

**Romans 8:23-25** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Romans 8:17-18 introduces the doctrine of Glorification. Since we are children we are heirs...since we suffer with Jesus so that we would be glorified with Jesus. The emotional distresses of this world are not worthy of the glory to be revealed to us.

The glory, "*ho doxa*," is the word glory (splendor, honor) used with the definite article. Paul's uses this in his letter to indicate something greater (Romans 1:23; 3:7,23; 5:2; 6:4). With the definite article, the word is always used in regards to God. God's glory is always expressed in the Bible as His character. To bring glory to God is to emphasize Who He is, to place the spotlight on His character. Human eyes cannot witness the physical glory of God's face and live. Being glorified with Jesus not only means that we get a new glorified body but also that we will be like Him in regards to His character.

Creation, in Romans 8:19-22, is waiting for mankind — not just an immortal mankind, but a people that is ruling God's creation without any sin and has the character of God. Creation itself will be freed from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of ***The Glory*** of the children of God.

Paul then takes the promise from 8:17-18, and reflects on creation's hope. Last lesson we understood that creation is currently in rebellion and is miserable; it groans and moans in pain and with anticipation. This bondage that it is under is caused by sin, the sin of Adam, the sin of humanity. Creation is now waiting for mankind in his glory accompanied by our Big Brother, the head of all creation, Who will restore creation and will subject it to Himself and subsequently to us as well (Hebrews 2:10-11).

Now to our text today, this section indicates that not only does creation groan and moan in pain, but ***we also*** wait in anticipation for our glorification as well. Verse 23 begins by stating that "not only, but also we." The pronoun is used here to indicate that we also groan and agonize in this fallen state. The second half of this verse makes this clear — "we also ourselves groan in ourselves." All this is highly emphatic, that we as believers, as well as creation, all agonize together in regards to the waiting for the promise.

In the first section, Paul states that "we, being ones who have the first fruit of the Spirit (LCV)." The present active participle "for" (*echō*) describes "we." "**ἔχω** *echō* (**ehkh'-oh**)" means to have or possess. Being used as a present participle, Paul indicates a status of who we are. We are ones who have "the first fruit."

"**ἀπαρχή** *aparchē* (**ahp-ahr-khay'**)" is a compound word "apo (ahp-ah)" and "archē." The parts indicate "first with an intensifier" (Romans 11:16; 16:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20,23). The simple definition is that this is the

first or primary, the super first, or the best of. The reason that “first fruits” is normally how this is translated is because of the Septuagint’s use of this word in regards to sacrifice. Even in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is easily seen that this indicates first or best (Exodus 23:18-19a).

We have the “first of the Spirit.” In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, Jesus is the first. The Holy Spirit is the first of what we can expect. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of what we will fully possess in the future.

The rest of verse 23 expresses that we groan looking forward (same as verse 19 – to be foremost on the mind; to always be looking with the head) to the adoption. There is a textual criticism here, but the word adoption is most likely in the text. Some try to draw confusion because of verse 15. We have received adoption (Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5), but now we are waiting for it. There are two views to explain this. First, we must see this in Greek word order — “We also ourselves in ourselves groan, adoption, awaiting the redemption of our body.” Adoption is in the accusative. There are some Greek grammars that explain that an accusative noun can be used to describe a person connected with an action or as an explanatory of whom the writer is referring. In this situation then, the phrase we groan in ourselves “in our adoption.”

The second is that there is a positional adoption, as we have seen and know, but there is also a final adoption — “the redemption of our body.” The first explanation fits well theologically but is difficult grammatically. The second is the normal understanding, but there are no other references to a second phase adoption.

Personally, I tend to lean towards the first in that it explains who are groaning, because I cannot defend a secondary adoption in Scripture.

The best is to understand the point of the verse, to see that we are also eagerly anticipating our glorification, “the redemption of our body.” “ἀπολύτρωσις *apolutrōsis* (*ah-pah-loo'-troh-sis*)” is normally translated redemption. It means the buying of a slave or the paying for freedom of a prisoner. The primary root is “to be loosed.” We are waiting to be released from this body of sin and made new.

Last lesson we discussed that although the world seems to be beautiful and majestic, in reality, it is in pain and agony. Likewise, mankind is also in bondage, not only to sin until our salvation, but even now in our flesh. We are held captive in this flesh waiting for our new bodies, apart from sin and made in the image of Jesus.

Verse 24 states a truth in a way that most see and acknowledge, but when asked to explain, it is usually shrugged off. “For in hope we have been saved.” “For in the hope we were saved.” The article with hope is in the dative. It is first in the sentence to create emphasis, but it is not the subject of the sentence. In English sentence order, this would read, “For we were saved to the hope.” As a dative, this is typically the indirect object or it indicates in reference to what. We were saved in reference to the hope. The hope in this context is the promise (specifically) of being moved from this reality to the future glorified state of a new body and

taking on the character of Jesus Christ. Most of the time, saved is in regards to “from what.” This verse is in regards to “unto what.” Salvation in the Bible is always from one thing and to another.

The rest of verse 24 and finishing in verse 25 describe the nature of hope. Remember that hope is a known, relied upon future expectation and not a wish or a desire that is possible. Hope is reality that has not yet been seen or received. The promises for which we are waiting need to be something that we rely upon. Hope is not simply knowing of the promises but relying on the promises.

Hope, being understood in part, as reliance is found in the definition. If it is known, then that which is not our future should not distract us. The verb is defined by one lexicon as “to put one’s expectation and trust for the future in someone or something.” The idea of reliance or trust is found in this word. The noun is that “which is expected and trusted for the future.”

That is why in verse 25 the idea of hope is equated with endurance. Verse 25 is a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional sentence. The “if” statement is actually backwards in the NASB — “If what we do not see, we hope...”

Obviously, we do not see the future and, if the promises were seen and realized, then it is no longer hope.

The “if” clause is not hoping in what we do not see, rather the emphasis is in what we do not see, we hope. If that is the case, implied for the sake of argument, then with (through) perseverance we wait.

Perseverance is “**ὑπομονή** *hypomonē* (*hoop-ah-mah-nay*)” which means to “bear under.” We saw the close connection between endurance and hope in Romans 5:3-4. Remember, this was demonstrating a close connection between endurance, character development, and that which is relied upon.

John 20:29; Romans 15:4

**Romans 8:26-27** In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of* God.

Romans 8 so far:

1. Verses 1-17 – Who we are
  - a. Not and never to be condemned
  - b. The Law fulfilled in us because of Jesus
  - c. Unbelievers have no mind for the Spirit, they are completely not influenced
  - d. We are in the Spirit, dwells in us
  - e. We have no obligation to the flesh
  - f. We are ones who live by means of the Spirit
  - g. We have been led by the Spirit
  - h. We are sons of God
  - i. We have access to God as a relational Father
  - j. We are His children
  - k. We are heirs, co-heirs with Jesus
2. Verses 17-25 – Who we will be
  - a. We look forward to glory
  - b. Creation looks forward to our glory
  - c. Creation groans and agonizes until now
  - d. We also groan in this flesh waiting for our full redemption
  - e. We do not see what we hope for
  - f. If we hope, with persevere we wait

In the next section we see not who we are, not who we will be, but what God does for us in the now. We will see the Holy Spirit's help, God's purpose, God gives us all things, God protects us from accusation, Jesus intercedes for us, nothing can separate us from Jesus, and we are fully successful in Christ Jesus.

Verse 26 begins with "in the same way," — in the same way as what? Verses 24-25 are about the fact that in what we do not see, we hope. The Spirit also is not something that we will see. The only reason we know of the Holy Spirit's activity is because we read about it. The emphasis in verses 26-27 is the Spirit helping us even though we do not see it.

The Spirit "helps" "**συναντιλαμβάνομαι** *sunantilambanomai* (*soon-ahn-tih-lahm-bah'-nah-my*).\" It is used only twice, here and in Luke 10:40, where Martha wanted Mary to help her with the preparations. The large compound word means to support in the work, to take hold of opposite ends (team lift).

The Spirit helps our weakness (the weakness of ours). "**ἀσθένεια** *astheneia* (*ahs-theh-nay-ah*)\" is defined as physical or spiritual weakness. Physical weakness is normally understood as sickness (illness). When the

weakness is not in a physical context, it generally indicates spiritual weakness (Romans 6:19; Romans 15:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:1-5; Hebrews 4:15).

In this context, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit works in tandem with us in our spiritual inability. The inference is that without the Holy Spirit's help we have no ability. Notice that this is in general, specifics will follow. But in general, there is a constant help from the Holy Spirit because we have no ability within ourselves.

Specifically, it speaks to our prayers. The translation in the NASB states, "we do not know how to pray." Other translations state, "what to pray for." There is disagreement among the translators, is this speaking about how to pray or what to pray for?

The literal Greek is "For the what we should pray as is necessary not we know." Literal sentence order is "for we do not know the what we should pray as is necessary." The emphasis is not method but for what. The word for know (we do not know) is "*oida*" (perfect knowledge). We have no idea what we should pray.

As to the "how," we have been taught. We have both the outline in the Lord's Prayer and we have examples of prayers written down for our education. By way of reminder, the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer to be repeated (Matthew 6:7-8). The outline following is a "pray in this manner." This is not what to say but have this general idea in your prayers.

1. Worship – Begin with the thought of recognition of who you are praying to, respect and worship
2. God's will not ours
3. Daily provisions
4. Not for this dispensation – forgiveness is already provided
5. Spiritual guidance

Romans 15:30-32; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; 6:18-20; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12 – Every prayer has the quality of recognizing the sovereignty of God, the power of God, the glory of God. Most are focused on the benefit of others. When Paul asked for prayer for himself, it was about the success of the Gospel and staying strong in the face of opposition.

Therefore, we do know how to pray, but we do not know for what to pray. Why is that? The answer is simple; we do not have enough information. Acts 3:1-10; 4:4 – I am sure that the parents asked God for healing every day of his life, but being this example led to 5,000 people believing. We do not know what God has in store,

so we need to pray knowing that we do not know what to pray. Lord, Your will be done. But even if we are mistaken in our prayers, we can be confident because the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us.

The word for intercession is “ὑπερεντυγχάνω *huperentunchanō* (*who-pehr-toon-khah'-nō*)” and means to entreat on the behalf of another, to plead on another’s behalf; a cognate of this word is used in the next verse and also in verse 34. God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus is perpetually entreating on our behalf. This goes beyond entreaty for sin; this is because we have no ability outside of God’s providence.

Notice it does not say, “do not pray, the Spirit does it for us.” Rather it states the Spirit works with us in our spiritual weakness. We still do what we are supposed to do, but we are also ensured that we receive help. Notice that it does not identify the “how,” it says only that He does.

The final clause in verse 26 is “with groanings too deep for words.” The word for groanings is the noun form of the groanings in verse 22 and 23. It is not our groanings (deep emotional sigh) here but the Spirit’s. The term “too deep for words” is a word that is the alpha negative with the word for “speech.” There is disagreement whether this is “words cannot express” or “cannot be vocalized.” The latter is used mostly by those who believe that our prayers can be in tongues (no need to make sense to us). Regardless, this does not express our prayers. It is the intercession of the Holy Spirit to God for us in response to our weakness in our prayers.

Verse 27 simply indicates we have help from God, the One who searches the inner recesses of the mind and knows the thinking of the Spirit — that according to God, He intercedes for the saints.

This is the capstone of this passage. It is all about the role of the Holy Spirit doing the will of the Father. The will of the Father is that He intercedes for believers. He knows our thoughts, but He alone is all knowing. He takes our prayers and makes them into something useful.

In Conclusion: Pray – Pray in full knowledge of how to pray; pray to the best of our knowledge and always with the thoughts that God’s will, not ours, be done. In our weakness, we are assured that when we fail, God knows what is needed and the Holy Spirit makes the prayer good, pleading on our behalf.

**James 4:13-16** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."