

Holy Spirit, the Intercessor

Sunday, July 26, 2026

Preached by Bert Visser

KEY PASSAGES

Romans 8:22-30 (NIV)

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

FIVE KEY POINTS

- 1 **We already have the Spirit, and we still don't live it out.** The fruit in Galatians 5 has been in every Christian since Pentecost, but none of us produce it all the time. That gap between what is true of us and how we live is our weakness.
- 2 **Not knowing how to pray comes with the territory.** We can say "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" easily enough. Knowing what that will is for our family this week, or our health, is another thing entirely.
- 3 **The Spirit prays for you when you have no words for it.** Verse 26 says he intercedes through wordless groans, and verse 27 says he does it in line with the will of God. You don't have to understand it to thank him for it.
- 4 **The first question in a hard situation is what God wants.** With a job offer or a diagnosis, our instinct is to ask what brings relief. The night before the cross Jesus prayed, "not as I will, but as you will."
- 5 **The good in Romans 8:28 is being made like Jesus.** That verse gets quoted on its own all the time, but verse 29 says what the good is. It is being conformed to the image of his Son.

STORIES & ILLUSTRATIONS

Passed over three times. He was nominated to lead SIL Cameroon in 2003 and again in 2005, and neither time was he chosen. In 2009 he flew from Cameroon to Calgary to interview for president of Wycliffe Canada, and the board appointed an interim instead. For a year he would not read anything about leadership. What he came away with was humility.

A week of prayer before saying yes. When the position came up again in 2012, he asked himself whether he was afraid of rejection or looking for recognition. He spent a week praying and fasting, then asked God to open or close the door.

A book that put Romans 8:28 back in its context. He read Tony Evans on the names of the Holy Spirit, and it changed how he hears the promise that God works all things for good. Read next to verse 29, the good is being made like his Son.

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