

*“Our failure to know God’s will and consequent inability to petition God specifically and assuredly is met by God’s Spirit, who himself expresses to God those intercessory petitions that perfectly match the will of God.” ~ Douglas Moo*

- The Spirit’s groaning is not in our words or groans but is His own emotional expression. He prays for us – with deep and wordless groanings.
  - These groans are an expression of God’s deep love and concern for us.
  - The Spirit overcomes this weakness by his prayer for us – and his perfect knowledge of God’s will.

*“When we feel that somehow God has forgotten us... at that very moment the Spirit is closer to us than at any other time.... Far from being unaware of our troubles, at that very moment the Spirit is entreating or petitioning God more deeply than we ever could! Far from being an uncaring God, the Spirit is groaning with us!” ~ Grant Osborne*

- (e) **Conclusion:** God works all things together to bring about his purpose for us – perfect conformity to the glory of Christ. (8:28-30)

## Schedule

- Feb 2 - Romans 8:28-39

## Previous Lessons

- Previous lesson notes are available online:  
<https://www.theheightschurchmn.org/adult-sunday-school>

## Credits

- Main sources for outline and shared quotes are:
  - *Epistle to The Romans (NICNT)* by Douglas Moo [Eerdmans, 1996]
  - *Romans (IVPNTC)* by Grant Osborne [IVP, 2004]
  - *Teaching Romans, Volume One: Unlocking Romans 1-8 for the Bible Teacher* by Christopher Ash [Christian Focus, 2009]

## III. The Assurance Provided by the Gospel: The Hope of Salvation (5:1-8:39)

### D. Assurance of Eternal Life in the Spirit (8:1-30)

#### 1. New Life in the Spirit (8:1-17)

##### a) The Victorious Life in the Spirit (8:1-11)

##### b) The Adoption of the Believer as God’s Heir (8:12-17)

- (1) **The Christian’s Obligation:** *“Put to death the deeds of the body”* (8:12-13). *“Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.” ~ John Owen*
  - (a) No longer slaves, yet now we are debtors – to God not sin.
  - (b) Paul warns of the seriousness of living “according to the flesh”.
    - Death results if we do not fight against our sin. – see also Gal. 6:8
  - (c) We have to “put to death” the misdeeds of the body – we don’t just “let go and let God” we have to do something.
    - this is in the present continuous tense – it is characteristic of our life as believers. – take up our cross daily and deny ourselves (Lk. 9:23)
  - (d) But we do not do this in our own strength, we can only fight against our sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*“The believer’s once-for-all death to the law of sin does not free him from the necessity of mortifying sin in his members; it makes it necessary and possible for him to do so.” ~ John Murray*

- (2) **The Christian’s Privilege:** *Adopted Son and Joint-Heir with Christ* (8:14-17).

- (a) “For” – the basis for why “we will live” (v. 12), is our new relationship the Spirit gives us. We are being “led by the Spirit”.
  - Being led or controlled by the Spirit is a “distinguishing sign” of being a son of God.
- (b) Sons of God – special status (can receive the inheritance)
  - Israel was God’s Son (OT), the Church is “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16), and we are united to Jesus – God’s beloved Son.
- (c) Spirit of adoption – we are adopted into God’s family.
  - We are “crying out” – points to continuing life in the Spirit. Cry points to “strong emotion and... deep-seated joy”
  - Abba, Father – is Jesus’ own prayer in Mark 14:36; Paul also uses this phrase in Gal. 4:6. It marks a special, intimate relationship. A status comparable to what Jesus himself enjoyed!

*“Although I be oppressed with anguish and terror on every side, and seem to be forsaken and utterly cast away from thy presence, yet am I thy child, and thou art my father for Christ’s sake: I am beloved because of the Beloved. Wherefore this little word, Father, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in the world.” ~ Martin Luther*

- (d) This inner witness of the Spirit is important in our assurance of salvation – we do experience God’s Spirit and that can assure us of his Fatherly care for us.

*“If some Christians err in basing their assurance of salvation on feelings alone, many others err in basing it on facts and arguments alone.” ~ D. Moo*

- (e) Heirs – we receive the inheritance. Fellow heirs with Christ.
  - Inheritance – in the OT was the promised land but became a type of eschatological life and restoration. The NT expands inheritance to include spiritual life. (cf. Rom. 4:13-16; Gal. 3:29; Eph. 1:18).
  - But inheritance has a cost – and like Mark 10:29-30 – we receive persecutions, and only attain glory through suffering (Phil. 3:10; Phil. 1:29; 2 Cor. 1:5; Acts 14:22)

## 2. New Hope of Glory in the Spirit (8:18-30)

- e) **The Theme:** *Suffering leads to glory.* (8:17b-18)
  - Consider – “realize from the standpoint of faith”
  - Glory frames this paragraph (v. 18 and 30). See also Rom. 5:2.
  - “Sufferings of the present time” includes “*all the pain of living in a broken world*” ~ Christopher Ash
  - Present suffering is not worth comparing with future glory – 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
- f) **The Groaning of Creation:** *The glory is so great that all of creation groans in longing for it.* (8:19-22)
  - Creation – refers specifically to “subhuman” creation, which is personified as eagerly waiting and even groaning (v. 22).
  - Eager expectation – “*suggests the picture of a person craning his or her neck to see what is coming.*” ~ Douglas Moo
  - Creation is waiting for the “unveiling” of the true nature of Christians.

## (1) Why creation waits with eager longing (8:19-20).

- It was subjected to futility

*“Creation was meant to be the theatre of God’s glory, singing his praises and showing his beauty. It will never be ‘free’ to be this as it ought until it is governed as it needs to be, by human beings in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15).” ~ Christopher Ash*

- Against its will (points to Gen. 3 and Man’s Fall, Rom. 5:12)
- Subjected in hope (may point to Gen. 3:15)
- (2) **Nature of the hope and its relation to sons of God (8:21-22).**
  - Liberation/renewal is coming.
  - Destiny of God’s children is to judge/subdue the created order.
  - Having to wait is tied to groaning (see also 2 Cor. 5:2, 4)
  - This groaning is not death throes, but birth pangs.

## g) **The Groaning of Christian:** *Christians groan in longing for this glory to be revealed.* (8:23-25)

- We share groaning and frustration (v. 19, v. 23b, v. 26a)
- This frustration also points back to our struggles with sin (ch. 7)
- Rather than grumbling, we express our frustrations in prayer (“entreaties” to God) – Ps. 38:9; 1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20; Mt. 6:10.
- We await the ultimate realization of our adoption as God’s sons.
- Our possession (“firstfruits”) of the Spirit makes us:
  - (1) realize what glory awaits us.
  - (2) long for more of what the Spirit represents.
- Our redemption is not complete until our body is resurrected.
- In this hope we were saved – past reality yet future expectation.
- Our hope in the coming realities of a new heaven and new earth needs, and brings out from us, a waiting with patience.
- h) **The Groaning of the Spirit:** *The Spirit of God groans in prayer that this glory be revealed.* (8:26-27)
  - Likewise – in the same way the Spirit gives us hope that sustains, so also the Spirit “helps us in our weakness.”
  - Our weakness is our “creatureliness” and this leaves us vulnerable in respect to prayer:
    - (1) We do not know what to pray for.
    - (2) We do not know what God’s will is with respect to what we pray for.