

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



Adopted By God

Romans 8:22-28

Sunday, July 12, 2026

Because the world is broken, living in it hurts. Some people think that if you follow God, you will always be happy. But Paul says living in a broken world frustrates us; it causes us to groan. He uses the Greek a Greek word that means a deep, heavy sigh. It is the sound you make when words cannot show the depth of your emotions.

Romans 8:23-25

23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ESV

THREE DIFFERENT GROANS OF FRUSTRATION

Paul says our groaning comes from three different sources:

- 1. The earth groans (verse 22) - For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ESV**
- 2. We groan (verse 23) - And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ESV**
- 3. The Holy Spirit groans (verse 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. ESV**

We groan because we are caught in the middle. God has saved our souls, but our bodies still feel the effects of the fall.

To explain this, Paul uses a farming custom from ancient Israel. He calls the Holy Spirit the "firstfruits." In ancient times, when the spring crops began to grow, a Jewish farmer would cut the very first handful of wheat. He took this bundle to the priest at the temple, and the priest waved it before God. This bundle of wheat was a guarantee. It proved that the giant harvest was coming soon.

Paul says the Holy Spirit inside us is the guarantee. God gives us His Spirit right now to prove that He will give us new, perfect bodies in the future. We groan because we hold the promise of the future, but we still live in the frustrating present.

THE COMFORT OF ADOPTION

While we wait, Paul says we are waiting for "adoption as sons."

To understand this, we should take a look at the ancient Roman custom of adoption.

In the Roman world, adoption was very serious. A wealthy man with no heir would choose a young man, often a servant, to be his true son. When the adoption papers were signed, three things happened:

1. The young man got a new name and full legal rights to the rich man's money.
2. All of the young man's old debts were completely wiped out. Legally, his old life was dead.
3. He became the true son. Nobody could ever take that away.

Paul says God did this for us. We can now cry out to God using the word "Abba." Abba is an ancient Aramaic family word children use for their daddy.

Oddly though, Paul says we are already adopted, but at the same time we are still waiting to be adopted. How can this be?

God told Moses to go to the pharaoh of Egypt. He said, "Israel is my firstborn son." When He said this, the Jewish people were still slaves making bricks in the mud. They had not been rescued yet. But God already called them His son. The relationship was real, even in the mud.

God loves us the exact same way. We are His true children right now. But we must wait for the day when Jesus returns. On that day, all of creation will see that we belong to its King.

In the meantime, the Holy Spirit groans for us. God feels our pain.

Romans 8:26-27

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. 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. ESV

And now while we wait on our full adoption, the Spirit insures that we can accomplish God's will even in this broken world.