

More Than

Week 6: Hope in the Waiting

Romans 8:22-27

Yesterday, I hit a 425-day streak of doing at least one Spanish lesson each day in Duolingo. I've wanted to learn Spanish for a long time, so I've been working through the lessons and giving it a try.

And, I don't think I'll ever be fluent. I just want to be able to hold basic conversations, so I've asked our Iglesia Hispana team to talk to me in Spanish, but like I'm a toddler. And I try to reply in Spanish...and it comes out like I'm a toddler! I'm slow, I get my tenses wrong, mix up my words.

And they just look at me like, "Ay, pobrecito," which is the Spanish equivalent of "Bless his heart, he's trying!"

I think there are times in our faith when we kind of feel the same way. We want to talk to God, we want to have a conversation with Him and tell Him what's on our hearts, but the words just won't come out. There are times when I've been praying and I'm stumbling and stammering. I don't know what to say or how to say it. I can't find the words to capture what I'm feeling in my heart.

But, I think our text today has some really good news for those of us who have ever found ourselves in that place. What we're going to see is that, when we can't find the words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us. That God perfectly understands what we're praying for, even when the only thing that comes out of us is a groan or a tear.

We're in week 6 of our series through Romans 8 where we're going verse by verse through one of the most important and powerful chapters in all of Scripture. And, before we get to where we're going today, I want to spend just a few moments looking back at where we've been.

Romans 8:1 (READ) – We are more than our guilt. Through faith in Jesus, we can be forgiven and set free.

Romans 8:6 (READ) – We are more than who we used to be. The Holy Spirit renews our hearts and minds, bringing us new life and peace.

Romans 8:14 (READ) – We are more than loved by God, we belong to His family. We are His children.

Romans 8:18 (READ) – We are more than temporary beings. We were made for eternity, and one day, we will dwell with God forever, and there will be no more weeping or mourning or pain.

But we're not there yet. So, in the meantime, Paul tells us in our text today that:

Romans 8:26 (READ)

Put another way...**the Holy Spirit translates our sighs into the language of Heaven.**

When we are confronted with the painful reality of this world we live in, and we come face to face with our inability to fix it, often times, what comes out of us is this deep sigh. And it's not a sigh of resignation; it's a sigh of helplessness. We want to do something, but we don't know what to do or how to do it, and so we just sigh a prayer that goes something like this..."Oh, Lord."

And Paul wants us to know that our sighs are not wasted. The Holy Spirit collects them and takes them before the Father on our behalf. And He translates them to our God who understands the language of our pain because Jesus experienced it with us. Jesus knows what it's like to live in this world that is crying out for God to finish the work of redemption He started through Christ.

And in our text, Paul says that all of this pain is leading to something better than we can imagine. Look at it again with me...**(READ Romans 8:22-25)**

Vs. 22 - Creation isn't groaning because it's dying. It's groaning because something new is being born. These are birthing pains. The world is aching for renewal. And we feel it, too.

Vs. 23-25 – For those who are in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit, living in us, which Paul says in Ephesians 1 is a deposit God put down in us to guarantee our inheritance that is to come. But for now, even with the Holy Spirit in us, we still ache for what is not yet finished. That's the tension of the Christian life.

The Christian life is lived between groaning and glory. We have hope for what will be, even while we live in the "not yet."

It's kind of like Christmas morning for a kid. Kids wake up on Christmas morning, jump out of bed, run into the room and see all the gifts under the tree. Those gifts belong to them, but they can't open them yet. They have to wait on their parents. So, they go wake them up, but then they have to wait on them to get up, get dressed, make their coffee. Meanwhile, the kids are eagerly waiting to open their gifts!

That's where we live right now. We have the promise and hope of Heaven, but here and now, we have the very painful reality of living in a broken and fallen world. A world that sometimes make us groan in agony while we wait for God to redeem, restore, and renew all things.

And while we wait, we walk through some heaving things in life that can sometimes leave us speechless. There are times when we see the evil and pain in our world, things that aren't right and seem so unfair. We want to do something to make the world right and to take away the pain that people feel, but we don't know what to do. And even when we try to pray, the only thing that seems to come out of us is just a sigh and some tears.

But in our text, Paul says, "That's more than enough" because the Holy Spirit translates those sighs and tears into the language of Heaven. And God works and moves in our world those wordless prayers. They actually become a part of what He is doing to redeem and restore this broken world.

So, what do we do while we wait for all things to be made new? **We stand in prayer where the world is in pain.**

While we patiently wait for God to bring about new creation, we join His redemptive work of righting the things that sin has made wrong. And one of the ways we do that is by simply standing in the gap where the world is in pain. Praying, "Lord, your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

God's desire is for us to partner with Him in what He's doing to restore what sin has broken. And somehow, even our wordless prayers become a part of what He is doing to redeem the world. He is using your prayers, and groans, and tears to bring new creation while we wait for our ultimate redemption.

And so, our calling as followers of Jesus is not to avoid, or escape, the world's suffering. Our calling is to stand in it with others in humility, and sorrow, and hope. As we live between groaning and glory, our calling is to stand in prayer where the world is in pain.

We want to spend some time doing that now...(lead into time of prayer)

- Relax, get into physical posture of prayer.
- “Don’t know how to pray.” – Text today, prayer can be as simple as sighing. If you know how to breath, you know how to pray.

Prayer Prompts

1) Silence – pay attention to where your mind wanders.

2) Think about a place of pain in our world (division in our country, wars, famine). Take some deep breaths and exhale. Even if you have no words, the Spirit does. He prays through your sighs, so let Him translate them into the language of Heaven for you.

3) Bring it a little closer to home. People you know who are in pain right now. Take some deep breaths and exhale. Don’t feel like you need to use words, but if you want, you can simply cry out, “Lord Jesus, have mercy.”

4) Where do you feel pain today? Loss of hope or expectation. Disillusioned by something or someone? A relationship that’s not where you want it to be. Your own health? “Come, Lord Jesus.”

Closing

As we think about all the pain and sighs and waiting in our world, I find myself grateful, once again, that Jesus entered into this very same world and experienced the same pains and struggles and heartache that we do.

He didn’t avoid our pain, or stay distant from it. He stepped right into it, fully human and fully divine, and He stood in the place of pain for us. He bore our sin, our sorrow, and our shame on the cross so that, one day, all of our groaning will give way to glory.

And if you’re here today, walking through this world on your own, this hope that we have in Jesus, it can be yours, too. You don’t have to face the pains of this world alone. Jesus is

inviting you to come to Him, to find rest and forgiveness and new life in Him. And if you're ready to take that step, we're ready for you.

Communion

Communion reminds us of the One who entered our pain, bore it fully on the cross, and will one day return to make all things new.