

Groanings Too Deep for Words

Scripture: Romans 8:26-28

Code: 90-425

We open the Word of God now to the 8th chapter of Romans to continue our look at life in the Holy Spirit. We have been endeavoring to bring the wonderful, blessed Holy Spirit into a clearer picture in our understanding. Given the fact that much today in the evangelical church is said about the Holy Spirit, I'm afraid that most of it is a misrepresentation of His person and His work. I said at the very beginning a bold statement, and I will repeat it, that our Lord Jesus condemned the leaders of Israel for attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan, and in the modern Pentecostal movement of today, the reverse is occurring where works of the devil are being attributed to the Holy Spirit. It's a very sad, sad insult, a grief to the Holy Spirit and in some cases even a blasphemy of the blessed Holy Spirit.

When we worship God, we worship the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Somehow, the Holy Spirit has been trailing behind in terms of emphasis when in reality, the Holy Spirit is *the* member of the Trinity most personally, intimately involved in the life of a believer.

We've been learning that in this 8th chapter of Romans. We find ourselves now down in the middle of the chapter, and I want to read for you verses 24 through 30 – verses 24 through 30. We've already looked at verses 24 and 25 but we need to read them for context, and we won't go into verses 29 and 30 but, again, they give us the full picture of this section.

Romans 8:24: "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

In earlier studies of this chapter, we have learned the marvelous height and breadth and length and depth of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to a believer in whom He dwells. We found in verses 2 and 3 that He frees us from sin and death. In verse 4, we are taught that He enables us to fulfill God's holy

law. In verses 5 through 11, we are told that He changes our nature. In verses 12 and 13, He empowers us for righteous living. In verses 14 to 16, we learn that He confirms our adoption as sons of God, and that brought us to verse 17, and the lengthy section from verses 17 to 30 emphasizes the work of the Spirit in securing our eternal glory, securing our eternal glory. And we have just read, essentially, the means by which the Spirit works to secure that glory, and we'll look into it more deeply when we get to verse 26 in a moment.

But let me give you the foundation for today's thinking. The greatest blessing God has given to believers is the secure promise of eternal life in heavenly glory. We already know from the opening of the chapter that we are in a no condemnation status before God. That is reiterated to us in verse 34 when the rhetorical question is asked, "Who condemns?" Is there some higher court than Christ or God? Again we are told nothing can separate us from that love of God which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. So the theme of this chapter from the beginning to the end is that we exist in a situation before God that is unalterable and unchangeable. It is a permanent no condemnation status. That is to say, those of us who belong to Christ will be glorified. We saw it essentially summed up in verse 29. We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. That means we go from being predestined to being called to being justified to being glorified, and nobody falls through the cracks.

I can tell you, beloved, no doctrine of Scripture is more comforting than that, more strengthening than that, more encouraging than that, and that is why we live with hope. We live with hope. Not a wish but a hope that is a fixed certainty, based on the promises of God.

A comparative passage to this is very instructive for us. The words of Peter in his first epistle, chapter 1 and verse 3, are a kind of benediction, a kind of doxology, in contemplation of this reality of our secure glory. Where Peter writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God." No wonder he burst into a doxology. We have the promise of future glory, we are protected by the power of God through faith to that glory. That is to say we have been given by God sovereignly a faith that will not fail, a faith that will not die. That faith that is secured to us by the power of God, and the power of God is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself.

In John 6, Jesus essentially said the same thing when He said, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me, I will not turn away." "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me" and "I will lose none of them, but raise them at the last day." He said, "This is the will of the Father." The New Testament calls this, for example, in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians, the sealing of the Spirit, sealing us safely to future glory. Paul speaks of it in this way: "He who began a good work in you will perfect it to the day of Jesus Christ." But perhaps there's no greater or stronger text

on this great doctrine than the one that is before us. We groan for the reality of our glorification, we've been learning that, haven't we? We live in a cursed world.

We ourselves, though regenerate on the inside, are still incarcerated in unredeemed flesh, and we groan in our humanity. The things we want to do, we don't do. The things we do, we don't want to do. We have a body of death attached to us, as Paul says in Romans. We still, as He says in 1 Corinthians 15, have a corruptible body, a perishable body that we long to get rid of. We want the perishable to put on that which is imperishable, the mortal to put on that which is immortal, the corrupt to put on that which is incorruptible. We long for glory.

And so starting in verse 19, running down all the way to verse 23, Paul talks about the groaning of creation, how the world itself, both the created world, animate and inanimate but impersonal, groans under the burden of the curse of the fall of Adam and Eve. Not only does the creation groan, but we groan, verse 23 says, we ourselves groan within ourselves, longing to be all that we have been promised to be in full glory. We feel the weight of our sin, we feel the curse of God, we feel the power of corruption within us. We understand the decay and the inevitability of death that stalks us all. We groan; creation groans. As I told you last week, the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, the revealing of the sons of God, all of that that's going to happen when there is the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, and all the curse will fade away in some kind of an uncreation, kind of an atomic implosion, the elements melt with fervent heat. Everything in this universe created by God goes out of existence, and in its place a new heaven and a new earth and no curse.

Creation is personified as feeling the pain, waiting, longing for that day, and we genuinely long for that day. As I look at heaven, it's not about golden streets – although I'm happy to live there – it's about the absence of sin; it's about the absence of temptation; it's the absence of ignorance that is appealing about heaven. We all groan for glory.

But there's a third groaning in this passage that is quite remarkable, and it is the groaning of the Holy Spirit. It is the groaning of the Holy Spirit. The blessed Holy Spirit in whom we enjoy – with whom we enjoy fellowship, called the fellowship of the Holy Spirit - is also groaning, groaning, waiting for our glorification. Creation is pained by the curse. We are pained by the curse. And even the Holy Spirit suffers the unfulfillment of the believers in whom He dwells until the curse is removed.

As we've gone through this chapter, we are essentially learning this, that the Holy Spirit is responsible for three marvelous ministries in our lives. First of all, the ministry of regeneration. He gave us life. We are born of the Spirit, born of the Spirit. He gave us life when we were dead - regeneration.

Secondly, the ministry of sanctification. It is He who increasingly conforms us to the image of Christ. Second Corinthians 3:18 puts it from one level of glory to the next, to the next, to the next, to the next,

as we gaze on Christ as revealed in Scripture, who is the perfect model of Spirit-filled humanity. As we see Him as the example, as we gaze at Him in His full expression of deity and humanity, the Spirit changes us increasingly into His image from one level of glory to the next. That's His work of sanctification.

And along with that work of sanctification, the third ministry that He has in this era of grace is the ministry of security. He secures us until that final ministry, the ministry of glorification when as the Spirit raised Christ from the dead, He will also raise us to be in His very likeness.

I think about the work of the Holy Spirit in my life, regenerating, sanctifying and securing me to future glory. What a blessed ministry. And all the while I'm thinking about that, I'm grieved over the amazing irony – amazing irony – that it is these very ministries of the Holy Spirit, which are so precious to us and so clearly revealed in Scripture, that are denied by the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. They claim to be the movement of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They claim to have some kind of corner on the Holy Spirit. They claim to have an experience with the Spirit that we don't have. And yet they deny the very work that the Spirit does in the life of the believer.

First of all, they deny the work of regeneration. The Bible teaches us that we are all dead in trespasses and sin, we are unable to give ourselves life. We must be born from above, born of the Spirit, and that is totally a work of God, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God. The Holy Spirit blows where He will, like the wind; does what He will with whom He will. This is a sovereign, mighty, divine work. Charismatics would want us to believe that it is a synergistic work, that the Spirit must be involved in it but that the sinner has the power in himself to make the necessary steps to bring life to himself in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. They also deny His mighty work in sanctification. They are little interested in the internal work of the Holy Spirit, little interested in His perfecting us into the likeness of Christ, little interested in His cultivating the love of holiness, the love of righteousness, the love of purity. They're much more interested in the externals.

It's called the holiness movement, but it's really not about holiness. It's called the Holy Spirit movement, and it's really not about the Holy Spirit. Very little interest in internal holiness and purity that is the Spirit's true work and almost exclusive interest in the external phenomena that they attach to the Holy Spirit, which in reality have nothing to do with Him, such as supposed miracles, tongues, falling down, hearing voices, barking like dogs, laughing uncontrollably, material prosperity, worldly success. And because that is not a paradigm for sanctification, the movement is loaded with scandal, sex, greed, corruption, and perversion.

You know, doing a little bit of reading on the history of this movement is a very interesting thing. If I asked you, "What is the fastest-growing form of religion in the world?" you probably wouldn't give me the right answer. The right answer is Pentecostalism. That is the fastest-growing religion in the world. It didn't exist in 1900. Just a handful of people launched something in 1901 in Topeka, Kansas,

followed up by something in 1906 here in Los Angeles. And by this time now, the estimate is there are a half a billion people that would identify with this movement – from nobody in 1900 to half a billion people. Falls into three forms. There's traditional Pentecostalism, there is Neo-Pentecostalism, and there is the Charismatic movement from 1960 on, but it all kind of blends together.

What happened in this movement is the center of interest was shifted from the gospel to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The center then was shifted from the Bible to experience, to a false experience with a false theology. Worship, then, was radically recast away from what was worship in spirit and in truth to what was simply an inducing of emotional highs. People became bored with the Bible, bored with preaching, and so preaching began to fade away. Sound doctrine had to be eliminated because the movement couldn't survive under the scrutiny of sound doctrine. And so in the place of preaching the Bible and sound doctrine was wild, emotionally charged music and manipulated feelings. The truth was replaced with lies, and it is its own judgment. It is its own judgment.

The work of the Holy Spirit has been so totally misrepresented. There are essentially three forces in Christianity. This is called the third force: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism. And we have said much through the years, the church has, about the errors of Roman Catholicism. We have said a whole lot less about the errors of Pentecostalism because they threaten us with accusations of being divisive, and that causes some people to be silent.

I'm not defending the truth for the sake of my own church or the sake of my own opinion. I'm eager to defend the truth for the sake of the Holy Spirit, not that He needs me as a defender, but He needs me to not grieve Him and not quench Him and not insult Him and certainly to recognize what dishonors Him. I feel like the psalmist who said, "The reproaches that fall on you have fallen on me." When the Holy Spirit is dishonored, I feel the pain, and it seems to be a very popular sport to do that.

So let's look at the true ministry of the Holy Spirit with regard to His groaning related to our security. It's an amazing section of Scripture, particularly in verse 26. "In the same way, the Spirit also helps our weakness for we don't know to pray as we should. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." This text has to be one of the great biblical treasures. It describes the means by which the Holy Spirit supports and secures us in our grace journey to final glory. This is one of the most abused texts in the New Testament by the Charismatics. I always expect my Bible to bleed here because it's been wounded so many times. They want us to believe that this is an advocacy for – advocacy text for speaking in tongues, this "groanings too deep for words." They want us to believe that what this verse is saying is that when you don't know how to pray in words that you do understand, launch off into glossolalia in words that you don't understand and this is the Holy Spirit doing what you can't do. That is not what this verse means, as you will see in a moment. It's utterly foreign to the reality of the meaning of this text to impose that on it.

Let's pick up the context: "In the same way the Spirit" – "in the same way." What do you mean "in the same way"? In the same way that creation groans, waiting for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, in the same way that we ourselves groan, waiting for the adoption of sons, the redemption of our body, so the Holy Spirit groans. We saw the groaning of creation, the groaning of the believer, now the groaning of the Holy Spirit – and all of this groaning in the direction of our future glory. It would be one thing for the creation to want to be glorified, one thing for the believer to want to be glorified, but those two in themselves wouldn't necessarily guarantee that glory, but here comes the most important groaning of all, the groaning of the Holy Spirit for our future glory. In the same way, the Spirit groans "with groanings too deep for words." It's an amazing thought.

The Holy Spirit is intimately involved in the agonizing reality of the burden and the weight of sin in the lives of those in whom He lives. He unites with our desire to be free from the flesh, our unredeemed humanity, and to receive full salvation; full sonship; full, righteous perfection. Our eternal glory is secured, then, by this groaning intercession of the Holy Spirit. This is necessary. Go back to verse 26. It says that the Spirit "helps our weakness." We've already identified our weakness. We groan within ourselves, back in verse 23. We have the down payment on our future glory, the firstfruits, but we groan under the debilitating weakness of our remaining sin. The Holy Spirit helps our weakness.

This doesn't mean weak prayers; doesn't mean weak prayer life. It doesn't mean a kind of a weak understanding of what's going on. It's the whole debilitating power of our fallenness that remains in us. It's our general weakness as fallen beings. It's a comprehensive word. The whole scope of our sinfulness is a weight to us, and it is such a burden, such an overwhelming burden that we don't even know how to pray as we should. We don't even have a strategy to cope with it. We are so helpless in our sin and so helpless in our suffering, we don't know how to overcome the power of our fallenness. We don't have what it takes to guard our own souls.

I was reading one popular Charismatic theologian who said this: "I believe the Spirit is very strong, but His seal can be broken if a person with his own free will has chosen to live life on the darker side. Sins can keep Christians out of heaven. If you can't stay loyal to your spouse, you can't stay loyal to your Lord, and will not be able to stay loyal to Him even after you enter heaven. Like Satan and the angels, you may be thrown out." Really? Just how insecure is insecure? I can't be loyal on my own here, and I can't be loyal on my own in heaven, and I might get thrown out? That is to completely, completely ignore the Holy Scripture that describes the securing ministry of the Spirit.

Let me say it simply: If you could lose your salvation, you would. If I could, I would. In fact, if I had to do anything to keep it, I couldn't keep it at all. I don't have the power. I don't even know how to arm myself. I'm way too weak. I'm not kept by my own power. I'm not kept by my own prayers. Yes, "watch and pray lest you enter into temptation," but on my own, unaided by the power of God, that's not going to do it.

This is illustrated to us in the 22nd chapter of Luke where Peter is on the brink of his classic failure around the fires at the trial of our Lord, and Jesus gives him warning. Jesus tells him in verse 31 of Luke 22: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.” “Satan’s coming after you,” and he certainly did. But verse 32 says, “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” What was Peter’s attitude going into this temptation? He said it this way: “If everybody fails You, I won’t.” Self-confidence. He didn’t know how to pray for himself. He didn’t understand the profound nature of his own weakness. He had no ability to understand the forces that he was going to encounter. He was secured not by his own faith. He was secured not by his own will power. He was secured because the Lord Jesus prayed for him that his faith would not fail. That’s the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ that secured Peter, and that’s a model of His high priestly work. He ever lives to make intercession for us.

The reason that you’re going to make it to glory, the reason that you stay saved, that you are secure, is because you have a high priest in heaven continuing to intercede for you. And you also have a second intercessory priest living in you; namely, the Holy Spirit. Just how much power does it take? How much divine power does it take to get a believer from grace to glory? It involves the continual, unending, relentless intercession of the Son and the Spirit.

Do you think that you can hang on by yourself? We could never attain to the resurrection of glory by the strength of our own flesh. We could never overcome our own sinfulness. We could never protect ourselves from failure unless we had been given by God a faith that would not fail, and it is sustained by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. That is why, as Grace was singing a little while ago, it doesn’t matter what comes at us, our faith doesn’t fail. Illustration: Job. Our faith doesn’t fail.

In this case, verse 26, how does the Holy Spirit help our weakness and the fact that we don’t know how to defend ourselves, even through prayer, even tapping into the divine power? “The Spirit Himself intercedes,” “the Spirit Himself intercedes.” *Huperentunchano*, a strong compound word, means to rescue someone in very great danger with no resources on his own, like somebody floating down the stream headed for Niagara. That’s the extremity of this verb. We need somebody beyond us and above us with far greater insight, far greater power than we have, and it is the Spirit Himself. I love that pronoun, *auto*, which points back to the Spirit Himself, not someone delegated by the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit Himself. It’s His work. This is His work. It was He who gave us life. It is He who conforms us increasingly to the image of Christ. It is He who secures us.

How does He do it? “With groanings too deep for words.” “With groanings too deep for words.” Please – this is not speaking in grunts and gibberish and tongues; this is not ecstatic speech; this isn’t anybody saying anything that can be heard. This is the Holy Spirit saying things that can’t be heard. It says it, “too deep for words.” Groanings, not of men, but groanings of the Spirit. The magnificent beauty of this is that the heart of the Holy Spirit aches for the glorification of every believer. And that

aching, compassionate longing for the glorious manifestation of the children of God causes the Holy Spirit to speak silently to the Father in inter-Trinitarian conversation about the well-being of believers. We are not secure because God said it. We are secure because God said it, and God makes sure through the work of His Son and His Spirit that it happens.

The Holy Spirit understands our flesh, understands our weakness, understands temptation. Would never, ever lead us into some situation we couldn't handle, right? "No temptation is taken you but such is as common to man." God will always make a way of escape. John 18 is an illustration of that. When they came to arrest Jesus, He wouldn't let them arrest the disciples because the Scripture needed to be fulfilled that none of them would defect, and so they were never going to be in a position where defection would happen. It's a securing that is not simply a stated fact. It is a securing that is a constant work by the intercession of the Son and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit yearns for our final glory.

This is the heart of God, really. I was reading Hosea chapter 11 and I came across verse 8 where God says, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?.... My heart is turned over within Me. All My compassions are kindled." And, you know, in the true sense, God never does give up Israel, does He? He's going to bring Israel back. That's the heart of God. How can I give you up?

These groanings have content. They have meaning. They have purpose. They are individually expressed, inter-Trinitarian, wordless communications that transcend language, that secure your place in heaven. And who is the Holy Spirit speaking to? Go back to verse 27: "He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is."

Who is that? Who's He who searches the hearts? Well, 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." First Kings 8:39 says, "You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men." First Chronicles 28:9 says, "The Lord searches every heart, understands every motive." Psalm 139: "Lord, You have searched me and known Me. You know when I sit down; You know when I rise up." The entire psalm lays that out. Proverbs 15:11: "Even Sheol and Abaddon are open before the Lord." Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, exceedingly corrupt. Who can know it?" The answer: "I, the Lord search the mind." Acts 1:24: "Lord, You know every man's heart." There's no creature, says the writer of Hebrews, hidden from God's sight. "All things are open and laid bare to Him with whom we have to do." So the Holy Spirit is interceding for us in this wordless communication from His own eternal, holy mind to the Father and His mind. The One who searches the hearts, God, knows the mind of the Spirit, perfect communion, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

What is the will of God for the saints? What is God's Will for us? That we be glorified? Is that His will? Was His will that whomever He predestined He would call? Whoever He called He would justify? Whoever He justified He would glorify? Is it His will to bring to heaven a redeemed humanity? Is that

His will? Is that His purpose? Is that the plan? Absolutely the plan. The Father planned it. The Son provided for it. And the Holy Spirit preserves it, protects it. So the Spirit is praying for our glory in consistency with the Father's will. The Father planned our glory, the Son provided our glory, and the Spirit protects our glory. This is just an astonishing verse.

As you go through your life, you think about a lot of things around you and outside of you. Do you ever think about anything inside of you? Do you ever think about the ongoing, intercessory work of the Spirit of God who never slumbers or sleeps because God never slumbers or sleeps? Do you think about the fact that in all the vicissitudes and struggles and issues of life, the Spirit of God is relentlessly interceding on your behalf, silently, in perfect communion with the mind of God to effect the purposes of God? And that you even have an advocate against every accusation brought against you, namely Jesus Christ, who stands at the Father's right hand in your defense as the One who paid in full the price for all your sins? That's why you get to glory. That's why no one can ever condemn you.

Now, all of that produces the truth of verse 28. All of that gets us to verse 28. And I know that verse 28 is a popular verse, everybody knows it that's been in the church any length of time. And it sort of gets isolated a little bit, but the context gives the rich meaning of this verse, and you must see it in the context. "And we know" – this is sequential, this is subsequent, this is connected. It is because of the groaning, intercessory ministry of the Holy Spirit in perfect harmony with the purposes of God to bring us to eternal glory. It is because of the Spirit's intercessory work and because of God's divine purpose that God Himself, in answer to the Spirit's pleas, "causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

This doesn't happen in a vacuum. And let me just say – because we can't go into all of this - I've done that in years past about verse 28. You can go on and on about it because it's one of those expandable verses – very expandable verses. But let's just say for the moment that the "good" being referred to here is eternal glory. The "good" being referred to here is eternal glory because it is eternal glory that is the goal of everything, as verse 30 indicates, "glorified"; verse 19, "the revealing of the sons of God"; verse 21, "the glory of the children of God," that's the theme; verses 24 and 25, our "hope." The good being spoken of here is our eternal glory.

The point is this: Because of the plan of God and the provision of Christ and the protection of the Holy Spirit through His intercessory ministry, God is causing all things to work together for our final, eternal, ultimate good. Not everything in this life works out for good – far from it. Oh, you might draw a good lesson from it. You might draw a good outcome from it. You might be drawn to the Lord. It might increase your prayer life. It might strengthen you. It might give you patience. It might perfect you, mature you. It might make you able to counsel other people and strengthen them because you can comfort those with whom you've been comforted by God in the same struggles.

All of those are wonderful realities, but that's not the good that's being spoken of here. The good that dominates this passage is that ultimate, final good that is the glorification of true believers. We are secured to that final good, that which is the best. "God causes all things" - in response to the intercessory work of the blessed Holy Spirit - "to work together for good." The extent of security. There it is, the extent of security - "all things" - "all things" - "all things." What does that mean? Nothing can change the ultimate good - nothing. That's the positive way of saying we're in a no condemnation status. There are no limits on that. "All things," *pantos*, whatever the nature, whatever the number, whatever the extent, whatever the character of whatever may come in a fallen, corrupt world to people who still bear the weight of the curse in their unredeemed humanness - all of it. Everything that comes - everything - is woven together by God for our final good.

"Works together" is *sunergei*, from which we get *synergy*. God is the great synergizer. We could say that's what providence is, God's providence. All things are not necessarily good in themselves, all things don't necessarily combine to produce good in this life. Some of you are living with that. Life's not being good - illness, loss of jobs, loss of houses, loss of lots of things, friends. But in the end, there is a good, the ultimate good, eternal glory, that will come to pass. That's the good that is the theme here, and it's attached to the hope mentioned in verses 24 and 25, our eternal hope.

And this is good in the moral sense, not *kalos*, which is kind of good in the appeal to the eye. This is *agathos*, good in the moral sense; the true goodness, the real goodness, the ultimate goodness so that we can say good things - and life is full of many good things, obviously; we're blessed. Good things work together for our good. But so do bad things. Bad things work together for our good - suffering, struggling with temptation, even sin. God gets a hold of all of these things and works them, in response to the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit, to our final good.

So that's the extent of our security. How could we ever lose our salvation if everything that happens to us works together for our eternal good? There's no other option.

So that's the extent of security. Who are the recipients of this? The recipients of this security, this promise - just quickly. Verse 27 tells us that the Spirit is interceding "for the saints" - "for the saints," the holy ones who have been covered with the righteousness of Christ, and thus before God are holy. But then in verse 28, it further defines them this way: "to those who love God." "To those who love God." They're the recipients of this.

You ever kind of ask yourself the question, "How do you know if somebody is a Christian? How do I know if somebody - you know, they prayed a prayer, they go to church." How do you know if someone's a Christian? Here's the answer: They love God. They love God. They love God. Why do they love God? Because they're the called. That's an effectual call. That's an effectual call. That's not an invitation like in Matthew 22 when the Lord invites people to come. That's an effectual call. That is

an absolute call. Verse 30: "Whom He called, He justified." This is the call to life from spiritual death. This is the effectual call, as theologians have called it. All those who have been called in that way, called into life, called into salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit are then described as those who love God.

How can you tell a true Christian? They love God. They love God. Basic - they love God; they love Christ. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned," 1 Corinthians 16:22 says. Being Christian is about loving Christ, loving Christ. We're like that woman in Luke 7 who loved much because we'd been forgiven much. The great command of the Old Testament is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. We desire to do that. We don't do that, but we do love God. All through Scripture, true believers are described as those who love God. "We love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you." We love God. We love Jesus Christ.

It is a love that meditates on His majestic glory. It is a love that longs to worship, to sing His praises. It is a love that seeks the fellowship of others who love Him. It is a love that loves those who love Him and are loved by Him. It is a love that seeks communion with God, intimate communion. It is a love that seeks the knowledge of God in the Word of God, to know Him more. It is a love that is sensitive to God's honor and God's dishonor. It is a love that hates what God hates and loves what God loves. It is a love that grieves over sin and rejoices over righteousness. It is a love that rejects the world. It is a love that longs for the coming of Jesus Christ. But mostly, it is a love that obeys the Scripture. "If you love Me" – Do what? – "keep My commandments." "Whoever keeps My Word, he it is that loves Me."

For all those true believers who love the Lord, the promise is a wonderful promise. The Holy Spirit is interceding in perfect harmony with the will of God so that God is causing everything that happens in the life of those who love Him to come together in the end for their eternal good and eternal glory because that was His purpose from the very beginning. Predestined to that purpose. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. I think it's time in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ to give honor to the Holy Spirit, to worship Him, to love Him, to ascribe to Him the glory that He is due and to stop the nonsense that brings dishonor on His holy name.

We do a lot about worshiping God. We say a lot about worshiping God. We seem particularly in this current era to celebrate, and could neither be over-celebrated, neither the Father or the Son; to celebrate the cross and the work of Christ, and you could never do that too much. But in the midst of all of this, seems to me the Holy Spirit has been left behind. And He is equally God and equally to be honored and adored.

These are things that are confidences that we have. Verse 28 says, "We know." "We know." This isn't a maybe; we know this. This is the certainty of our security. "We know." How do we know? Because

we know the purpose of God to predestine, call, justify, and glorify a redeemed people. This is the plan. Christ provided the necessary sacrifice, and the Spirit makes the plan work all the way to the end.

Now, verses 29 and 30 are two profound verses for next time. But I want you to listen to me right now. Usually, when I finish going through the Word of God with you, I have prayer and then you all just jump up and run. I don't know where you're going. I don't know what's so urgent. I just assume it's deep conviction, and whoever gets up first is the most convicted. So we're going to ask you, because when you teach the Word of God, the Spirit of God is working, don't you believe that? And sometimes it just ends, and so what we're going to do is I'm going to have a final prayer with you at the end of our service and let you know the prayer room is available and open for any help you need spiritually, anything you need there. The member center is open for membership, baptism information, you know all that.

But I'm going to ask you after this closing prayer to sit quietly and meditatively and think about what you heard while Steve plays for about 30 seconds or so, just some quiet background. And let's just try to capture some moments of personal examination, okay? And then when he hits the foot pedals with both feet, that's the signal that you can begin to move. Can we do that? And just kind of close in that meditative way after this prayer?

Father, thank You for – thank You for this. What can we say? What can we say? What can we even comprehend of this magnificence of this generous grace, of this overwhelming mercy that You have given to us? We thank You for not only giving us Christ as our heavenly defender, but giving us the Holy Spirit as our earthly intercessor who cries out for our glory. And You hear and You answer, and we're secure by a supernatural protector. We give glory to You, O Son of God, for the mighty work on the cross, for the purchase price of our redemption. We give You glory, O blessed Holy Spirit, for regenerating us, sanctifying us, securing us, and one day glorifying us. We want to honor You, the triune God, in every way and live lives that adorn all that is true about You, as much as is possible for weak humans such as we are. Thank You that You've made us Your children, adopted us as sons, and we, too, groan until the day of our glory when we can fall at Your feet and worship You, O God, in full righteousness. That's our prayer. In anticipation of that, we offer You the rest of this grace journey in obedience to You, that Christ may be honored and lifted up and draw others to Himself. We pray in His name.

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