

Leader's Guide

LESSON 14

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on December 9th.

Romans 8:26-28 **Grace for Waiting**

Key Points

The ill effects of a fallen world impact all of us. In the last week's passage we addressed the groaning that takes place in the midst of suffering. We know what it means to live in a fallen world as we wait for the glory that is yet to be. And we are not alone in our grief. In this passage, we will discover:

- The work of the Spirit in our weakness
- The “groaning” of the Spirit as he intercedes on our behalf
- God's relationship with the Holy Spirit
- The prayers of the Spirit, who desires to accomplish God's will for us
- That God is sovereignly managing all things even now

We often bear grief alone, or so we think. Many times we have grieved over death, relational loss, and over the guilt and consequences of our sin. This type of pain is so deep that we find ourselves unable to speak. In our weakness we are at a loss for what to do...we don't even know how or what to pray. Yet the Triune God (Father, Son and Spirit) is actively engaging one another on our behalf to accomplish what the Father has in mind—his perfect will for us.

Personal Reflection

This passage exposes the intimate work of the Spirit on our behalf, the relational connection between the Father and the Spirit and the providence of God in our lives. As you prepare for this week's lesson, take time to meditate on the truths of these three verses in the context of your life's circumstances. Recall the times when you were carried by the prayers of the Spirit—the times when you could not pray—and the times you could see evidence of God's sovereign control of situations. Spend some time in worship, thanking each member of the Trinity for their engagement on your behalf.

You might want to ask your group to share stories about a time in their life when, in retrospect, they knew the Holy Spirit was interceding on their behalf or controlling events. You might want to end your time in worship and thanksgiving for God's grace for waiting.

Discussion Questions

1. Verse 26 says “the Spirit helps us in our weakness.” In light of the preceding verses about our sinful nature and the Spirit's greater influence (“control”) AND our continuing “suffering” in this life AND our “waiting” for the glory that is to come, what might “our weaknesses” be?
2. Occasionally we suffer losses in life, which bring about a loss for words. The pain is so deep we have nothing to say, and the words of others don't offer relief. Our weakness is evident when we are at such loss that we do not know how to pray. What ways do we and/or should we respond in our weakness?
3. The Holy Spirit doesn't approach our needs with emotional detachment; he groans as well, interceding to the Father on our behalf. In the “groaning” what is he communicating to the Father? What do you think the Father is communicating to the Spirit?
4. Describe a time when you know that the Holy Spirit interceded for you personally. What was the result? How do you relate this to God's will?
5. Relational intimacy occurs when we share deep thoughts and/or emotions and the other person understands and responds with like passion. What would happen to the relationship if we never acknowledged the connection, never appreciated the response?
6. Have you ever thought about the silent work of the Spirit and the communication that goes on about you between the Father, Son and Spirit? Would the revelation of those “conversations” draw you closer into relationship with the Triune God? What is your response to such love? (*worship*)
7. The Spirit intercedes for us in order to accomplish God's will. Do you trust in God's perfect will for your life? Why or why not?
8. “In all things God works for the good...” What is this verse NOT asserting and what is it asserting? Is this promise for all people? Why or why not?
9. Are we promised that we will see or understand the “good?” What difference does this make?
10. Sometimes we do “see” God's sovereign hand at work in our circumstances. Can you describe such a time?