

Title: Living the Prayer-Filled Life

Text: Romans 8:26-27

You Can Do it - The Possibility of Following Christ Perfectly

Review last weeks passage - [Romans 8:18-25](#)

Review last weeks sermon in a sentence - **Main Idea - Have A Confident Life Now by Focusing on the Future!**

This week we are focusing on Living the Prayer-Filled Life

Prayer is a strange activity, isn't it? Talking to someone we cannot see, feel, hear, or even touch.

Yet prayer is the power behind the successful Christian life.

"Prayer lays hold of God's plan and becomes the link between his will and its accomplishment on earth. Amazing things happen, and we are given the privilege of being the channels of the Holy Spirit's prayer." - Elisabeth Elliot

"Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying." - E.M. Bounds

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." - Martin Luther

Paul's conversation regarding suffering (8:18-25) inevitably turns to prayer.

I'll be honest with you; I have recent seasons of life when I was suffering emotionally. I felt weak and powerless. I felt alone and discouraged.

I remember one time that I got on my hands and knees in my office at home and rocked back and forth begging God for relief, hope, and joy!

When true believers suffer, they will turn to Jesus for help!

So, I want to encourage you today with a powerful truth found in [Romans 8:26-27](#)...

Main Idea - You May Be Feeling Weak, but Your Prayer Is Powerful!

How can this be?

Who am I?

Why would my PRAYER have power?

Three reasons why your prayer has power...

1. The Spirit Helps You Pray (vs. 26)

*Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong...*

The blunt truth of the matter is that little children are not the only ones who are weak...

We are **Weak** but He is **Strong** (vs. 26a)

Such a comforting truth for us this morning. take a look at the first part of verse 26...

Romans 8:26 - *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness...*

We do not have spiritual strength in and of ourselves.

Any desires of godliness you have are because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit! I think we will be shocked when we get to heaven and learn just how much the Holy Spirit did in our lives to not only sustain us spiritually, but to empower us spiritually!

The Holy Spirit is our HELPER

Paraklētōs - *One who acts on another's behalf as a helper, legal advocate, advisor, or intermediary - David Seal, "Paraklētōs," in Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016).*

But interestingly enough, "Paraklētōs", the word most often used in conjunction with the Holy Spirit as helper, is not the word Paul uses here. He uses a different Greek word.

"synan-til-am-ban-e-tai" - to help by joining in an activity or effort—'to join in helping.'
Greek-English Lexicon

This word is used in two other places in the New Testament...

Luke 5:7 *They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.*

Luke 10:40 *But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."*

Our Strong God is all about joining with us who are weak, to help us!

This is what we are supposed to do with one another. "The strong bearing with the frailties of the weak.

Romans 15:1 *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

Yet again, God doesn't ask us to do anything that He is not willing to do Himself. Amazing!

But Paul gets more specific on HOW the Spirit HELPS us!

He helps you to pray!

We Don't Know What We Should Pray For (vs. 26b)

By a raise of hand, how many of you realize that prayer is hard work?

Why is it such hard work? Because every time you pray you are going to war!

That's right Christian, each time you go to prayer you are jumping into a very real spiritual warfare...

But here is the good news - Have you thought about the fact that every time you go to prayer you don't go alone?

Nope! The Holy Spirit is right there with you, joining you in the activity of prayer!

Now this proves something about prayer - God thinks so highly of the activity of prayer that He not only wants to hear from you, but He will join in with you to empower you to get the hard work of prayer accomplished well - He is the only reason why your prayer is effective.

Romans 8:26 - Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought...

The truth is, you and I don't always know how to pray - What is God's will for any given situation?

But the Holy Spirit knows! Why? Because He's in the know!

And because He is in the know with God. We can "tone down the groan!"

But I want you to notice why we can "tone down the groan" from the last part of verse 26

When We Tone Down the Groan, He Turns His Up (vs. 26c)

Romans 8:26 - 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."

With all the suffering we face as believers, that Paul talks about in verses 18-25, we groan. Groaning is a part of suffering.

Interestingly, there are three that groan in these verses.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Romans 8:23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

The creation groans because of the curse of sin!

Believers groan because of the curse of sin!

and the Holy Spirit, God Himself groans because of the curse of sin and the demonstration that we have a right relationship with God!

In other words, we can communicate with God because the Holy Spirit groans on our behalf!!

Romans 8:26 ...but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

In studying this passage, I have discovered that there is a HEAVENLY language! However, this language is not one I am able to speak.

The Holy Spirit, however, is fluent in this language and translates my prayers and groanings in my prayers to the Father.

God the Father and God the Son are also fluent in this HEAVENLY language! They can talk through my prayer together.

The Spirit shares my heart with the Father and the Son, and they perfectly understand one another, and they perfectly understand my need. And I can trust God that He hears and will answer well.

Listen - I don't have to know the language, I just need to know the one who can speak it!

The point is this. We can tone down our groan and instead turn to the one who will groan for us! We can leave our groaning with the Holy Spirit who will groan way more productively than we can! When we hand over our groan to Him in prayer, we can REST!

1 Peter 5:7 ...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Prayer is hard work, but when you understand that God is helping you pray to God - Wow!

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." - Max Lucado

I've done a great deal of biblical counseling over my years as pastor and one of the questions I ask people when I first meet with them is "What is your habit in prayer." 99.9% of the responses are the same - "Not as much as I should be." I then ask, "What does this mean? Quantify it for me." Inevitably they say, "Well, I don't pray at all." Then I teach them how to pray and inevitably, when they start praying as they ought to, their lives begin to change.

Maybe this is your story too? Does it help to know what Paul is teaching us in verse 26? Does it help you to understand that God values prayer so much and God desires to help you so much that He helps you pray to Him?

I'll tell you what I tell those that I counsel. Start with the ACTS model of Prayer.

Adoration (Praise) - ***Psalm 9:2** I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*

Confession - ***1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Thanksgiving - ***Psalm 100:4-5** Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! 5 For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Supplication (Pray for yourself then pray for others) - ***Psalm 86:6** Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.*

If you are new to prayer or you have never put real energy in prayer, today is a great day to make a promise to the Lord that you are going to start. And use the ACTS model just 5 minutes each day to get started and to build a godly discipline in your life.

Remember! You are not alone in this work; the Spirit is right there translating your prayer to the Trinity!

Review - You May Be Feeling Weak, but Your Prayer Is Powerful!

The Spirit Helps You Pray

Transition - Because...

2. The Spirit Knows What to Say! (vs. 27)

Wait, what? The Spirit knows what to say to who?

The Spirit of God knows exactly how to take your prayer and communicate it to the triune Godhead!

But before we get there...

First, please know this about our God!

God Knows Your Heart (27a)

***Romans 8:27** - And he who searches hearts...*

I don't want to spend a lot of time on this, but when I was studying these verses this stood out to me. There is nothing about me that is hidden from God. The assumption here is He searches and knows all hearts. But I was blown away with the thought that God searches and knows my heart. My black, deceitful, self-focused, prideful, heart.

God knows all! - Omniscience...

Yet he still loves me. He loves me so much that he is giving me a new heart!

God not only knows our heart...

God Knows the Spirit's Mind (27b)

Romans 8:27 - And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit..

And God knows what is going on in the mind of the Spirit. Why?

Well, because they are God, and they share a mind.

Angie and I share a brain!

Again, God knows all - he is omniscient

And

God is Triune – Even though it never uses the term, the bible clearly demonstrates the Trinity...

Luke 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him [Son] in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice [the Father] came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name [Jesus], he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

This doctrine distinguishes our faith with every other religion in the world. And Paul's point is there is a powerful intimacy that is present in the triune Godhead. There are no secrets between the persons of the Trinity.

And because of this...

The Spirit of God Prays for You (27c)

Romans 8:27 - And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints...

ἐντογγάζω - to ask for something with urgency and intensity—'to plead, to beg, to appeal to, to petition. - Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains (33.169)

Do you get the picture here? God the Holy Spirit goes to God the Father with great urgency and intensity to plead, to beg, to appeal on your behalf!

Again, I know I said this before, but let this sink in! God values prayer and you SO much that HE makes sure to join with you in the work of prayer! He wants to hear from you!

Warning - This also means something else. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit and therefore God the Father will not hear you.

And because the Holy Spirit prays on behalf of the Holy ones of God (believers in Christ) we can rest assured that our prayer will be POWERFUL!

Why can we be so confident about this?

Because...

The Spirit of God Knows The Will of God (27d)

Romans 8:27 - 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.

Have you ever wondered if you are praying correctly? Have you ever worried that you haven't prayed well enough?

Well, according to this passage, you have nothing to worry about AT ALL!

God can take the weakest of prayers and turn them into powerhouses of praise!

How? Because God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit knows the will of God! What does this equal? Your prayer is always the right prayer even if you pray it wrongly!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary (8:26–27)

Even though the Spirit's words are not expressed, the Father knows what the Spirit is thinking. This is an interesting statement about the Father's omniscience and the intimacy within the Trinity. The Lord Jesus continually intercedes for believers in God's presence (v. 34; Heb. 7:25) and the Holy Spirit also intercedes on their behalf! Though believers are ignorant of what to pray for and how to voice those requests, the Spirit voices their requests for them.

Stop worrying if you are saying the right thing! God the Spirit is there to join you in prayer so that your prayer, no matter how you pray it, will be properly communicated to God the Father and the message will be cleaned up and brought up to snuff to be appropriate for God the Father to hear!

Encoder = the messenger

Translator = the Holy Spirit

Decoder = The recipient

Mom translates for her child...

My friends, we need to start looking at prayer in light of this passage.

I think there are some that are here that think God doesn't want to hear from them because they are not eloquent.

Story of Dr. Mack

Well, if I can't pray like Dr. Mack, then I just shouldn't pray.

Pardon my language but Bologna

Maybe you don't think you are articulate and well spoken - PRAY ANYWAY

Maybe you are a new Christian, and you don't understand all the theology of the bible yet - PRAY ANYWAY!

Regardless of your level of sanctification - PRAY ANYWAY!

You need not worry about miscommunication

You need not worry about even praying in the wrong attitude

Don't make excuses - PRAY ANYWAY!

Why? Because you can rest in the fact the the Holy Spirit will bring your prayer to God the father and it will be exactly as it should be. And God the Father will answer accordingly!

Yes - No - Not Yet!

Review - You May Be Feeling Weak, but Your Prayer Is Powerful!

The Spirit Helps You Pray

The Spirit Knows What to Say

It grieves me to hear of Christians that have forsaken the one activity that God has baked into His world that can move Him and even change His activity - PRAYER

"We are to pray in times of adversity, lest we become faithless and unbelieving. We are to pray in times of prosperity, lest we become boastful and proud. We are to pray in times of danger, lest we become fearful and doubting. We are to pray in times of security, lest we become self-sufficient." - Billy Graham

New Believer - cultivate this habit in your life and never stop talking with God. Remember, our faith is based on a relationship with God through Christ, not a religion of following the Law.

Christian who has stopped praying - Start back up and watch what God will do...

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." - Martin Luther

Older Christian - You may be feeling like you have nothing to offer because you can't do things like you used to. Well, let me tell you something, there is no more significant and powerful act of faith that you can do than prayer.

You may not be able to sing in the choir, work with the youth, teach a class, or even set up rooms and move chairs around, but brother/sister YOU CAN STILL MOVE MOUNTAINS by praying to the omnipotent God of the universe through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

“There is power in prayer. When men work, they work. But when men pray, God works!” - Angus Buchan

I wonder what God might accomplish if you truly believe that the Holy Spirit promises to join in the activity of prayer?

I think great things are going to happen in our church and in our community over the next several years not because

- We will have a new building
- We will have a clear strategic plan to reach our community with the Gospel
- We are getting good at discipleship.

No, I think God is about to move in our church POWERFULLY because **YOU** will purpose to do the hard work of prayer.

There is no more powerful Christian activity you can engage in, friends.

Hang on! God’s about to do some amazing work because some of you will do the hard work of prayer!

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. In what ways are you feeling weak these days?
2. Have you ever considered that God the Spirit “joins in to help” you pray? What difference should this make in your prayer life?
3. The Spirit groans on your behalf. What does this mean? How does this encourage you?
4. There is a beautiful intimacy in the Godhead. Why does Paul point this out when speaking about prayer?
5. What keeps you from prayer? How do these verses motivate you to be a person of regular prayer?