

Groaning under the Curse # 27

Romans 8: 18-27

As we have journeyed through Romans, Paul has spoken a great deal about the struggles we face in life due to our sinful nature. The saved are assured of a glorious future, but we remain in a body prone to sin and live in a world that lies under the curse of sin. These struggles will continue as long as this world remains and men inhabit it.

You may have noticed as we read the text, the word or idea of groaning was mentioned several times. In fact, Paul reveals that the entire creation of God groans under the curse of sin. The believer continues to groan because of sin and the detrimental affect it has on humanity and creation. We also discover that the Holy Spirit also groans in relation to sin. As we consider each of these groaning, we will find they are very similar in nature, but unique as well.

I hope our study today will help us understand the struggles we face, as well as equip and encourage us while dealing with those struggles. I want to examine the particular [expressions](#) Paul reveals as we consider the thought: [Groaning under the Curse](#).

I. The Groaning of the Creation (18-22) – In these verses Paul addresses the continued groaning of creation under the curse of sin. The summary verse is: [V.22 – For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now](#). This groaning has the idea of “*groaning or sighing under a burden*.” Consider:

A. The Attitude (18) – [For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us](#). Having just spoken of the great and precious promise of being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Paul reminds us to maintain a proper attitude while dealing with the struggles of life and sin in particular. He doesn't imply that we will come to the place where we are able to escape the sufferings of life. In fact, he implies those struggles will remain, but they will in no way compare to the future glory we will experience. We must keep a proper attitude as we deal with struggles and remember they won't last forever!

B. The Affliction (20) – [For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope](#). Here Paul speaks of the fall in sin. As Adam fell in sin, all of creation fell under its curse. The peace and harmony of creation was tainted by the effects of sin. Adam's disobedience affected all of creation.

- Paul reveals that creation was made subject to vanity. This literally means “*disappointing misery*.” It has the same idea as the Hebrew word found numerous times in Ecclesiastes. It describes an event or action that doesn’t produce the desired result. It doesn’t measure up to what was expected originally. Adam did not understand the severity and far reaching consequence of his action.

C. The Analysis (22) – [For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.](#) As Adam ate the fruit in disobedience, all of creation fell under the curse of sin. None escaped the reach of the curse. All of creation groans and travails in pain together. We all share in the burden of sin and the dreaded consequence it brings. Life and death are apparent in every form of life and creation. It has been thousands of years since the fall of man, and yet we continue to deal with the curse of sin.

D. The Anticipation (19, 21) – [For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.](#) ^[21] [Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.](#) Although we are born in sin and live in a world that suffers under its curse, we look forward to the time when all of creation will be released from the heavy grip of sin. This refers back to [v.18](#). We are forced to deal with the burden and curse of sin while in this life, but the curse of sin will not last forever. We can look forward to that time with earnest expectation. J.B. Phillips said this, “*The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.*” ⁱ [Rev.22:3 – And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:](#)

II. The Grieving of the Christian (23-25) – As we continue in the text, Paul narrows his focus from all of creation to the believer. He declares that we groan within ourselves. This groaning is very similar and yet unique. It speaks of a person “*groaning under distress and affliction.*” It has the idea of “*being squeezed or pressed by circumstances.*” Consider:

A. The Agony (23) – [And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.](#) This groaning under the burden of sin is not limited to the creation of God or those who are yet unsaved. Those who are the first-fruits of the Spirit, the saved by grace, also endure this groaning.

- As we were saved by grace, we were inhabited by the Holy Spirit. He serves many roles in our lives, and one of those is to convict of sin. We are no longer insensitive or uncaring about sin and its consequences. We are now keenly aware of it, and it grieves our hearts.

- Paul spoke of this in the previous chapter. He struggled with sin and longed to be set free from it, fully and finally. He knew this would not happen in this life, but he longed for the day he would be freed from the struggle and agony of sin. [Rom.7:24 – O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?](#)

B. The Assurance (24a) – [For we are saved by hope](#). Although we deal with a continual and difficult struggle with sin, we have assurance of deliverance. We are saved by hope. Now, don't confuse this with a modern definition of hope. Many today think of hope as a wish or a desire, not something of absolute certainty. Paul does not imply that we can only wish we are saved without certainty. He reveals our salvation brings absolute assurance of deliverance from the body of flesh that is prone to sin and the sin cursed world in which we live. This speaks of earnest expectation of obtaining what was promised. It speaks of certainty, not possibility.

C. The Anticipation (24b-25) – [but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?](#) ^[25] [But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it](#). Paul speaks of hope that is founded upon faith. The hope believers possess isn't something tangible that we can hold in our hands. It isn't a physical or material presence, but a spiritual assurance. Paul declares that the believer, although surrounded by sin and continually struggling to overcome, has an assurance of complete salvation that he looks toward with great anticipation. He patiently endures the difficulties associated with the curse because he knows this world is not all there is for the believer. We will one day lay aside the body of flesh that is prone to sin and receive a new, glorified body as we enter the presence of our Redeemer and Lord.

- Each of us struggle with sin. We groan under the curse as we dwell in a body of flesh, but one day we will be set free from all our struggles. One glorious day our faith will end in sight. [Titus 2:13 – Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ](#). [Phil.3:21 – Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself](#).

III. The Guidance of the Comforter (26-27) – Finally Paul addresses the groaning of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide. The groaning of the Spirit is similar to the groaning of the creation and the believer, but it too is unique. It speaks of *sighing for the oppressed* and refers to *prayers that are offered on our behalf unto the Lord*. Notice:

A. The Assistance (26a) – [Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought](#). Paul was a giant of the faith. He had experienced the Lord's power in

mighty and miraculous ways, but he also understood our weakness in prayer. As we groan under the burden of sin, we struggle to obtain victory. Our minds and lives are so consumed with the cares we face that we don't even know how to pray effectively.

- Thankfully we have one who assists in times of our weakness. Even though we fail to pray properly or earnestly, the Spirit helps us in that He knows what we need and how to pray for us. As we face our day to day struggles, the Spirit is always there to assist us as we pray.

B. The Appeal (26b) – *but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Isn't that an amazing and comforting thought? When we are weak and weary in the journey, unable to pray or communicate our need to God as we should, the Spirit appeals to God on our behalf. He carries the burdens and needs of our heart to the throne room of God and speaks on our behalf.

- Surely we have all experienced those times when we were so burdened, we couldn't even pray. We were well aware of our need and our inability, but we could not find adequate words to express our need unto the Lord. Maybe all we could muster was a plea for help. In those times of great difficulty, the Spirit translates the burdens of our hearts unto a prayer before the Lord.

C. The Agreement (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.* This reveals a great blessing and benefit for the believer. Many times we pray and make our request unto the Father, but our prayers are not within God's will. In fact, there are times when we may offer a request that would not be beneficial to our spiritual need or according to God's divine purpose for our lives. The Lord provided a remedy for our inadequacy through the Spirit. He always prays according to the divine will of God. He will never seek the Lord on our behalf with anything that is contrary to God's will.

- Isn't it good to know that when we don't know how or what to pray, the Spirit steps in for us and prays according to the will of God? When He takes a petition before the Father, it is always in agreement with the plan and will of God. There is no reason to fear when we pray. The Spirit works alongside us and makes intercession for us. Our prayers lack wisdom, discernment, and zeal at times, but the Spirit translates those into prayers that are effective within the will of God.

Conclusion: We all struggle with the burden of sin. Our world is marred by the curse of sin. This struggle will continue until our Lord makes all things new. We will struggle with sin as long as we live in a body of flesh. While we don't have all the answers for the questions of life or the strength we need to continue in the journey, we have a companion who is ever near. The Spirit is always

there to lead and guide our lives. He takes our burdens before the Father on our behalf. He always seeks God's will in our lives. While we face difficulty, we are never alone.

All people struggle with the burden of sin, but only the saved have the benefit of the Spirit working for them. If you are unsaved, you face the same difficulties, but without the benefit and help of the Spirit. Jesus is the answer to the need you face. Seek Him in salvation. Your struggles will continue, but you will not have to make the journey alone!

ⁱ John Phillips Commentary Series, The - The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Romans: An Expository Commentary.