

Introduction

Along with this being Memorial Day Weekend it is also “Pentecost” Sunday, the promised day of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In our text Paul will speak to us about the Holy Spirit's role in our lives.

There will be two words that we hear a lot: “*wait*” and “*patience*”.

The Christian life is a lifetime of patience; it requires a lot of patience to be on this journey with Jesus.

Even God's Spirit waits.

Gardner's must be patient; the seeds that are planted seem to take forever to come up.

“Any plant that grows up to provide fruit must first grow down”

It's the same for us; we must first grow down into the deep and rich soil of the Holy Spirit.

Text

Romans 8:18-30

¹⁸“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³Not 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. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶In 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. ²⁷And 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.

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he

foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, and 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”.

“All Things”

Verse 28 is so familiar to most of us, but there is a danger when we add our own words as opposed to hearing what God’s Word says.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”.

- In Genesis 2, when the snake was quoting scripture, he conveniently left things out or added to what God said...and that changes the meaning.
- In this much-quoted scripture we have a tendency to fill in the blank of what is “good”.
- It may sound like: “God works for the good”...the comfort, the excitement, our influence, our financial benefit, our personal fulfillment, etc.
- We want to determine what is “good”, but God is the one who determines what is “good” and sometimes that good can be painful or difficult, Jesus on the cross is an example.

“All” is the craziest, most troubling word in the bible, meaning everything, good bad, joyful and painful.

- The Holy Spirit becomes a reminder that God is actively at work, working even the minute things.

Pray

“We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans” (Verse 26)

- We don’t know what or who to pray for or maybe we’re out of words.
- The Holy Spirit himself prays through “wordless groans”
This is praying in obedience to the Holy Spirit leading when you don’t know what to pray for.
- It is very unique; it is God praying through us to himself to get things done.
- The power in the prayer isn’t the prayer, but in the listener...God.
- Oddly James was asking people to pray to his brother
- Also Mary is the only one in the world that could worship her son and not be committing idolatry.

Hope

Paul is writing to people who are suffering: But it can’t be prepared with the coming glory, this gives us hope. We pray because we hope

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

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

“First fruits” (V23) it’s like growing Oregon strawberries and the very first one that becomes ripe.

- We’re experiencing the *foretaste*, an *appetizer* of what is coming; we can’t even imagine what’s approaching.
- We have a tendency to compare the present with the past, nostalgia. The Christian life is not nostalgia.
- This is about comparing the present with the future... it results in hope.
- We have hope; something this world is completely empty of.

Weakness

Paul talks about weakness a lot in his letters,

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst”. (I Timothy 1:15)

The Spirit helps us in our weakness:

- 1) When we come to faith in Christ, we don’t come out of the “phone booth” as Superman, but we do know who is. He helps us **in** our weakness, it isn’t the annihilation of weakness but a baptism
- 2) In this passage he intentionally uses a word that is used only 3 times in the New Testament, “help”.

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

“Help”: “sunantilambanomai” (συναντιλαμβάνομαι)

Short Definition: I assist, help

Definition: I lend a hand along with, take interest in (a thing) **along with (others)**, **assist jointly** to perform some task, **cooperate with**, take my share in, help, **aid**.

The Spirit helps us but doesn’t replace us. It may just be a little nudge a thought, which will show us what and who to pray for.

- But this is not a “hall pass” for not doing anything; God is all-powerful and sovereign, but he wants to partner with us. It is in our weakness he works.
- If the Holy Spirit were to leave the churches today, much of what goes on in the church would continue without missing a beat. We begin to feel that we can do it on our own.

Many believers try to distance themselves from other Christians when sharing with unbelievers, qualifying what type of Christian you are.

We can begin to have “image fatigue”; we feel we must clean up our image

We can begin to have “image fatigue”; we feel we must clean up our image and reputation. Just follow Jesus, he didn’t have a good reputation, the Spirit works through the weak and broken church, believers.

What was the temptation of Jesus to turn rocks into bread? AJ suggested it was a “temptation to become relevant” It’s not our job to become relevant, but faithful and loving.

Discussion Questions

Hopefully these questions will help generate discussion among your small group.

- 1) AJ pointed out that there would be two words that we would hear a lot in this passage: “*wait*” and “*patience*”. Has your journey with Jesus shown you that the Christian life is full of times of waiting and the need for patience? Please share with the group examples of this from your life.
- 2) Discuss this statement: “Any plant that grows up to provide fruit must first grow down” Also discuss how this applies to us: “we must first grow down into the deep and rich soil of the Holy Spirit”.
- 3) AJ suggested that verse 28, (that is a very familiar verse for us) we have a tendency to fill in the blank of what is “good” “*And we know that in all things God works for the good...*” In your walk how have you defined “good” and how has God defined “good”?
- 4) Many times we don’t know what or who to pray for or maybe we’re out of words. Looking again at our passage how does the Holy Spirit help us pray? Can you give any examples of how this has worked in your life?
- 5) We see in verse 18 that Paul is writing to people that are suffering. He assures them that this present suffering cannot compare with what is ahead for us. The scriptures tell us that what we are experiencing is a *foretaste*; an *appetizer* of what’s ahead, what does this mean to you? We have a tendency to compare the present with the past and become nostalgic. How do you respond with the challenge to compare the present with the future... will it result in hope?
- 6) Lastly, what does it mean to you when the scripture says: “...*the Spirit helps us in our weakness*” Do you feel that you have a clear understanding that the “Spirit helps us but doesn’t replace us”?

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check “Right now Media” there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.