



gracefellowship

Series: The Holy Spirit
Date: June 18, 2023

Title: The Spirit: Our Guarantee
Passage: Romans 8:18-39

Father's Day Recognition

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:5

Recap: Over the course of this series we have been talking about what it means not only to have information, or knowledge, about the Holy Spirit, but how to have a relationship with Him.

Week One: The Holy Spirit is God; He is not an impersonal force, but a divine person. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus and sanctifies us to become like Jesus.

Week Two: He is the Spirit of life and peace. As we grow in our relationship with Him and learn to listen to His voice, we gain the power to say “no” to sin and to more fully follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit will always lead you to life and freedom. Without the Spirit of God in our life we cannot please God.

Week Three: He is the Spirit of belonging. Last week we talked about how the Spirit of God changes us into members of God's family. He teaches us to speak to God as Father and moves us to a place of belonging in God's family where we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Our relationship with the Holy Spirit empowers us to be part of the family business- making disciples of Jesus.

Today we are going to close out our series and look at the final parts of Romans 8 together. If you remember last week we ended by saying that we share in Christ's glory if we also share in His sufferings. We may not have to give up our physical lives, but making disciples and living for God's Kingdom in this world will probably bring some level of pain or heartache into your life.

- You may lose friends
- Your family may reject you
- There will be times you have to give up being comfortable to be obedient
- Etc...

Paul picks up with that same thought process in verse 18 with some words meant to bring us comfort, no matter what we face in this life as disciples of Jesus.

:: Romans 8:18-25

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

21 that^h the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Paul tells us that whatever suffering we may be going through in this life, it doesn't compare to what we are going to receive when we arrive in our eternal home with God. The glory we are waiting on far surpasses the pain or hardships we face now. So, hang on!

- Are you going through sometime difficult? Hang on- something better is coming!
- Do you have hard questions for God because of what you're seeing and experiencing? Hang on- something better is coming!
- Does walking in the ways of Jesus seem like it isn't worth it? Hang on- something better is coming!

All our pain, all our hardships, all our trials, all our suffering that comes from following Jesus can't be compared to what He is going to give us when we enter His eternal Kingdom!

Life on earth is hard due to the consequences of sin. When we sinned against God not only did things get bad for humanity, but all of creation was broken! Paul says all of creation was subjected to frustration and is crying out for things to be returned to their original state of perfection. Whether you are a Christian or not, you can look around and see that the world is broken and things are not as they should be.

(Natural disasters, disease, famine, drought, corruption...)

Sin brought bondage to the things God created and all of creation is waiting for the day God will make things right again. But Paul says that's not just something

creation is waiting for- those of us who know Jesus are waiting for our full adoption into His eternal dwelling.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.

When we come into faith in Jesus we receive the Holy Spirit of God into our lives. Paul says that is called the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Firstfruits of the Spirit: we have experienced a taste of God through His Spirit in our lives, but we long for the fulfillment of what has been promised- face to face relationship with God!

And that waiting causes us to groan inwardly while we wait for God's promises to come full circle.

:: 1 Corinthians 13:12

12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

While we wait for that day to come, we go through challenging things and many hardships. But here's the good news- our comforter, the Holy Spirit sent from God, has a purpose in our lives to carry us through.

:: Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ 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 through wordless groans.

²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Have you ever been a place where you just don't know what to pray or how to pray? That happens to me often! In those times Paul wants us to know that when we are completely at a loss as to what to pray or how to pray, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. That's a powerful thought! We have an advocate who knows us intimately and who knows God the Father intimately, and He stands in the presence of God praying for us even when we don't know what to pray.

In his book, *The Good and Beautiful God*, James Bryan Smith says this:

“ When we pray we do not pray alone. The Spirit has subtly prompted us to pray, preceding us in prayer, and then prays with and for us.” – James Bryan Smith

And as if that weren't enough later in Romans 8 Paul is going to drop this little bit of information on us:

:: Romans 8:34b

³⁴ ...Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Christian, I want you to listen to me this morning: The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ stand in front of the throne of God the Father and pray for you! And here's the powerful thing we gain from that: Paul says that the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Intercedes: acts in behalf of us; bending over to protect

The term carries the idea of a lawyer acting on your behalf with your best interests in mind. Satan desires to condemn you before God, but the Holy Spirit acts as a mediator and pronounces your innocence. That takes us back to the first verse of Romans 8- "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

Aren't you glad to know that the Holy Spirit intercedes on your behalf?

Let's look at two more things we gain in a relationship with the Holy Spirit before we wrap up this series.

:: Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who [\[1\]](#) have been called according to his purpose.

²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Verse 28 is one of those powerful verses in the Bible that often gets misquoted or misunderstood, but it fits well in the discussion Paul is having with us here. We've been talking about the idea that when we come to faith in Christ we join Him in His suffering, but we also join Him in His glory. In this verse Paul tells us that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

- That does not mean that everything that happens to us in life is good.
- Paul does not mean that God shields us from bad and only allows good things to happen to us.

- What Paul is saying is that God knows how to take the bad and weave it into His ultimate story in a way that brings good.
 - o We may not see it right now, but God will find a way to take the hardship you're facing and work for your good.
 - o Whatever you're looking at and saying, I don't see how any good can ever come from this; just wait and trust God to work on your behalf. The good may not even come in your lifetime. But God knows how to take every situation we face in life and work for your good and His ultimate glory.

Then Paul tells us how God does that throughout our lives:

²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Here's the next point I want to make:

Salvation belongs to God.

- God, in His divine knowledge knows every single person who will come to Him in faith.
- Every person who responds to God in faith and accepts Jesus as Savior is predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.
- God calls us; God justifies us; God glorifies us.

And God does all this through the work of the Holy Spirit.

:: 1 Corinthians 12:3

3 No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to your salvation, the Holy Spirit is the active agent pursuing people, making Jesus known to people and giving each of us the ability to say, "Jesus is Lord." Salvation is not something man came up with; this is God's divine plan. Nor is salvation something we can achieve through our own power; it is the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives to bring us to God.

Some of you right now can say you've been feeling the pull of the Holy Spirit to bring you to faith in Christ. He has been at work in your life convicting you of sin, showing you the love of God, tugging at your heart to surrender to Jesus and become part of His family. Let today be the day you stop fighting God and you say, "Jesus is Lord!"

Others of us would say we remember when God saved us and the Holy Spirit moved in our lives to reveal the life-giving hope we have in Jesus. Since then the

Holy Spirit has been at work to sanctify you and to continually help you be more like Jesus so you can carry on His work in this world.

When we come to place where we surrender totally to Jesus God picks us up, puts us in His hands and promises never to let go. In these last verses of Romans 8 Paul writes some of the most powerful words in all of Scripture.

:: Romans 8:31-39

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

36 As it is written:

**“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”^[1]**

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, ^[k]neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I hope it brings you a lot of peace and hope to hear those verses! Is there anything that can separate us from God's love? No!

Now, maybe you ask, well, where is the Holy Spirit in that? And I'm glad you asked! Paul doesn't mention the Spirit explicitly here, but he will twice in the same context in 2 Corinthians.

:: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

:: 2 Corinthians 5:5

⁵ Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Why can we never be separated from the love of God? Because when we come to faith in Jesus, God puts His Spirit in us as a deposit guaranteeing our salvation. We are sealed by Him for our salvation.

That makes me think of two illustrations:

1. When you put your money in the bank it is FDIC insured. What you put in, you are guaranteed to get back. If I deposit \$2,000 into the bank this week and then go back in a couple months and tell them I want to withdraw that money, they give it back to me because my deposit is guaranteed.

2. In the time Paul was writing this a seal was typically something that was on a letter. You poured wax over the fold and then stamped your seal in the wax, so when the recipient got the letter they knew it had not been tampered with. But if I were going to bring it into a more modern illustration I would compare the seal of the Holy Spirit like this: Have you ever bought one of those vacuum sealed packages they put electronics in. That packaging is crazy! It's like they want you to buy the product but never use it! I always have to get an exacto knife and hack through that sealed package- it's not easy!

The seal the Holy Spirit puts on you is way more protective than that! When you truly come to faith in Christ nothing can separate you from His love. So, if you're asking the question, "How can I know that I'm a Christian?" Here's what Jesus said...

:: John 10:27-30

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all^[a]; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

If we put these things together, here's what we get:

We are held in the hand of Jesus.

We are held in the hand of the Father.

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit.

What can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus and sealed by the Spirit? Nothing!

As we walk in relationship with the Holy Spirit, let's learn to thank Him for the role He plays in our salvation to intercede on our behalf and to guarantee our salvation.