

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.14.2024

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

I. INTRODUCTION

Romans 8:26-27

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

II. OUR LIMITATIONS IN PRAYER

- Paul in this great chapter, tells us that we have a debilitating condition, a weakness.
- It is that we don't know WHAT to pray for as we should.
- We don't know if WHAT we are praying for is WHAT we SHOULD be praying for.
- We don't know what to pray for as we should because we have a limited perspective, we are shortsighted and lack vision, and our prayers are often selfish.
- We do not know how to pray according to the will of God.

- That's why most of our prayers are about how things should work out in a way that we think is most advantageous for us.
- We generally pray for the good life.
- Our prayers are always limited by our finite thinking, reasoning, and knowledge.
- Our prayers are always limited by our lack of understanding of God's greater purposes.
- On our own, we do not know what to pray for that accords with the will of God.

- Jesus said, to ASK anything in his name and he will do it.
- Praying in Jesus's name is asking for things consistent with his character and to pray for things that conform to Christ's purposes.
- How can we know if what we are praying for accomplishes that?
- John writes that the kind of prayer that God hears and answers is the one that ASKS according to the will of God. (1 John 5:14-15)
- But here Paul is saying, we don't know WHAT to pray for as we should.

- The good news is that we don't need to despair.
- Paul tells us we have divine assistance in prayer.

III. DIVINE ASSISTANCE IN PRAYER

- “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness.”
 - Likewise, is a conjunction, meaning, “in the same way,” or “in a similar manner”.
 - In the context of the passage, Paul is referring to how the Spirit helps us in our weakness through his intercession for us.
 - He writes, the Spirit intercedes for us “with groanings too deep for words.”
 - This is the third time Paul mentions groaning in this chapter.
 - In v19-22 Paul writes the whole of creation is groaning like a mother groans in the pangs of childbirth, Creation is groaning in anticipation for the fulfillment of all of God’s promises and purposes to make all things new.
 - Then Paul says in v23, that believers also groan inwardly as we await the redemption of our bodies.
 - Then surprisingly, Paul writes that the Spirit also groans interceding for the children of God so that God’s will and purposes would be fulfilled in them.
 - The Spirit intercedes for us with a fervency, with an urgency, like that of a mother who cries out in childbirth for the new life to come.
 - What is inexpressible to us because of our weakness, the Spirit cries out before the throne of grace for the Father to work all things out according to his purpose and for our eternal good.
 - Romans 8:28-29 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- The glorious third person of the Triune Godhead is interceding for us with a fervor and urgency that we so often lack in prayer.
 - When we pray we’re often distracted. Our prayers are lifeless and weak, with little fervor, little urgency, and little effort.
 - What is amazing is that my weak, feeble prayers offered in faith, in Jesus’s name, are met with the Spirit’s strong pleas on my behalf, with a fervor and urgency, and my prayers are presented before the throne of grace and a response comes from heaven.
 - Our struggle to know what to pray for as we should is met with the gracious provision of Holy Spirit intercession, divine assistance.
 - We need to understand that to pray in the Spirit.
 - While we struggle to pray according to the will of God, the Holy Spirit is interceding for us according to the will of God.
 - He can intercede for us according to the will of God because HE IS GOD!
- We never have to worry about praying in the will of God if we are praying according to the Word of God.
 - But it’s not enough.
 - Because we cannot truly understand the revealed truth in God’s Word apart from God’s Spirit revealing the truth to us.
 - **1 Cor 2:9-12** But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” — **10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.** For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. **11** For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **12** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, **but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**
- Paul prays for the Ephesians that God would give them “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know...” (Eph 1:16-19)
 - Paul prays for the Colossians that they would be “filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...” (Colossians 1:9)

- Only the Holy Spirit can give us the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge we need to comprehend God's Word and His truth.
 - Jesus himself promised that he would send the Holy Spirit who would indwell us and teach and reveal to us all that God has for us in Christ (John 14:16-17; 26).
 - Without the Spirit we cannot know Christ and have the things of Christ, and without the Spirit we cannot pray according to the will of God.
-
- Praying in the Spirit is prayer motivated by a practical reliance on the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us according to the will of God.
 - Praying in the Spirit is prayer that relies on the divine power, presence, and guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than our human strategies and intellectual reasoning.
 - When we pray in the Spirit, we are trusting that the Spirit is interceding for us, depending on him, being sensitive to Him and the Spirit will prompt and suggest things to us in prayer that are in God's heart.
 - The Spirit will pray within us in perfect harmony with the will of the Father.
 - When we pray in the Spirit, praying God's Word, the Holy Spirit gives us insight and understanding, He ignites our heart with God's truth and wisdom in our prayer life.
-
- Praying in the Spirit is the opposite of how we often pray. We pray like we have everything figured out.
 - But praying in the Spirit is confessing our utter dependence on the Spirit of God and the wisdom of God, because we don't have it all figured out.
 - Praying in the Spirit acknowledges our limitations and weaknesses, our limited vision, our mixed and selfish motives, and trusts that the Spirit of God will form our prayers such that they will match God's intended outcome.
-
- Praying in the Spirit lifts the burden off of me of having to say the right things in prayer, or have the right feelings when I pray, or expressing certain emotions in prayer in order for God to hear and answer my prayer.
 - He takes your prayers and molds them and shapes them according to the will of God, to fulfill the purposes of God and for all things to work out for your ultimate good!
-
- How can you begin praying in the Spirit?
 - Pray believing in God's gracious provision of divine assistance through the Spirit's intercession for you.
 - Ask for the Spirit's guidance in prayer.
 - Ask for spiritual wisdom and understanding as you open the Scripture and pray God's Word.
 - Pray in the Spirit with confidence, relying on the Holy Spirit to take your weak prayers and mightily transform them so that all things work together for good for those who have been called according to his purpose.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?