

# Couldn't Have Made It Without Him

## Romans 8: 26-27

November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009



Have you ever been in a situation where you told someone (or thought it) that you wouldn't have made it if they hadn't been there? I don't mean flippantly; I mean that you really realize that the person standing with you made a difference in the outcome of the situation. Or, maybe you have been in a situation and you knew the outcome was directly affected and changed because you knew someone was praying for you.

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the gospel of Luke, Peter had one of those moments. Jesus is getting ready to go to Gethsemane, and the disciples are arguing over which the greatest is. Jesus told them what was going to happen to Him, and Peter pledged loyalty to Him. He looked at Peter and said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Peter told Him that he would go to prison with Him and lay his life down for Him! But Jesus told him that before the night was over and the cock crowed, he would deny Him three times. Peter fully believed that night that it would be God's will for him to lay his life down for Jesus. What he didn't realize was that God's will was for Jesus to lay

His life down for Peter, and for us. I have to believe that later in Peter's ministry he looked back and realized how powerful the prayer of Jesus was, because while he made a mistake and denied the Lord three times, his faith did not fail.

The Bible is full of stories where people actually intercede on behalf of others, like Jesus did for Peter. Abraham interceded for Sodom and his nephew Lot. Moses interceded for the children of Israel after they made the golden calf and God was going to consume them. An intercessor is someone who stands in the gap; someone who stands alongside; someone who stands in between two others.

I believe that Romans 8:26-27 is often neglected. I mean, I think sometimes it has to be tough when you live next door to someone or someplace really famous. You have heard of Winston Churchill, but have you heard of the guy that followed him in office? There is hardly anyone! Most of you can quote John 3:16, but can you quote John 3:17? There are only a few. Everyone knows Romans 8:28, but hardly anyone knows verses 26 and 27. In all of my years in the Church, I don't know if I have ever heard a sermon preached on these verses, and they are absolutely amazing!

## **Scripture**

***"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."***

## **Jesus Intercedes for Us**

I think most of us realize the New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ is right now sitting at the right hand throne of God making intercession for you and I (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Romans 8:34). The book of Hebrews introduced Jesus as our High Priest, and because He lives continually, He continues to make intercession for us. Because He lives to make intercession for us, we are saved completely, to the uttermost, to the very end. Because of the work of Jesus Christ on a cross, you don't have to worry about your salvation. It does not rest on you and what you do; it rests totally on what God has done for you in Christ. He is sitting at the right hand throne of God and is interceding for you; He is sitting there on your behalf. Hebrews 4 taught that in order to be our High Priest and sympathize with us, He had to take upon a flesh just like ours. In other words, Jesus Christ, the God-man, had a body that was weak just like yours. He was tempted just like you, yet without sin, so that He could sympathize with us. The word, *sympathize*, means 'to suffer with.' He took upon Himself a body like ours and faced temptation so that He could suffer like we suffer. He did this so that right now, at the right hand of God, He understands every temptation you face! I have to say that He understands it more fully than you do. When it comes to temptation, most of us never pay the full price; we give in. We don't know what it would have been like if we had gone a little deeper and resisted longer. Jesus went to the depth of temptation, yet never sinned.

- **Grace and Mercy**

You don't know what it does to my heart to know that at all times, Jesus never goes to sleep. He is at the Father's right hand side and is interceding there on my behalf. That is why Hebrews 4:16 tells me to come boldly to the throne of grace! Grace is not merely opportunity and provision, it is God's enabling power; it is God's ability. It is God doing for you what you cannot do for yourself, so that you can now do what

He did, and that is to live the life that He has ordained for you to live. In the midst of temptation, I know that I have a High Priest who is interceding for me. So I need to go to the throne, and in the nick of time, I will find mercy and grace!

Mercy is the ability to get over what you have done, and grace is the ability to get on with the rest of your life! You have a Savior who sits at the right hand of God, and anytime you are in a place of temptation, you can go to the throne of grace. If you've already blown it, you will receive mercy and He will give you grace to get over it and get on with the rest of your life for the glory of God. When I think about Christ interceding up above me in the heavens, it is a tremendous thought! The reason Peter couldn't fail was because he had Jesus praying for him. How can we feel like failures when we have Jesus praying for us? Do you understand that? He isn't there saying, *ok Father, forgive them, forgive them, forgive them*. He has already forgiven us! He is there interceding on our behalf, not for forgiveness, but for the ability to get over what has happened to us and get on with our life. Do you believe that God will answer that prayer or not? He will answer it.

## **The Holy Spirit Intercedes for Us**

Now Romans 8:26 and 27 introduces something amazing alongside that truth. Not only is Jesus in Heaven interceding for me, I have the Holy Spirit within me who is interceding for me...wow! The intercessory ministry of Jesus means that God fully understands your temptations. Don't ever think you face a temptation situation that God doesn't understand; He fully understands it. But these verses aren't dealing with our temptation to sin; it is dealing with our suffering. I think we understand that Jesus understands how we have been tempted, but I don't think we realize that God understands our suffering. Do you believe that God is exempt from suffering? The Bible is teaching that just as Jesus understands the extent of your temptation, the Holy Spirit of God understands the extent of your suffering. Yet, sometimes the

thought goes through our mind that God doesn't understand. Sometimes because of how a situation turns out, it makes us also wonder if He cares, or if He really loves us. Am I close here, or am I missing it? About the only time these verses are spoken of in the Church, it is spoken out of context. The context is in the midst of suffering; us living in a body that is weak and frail, and it suffers. God has ordained suffering to actually be a path to our future glorification to Jesus Christ. It actually teaches that we will not become like Christ without suffering to a certain degree. The Bible says that in the midst of that suffering, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

- **Help of the Spirit**

When you look at this word, "*helps*", it looks like a simple little word. It is a compound word in the Greek. Normally, we think of a compound word as taking two words and putting them together to form a new word. But this is actually a triple compound word; three different Greek words have been put together to form a new word. But the English translators have taken this big word and translated it with the little word "*helps*." The word in the Greek is ***sunantilambanetai***, meaning: (***sun***) to come in alongside of, (***anti***) and stand in the place of, (***lambanetai***) to take hold of, to bear, or to remove. WOW! The Bible says that in the midst of our weakness of having a body, while we are waiting for this new body to get here, I have Someone who comes in alongside and stands with me and takes hold of whatever I am in, to either help bear it or to remove it! That is amazing! We need a helper like that because sometimes in the midst of our circumstances that involve suffering, we really don't know how to pray. That doesn't mean we have forgotten to fall on our knees, close our eyes, or open our heart to God. Have you ever bowed in prayer, but because of the circumstances you're in, you just don't know what to say to God? You understand the character of prayer, but you don't understand the content of prayer; you have no idea what to ask for right now. The reason you don't know what to ask for is because in certain situations more than others, you don't want

your will, you want God's will to be done. Ultimately, there are some things you could ask for that might not bring what is best for you or the person you are praying for. You know how it looks to you right now, but you really don't know whether to ask for that or not because you don't really know if that is what is best. But you trust your Father has a will and His will is best. Most of us in that position stop praying, get up, and feel frustrated. We feel hopeless and don't know what to do. The Bible is teaching not to get up, don't quit praying! Know that when you are at the end of you and don't really know what to ask God for, you have the Holy Spirit of God, who has been given to you as the first installment of your salvation, interceding for you.

- **Groanings of Suffering**

The Bible says, "...with groanings too deep for words." This verse is not teaching about biblical glossolalia. It isn't talking about the Holy Spirit articulating words that we do not understand. This is talking about the Holy Spirit who lives within you, who has come in alongside you during this moment of intense suffering, is suffering with you. He is sensing the extent of your suffering, and because you are groaning, He groans, and these groans that He has are deeper than any words could articulate. There is a difference in a believer who is in an unredeemed body that groans because of his suffering, and a believer who grumbles because of his suffering. When I am grumbling, I don't think it is fair, I don't think it is right. I don't think I or the person that I am praying for deserves what I am going through. But when I am groaning, I am under a tremendous load, I have a tremendous burden. That burden is so heavy that I can't articulate it with words, but I just find myself sighing and groaning and desiring to stand up under the intensity of it, and the Holy Spirit groans! This tells me that there is merit to my pain. There is real merit to my suffering. Don't ever look at me and say I am being a baby! I am not being a baby, because the situation that I'm in is not only affecting me, it is affecting the Holy Spirit within me. Because I don't know what to pray for, He does. But because He is with me in my

groanings, without me realizing it, He is bearing the burden, He is bearing the load.

In the Greek language, 'to groan' is the word picture of two guys facing each other on the ends of a log. You couldn't pick up a log by grabbing it in the middle, but if you get on one end and the other guy gets on the other end, together you could do it. That is the picture here. What comes your way in life is not designed by God to defeat you. It has been designed by God to mold you and shape you into the image of Jesus Christ. God knows there are just some situations that you couldn't face by yourself. This isn't about a temptation to sin; it is a pure unadulterated suffering. Don't ever believe that what you go through does not affect God. I have read many commentaries that suggest this couldn't be God groaning, but the Bible clearly says the Holy Spirit groans with groanings that are too deep for words. When you are in the midst of suffering and don't know what to pray, don't get up off of your knees. Don't shut the door to your God, but continue to pray without ceasing. When you don't know the will of God, trust that the Bible is true and the Holy Spirit knows why you can't pray.

## **God Knows the Heart**

Verse 27 says, "*And he who searches the heart knows that mind of the Spirit...*" The Spirit of God is within me and He is suffering along with me. Many times in the Bible, God is identified as the God who knows the hearts. Samuel went to Jessie's family, and thought Abinadab was the one. God told Samuel that he wasn't the one, and not to look on the outside appearance because God knows the heart. God looks within. In 1 Kings 8, Solomon was dedicating the temple and he prayed to the God who knows the hearts of all the children of mankind. Then in 2 Chronicles 28:9 when David was dying and Solomon would succeed him, David reminded him to search the Lord with all of his heart because God knows the hearts of all men.

- **God Hears the Spirit's Prayer**

The God who knows your heart and the heart of all people, in the midst of their suffering, also knows the mind of the Spirit. The Spirit of God, who knows what you are going through; while He is groaning, His mind is known and read by our Father! Father is not listening to your mind that says you don't know what to do or ask for; He goes directly to the mind of the Spirit. While He is groaning, the Spirit of God is praying, He is interceding for you, a saint, who has been set apart for the glory of God according to the will of God. Isn't this amazing? Do you think the Father will say no to the Holy Spirit of God? No, because the Holy Spirit of God will never ask God for anything that isn't according to His will.

There are times I pray and I know the will of God, and that's awesome. But there are times when I don't know the will of God, but I don't quit praying. I pray, trust, and depend upon my Intercessor who is within me. When everyone else goes home, as a believer, you are never alone. God is always there with you, bearing with you everything that you bear, and praying about how this thing you are in the midst of will be used by God to ultimately make you just like Jesus Christ.