

Growing Through the Groan

How the Holy Spirit Uses Our Longing to Produce Life

Text: Epistle to the Romans 8:1–30

INTRODUCTION — WHEN LONGING FEELS LIKE WEAKNESS

Many believers misread spiritual tension. We assume that if we were truly mature, we wouldn't feel such deep dissatisfaction or ache.

But Romans 8 reframes the experience.

The groaning we feel is not proof of spiritual failure. It is evidence that the Holy Spirit has awakened a new life in us — a life that now longs for what this world cannot provide.

Tonight we see how the Spirit uses that groan to grow us.

I. WE HAVE A NEW STANDING — NO CONDEMNATION (8:1–4)

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Paul begins in the courtroom, not the emotions.

Before Christ:

- Sin accused
- The law condemned
- Guilt defined our standing

Now:

- The verdict is settled
- Christ fulfilled the law's demands
- You stand accepted

You are not trying to earn freedom.
You are learning to live from it.

II. WE HAVE A NEW NATURE — A NEW DESIRE (8:5–11)

The Spirit does more than correct behavior. He reshapes desire.

Evidence the Spirit is at work:

- Sin no longer feels natural
- Distance from God feels uncomfortable
- Spiritual hunger increases

Even your frustration with yourself can be evidence of transformation. Dead hearts don't struggle toward holiness. Alive ones do.

III. WE HAVE A NEW OBLIGATION — DEBTORS, BUT NOT TO THE FLESH (8:12–13)

"So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."

Paul uses financial language on purpose.

A debtor owes something — but our debt has changed direction.

Before Christ

We were in debt to sin. It dictated our desires and direction.

After Christ

We are still debtors — but now to the Spirit who gave us life.

This is not legalism. It is gratitude-driven alignment.

We don't obey to earn life.

We live by the Spirit because He already set us free.

Preaching Line:

We are still debtors — but we don't owe sin a single payment anymore.

IV. WE HAVE A NEW IDENTITY — CHILDREN, NOT SLAVES (8:14–17)

We are led, not driven. We cry, “Abba, Father.”

That cry is instinctive, not rehearsed. Adopted children run toward their Father, not away.

Your longing for God flows from relationship, not religion. You belong to Him.

V. WE EXPERIENCE A HOLY GROAN (8:18–25)

Creation groans. Believers groan.

But this is not despair — it is birth pain.

Groaning means:

- You've tasted the Spirit
- You see the brokenness of the world
- You long for full redemption

The ache you feel is homesickness for glory.

VI. WE RECEIVE THE SPIRIT'S HELP (8:26–27)

When we don't know what to pray, the Spirit comes alongside our weakness.

He turns our wordless sighs into intercession according to God's will.

You are not struggling alone. Heaven is working within you.

VII. WE REST IN CERTAIN GLORY (8:28–30)

God works all things toward good for those called according to His purpose.

This doesn't mean everything is pleasant. It means everything is purposeful.

Foreknown → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

The groan is not the end of the story. Glory is.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION — HOW TO GROW THROUGH THE GROAN

1. Direct longing toward prayer, not distraction

Let dissatisfaction push you toward God.

2. Let longing deepen intimacy

Hunger for God is an invitation, not a problem. nm vb

3. Refuse false comforts

Anything that numbs spiritual desire slows growth.

4. Lean on the Spirit when words fail

Stay present in prayer. The Spirit is interceding.

5. Anchor yourself in hope

Your life and creation itself are moving toward renewal.

6. Live from identity, not performance

You are already God's child. Growth flows from belonging.

CLOSING DECLARATION

This groan is not regression. It is growth.

It is the Spirit teaching you to long for what is eternal.

You are free from condemnation.

Alive by the Spirit.

Sustained in weakness.

Carried toward glory.

You are not falling apart.

You are **growing through the groan**.

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