

Romans 8:26-27 Prayer: Essential to Entering into God's Will

Understanding the Greater Context

These verses are set in a greater context of the believer's assured inheritance and future glory with Jesus Christ, 8:16-17 & 8:28-30. But coupled with that certainty, that hope, is another certainty— present suffering with Christ.

In this context, the Apostle states **3 sources of strength under present suffering:**

1. 8:18-25 The Hope (confidence) of Glorification (Future)

In comparing present sufferings to future glorification with Christ, Paul reasoned or calculated (KJV "reckoned") that the glory far surpassed any pain the present could afflict. Sufferings cannot dim the radiant future of the believer.

In the meantime:

... the creation groans (v 22)

... we groan (v 23)

... the Holy Spirit groans (v 26)

2. 8:26, 27 The Help of the Holy Spirit (intercession in the Present)

3. 8:28, 29 The Knowledge of God's Control (Present & Future)

Understanding Rom. 8:26, 27 in Context

I. v. 26a Our Problem (expressed 2 ways)

A. "infirmity" or weakness (with the definite article): same word in Heb. 4:15.

astheneia / ἀσθενεία = weakness of any sort (physical, spiritual, moral)

B. precise prayer

Lit. translation: "for the what we should pray for just as we ought, we do not know"

Our problem under suffering compounded by our natural weakness makes precise prayer difficult (that is, prayer that accurately corresponds with the real need). The exact "what" for which to pray so that it actually meets the real need baffles us.

II. v. 26a & b The Holy Spirit's Certain Help

"likewise, the Spirit also helps our infirmity": "likewise" to what?

“ the H.S. helps...” = “takes hold of,” “lends a helping hand” (as in Luke 10:40).

NOTE: THAT WHICH FURNISHES A HANDLE FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GRASP IS OUR WEAKNESS, THE VERY THING THAT WE THINK WILL DEFEAT US!

“the Spirit himself makes intercession on our behalf with wordless aspirations...”

“intercession” (intensified form) = “to plead the cause,” “to meet with to help”

QUESTION: WHOSE CAUSE IS THE H.S. PLEADING?

III. v.27 Explanation of the H.S.’s intercession

“and He (The Father-God) that searches the hearts knows the mind of the Spirit”

“that (not “because”) according to God He (the Holy Spirit) intercedes on behalf of the saints.”

THE IDEA IS THAT THE H.S.’S GROANINGS AND ASPIRATIONS CAN ONLY BE CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S MIND, GOD’S PLAN, GOD’S PURPOSES FOR EACH OF US AS BELIEVERS.

Summary & Doctrinal Application

1. **Suffering is real. You will feel it, but it is subservient to God’s plan. Lean on Rom. 8:26,27.**
2. **Our job in prayer is to express our felt need out of our frame of reference: the H.S. will intercede and bring Divine viewpoint to bear on the matter. (Principle: prayer is educatory).**
3. **Implied is the fact that both our felt need & our real need promote the work of God in our lives because the H.S. continually makes intercession in this direction: OUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN PRAYER IS A CATALYST TO THIS SPECIAL MINISTRY OF THE H.S. (Principle: prayer is a divinely designed system of communication).**
4. **Our human condition of weakness (which we fear will cause failure) furnishes the handle for the H.S. to take hold of to help us; our lack of knowledge under suffering gives Him vent for ministry as we pray. Compare “weakness,” “infirmity” in both Rom. 8:26 & Heb. 4:15.**
5. **Our finiteness with its frustrations and expressions in prayer is part of the Holy Spirit’s teaching us Divine viewpoint (real need) as well as His meeting that need. He is interpreting God’s will to us under stress through prayer! (Principle: prayer is not an exercise in overcoming God’s reluctance, rather an exercise of entering more fully into His will).**

IN VIEW OF THIS UNDERSTANDING OF ROMANS 8:26, 27,
READ VERSE 28 IN THE NASV!