

Ladies Bible Study

Week 18

(Week 17 in your lessons)



February 17, 2026

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.” Romans 8:26

Likewise can be translated as “in like manner,” or “in the same way.” It refers back to that which the Holy Spirit has already done for believers:

Verse 14 – He leads us

Verse 16 – He assures us of our relationship with God

Verse 17,23 – He acts as a guarantee of our future glorification with Christ

Verse 26 – He helps us in our weakness

Those who hold that believers should receive all they ask for in faith should consider this passage, for here Paul clearly states that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” This is why the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us. It is a blessing to know that in this present evil age we do not receive all we ask for, even in faith! What _____ we would create for ourselves if we did receive all we asked, even in believing prayer.

We should always be in a prayer-relation-sphere with God. It is not a matter of whether or not we are to pray, but the strong suggestion is that we should pray. Prayer should be a normal part of our lifestyle.

“As we ought” leads us to believe there is a proper and improper way to pray. As finite human beings, limited by our own minds, we do not have the ability to mentally see and perceive what we really need to pray for. The implication of this passage is what we pray for is exceedingly important. To fail to pray for that which is proper, that which is “ought,” or necessary, is probably what Paul would call “beating the air” (1 Cor. 9:26).

He aides us in our lack of spiritual health, feebleness, and weakness. In this particular verse, Paul specifically mentions our inability to know what we should pray for. In view of our weakness and inability to pray as it is necessary, “the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.” He intercedes for us, pleads our case, and expresses our true needs to the Father.

The Holy Spirit does this with “groanings which cannot be uttered.” These non-language sighs and groans are produced by the Holy Spirit, and even by the wildest stretch of the imagination, have absolutely nothing to do with the so-called speaking in tongues. His intercession for us indicates how infinite His love is for us.

Verse 27 – “ And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

He that searcheth the hearts, i.e., God, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He (the Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. That is, God, who searches the heart, knows what is in our prayers is merely the expression of our own finite, fallible mind, and what is the mind of the Spirit, who always prays for us “according to the will of God.” God knows the frame of mind, the thought patterns, and the thoughts which the Spirit has as He intercedes on behalf of the saints. He knows the meaning of the groaning and unspoken sighs involved in the Spirit’s interceding.

The reason God knows what is in the mind of the Spirit is “because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” The fact that the Holy Spirit’s intercessory ministry for the saints is “according to the will of God,” conforming to God, and in keeping with God is certainly a _____ reason why God knows the mind of the Spirit. In other words, since a unified mindset exists between God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and because the Holy Spirit’s interceding for believers conforms to the mind of God the Father, it is a foregone conclusion; God knows the mind of the Spirit.

How important to rightly divide the Word of truth at this point! We are to pray now, not like the widow in Luke 18, nor according to Matt. 21:22 or Matt. 18:19, expecting whatever we ask in faith, but from acknowledged ignorance, weakness and need, always in subjection to the will of our wise and loving heavenly Father. There is an additional reason for praying in this way during “this present evil age,” for Paul continues:

Verse 28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

There are two things in Romans 8 that “we know:”

1. “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (verse 22). The great prophesied change has not yet taken place. At Pentecost there seemed to be bright hope that the favored nation would repent and that Messiah would return to bring peace, prosperity and blessing, but “His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14).

Thus “the whole creation” continues to groan and travail in pain together “until now,” with no prospect of a change until our Lord comes in power and glory to take the throne that is rightfully His.

2. In the meantime – “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Verse 28).

We should also compare two passages in the chapter to which refer to what “we know not” and to what “we know.” “We know not what we should pray for as we ought” but, thank God, “we know all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

What a strong _____ we have in the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered! What an ally in the Lord Jesus Christ, who also intercedes for us at the Father’s right hand! And what a loving, faithful heavenly Father, who works all things out for our good!

With the Spirit intercession of the Spirit on our behalf, this demonstrates the fact that God Himself, the Spirit, a member of the Trinity, is deeply and personally interested in our weakness, and concerned that we pray aright, with requests that He can grant for our good.


This explains Philippians 4:6,7, where we find the highest form of prayer during the present dispensation:

“Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD AND.....

And what? “And whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive?” NO! This would be tragic today. Thus the passage reads:

“.....let your requests be made known unto God, AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.”

Here is ample proof that God is not deaf to the cries of His people in this evil age. He urges them to pour out all their hearts to Him. There is nothing about which He does not wish to hear. He says, “tell me everything and be anxious about nothing, for I’ll work it all out for your good.”



In the darkness of this “evil age,” we are instructed to take all our burdens to the Lord “with thanksgiving,” being anxious for nothing since He has promised to work all out for our good. What more could we ask for?! Little wonder Paul breaks out in the doxology of Ephesians 3:20,21:


“Now unto Him that is able to do EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THING, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be the glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Rom. 8:29,30)

This passage will help to explain what is meant by the phrase, “the called according to His purpose,” in verse 28.

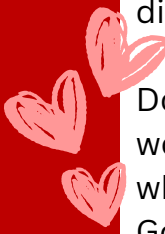
First, verse 28 does not say that God’s people are “called according to His purpose to call them,” nor do we believe that this is the sense. Rather we believe that His purpose here refers to “the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,” the great _____ of Paul’s epistles. This purpose, of course, includes individual believers.



Thus, covering the whole span from foreknowledge to glory, Paul says:

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (verse 29).

But what is the “foreknowledge” referred to here? This is important, for “whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.”



Does His foreknowledge here refer to the mere fact that He knew beforehand who would be saved? Hardly, for then God could predestinate only on the basis of what He knew – merely knew – men would do. Thus man’s actions would govern God’s!

It is true that God foreknew all things and therefore could elect reasonably rather than arbitrarily or capriciously, but this had no bearing here, for Romans 8:29 does not state that God knew something – or all things – about us; it says He foreknew us.

To understand this statement we must bear in mind that in Scripture, as in modern English, to know a person, or group of persons, is to recognize, to have regard for, or interest in, or a close acquaintance with. The following Scripture passages will bear this out:

Amos 3:2 – You only have I known of all the families of the earth.....(regarding Israel).

Matthew 7:23 – And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.

....Ye have known God, or rather are known of God...Galatians 4:9

Thus to foreknow a person is to know him beforehand, or to recognize or regard him beforehand.

The argument so often heard, that “God foreknew everybody,” denies the above facts and, indeed, the very passage we are considering, for “whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” and surely all men will not be conformed to the image of God’s Son.

Predestination is to be _____ from foreknowledge here, in that God’s foreknowledge has special reference to the person foreknown, while predestination has reference rather to that to which the person foreknown is predestinated.

Before leaving verse 29, we should note the fact God will conform believers to the image of His Son “that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” In one sense our Lord is “the only begotten Son” of God, but in another – and due to His redemptive work at Calvary – He is “the firstborn among many brethren.”

Mark well that verse 29 and 30 are both in the past tense, for as far as God is concerned, He sees us already glorified in Christ. The Epistle to Ephesians has much to say about this, as in Ephesians 2:4-6:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

This is how God sees us in grace, and we may now occupy this God-given position by faith and appropriate the “all spiritual blessings” that go with it, until that blessed day when our Lord comes for us Himself and takes us physically, in glorified bodies, to be with Him (1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:16-18).

There is a tendency among believers to minimize the reality of our position in Christ. Actually it should greatly encourage fainting, doubting Christians that God sees them already in heaven, and beckons them to rise experientially by faith above this sin-cursed world and “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

We come now to the grand climax of the doctrinal part of Romans.

“If God be for us, who can be against us?”!


But Romans 8:31 is more grand than this! It is the more powerful because it is put in the form of a challenge. It breathes defiance and confidence, taking us back to a line from John Newton’s great hymns: “Thou may’st smile at all thy foes.”

How wonderful to have God for us! He manifested this attitude toward us in the greatest gift ever given to mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ. His beloved Son, delivering Him to shame and death that even the vilest sinner may be redeemed and justified before the bar of justice. And the giving of this _____ gift proves that there is no good thing that He would withhold from us: it is “the gift that includes all others.”

To begin to appreciate the bestowal of this infinite gift, we must consider:

- 1.The love that prompted it – John 3:16
- 2.Its priceless value – 2 Cor. 9:15
- 3.Our deep need of it – Romans 6:23
- 4.How gratuitous the offer – Romans 4:5, 10:13

In this brief passage of the Word of God, seven short phrases stand out, any one of which would provide material for many hours of Bible Study. They are:

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1. "Spared not"
 2. "own Son"
 3. "Delivered up"
 4. "for us all"
 5. "with him"
 6. "freely give"
 7. "all things"

Two of these demand our special attention in this volume: "spared not" and "delivered up." In His love and compassion for doomed sinners, God "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

The words "spared not" have a rough, _____ sound. Despite our Lord's divine and essential majesty, despite His infinite and perfect holiness, despite the humiliation He had already endured for sinners, despite the agonized prayer, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," despite the "exceeding sorrow," the bloody sweat, the "strong crying and tears," despite the infinite disgrace and agony involved – despite all this the Father spared Him not, but delivered Him up to bear a load that would have sunk a world to hell.

We can understand how even a merciful God "spared not the angels that sinned" in those day of antediluvian wickedness. We can understand how He "spared not the old world" with its vile revelry and godlessness. We can understand how He "spared not" Israel, "the natural branches" of His olive tree when they stood by the awful deed committed at Calvary. But the infinite purpose and grace that impelled Him not to spare His own sinless, spotless Son but to deliver Him up for us all, that we might be spared – this is utterly beyond comprehension. "Rooted and grounded in love," we should ever keep measuring "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of this, God's great purpose in Christ.

The words "delivered up," in our text, have the idea of giving up, or giving over to another, or to another's power – as a last necessity. Could a million worlds have paid for man's sin, God would gladly have robbed the heavens of them, or spoken a million more into space, but material transactions cannot fright moral wrongs, much less can they impart spiritual life. The price of man's redemption could be nothing less than the suffering and death of Christ, God's beloved Son.



As we ponder all this we begin to see the power of Paul's argument as to the infinite character of God's love for us.

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH HIM ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?” Romans 8:32

God has “saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and (His own) grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Timothy 1:9

It is because those who love God are “the called according to His purpose” that He works all out for their good. It is on this _____ alone that we can say with confidence: “if God be for us, who can be against us?” What if some have gone to one-sided and unscriptural extremes in this matter? This should not harden our hearts to what God has said about it. Rather than questioning these truths and minimizing “the glory of His grace,” let us stand amazed and grateful that He has saved us.

But if verses 31 and 32 are the text, verses 33-34 are the sermon – with a four-fold assurance for wavering believers of our eternal security in Christ. Consider the four headings carefully:

1. “Who Shall Lay Anything to the Charge of God's Elect? The answer: “It is God that justifieth” (verse 33), and this is what really matters.
2. “Who is He That Condemneth?” Again the answer: “It is Christ that died” (verse 34). He paid the penalty for our sins that we might not be condemned. But more:
3. “Yea, Rather, That is Risen Again” (verse 34). We have seen at Romans 4:25 that as our Lord died to pay the debt of our sins, He arose again to prove that the debt was fully paid. Who, then, can condemn us?
4. “Who is Even at the Right Hand of God, Who Also Maketh Intercession For Us” (verse 34). How can we be condemned while God's precious Son, our Savior, appears in His presence on our behalf?

What blessed assurance for the fainting believer! True, Satan accuses, the Law condemns, and our hearts acknowledge that daily we sin in thought, in word and in deed. But our glorious Lord defeated Satan and the Cross, making a show of him openly (Col. 2:15), and as to the Law, He took that out of the way, “nailing it to His cross” (Col. 2:14). As to the sins, our hearts must continually acknowledge, has not God justified us, did not Christ die to pay our debt and rise to prove it paid- and does He not intercede for us at this very moment? Let us then put aside our doubts and fears, rejoicing that “if God be for us” we are eternally secure.

Does this promote lax conduct in the believer? Indeed not. In fact God's infinite grace to us offers the greatest possible incentive to holy living, an incentive that the Law could not possibly provide. Let us not tell God what we think will promote godly or more careless conduct among His people! He says that it is His grace that "teaches," or disciplines us to live "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

But Paul is not yet through _____ the believer's security in Christ. In closing this important section of his Epistle to the Romans, he takes us from the courtroom to the Father's house, as it were, where we learn the final lesson as to this precious truth.

WHO SHALL SEPARATE US?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35-39

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Could the believer possibly have greater assurance of his eternal security than this? It is significant that the Apostle Paul never tells us about his love for Christ, but he is always telling us about Christ's love for him and for others! The Law commands: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," but grace puts it the other way, telling us how deeply God loves us – and this begets love in return. "We love Him because He first loved us." Paul experienced discouragements that would have caused him to give up the work of the Lord a thousand times, but he could not. Why? He says, "the love of Christ constraineth us;" it bore him along like a strong tide. No doubt he had this very thing in mind when he continued writing in Romans 8.

"For Thy sake we are killed all the day long...accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (verse 36)

And therefore defeated? Far from it! Listen:

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (verse 37)

Not only do we win the battle; we are “more than conquerors,” for these _____ serve to draw us into still closer fellowship with Him, thus enriching our Christian experience.

Thus this great chapter opens with “no condemnation” and closes with “no separation,” and Paul, gathering all the forces of creation together, whether they be time, space, or matter, declares that none of them can separate us from “the love of God, which is (manifested) in Christ Jesus.” Whether it be death or life, heavenly principalities, things present or to come, height or depth or any created thing, none of them, nor all together, can threaten our security or separate us from the love of God, which He has manifested to us in Christ Jesus.

The work which His goodness began,
The arm of His strength will complete;
His promise is “Yea and Amen”
And never was forfeited yet.

Things future and things that are now –
Not all things below, nor above,
Can make Him His purpose forego,
Or sever my soul from His love.

-Augustus M. Toplady