

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

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WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY FOR

Romans 8 Series: "The Mountain Peak of Scripture – Our Hymn Of Hope."

ROMANS 8:26-27

There was a lady who had a female parrot and the only thing the parrot said was, "Let's pray." Well, the lady met a man at a parrot lover's meeting, and he had a male parrot who never said anything but "Let's kiss."

In our passage for today we're going to see that not only is creation groaning, and not only are we groaning for glory, but the **Holy Spirit Himself is groaning**. Paul begins, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us..." This word "**help**" means to "take hold at our side; to receive help from one who bears our load." **J. B. Phillips translates it, "his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words"** Jesus spoke about that Helper in **John 14:16-17**.

You're not alone when you're in the **groan zone**. In our passage we see....

I, WHEN THE SPIRIT HELPS US **V-26a**

1. When we're weak and weary.

The Spirit who is holy helps us "**in our weakness**." This word literally means "without strength" and speaks of being incapacitated.

2. When we're perplexed about what to pray for.

The Holy Spirit also helps us when "**We do not know what we ought to pray for**." Have you ever been at a total loss about what to pray for? Sometimes all we can get out is some sighing and a lot of crying. Do you remember the story Jesus told about the self-righteous Pharisee who went to the temple and **sermonized** as he prayed? **Luke 18:11-ff**. But we are not alone when we are in the **GROAN ZONE**.

Secondly, we see...

II. WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES **V-26**

The second half of verse 26 tells us what the Holy Spirit does and how he does it. Let's look first at what He does: "**But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us**." Do you hear the emphasis here? In contrast to our trifling prayers the "**Spirit Himself (not it)**" prays for us. The word "**intercede**" means to "**speak in behalf of, to appeal and plead for**." We not only have the Spirit interceding in our heart; we also have God the Son Christ Jesus our Lord interceding in heaven. Jump ahead to **verse 34**. **Hebrews 7:25** tells us that Jesus is interceding all the time for us. And **1 John 2:1** asserts that we have an **Advocate** who intercedes on our behalf.

Thirdly we see...

III. HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT INTERCEDES **V-26c**

The last part of **verse 26** tells us how the Holy Spirit intercedes for us: "**with groans that words cannot express**." I find it so comforting that the Comforter groans with me as I deal with all the garbage in my life. **John Piper** says that these groanings are based on two things: "**First, a deep desire and ache of heart that Christ be magnified in our lives; and second, a weakness that leaves us baffled and unknowing as to how this is going to happen**." It's so intense that words are inadequate to express it.

Are you still with me? It gets even better. Look at **verse 27**.

1. God the Father knows our motives
2. God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit
3. God the Holy Spirit helps us pray according to God's will - **1 John 5:14**

John Piper suggests some ways that this passage can provide comfort to Christians:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Prayer is like our bridge to God, and it will never come down or collapse because the Holy Spirit is interceding for us with groans that cannot be expressed. You're not alone when you're in the groan zone. And the Holy Spirit does more than just pray for us – He sends us out with power to be His representatives to a lost and dying world. Remember **Acts 1:8**.