

Just Checking In #116 Our Greatest Intercessor

October 15, 2011

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Romans 8

Saints, Servants, Sons

Changed by the Gospel

The Creation Groans for Liberation from the curse when saints are glorified

The Christian Groans for Redemption of the body when we are glorified.

The Comforter Groans in Intercession in anticipation of when we are glorified.

In this section of Romans Paul is putting the dark picture our present temporary sufferings into the frame of a bright and endless eternity. It is one of those incredible perspective correctives that leap large from the page and enable us to refocus on reality.

Our suffering is not pointless. Our suffering is not lethal. Our suffering is not punishment. Our suffering as co-heir with Christ is defined as labor pains. As a mother gives birth to her precious child, her suffering is agonizing but also anticipatory. It is suffering in preparation for indescribable joy.

This indescribable joy, this ultimate purpose of God's saving work, is our Christ-likeness. Salvation is not merely about a change of location... out of hell and into heaven... it is about a change of character, a transformation of our spirit, soul and body, into the fulness of the image of Christ.

***God's ultimate purpose
is also God's immediate purpose***

Romans 8:26-29 "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 with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

In no other passage of scripture are we given such a glimpse into the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit on our behalf. We find here precious truths to sustain us in suffering. Here we see God's purpose is not thwarted by our suffering, but actually accomplished in it.

TRUTH #1 Intensity in our Suffering leads to confusion

Paul declares that in our intense suffering "we do not know what we ought to pray for." This does not mean we never know what to pray for! For Jesus gave us the model prayer which gives us several clear requests, plus He told us to pray for more laborers. Paul is very clear and confident in his prayers for the churches, with no evidence of confusion or indecision in his intercession. What then does this mean? I believe the context is clear, when suffering is extreme, we just don't know what to pray for.... "

Shall I pray to be released from this suffering in death..is that God's will? Should I pray for healing.... is that God's will? Shall I pray for endurance....is it God's will to leave me in this suffering? Does He will that I submit, or pray for release, or pray for contentment, or pray for healing, or what.... what shall I ask?

Have you been there? Have you been in the fire of suffering when you just didn't know what to say to God? There are times when the burden is so heavy, the pain so intense, the suffering so extreme... words just won't come. But there is One who suffers with you and in you who is never confused.

TRUTH #2 Intercession on our Suffering leads to certainty

When we don't know how to pray, or what to pray, the Spirit always knows! He knows us and the Father omnisciently, and the Father knows Himself and the Spirit omnisciently. And together they work all things into the material from which we are constructed into the image of Christ.

The WHY of the Spirit's Intercession: "We do not know..." "He helps us..." The word for "help" is found only here and in Luke 10:40. Sunantilambano - "To lift the opposite end of an impossible load with you" He holds the other end of your load with His omnipotence. We must bear part of the load, but every ounce that we cannot bear, He does!

The WHAT of the Spirit's Intercession: "God's will..." The Spirit is always praying according to God's will and therefore is always answered by God the Father's immediate "YES!" The Spirit makes request with fulness of the knowledge of both your need, and the Father's purpose. Never have you had such a wise intercessor like this intercessor.

The HOW of the Spirit's Intercession: "with groans that words cannot express..." He is never apathetic, careless, forgetful, or lukewarm in His intercession. The Spirit is intense in His

intercession. He is involved, passionate, aggressive, ceaseless, and intense to the point of wordless groaning. Never have you had an intense intercessor like this intercessor.

The RESULT of the Spirit's Intercession: "...God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." God answers the Spirit's intercession by sovereignly orchestrating every incident, so that there are no accidents. God's purpose is to make you into the image of Christ. And that is happening now, even as it will be completed on that final day "when we see Him we shall be like Him." Your present sufferings have been, by the Spirit's intercession and the Father's orchestration, sanctified to bring you into greater conformity to Christ.

"Many brothers....conformed to the likeness His Son!"

Our greatest intercessor, our wisest intercessor, our most loyal intercessor, our most fervent intercessor, our most perfect intercessor...always gets it right, and always lifts the load we cannot lift in our sufferings. From this we can be sure that God's grace will either remove the suffering or sanctify it to make it fully useful in making us more like Christ this day.

Salvation = Christ-likeness

This is the "good" of the "all things" God is working in and for

The Spirit Co-lifts in Intercession

so that the Father Co-works all things in Providence

so that we are Co-formed into the likeness of Christ

which is the end result and purpose of His Salvation

Creation co-groans in suffering under the curse of Adam's fall, severe in agony but also severe in extreme in anticipation of soon coming blessing. Just so does the Christian groan deeply, suffering under the curse of our present, pregnant fallen-ness, but anticipating release when we hold the fullness of our adoption privilege, a glorified body. And just so does the Spirit groan with unspeakable, silent groans, striving with our spirit to overcome our inner corruptions as He intercedes with longing for the day when we shall be birthed in glory to bear the fullness of Christ's image in perfect holiness.

How Firm a Foundation - original verses 4 & 5

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,

*The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.*

Self Check:

Are you depending on Christ's intercession to maintain your salvation? Hebrews 7:25

Are you depending on the Spirit's intercession to further your sanctification? Romans 8:26-29

Can you testify of how God has sanctified you in suffering for His glory?

For Further Study:

There are a number of passages that show such intensity of suffering and the confusion that can come as a result. Check out 2 Cor 1:8-9; 2 Cor 10:23-12:10; Phil 1:20-24; and perhaps most powerful is John 12:27-28. Jesus could not embrace the cross and the suffering as sin bearer, yet He couldn't refuse it as submissive Son. So He prayed, in the Spirit, "Father, glorify Thy name!"

O Son of God my Intercessor, plead for me to the Father Thy precious blood that when the accuser points to my sins, Thy wounds may speak to the forgiveness Thou has purchased once for all. O Spirit of God my Intercessor, plead for me to the Father with Thy wordless groans that my fiery trials may purge away the dross of my corruptions and cause all things to work for my conformity to Christ. Lift my load and change my spirit, soul, and body to reflect Christ more fully and more clearly with each passing day. I ask in the Name of Him whose likeness I shall wear forever, Christ Jesus my Lord, Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable,
running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.