

Christ Our Sanctification #3

by Ed Miller

The sermon teaches that Christ is our sanctification, encouraging believers to focus on Him for freedom from sin and holiness concerns.

Duration: 59:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 6:14, Romans 8:2-3, Romans 8:18, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for understanding the Bible. He explains that while we need to apply the laws of human language to study the human side of the Bible, there is also a spiritual side that can only be understood through the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages believers to reflect on their past experiences and the grace that has brought them this far, reminding them that they are waiting for the adoption and redemption of their bodies. He also urges believers to study holiness, righteousness, and the will of God in order to live a spirit-filled life.

Transcript

Well, good evening again, brothers. Ask it open, please, to Romans chapter 8, if you would. As we come to the study of God's Word, there is a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable.

And that principle can be expressed many ways, but it boils down to total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit, upon God the Holy Spirit. And He is the only one that can take this book and show us the Lord Jesus through it. Our Lord Jesus, like this Bible, is human and divine.

And when we come to the human side of this book, we need to apply the laws of human language. And we need to be diligent, and we need to understand what paragraphs are and what sections are and chapters and so on. But there's also another side to this book.

It's a spiritual side. And the natural man, and I'm not talking about the unsaved person, I'm talking about any person who comes naturally. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit.

They're spiritually discerned, and only God's Spirit can teach them. And we need to understand that every time we come because God is the one that teaches us. He's promised He would minister to us.

Let's just bow together again and commit our time unto Him. Our Father, we thank You again this evening for the great privilege we have to handle, to touch the great treasures of Christ. And we would ask You

again tonight by Your grace to minister Him unto us.

You know our hearts and our hungers and our needs, our capacities. You know where we are and where we ought to be. You're able to take the same Word and speak it differently to every heart.

And so we'd ask You, Lord, to minister unto us and speak. And whatever revelation we need of Yourself, we pray that we might see that. And then, Lord, not just be those who see, but that we might then by simple faith appropriate a full Christ.

Enable us tonight, Lord, to hear Your voice, to see Christ. And as You propose Him to us, may we receive Him. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Alright, once again, Romans 6-8. We're looking at the Lord Jesus as our sanctification.

A great section on the unfinished work. Romans 6, we've suggested, presents the finished part of the unfinished work. And the finished part of the unfinished work is His sanctification.

The Lord Jesus is victorious. He is dead to sin. He is alive unto God in everything that those expressions mean.

Romans 7, as you know, gives us the unfinished part of the unfinished work. And we're all quite aware that there's an unfinished part. And we're it.

And we have not yet become what we're going to be. We're in process. He's conforming us into the image of His dear Son.

But it's not finished yet. And then Romans 8, God shows us how He will finish the unfinished work. And of course, it's by the blessed Holy Spirit.

And God has promised through that Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to us in a progressive way so that we'll continually be made like Him. Seeing the Lord Jesus in reality as our sanctification is designed to bring us into sweet liberty in the Lord, to set us free, to enable us to walk in a union with Christ and free from the cares of this earth. And I've suggested that Romans 6, 7, and 8 give us three great releases, three freedoms that issue from seeing Him as our sanctification.

And for our discussion and our analysis of it, here's the divisions again. Chapter 7, 1 through 8, 17. Christ is your sanctification.

Don't worry about sin. Chapter 8, 18 to 30. Christ is your sanctification.

Don't worry about holiness. And then finally, chapter 8. We'll look at it in the morning. 31 to 39.

Christ is your sanctification. Don't worry about anything. That's how he ends up in this glorious section.

Now if the Lord can bring us this weekend to even begin to view Him in such a way that we take our eyes off sin and we take our eyes off holiness and we take our eyes off everything except the Lord Jesus, then we haven't met together in vain. God has called us to see Him. This morning we meditated on that first truth.

Christ is your sanctification. Stop worrying about sin. Romans 8, 3. What the law could not do, that is, sanctify.

Christ did. Christ did. That's why Paul said, don't worry about sin because Christ has done that for us.

I don't know if you folks like poems. I enjoy poems. If any of you brothers write poetry, send it to me.

I love it. Christian poetry. Good.

Turn to Jesus kind. Here's one I picked up in an old book. To run and work the Lord demands, yet gives me neither feet nor hands.

Far greater news the Gospel brings. It bids me fly, then gives me wings. How about that? That's exactly so.

Exactly so. Chapter 8, verse 2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. Now, I want to make one comment on that before we move into the new section.

Many have illustrated this law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in terms of gravity and aerodynamics. And the idea is that the law of sin and death is like gravity and it holds you down. But God's given a new law.

The law of spiritual aerodynamics. And when that's applied, it's stronger than the law of sin and death and so on. Now, that's true as far as the illustration goes.

But the illustration breaks down. What God is saying here is far greater than some law of counteraction. That God has given you a law that's stronger than the other law.

He's not really saying that when He says the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and death. He doesn't save you by counteraction. He saves you by substitution.

That's not the same thing. That's another direction. And what He's saying is by the Spirit of life in Christ, He's not overpowering the old law.

He's replacing it. Replacing it with Himself. It's a new principle.

It's a new creation. It's a whole new realm. It's a whole new dimension.

And it's not an arm-wrestling match between God and Satan and God's winning. It's not that at all. It's a whole new life in Christ Jesus.

And that's what He's doing. Well, that's what we looked at this morning. Stop worrying about sin.

You're married to Jesus. Love Him. Stop worrying about sin.

He's achieved what the law could not achieve. Thank Him. Stop worrying about sin.

The Holy Spirit lives in you. Trust Him. Love Him.

Thank Him. Trust Him. And then you'll begin to see these things take place in your life.

Alright, that brings us tonight to the second issue of seeing Him as our sanctification. Stop worrying about holiness. Now, if your heart's like my heart, you might be saying, and when we touch on some of these concepts, if I stop worrying about sin, if I just seek Him, if I just love the Lord and thank the Lord and trust in the Lord, will that lead to personal holiness? Can you give me some assurance? Because I don't want to go off on the wrong step and then end up lazy and passive and slipshod and live a reckless life.

I want to be holy. And I want to be holy God's way. But there's sort of a little puzzle here.

And it seems a little confusing. You sort of feel like Daniel in the lion's den. And you say, I know there's a real enemy.

There's no question about that. There's a real enemy. And I know I want personal victory.

And somehow, like Daniel, I'm bound hand and foot. And I know there's got to be a battle, but I know somehow I'm not in it. Because I'm bound hand and foot.

Sort of like that man in Matthew 12 with the withered hand. And the Lord Jesus said, stretch forth your hand. There's mystery in that, you know, when you stop to think about it.

Somehow, you ask, what's my part? There's the attempt to do the impossible. And that seems indispensable. And yet you know the power of God is indispensable too.

And you say, I know the attempt without God's power is worthless. But isn't it also true somehow that the power of God without the attempt is worthless? What's my part? Think of Saul. He's not a great illustration for a lot of things, so when you can use him positively, try to do it.

1 Samuel 16, 14-23. Like Saul, I find myself, now I'm applying this spiritually, giving over to violent moods and a turbulent spirit in uncontrollable passion. And maybe there was something to Saul's solution for that.

He called in the son of Jesse, the one who played the harp skillfully. 1 Samuel 16, 23. David would take the harp and play it with his hand.

And Saul would be refreshed and well. And the evil spirit would depart. Saul couldn't help himself, but he could call in David.

And when he called in David and David took that skillful harp, somehow that did something to Saul that changed him. I realize every illustration breaks down and that certainly does. But as far as it goes and as it applies to our victory, maybe there's something in that that there is victory.

But it's not in us. It's in another. The greater son of Jesse.

The Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes I feel like Saul and I just can't live without that harp. And I need to call in David.

I want to be holy. What should I do? So he said, well, if you want to be holy, study holiness. Study the principles of separation.

Study consecration. Self-denial. Want to be holy? Want to be righteous? Study righteousness.

The Spirit-filled life. The kingdom truth. Study that.

1 Thessalonians 4 says, this is the will of God, your sanctification. Alright, let's study the will of God. This is the will of God, your sanctification.

Brothers, this is what we need to look at tonight. Should we look at holiness? What should we do? What assurances can you give that to love Him and to thank Him and worship Him and to trust Him, that's enough. And the rest will come automatically.

Your heart says, I want to believe that. Prove it. Show me that because that's what I really want.

Well, the Apostle seems to give some evidences here that that's all you really need. You don't need to look at holiness. And it will come.

Let's look at those evidences. Now before we do that, let me give you the transition from where we were to where we're going. Chapter 8, verse 16.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, heirs also. Heirs of God.

Fellow heirs with Christ. If indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may be glorified with Him. He gives a series here of logical deduction.

He begins with the Spirit. See, in what we've looked at this morning in just a short time, Paul knew if they had the Spirit, the issue was settled. Once you have the seed of God, you're going all the way.

God doesn't have an unfinished symphony. God doesn't begin something that God doesn't complete. And if Paul could be assured that they have the Spirit, it's all settled for him.

He says, I know if you've got the seed of God, he that has the seed of God doesn't sin. And though you don't see it now, if you have the Spirit, if you're convinced of that, then Paul says, then it's settled. But he gives this series here, these dominoes, and he says, you have the Spirit, therefore you're children.

Children of God. And then he says, is that settled? Alright, if you're children, then you're heirs. Verse 17, if children, then heirs also.

Heirs of God, joint heirs, fellow heirs with Christ. Now, before we go on, make sure you lay hold of that. If I was to inherit a piano, what would I get? This is not deep, boys.

Thank you. I get a piano. If I was to inherit a stamp collection, what would I get? A gun collection, what would I get? A million dollar estate, what would I get? That's true.

A new house, ok. Nice try, Steve. He promised me when he's a trillionaire, he's going to buy me one, so I'm not going to let him off.

Get hold of this. You're heirs of God. What will you inherit? That's what he's saying.

Heirs of God. He is your inheritance. He is your portion.

And so, he says, you've received the spirit of adoption whereby that seed in you is crying out with the spirit of sonship. And that spirit in your heart cries out local church. Right? That spirit in your heart cries out missions, souls, evangelism, spiritual gifts, doctrine, theology, unity, holiness, heaven.

Abba Father. Now, you know what it calls out. He said, you've got the spirit in your heart and it's the spirit of sonship.

And it cries out, Abba Father. God's spirit in your heart is crying out for the relationship you long for. He's put that in your heart.

Now, back to the logic. He said, if you have the spirit, you're children. If you're children, then you're heirs.

If you're heirs, then he says, verse 17, that we may be glorified with Him. And he follows this. You have the spirit, then you're children.

You're children, then you're heirs. You're heirs, you're going to be glorified. Now, glance at verse 16 and 17.

You might say, hey, wait a minute. You left something out. The spirit, sonship, heirs, suffering, and then glory.

You say, there's a suffering there that precedes glory. Why did Paul put that in here? I enjoyed the list the other way by leaving that out. You see, we have the spirit of God and we're His children.

And if children, we're heirs. And if heirs, then we're going to have glory. But he sticks suffering in there too.

Now, what is this suffering that he's referring to in the context? Is he talking about the everyday hardships of life? The everyday troubles of life? The limitations that we have and the accidents and the financial responsibilities? The problems we go through? Disease and poverty and the single state or married state or whatever? Is he just talking about the everyday problems of life? One commentator I read said, he's talking about the problems of old age because he's talking about these things wearing away. I have a brother that writes to me every now and then. He likes to send me papers.

He's an aged saint from the Baltimore School of the Bible. Dr. Crasty. Maybe some of you know him.

And that brother sent me a paper entitled, Lesser Lights. That would have been beautiful from anybody, but from an old saint. I'll tell you, that touched my heart.

And he listed all these lesser lights. And he listed strength and memory and eyesight and hearing and mobility, possessions and loved ones. And in the paper he says, God keeps extinguishing my lesser lights.

He keeps putting them out. My eyes are growing dim. My memory is getting weak.

I can't walk like I used to walk. I can't hear like I used to hear. And now I'm going to quote off his paper.

This is his words. He said, God keeps extinguishing the lesser lights so the great light might have the supreme place. With the removal of the diversions of the lesser lights, old age has this privilege, having its fixed gaze on Christ alone.

How about that for old age? Is that what he's talking about here? The sufferings of old age? Or maybe it's the hardships that Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11 of ministry. The rejection and the opposition and the self-denial and the care for all the brothers and all the churches. I believe with all my heart, in the context, the suffering includes all of that.

But again, it's bigger than that. In the common sufferings of life, our Lord suffers with us. But something about this suffering, verse 17, we suffer with Him.

Something different about these sufferings that he's referring to here. I have an idea. It's the same as Philippians 3.10, that I might know Him.

The fellowship of His sufferings. What is that? Colossians 1.24, I rejoice in my sufferings. I do my share on behalf of His body in filling up what's lacking in the afflictions of Christ.

What sufferings are those? Now, to understand this suffering, let me first show you the relationship between grace and glory. And again, I don't expect I'm showing you anything you haven't already seen. But let's review it again.

What is the relationship between grace and glory? And the answer is this. Grace is glory in seed form. Grace is glory in seed form.

Glory is the fruit of grace. Grace is an unmerited revelation of Jesus. What's glory? It's an unmerited revelation of Jesus.

But oh, I'll tell you, when you see Him in glory, that full revelation, that sparkling of deity, God in His fullness, the sum total of all His attributes, you'll never find in the Bible glory listed as an attribute of God. It's not. It's the sum of His attributes.

He's love, but He's glorious in His love. He's wise, but He's glorious in His wisdom. He's strong, but He's glorious in His might.

God and glory are inseparable. Glory is an essential part of God. You realize God can't be God without glory? His life consists in His glory.

Grace is the foretaste of that glory. When grace grows up, what will it be? Glory. It's the same thing.

It's exactly the same thing. Now, it's important to understand this because every Christian is heading for glory. Every Christian begins with grace.

We move from grace to glory. Every step in grace is a forward step in glory because it's the same thing unfolding and unfolding and unfolding until finally you see Him as He is. That's glory.

But every step of grace is glory. Now watch. Every time you see Him as He is, you see the glory of God, and that hurts.

There's pain with that. There's suffering by seeing Jesus. Every time you see Him in reality in this book, you're going to suffer.

Why is that? Well, that's because 100% of everything in the world is contrary to the Lord Jesus Christ. It goes in another direction. You let wait until God begins to change you.

Every time you're transformed, you're transformed against the tide, against the current. You're spitting in the wind. It's going the other way and you find yourself outside the camp.

And the more you see Jesus, the more father's going to rise up against son and mother against daughter and daughter against mother, friend against friend. There's suffering in seeing Jesus. I'll tell you the most glorious occasion in all the earth, and that's seeing Jesus in this book.

I'll tell you. If you haven't experienced the reality of seeing Christ, I don't know anything sweeter than that. I've often said if God would deny me heaven, I speak as a fool, and just say you can have any event, any situation on earth, I'd choose my study any day.

More than standing before brothers and sisters, sharing. More than anything, I would choose my study. That's my heaven.

Seeing Jesus. Nothing sweeter than seeing Christ in this book. I'll tell you the most painful experience I've ever had.

Seeing Jesus in this book. Exactly right. There's suffering with that.

That change isn't like growing hair, you know, painlessly. When you see Christ in this book, He drags you through death. He makes you take rugged stands where you don't want to take rugged stands.

He changes your life and turns you around. Identification with the Lord Jesus not only identifies you with a holy Savior, but with a rejected Savior. And you'll find out soon enough that the path of the King is the path of the King's servant.

And the more you know the King, the more you're going to be identified with Him. The more you see Christ, you're going to have that sweet banishment of Patmos. And even God's people are going to rise up against you the more clearly you see Him.

I think that's the suffering He's talking about. I think He's saying you need to see Christ and you've got the Spirit of God. You're His child.

You're His child. You're an heir of God. You're an heir of God.

Well, you're going to experience these changes in this suffering through seeing Christ. And it's the suffering that leads to glory. And you're going to see Him in full view.

Look again at verse 18. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed. Again, this isn't the everyday sufferings of life.

He's not talking about breaking an ankle here or twisting a back or chemotherapy or anything like that. A failed business or some insult you've received. He's talking about seeing Christ.

And there's a glory in this suffering. It's the pain of being one with God. The pain of being like the Lord Jesus.

I used to think there's a great contrast here. And the idea is when you get to heaven and you see the glory and you see Christ, why, that's going to be so big that the crosses of earth are going to seem so little. What is sickness? And what's bereavement? And what is suffering and handicap and poverty? What's pain when you see Him? That will be like this.

But He's not saying that. He's not saying when you see Him, that will be like this. He's saying it's not worthy to be compared.

See, I just compared it. He says it's not even worthy to be compared when you see glory. And all of those changes that you're going through, He says once you see Christ, that's not even worthy to be compared.

What's He getting at by giving us this transition? You have the Spirit. You're His child. You're His child.

Then you're an heir. If you're an heir, you're going to suffer. But if you're going to suffer, you're going to have the glory.

He's trying to show you how sure your holiness is. And your first step is the guarantee of your last step. Have you begun in grace? Is there any evidence in your life that there's been any grace? Then you're

going to end in glory.

The sanctification of every believer is guaranteed. You have His Spirit. Then you're His child.

You're His child. Then you're an heir. You're an heir.

Then you're going to have these sufferings when you're changed. Then you're going to have glory. It's as logical as math and music.

To worry about holiness is like worrying whether the sun is going to come up or worrying if the Lord Jesus is going to return. Some Christians look at their lives and say, oh, it'll never happen. I'm not going to make it.

I'll never get holy. And He says, yes, you will. Now, let Me give you some evidence.

I'm not the first one to notice that there are three groanings. Everybody gets the same Allah. Three groanings in Romans 8. Chapter 8, 18-21, creation groans.

Chapter 8, 22-25, the Christian groans. Chapter 8, 26-27, the Holy Spirit groans. Those groanings tell a story, brothers.

You see, they're not three different groanings. They're all in sympathy. Creation is groaning for the same things Christians are groaning for.

And Christians are groaning for the same thing the Holy Spirit is groaning for. There's a sympathy here in all of these groanings. And they're all groaning for the sanctification of the Christ.

Let's look at each of these groanings. Chapter 8, verse 19, For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childhood together until now. What does it mean? Creation is groaning. What's it groaning about? How is it groaning? Well, some say that's the curse.

It's groaning because it's under a curse. Genesis 3, verse 17, When man sinned, cursed be the ground. Thorns and thistles it will bring forth.

Didn't Romans 8.20 say that it was subjected to futility not of its own will? See, the creation, they didn't have a vote whether or not they would be cursed. The squirrels and the birds and the bees and the monkeys, the animals, they didn't say, we choose to die. Write me down yes for that.

The ground didn't put up a vote and say, I decide I want to bring forth thorns and thistles and poison toadstools. Not at all. The earth didn't say, I just love to be violent.

I think I'll have some volcanoes and I'll have some tornadoes and have some hurricanes and all that kind of thing. I just love cold. I think I'll make an icy, desolate region.

And I love sand. I'll make some deserts. They didn't have that.

They're under a curse. And some say, see, creation's groaning. Some even suggest that the whole creation's written in the minor key now.

And you can hear the howling of the wind and the creaking of the trees and the croaking of the frogs and all the other eerie sounds in creation. It's all in the minor key and creation's groaning because it's under this tremendous curse. I don't think that's what the context is saying.

That's true. It's under a curse. I haven't seen a lot.

Some of you brothers have been to Hong Kong and everywhere else. You've seen a lot of God's creation. I saw Niagara Falls last year for the first time.

Oh my, that was a marvel. You know the thing that amazed me when I saw Niagara Falls? I thought I'd be looking up. I thought I'd see something coming down from the mountains or something.

And it's down there. You're looking down. But oh, that was marvelous for me to see that.

And I've been up to New Hampshire and Mount Washington there. And I saw the beautiful view. And once I went to Northern Ireland.

Of course, I lived in Newport. And you can stand right out on the cliff walk there and look out at that mighty ocean. Well, I looked sometime and I've seen the sunset and I've seen movies of under the ocean.

Some of you may be diving. You've been seeing marine things under there. What a creation! If that's under a curse, what's it going to be like when the curse is lifted? You know, how beautiful it is under a curse when we look down from lofty mountain grandeur and so on.

That's under a curse. Well, is that why creation is groaning? Chapter 8, verses 20 and 21. Like Mr. Crasty says, maybe it's just getting old.

And creation is groaning in terms of Psalm 102, verses 25 and 26. It's all going downhill. Of old thou didst found the earth.

The heavens are the work of thy hands. Even they will perish. Thou dost endure.

All of them will wear out like a garment. Like clothing, they will change them. Thou wilt change them and they will be changed.

Verse 21, it sure looks like creation is groaning to be set free. Maybe that's why it's groaning for itself. Because it's under this curse and it wants to be free.

And contrary to the evolutionists, it's not going up, it's going down. It's going the other way. It's wearing away.

Jonathan Edwards. Are you familiar with Jonathan Edwards? Of course, he's known for that great awakening in New England in 1734 and so on. He looked at it devotionally.

He said, I'll tell you why creation is groaning. The food in the gardens crying up to God and saying, Lord, please don't make me nourish that ungodly man. Can't I lodge in his throat? Can't I just choke the buzzard? And the air says, do I have to fill his lungs? And the air is groaning.

Why should I fill the lungs of the One that breathed out threatenings against my God? Cursings against God. And the earth cries out and says, can't we do what You allowed us to do in the days of Korah, Dathan and Abiram? Can't we open up and swallow them up? These wicked people in the air and the sea and the land and the storm. They're all wanting to destroy the floor.

Must I follow that lightning rod? Says the lightning. Can't I just hit that man's house and burn him up? And so on. And creation is groaning.

Well, I don't know if Jonathan Edwards was close. I think he had a good point. But that's not why Romans says creation is groaning.

If you miss the expression in hope in verse 20, you miss the heart of God on the creation's groaning. Creation is groaning in hope. In fact, in verse 22, it talks about the pains of childbirth.

Creation is like a pregnant woman. And it's travailing. It's groaning.

It's expecting something. There's hope there. And I'll tell you what it is it's groaning about.

Verse 19, for the revealing of the sons of God. Creation is not groaning for itself. It's amazing.

You know, we've been talking about sanctification. Three or four brothers came to me and said, could you just give me a definition of the word? What is sanctification? Maybe we should have started with that. What is sanctification? Well, let me just illustrate it for you.

My shoes, they're dirty, but they're sanctified. They're sanctified because they're on my feet, not on my head. That's what sanctification means.

When something fulfills the purpose for which it was created, set apart for that for which it was made, it's sanctified. A hammer is sanctified when it's pounding the head of a nail. If I take a coffee cup and pound a nail, the coffee cup is not sanctified.

If I put coffee in it, it's sanctified. You were made for Him. That's your element, the fellowship of God.

You were created and redeemed to be set apart unto Him. And when that happens, you're sanctified. Call attention to that because creation, the whole universe, was created for a purpose.

It was created to minister unto the sons of God, to serve the children of God. And it has never been sanctified. Creation fell from the purpose of its existence.

And creation is frustrated because creation was created to minister unto the children of God. And now creation has become an enemy. And it doesn't want to mess up your tomato garden.

It has to. It's not sanctified. And all these weeds grow.

And you're constantly fighting creation to stay alive. That's why you wear a scarf. That's why you wear a sweater.

That's why you live in a house, in a shelter. And there's germs everywhere. Creation is trying to get you.

Every time you move, it's coming after you. And the wind and the rain and the cold and the germs. Creation is groaning.

And it's saying, I want to fulfill the purpose for which I was created. Creation is not groaning for itself. Creation knows something you need to know.

Creation knows something I need to know. Creation knows you're going to be sanctified. Creation says, I'm waiting for the revealing of the sons of God.

Right now you're under a veil. And there's a process and it doesn't look like it. And we're wondering if it will ever happen.

The whole universe knows it will happen. And the whole universe is waiting and longing and groaning and expecting. And they're longing for the day.

And what a day it will be when God's people finally arrive. Day of life. Day of largeness.

Day of liberty for the people of God and for the whole creation. Ephesians 2.7 And we'll be on display for all eternity. See, we're saying, give me some evidence.

How do I know if I just love Jesus? And if I just thank Him and I just trust Him, how do I know I'm going to arrive? And I would suggest the whole universe knows it. We don't. The whole universe knows it.

And they're longing for it. They're waiting for it. Because when you're sanctified, creation gets sanctified.

And then God recreates it for the purposes for which He designed it. And for all eternity, creation is going to minister unto you. It's what it's made for.

What a day when creation is sanctified. There's another reason. 23 to 25 Not only this, we ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

In hope we've been saved. Hope that is seen is not hope. Why does one hope for what he sees? If we hope for what we see, if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we eagerly wait for it.

Not only is creation groaning because it knows you're going to be sanctified, but this verse says every Christian groans. And some of you brothers might say, oh good, I'm glad for that verse because I love to groan. And now I have a proof text that groaning is okay.

It doesn't say gripe. It says groan. And there's a difference between gripe and groan.

You know, you read the book of Numbers and nine times they had those famous murmurings. Discontent is the exact opposite of the groaning here. You realize every time you murmur or complain or show discontent, you're an atheist.

That's a practical denial of God. A practical denial of the sovereignty of God. You complain about the weather or you complain about the food or the environment or something like that.

You're saying God had nothing to do with that. And it's the exact opposite of that. That kind of groaning is 100% the other way from this groaning.

You say, well, what's the Christian groaning about? Maybe he's groaning over that little thing we looked at before, suffering. You know, that hurts. You see Jesus and it hurts.

Maybe he's groaning over that. Chapter 8, 17 and 18. No, you look that through the whole Scripture and the balance of truth and you'll find that that suffering is gloried in.

That brings pleasure. Our dearest experiences with the Lord Jesus Christ come in our changes, in our suffering. There's a fellowship with Jesus Christ in a storm that you won't find in a calm.

With the Lord Jesus Christ in bitterness that's not found in honey. There's a tranquility with the Lord Jesus Christ in confusion that you're not going to find when everything's going smooth. You rejoice in that suffering.

There's no groaning over that. Why do Christians groan? Well, like creation, verse 24 and 25, they also groan in hope. Remember how the Bible uses the word hope.

It's the exact opposite of the way we use it. We mean maybe. The Bible uses hope as absolute certainty.

We say, I hope it doesn't rain. I hope so-and-so calls. I hope somebody that said they're coming doesn't come.

I hope, or whatever. But it may be. It may be not.

A pious wish. But in the Bible, it's absolute certainty. Not unsubstantial at all.

It gives fixedness. That's why the Bible calls hope an anchor of the soul. And that's why it compares hope to a helmet.

Because it's solid. Once you have it, you don't hope anymore. If I have a new car, I don't hope for the car.

It's there. Our children, for a while there, were hoping for good grades on their report cards. There's future.

Once the report cards were in, all hope was gone. Paul, the Apostle Paul, is drawing his argument that the Christians have already received a down payment. That's the big point here in verse 23.

Having the firstfruits of the Spirit. How do I know I'm going to make it? How do I know I'm going to become holy? How do I know what creation knows? God says, you already received the down payment. You already have the earnest.

You already have tasted that partial payment. You know, to the Jew, that firstfruit was always the pledge of the harvest. When that Israelite would go out and pluck that first handful of ripe corn, he'd bring it to the Lord and he'd hand it to the Lord and he would bless God because that was a guarantee that the harvest was coming.

No Jew was ever content with firstfruits. They never were. That was just the beginning.

That was a prophecy. That was a tale saying, the harvest is going to come. Firstfruits are designed to enlarge the heart for the harvest.

That's the whole point of firstfruits. And I'll tell you this, brothers. Some of you have seen very much of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And no matter how intimate your acquaintance with Him has been, no matter how precious and sweet your acquaintance, no matter how dearly you have known Jesus, you haven't known the harvest yet. You

haven't seen the harvest. The closest relationship you've ever had with Jesus Christ is only a handful of corn compared to what's coming.

That's the hope that we have. The Christian looked at that earnest. You know, it's not only how much is given in the earnest, but what does it cost to give that? What was involved in that? Listen to these verses from Romans 5. God demonstrates His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more than having now been justified by His blood, we'll be saved from the wrath of God through Him. If while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more now being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And the idea is this, that if God has done so much, if God has paid so much to give you the down payment, what about the rest of it? Let me illustrate it from 2 Samuel.

I'll just tell the story. 2 Samuel 23, David in the day of war made a sigh. And he said, Oh, that somebody would give me some water from the well of Bethlehem.

According to the context, that well was surrounded by Philistine. And David was just reminiscing. He was up there now and he was surrounded by the enemy.

And he was sort of thinking back when he was a little boy playing in the hillside of Bethlehem. And he remembers in the days of peace how he used to go down to the well and drink water. And he was saying now in the day of war, Oh, I wish I could go back to the old days when there was nothing but childhood and peace and I could go down and just get a drink of water.

And you know the story. Some of his mighty men, three of them, and praise God they're not named. Three unnamed mighty men just heard his sigh as he said, Oh, I wish I had water.

And the Bible tells us those three men went down and battled their way through the enemy to get a cup of water. And then they had to battle their way back again balancing the cup of water without spilling it. And they went through the enemy twice, once to get it and once to come back.

And they brought it up to David. Now you say water is not very valuable. It's not like gold or silver or gems.

What's the value of water? Well, what was the value of that water? See, it's not only what it is, but how much did they go through to give it to you? And the Bible says, 2 Samuel 23, Nevertheless, he would not drink it. He poured it out to the Lord and said, Far be it from me, Lord, that I should do this. So I drank the blood of the men who went at the jeopardy of their lives.

Therefore, he would not drink it. But David received a first fruit that day. Let me ask you this.

Later on, David, commander-in-chief of his army, do you think he had any doubt about who would be loyal to him in battle? After that, why, he knew who would be loyal. He had the first fruits. And that's what God is saying.

God says, you're wondering if you're going to make it. The whole creation knows you're going to make it. They're groaning, they can't wait until you're going to make it.

You wonder if you're going to make it. Look back in your lives, brothers. Look what you've already received.

Look where you've already been. Look at the hole you came out of. Look at how far you've come.

Look what you've already tasted. Look what it cost Him to bring you here. Look at what He's already given you.

You're wondering if you're going to make it. Grace has brought us safe thus far. Grace will take us home.

The Christian groans, as it says in verse 23, for the adoption. The adoption, the redemption of the body, the adoption of sons. Verse 15, He said, you've already received the adoption.

Verse 23, He says, you're waiting for it. Which is true? The answer is yes. Both are true.

They've already received it in foretaste, in grace. And it was coming in glory. And so the Christian also groans for the same thing creation groans for for the last chapter and the last page and the last paragraph and the last sentence and the last word when grace bursts into glory and we see Him.

See what God's underscoring? He says, you've got so many doubts. Oh, how do I know I'm going to be holy? Man, the whole creation knows it. You ought to know it just by what you've already received.

And then He says, but there's something else that's groaning. Someone. Verse 26, the same way the Spirit helps our weakness, we do not know how to pray as we should.

The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He who searches the hearts knows what's the mind of the Spirit because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Before we look at the Holy Spirit's groaning, let me tie it in to the clear reference to prayer.

Brothers, verse 26 will always be in your Bibles. There'll never be a time when you'll have to take that out of your Bibles. We don't know how to pray.

Right? Will there ever come a time when you'll say, well, I don't need that verse anymore. I learned how to pray. Never.

I don't care how much you learned about communicating with the Lord. There'll never be a time when you'll say, I don't need that. I've learned how to pray.

I get nervous with somebody who says, well, I've learned how to pray. And I think of that verse as I don't know how to pray as I ought to pray. The Holy Spirit prays for us.

And of course, that raises the question, does that mean I don't have to pray? Christians also often face this dilemma. Will my prayer change the will of God? Hasn't God determined all this stuff anyway? Doesn't God have a plan and all the rest? And then I'm going to pray, will my prayer change the will of God? Is my little prayer going to help? Why should I pray? I don't know what to pray for. I don't know how to pray.

The answer is, your prayer will not change the will of God. But your prayer will fulfill the will of God. God not only ordains the end, but He ordains the means to the end.

He's ordained the end, but He's also ordained that you pray along the way. And your prayer is a cooperation with God. My prayer is a cooperation with the Lord.

I think a great illustration of that is when Israel was in captivity for 70 years, and God through Jeremiah said at the end of 70 years, someone will pray. And when they pray, I'll deliver them. And Daniel was

reading Jeremiah.

And he looked at his watch, and he said, wow, 70 years are up. Someone will pray. I bet it's me.

And so Daniel started to pray, and God answered his prayer. God not only ordained the end, He ordained the means to the end. I call attention to that so that you don't throw prayer out the window.

Because the Holy Spirit prays, but He helps our weakness. He prays for us, but He prays through us as well. And He often prays in such a way that He empowers our prayer, or He sifts our prayer, or He mingles it with the beauties and the merits of the Lord Jesus, or He magnifies our prayer by grounding them in God and so on.

But in addition, He also prays with words we can't utter. He groans inside. And what is He groaning for? It's just so basic.

Verse 27. The will of God. Think of that.

You know, we make so much out of the will of God. I've got to find the will of God. How will I know? Ed, give me five principles that I can know I'm in the center of the center of the circle of the perfect will of God.

I don't want to miss God's will. How do I know His mind? How do I know His direction? Have the Spirit? You're His child. You're His child? You're an heir.

You're an heir? You're going to suffer. You're going to suffer? You're going to have glory. You start loving Jesus.

You start praising Jesus. You start trusting Jesus. And you can't miss the will of God.

In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He'll bring it to pass. You can't miss it. He's going to direct your path.

I think a lot of this looking for God's will is off-center. And it's turning your eyes to the will of God rather than to the God whose will it is. And you don't need to look for the will of God.

You say, oh, I'm going to miss the will of God. Not when the Holy Spirit is praying for it. I'll tell you, He always gets His prayers answered.

Doesn't it encourage your heart to know that the whole creation knows you're going to be sanctified? The whole creation knows it. They're waiting for it. You ought to know it.

You've got the earnest. You've already tasted so much of the Lord. And the Holy Spirit is inside there.

And He's praying for the will of God in your life. And we're wandering, walking around, oh gloomy, I think I'm going to miss it. And if I don't have this, and get all these lights lined up, and if that one is this, and this is this, and if circumstances and the will of God and the peace of my heart, and what's the evil spirit and the human spirit and the Holy Spirit, how can I... You go batty! I have folks in Newport.

Sometimes I want to shake them. I just shake them and shake them. Long for them to grow like the kid with the little flower.

Grow, grow! And they just don't grow. And this one lady, especially mine, she says, I just got to know God's will. I'm going to pray, should I go shopping today? And so she prayed whether she should go shopping.

Then she was concerned about what route she should take to the store. Then she got all upset because she wasn't sure if it was the right store that she was supposed to go to. Then she started praying over the brands that she should buy.

And after she got more bondage because she wanted the will of God, God hasn't called us to that. He's called us to know that if you love Him, if you seek Him, if you're seeing Him in this book, if you're praising Him, if you're trusting Him, you're going to make it. All creation knows it.

You ought to know it. You've tasted enough. The Holy Spirit knows it.

We're going to make it. He says, Christians, Christ is your sanctification. Don't worry about sin.

Christ is your sanctification. Don't worry about holiness. You're going to make it.

You're going to make it. The Holy Spirit is guaranteeing it. Tomorrow, God willing, we'll look at some of the most marvelous verses in all the Word of God.

Don't worry about anything. Pray. Pray for me, brothers.

It's hard to touch this passage. Pray that God will show us the final revelation of Christ that will set us free and we'll all fly home. Let's pray.

Father, we praise You. Lord, You've written it in all around us. And the whole creation knows what we seem sometimes not to know.

And Lord, You've given us the earnest and at such a cost. Oh, what a down payment. Give us that assurance, Lord, that all we need to do is seek Christ.

And thank You for the blessed Holy Spirit who is constantly crying out day and night for the will of God in our lives. Oh, Lord, we're such a blessed people. So wonderful to be Your children.

Heirs of God. Join heirs with Christ. We know, Lord, You've put the cry in our heart of a father.

We belong to You. We're related. And we have all things in Christ.

Teach us to cash in. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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