to Christ our Redeemer, to teach us to submit all to the will of God our Father. At times it seems that God did exactly what we asked him to do. It is not that we turned God to do our will, it is that the Spirit of God turned us to his--ask God for that very thing which God had already purposed to do. (Read what comes next Romans 8: 28-34—then turn over to 1 John 5: 14.)

This is the great consolation and support of believers. We do not know what is best for ourselves but the Holy Spirit brings his saints to submit all into the hand of God and ask for God to do his will to glorify himself and save his elect from our sins. (Turn to 1 Jn 5: 14.)

1 John 5: 14: And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Amen!