

Thu 30 June. Romans 8 verses 22-27. Waiting patiently

Even though the price has already been paid, we do not yet see everything the way God wants it. “The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Romans 8:22). The creation is burdened, as if in pain, as it forms the womb in which we are being birthed. Not only that, “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” (verse 23). Even though we have been given the Holy Spirit as an advance payment of salvation, we also struggle, for our salvation is not yet complete. We struggle with sin, we struggle with physical limitations, pain and sorrow — even while we rejoice in what Christ has done for us.

Salvation means that our bodies will be made new, no longer subject to decay (1 Corinthians 15:53), and transformed into glory. The physical world is not junk that must be tossed aside — God made it good, and he will make it good again. We do not know how bodies are resurrected, nor the physics of the renewed universe, but we can trust the Creator to complete his work.

We do not yet see a perfect creation, neither in space nor on earth nor in our own bodies, but we are confident that it will be transformed. As Paul says: “For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently” (Romans 8:24-25).

We wait, with both patience and eagerness, for the resurrection of our bodies, when our adoption will be completed. We live in the situation of “already but not yet”: already redeemed, but not yet completely redeemed. We are already freed from condemnation, but not yet completely freed from sin. We are already in the kingdom, but it is not yet in its fullness. We live with aspects of the age to come, even as we struggle with aspects of the old age.

“In 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” (verse 26). God knows our limitations and frustrations. He knows that our flesh is weak even when our spirit is willing, so his Spirit intercedes for us, even for needs that cannot be put into words.

Things to think about

- How much groaning do we do, and how much does the Spirit intercede for us? (verses 23, 26).

God’s Spirit does not remove our weakness, but helps us in our weakness. He bridges the gap between old and new, between what we see and what he has declared us to be. For example, we sin even though we want to do righteousness (7:14-25). We see sin in our lives, but God declares us righteous, because God sees the end result even while the process has just begun.

Despite the discrepancy between what we see and what we want, we can be confident that the Holy Spirit does what we cannot. He will see us through. “He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in

Excerpt taken from: (The Certainty of God’s Love: A Study of Romans 8:18-39)

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accordance with the will of God” (8:27). The Holy Spirit is on our side, helping us, so we can be confident!

Song: Holy Spirit we welcome you

By Chris Bowater © 1986 Sovereign Lifestyle Music

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Move among us with holy fire
As we lay aside all earthly desires
Hands reach out and our hearts aspire
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Let the breeze of Your presence blow
That Your children here might truly know
How to move in the Spirit's flow
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Holy Spirit, we welcome You
Please accomplish in me today
Some new work of loving grace, I pray
Unreservedly have Your way
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit
Holy Spirit, we welcome You

Remember a promise

- (your name) 's body will be redeemed, set free and made whole (v. 23)
- The Spirit helps (your name) 's weaknesses with intercessions from deep inside (v. 26)

Prayer:

Thank You, Lord, that by Your indwelling Holy Spirit I am “sealed for the day of redemption”

(Ephesians 4:30).

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