[00:00:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sClcanWHSxdEs8kDMkPqyxpcWQalboyrz7cVBkzoY706gB5hwVpljD80XI_Updfkb-BSzEo31VLwhYaR-vfDOsU-7HI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.25) Well, I knew Dr. Lloyd Jones was a very great man, but he's certainly gone up in my estimation this morning.

[00:00:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1JPgLArj80uK6gHyM_qr39yqgMDlk5ryxQfhcmHntfSj53kVtvXOLddVOza0YTrSUxNeVSeQadV4bdnI_DqBXLLjsJg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=14.87) It has been a tremendous privilege and pleasure for me simply to attend this conference. I have been constrained to sense, and indeed cry in my heart from time to time, how blessed it is that we have, one Lord, one faith, and yes, also one baptism; one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and in all, and through all; and it has been born-in again upon me, how marvelous is the diversity of the workings of the same Spirit----the expositions that we have together sat under, that have come to us with such diverse accents, from such very different personalities; and yet, if I'm not mistaken, all bearing to us the mark of the self-same Spirit who communicates, in the exposition of his words, such a rich variety of the fragments of the glorious and majestic ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, I want to thank Errol for badgering me again. I do want to remind him now, that having spoken on the Spirit, I am now free from the ‘Law of Errol Hulse’, and am no longer his bond-slave (at least in matters respecting conferences).

[00:01:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yy6_w8IqaAsMDEtdnd_NBgzpPMnnlNyJ11QYtKpxqiO5l6BGBRapMNR59Uk1wUmHUHRj_IIfl3um5i_hIijQXDE_BZM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=114.04) Now, **for the *second* of these two studies on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, our topic, as you have already heard, is *'Experiencing the Spirit'***; and the bridge between our study yesterday morning, in which we were thinking about the character of the Spirit ('Knowing the Spirit'), and our study this morning in thinking about ‘Experiencing the Spirit’, is to be found, I think, in this passage in **Romans 8**--- the whole of the chapter, I would like you to have before you this morning--- but, the bridge between the two studies is to be found, I think probably, in verses 9 and 10, where the Apostle indicates to us that we are not controlled by the flesh, but by the Spirit, because the Spirit of God lives in us. And, as all of us are, I'm sure, very aware, there is this remarkable way in these verses, in which the Apostle indicates to us that to have the Spirit of God, is to have the Spirit of Christ; and **to have the Spirit of Christ is, economically, one and the same as having the Lord Jesus Christ (who is the Lord of the Spirit) dwelling within our lives**. And, one of the things that we tried to underline together in our study yesterday is that the Spirit who is given to the Christian believer, far from being faceless and nameless, is distinctly the Spirit of Christ. He is not, that is to say, merely, as it were, the naked Spirit of the Son or the naked Spirit of God. **He is, distinctly and gloriously, *the Spirit of the Incarnate Son***; and he proceeds to believers (however he proceeds in the ontology of God), he proceeds to believers, not only from the Father, He proceeds to believers from the incarnate Son. That is to say, mind bending as it is for us, ***the Spirit who comes to dwell in us is one and the same Spirit who has dwelt upon our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the whole course of his incarnate ministry.*** And, therefore, brings to us (and this is the point that the Apostle Paul, in a sense, specializes in expounding to us in the Gospel, when he explains to us what it means to be in Christ), to be in Christ means that the Spirit brings, as were, as the Spirit of Christ, from Christ, everything that he has accomplished in Christ for our redemption and our ultimate perfection; so that, the Spirit who dwells in the poorest, and meanest, and weakest believer is identically (in the mystery of God's sovereign grace)…. ***identically* the Spirit who dwelt first upon our Lord Jesus Christ.** And it is because of this that the Apostle is able to say, "*That if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, Christ himself dwells in you."* And so, what the Spirit's ministry involves, inevitably, is the ministry of the Spirit constantly to honor, and glorify, and to bring to us the Lord Jesus Christ clothed in the riches of his saving grace. And there is no doubt, I think, that this is the great theme which the Apostle Paul is expounding for us throughout the whole 8th chapter of Romans. ***He (Paul) is teaching us, in this remarkable way, about the various ministries of the Holy Spirit by which we are brought to experience, in the Spirit, the riches of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

[00:06:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rAVZppd1hQQ4R7xp2XCt0JtduHa7B0DhrbgIvRPdv3WggoqlOABNHeeNky14dtMPZMkwh2zsh-3DX6y6wPBvLANzH2M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=385.34) **He (the Spirit) is taking from Christ, and revealing these things to us in an experiential and an experimental fashion**. And, although it is certainly true that Romans chapter 8 could never be reduced to a chapter in a systematic theology textbook, thankfully, there is no doubt, I think, that, as Paul works his way through his understanding of the glory of the Spirit's ministry, and the experience of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, that what he expounds takes on both a cumulative effect and an almost systematic character, as he rises, as it were, pyramid-like to the pinnacle of assurance, which eventually, at the end of the chapter, he will express, in the face of all possible opposition, to the powerful ministry of the Spirit in the life of the believer; so that, joined to the believer, by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, it is impossible that anything could ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And I want us, to try at least, to draw forth from these glorious verses in Romans Chapter 8, what we might call the seven-fold**….the seven-fold experiences of the seven-fold Spirit who proceeds from the throne of God to us, and from the Lamb.**

*1st EXPERIENCE: RECEIVING THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT*

[00:08:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yzoNzUxh3HEea3omT4SYwwfZrmWY2b1cPaR7T0JoWnzOoTUluFKLMtwCqkioO6KvItRtD7wEQRGcg24_KaujXaRMT_U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=490.46) The **first** of them, in the opening verses of the chapter, is, I think, important to emphasize in verses 1 through 4, as the principle that **the Spirit brings us into the blessings of the New Covenant**. Now, of course, in and of themselves, these opening four verses stress to us the remarkable connection between Christ's work of atonement and the Spirit's work of transformation. Christ has borne the judgement of God's Law. He has condemned sin in the flesh in Christ. But the purpose of Christ's death, notice,….**the *purpose* of Christ's death, in a sense, is not only to bring the forgiveness of sins, but *to obtain for us the Spirit*, through whom the just requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit**. And essentially, what Paul is, as it were, picking out here from the Gospel, is the fundamental principle that ***this coming of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit to the believer, is the epicenter of entrance into the New Covenant***. If we stand back from these verses, I think it will dawn upon us that what Paul is speaking about here is precisely the fulfillment of the New Covenant prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. What was it that characterized the expectation of the New Covenant and the elapse of the Spirit? What would be so glorious in the experimental dimension of the believer’s experience in the transition from the old into the new? It was this great and glorious truth: that now the Law that had been written in tablets of stone, would, by the Holy Spirit, be written into the hearts of Christian believers.

[00:10:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fVTn6JCzbat9ycaV2lA2_NUStFI90elslILgfdPPd73qfKA2gfWuxKWj0FnUVh78Rvuj2gRl3kjriKzVu4gT6B_GuiU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=624.12) You remember how **Jeremiah** puts it, when he says that, not only will we receive the forgiveness of sins, but, in the New Covenant that God will make, "*I will put my Law in their minds, and write it upon their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people*." And similarly, in the case of **Ezekiel**, what is it that will characterize the new age? "*I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit in you, and move you to follow my decrees, and be careful to keep my Laws."* Nothing could make it clearer to us, that in the New Covenant era, rather than abandon the moral Law of God and, as it were, escape from its obligations, **by the power of the Spirit the believer finds these moral obligations not only *written into his heart* by the Spirit, but his life *energized to walk in their ways by the Holy Spirit*.**

[00:11:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VhO2IfcE56BaM8FuIbNEbQBYIie63lfI4O6dCiYZI_X2AOyf9xkXn-CHzAbw6arAMksu_xWvXep0vQszmRLcdTA7TXs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=697.51) I would have to say to you, speaking personally, how, as a young person brought to faith in Jesus Christ, after a period in my early years of seeking to be a child of God by keeping the commandments of God, and finding myself, again and again, brought to the end of my resources, that probably the most signal characteristic of my own experience of God's grace, at the beginning, was the discovery that, instead of God's Law being a burden on my shoulders that crushed me to death, it became (although I could never have articulated it in this way then)…. it became for me, in the power of the Spirit, like wings that enabled me to fly and gave me direction in my life. And this is what the Apostle is emphasizing. In other words, when he says, "*That the just requirements of the Law are fulfilled in those who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit,"* what lies behind that is the great principle that what we are brought into, through the gift of the Spirit (which kings and prophets longed to see), is that the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the incarnate one, so comes to inhabit us, that the things the Law requires of us begin, by His grace, to be fulfilled. But you know, in the New Testament, as in the Old, that, in a sense, is simply part of a yet larger picture because in the Old Testament (but supremely in the New Testament) the fulfillment of God's requirements, the delighting to do God's will, finding it our meat and our drink, is, actually, not the thing itself that God seeks, but the evidence that what he seeks in us has begun to be accomplished. And that is what, of course, lies at the absolute center of the New Covenant. “*But in that day, when the Spirit comes, we will not need another to come to us. We will not need prophet, or priest, or king, or mediator to come to us to say to us, ‘Know the Lord,’ because, by the unction of the Holy Spirit, we will* ***all*** *have come to know the Lord."* **It is because we have come to know the Lord in the intimacy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that we are enabled by his energy to walk in the pathway that God has set to us.** This is our eternal life and our salvation, of which our obedience to God's word is simply an aspect. But we have come (we poor strangers---we were reminded yesterday---strange individuals from such a diversity of need)…. ***we have been brought (can we take it in?) by the Spirit to know God.***

[00:15:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sJ1VfnmnzuRU1EiEOX48TbK1rExhV6ymxWIavTL9eJMi1AGumFkG2JK5aUKSU8SoNV9MMYFjuSH-xfX_JndWU1FKB0g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=904.25) It's not only I who have a partiality to golf in my family. We have several children, and the middle two of them have shown distinct partialities to that royal and ancient game. And I remember our second boy (I think he was probably about seven years old), and he was already playing quite well, I may say, but he was not old enough for me to be able to take him to the British Open golf championship. And it was held, I remember, that year at Troon; and we went down and we watched various people. And then the great Jack Nicklaus came into sight (I will remember this to my dying day).We followed Jack Nicklaus and, the young (then young) Chip Beck around a number of holes---round the loop at Troon. And then, for some reason, the crowds seemed to quieten down; and we found ourselves, as Nicklaus came off, I think, the 12th green (the Plateau Green)…. he came down off the green, having played. And my son and I were, I suppose, about as near as those in the back row after the platform. And we were standing watching this great giant, perhaps the greatest golfer who has ever lived---or will ever live---come down from the Plateau Green; and, as he came down from the green, he stopped and he turned, and just the two of us there--myself and my little boy, holding him by the hand as though to say, "that's Jack Nicklaus." And Jack Nicklaus stopped, and he turned; and, I swear, for 20 seconds he stared at me. And the look on his face was the kind of look a man ought to have when he says, "How do I know you?" And my boy---Nicklaus shook his head and he walked on to the next tee…..and my little boy looked up at me, with wonderment in his face, and he said breathlessly, "Does Jack Nicklaus know you, Dad?" And, I thought, "Oh, to be able to say; oh, to be able to say!!"

[00:17:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=F6X_VTFXZpHzmNjwTr-nDIoKuyFE4DDZAySl-hbYnD7y9uQq6OQg-43waEJvTDEmDGKgcoEqXn3UzmIOhKMjayD4VDs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1049.72) You know, I've thought often enough, thereafter, "What if your son puts his hand in yours and says to you, 'Does God know you, Dad? Do you know God?’" This is what the Apostle is really speaking about here! We live in the day (as we were reminded the other evening) that kings and prophets would have died to see; because in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have been brought to such a knowledge of God, that we are able to say that we delight to do his perfect will. And yet, as we have also been reminded of the great balance of the Apostle Paul, he must've known something about playing golf, because he has a terrific stance in his exposition of the nature of Christian experience. On the one hand, he says, in the opening verses, that we have been brought into the ***blessings* of the New Covenant**; but, on the other hand, he emphasizes in **verses 5-13** **that, simultaneously and synchronously, we are brought by the Spirit, into the *conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.***

[00:18:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SIIoTaW2DHKn1MMreUcDp5ZlLMxXdbkgayzyJfhoBK1WDfY2pyGEhxpnZSKHTGgRVn7Tdd0JA4-7332gvhlovIDA5FM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1128.75) It is, I think, one of the most disappointing things in the entire NIV translation, that it's insisted on translating *'sarx'*, as *'sinful nature'*. That seems to me to be exceedingly, or, at least, potentially misleading; **but, the Apostle is saying, in the power of the Spirit we are brought here into the conflict between flesh and Spirit**. And, whatever we make of **Romans 7:14-25**, what we are bound---duty bound and exegetically bound---to make of Romans 8, is that **every Christian believer finds himself or herself caught up in this extraordinary and massive conflict between, what Paul calls, "*the flesh and the Spirit*."** And what he is, in a sense, underlining for us as a piece of key pastoral insight, is that we must always view the nature of the Christian life through both eyes---through binoculars rather than through a telescope. We must see that it always involves two dimensions; and we must never, ever, in this world, collapse those two dimensions either into one or into the other. Because, what the Spirit does when he takes hold of us and brings us into union and communion with Jesus Christ, is to work out that union and communion with Jesus Christ in Ephesus, or in Corinth, or in London, or wherever.

[00:20:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Md1YBJWvMMwR4OTb17-XeqYk18wrgNqCjcrAGiHLjr6QlH6JvJceS1zExkUyK56xvKBLnaGb-ntTgtTbaV5E4wkc75o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1224.95) Now, when Paul speaks here about the flesh and the Spirit conflict into which the believer has been drawn, he means, I think, obviously, not that there is a conflict within us between our spirit and our flesh---a kind of inner/outer conflict, merely. There can be that kind of conflict in the unbeliever. Nor do I think he simply means that we are brought into a conflict between two principles that are operated in our lives---our spirits and the flesh; our bodies, as it were, under the dominion of sin, true though that may frequently be. **What he is thinking about, almost certainly, is that the Christian believer has been brought into a context of conflict which is greater than himself; i.e., between the world of the flesh and the world of the Spirit**. It is, of course, emerging from what he has said in **Romans 5:12-21**, which, in so many ways, is the central passage in this whole great section of Romans, in which he is teaching us that we've been brought out of Adam, out of the world in which we are under bondage to sin, and Law, and death, and the flesh (as the expression in this world of all of those things), and brought into union and communion with Jesus Christ, and life in the Spirit.

[00:22:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mKzuaD7nAvJH7-MbZODCNI5Kzql9JnoY_PIZlAFC1xhigzceizzmMXDHTVQNy9r2QFOSEdLbrkG4_xmaRY0PeIPHWiU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1328.88) Geerhardus Vos has, I think, a very telling way of putting this. **He says that the flesh is the world of *inertia*. The Spirit is the world of *divine power*.** And we find ourselves, he says, in this world of inertia. Brought into the world are the realm of age of the Spirit, and energy, and power. And what we discoverer we have come to participate in, is a conflict between the mighty power of God in our lives, and the inertia that continues to surround us, and frequently invades us. And it is, therefore, not surprising that the conflict between flesh and Spirit into which we are brought is so excruciating in our lines. But, what does Paul want to underline for us about the experience of the Spirit in this context? Well, the ***first*** thing is obviously, that when we are indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, **we are given an altogether new *identity***. Our lives begin to participate in a new creation. And, you notice, how, in verses 5 and following, he works this out in terms of our being--- "**We *ARE* in the Spirit."**

[00:23:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6403QETJCwEhNI71ycm3mtEgoJ0QuH86tOcCsg9tbBKbpo4gRokEY0XnOcAAdTYLrYf1D_AwsgAV4vmzmaHZK6zXOFA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1417.96) And then, in terms of our thinking, **we *think* according to the Spirit**. And then, in terms of what is a more intimate idea---in terms of our minding; that is, our basic mindset. Not just the things we think consciously, as it were, but the very disposition of our minds and our beings are all, he says, under the dominion, in the realm, in the influence of the Holy Spirit. But precisely because that is true (that we have this new identity as those who live, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit), precisely because that is true, he urges upon us to recognize the seriousness of the reality which we face; and, that is that we live in a world, and indeed, we live in bodies, and have minds and dispositions that have emerged from not only, my brothers, a lifelong addiction to the flesh, but a history-long tradition of addiction to the flesh.

[00:24:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UdZg9bRgaFyHiWLPSnS8IIU3funnmKsN2ucx48Ej2460iBbBwg3ZH_aCmgYoN3tg14OX5ExlzRXweWpyZrgOSF_T39A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1483.99) Have you ever thought of that…that, it's not just, in a sense, your own personal history that has been addicted to the flesh? It is the history of your flesh, that it has been addicted to the flesh ever since the day of Adam. **And when anyone is brought into the new creation, the truth is, in a very deep and mysterious sense, that it is everything we've inherited from the whole of human history into our beings that needs to be put aside, as we grow in grace and in likeness to our Lord Jesus Christ.** That's why what John Owen says, I think, is so tellingly helpful for us individually and pastorally. When he says, you know, "You measure a man's spiritual stature, not by the height he has attained, but by the amount by which she has grown from where he originally was." And this is what Paul is saying here. This is why he urges us marvelously, through the agency of the Spirit, to put off, and put away, and put to death all that belongs to the flesh. Why? Because we belong now to the Spirit, and to the world of the Spirit, and to the grace of the Spirit. **And so, he (the Holy Spirit) who brings us into the *knowledge of God*, simultaneously brings us into the realm of lifelong *conflict between the flesh and the Spirit*.**

*2nd EXPERIENCE: ASSURANCE OF SALVATION*

[00:26:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3M1jHOe7a__oKIx_hrBzGtWjaTl7RUdjhjh_NzvJqCX137iRpBhPltucn8KlP2IlUrJxLWyfm5mh-_GJ4XqehC4TbSI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1589.26) But then, sweetly, notice the genius---the Spirit given genius---of theological melody that runs through Romans 8. Immediately he turns again to what is virtually the sweetest part of his exposition. Those who are brought into the blessings of the New Covenant, who are simultaneously brought into the conflict of the flesh with the Spirit, are precisely those who receive through the Spirit the very thing they need in that conflict; namely, **they grow by the Spirit in the assurance of salvation.** And this is what he is after in **verses 14-16 and 17** even, "*Those who are led by the Spirit of God (to put to death the misdeeds of the body), they are the Sons of God; because you did not receive a Spirit that makes you a slave again to fear; but you received the Spirit of Sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba, Father'. It is the Spirit bearing witness with our Spirits that we are God's children."* The one who has been set in the midst of conflict by the Spirit, is identically the one to whom the Spirit comes to bear his joint witness with the witness of our spirits---**that we are indeed the children of the living God**. The Father adopts us. **The Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to assure us that we really are the children of the heavenly Father**, so that, as it were (and perhaps this is what Paul has in mind), it may be established in the mouth of two witnesses, and thus confirmed, that I am God's child.

[00:28:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_E6yUNZFgQdGvc09SGfFDqdpF-_gs6aTgIHFLdpR0yTxieaiwZJdHX1SsJMS3SaicR956s2tTYw8_ynGwspNAGjCSDU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1712.08) In my weakness, I have a sense that I belong to him; but that sense is oftentimes so frail and so fragile; and the Spirit comes, and his witness coalesces with the witness of my spirit; and I find myself reassured that I am the child of God. And Paul appears to me, at least to indicate to us, what is the supreme illustration of that assurance that the Spirit gives, when he says, "*By him*," (verse 15b)…. "*By him we cry, 'Abba Father'*." It is interesting to compare this section with the parallel section in **Galatians chapter 4;** because, in Galatians chapter 4, Paul says, "*It's the* ***SPIRIT*** *who cries "Abba, Father*'." Here, he says, “*It is* ***WE*** *who cry, 'Abba, Father'*! And he, thus, gives us, I think, the clue to understanding what he's saying here. Just as we cry, "*Jesus is Lord*!" and that cry emits from our lips---but none of us is able to say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit-- what Paul appears to be saying here is that, similarly, none of us is able to say, "*God is my Father*!" without the conjoint witness of the Spirit operating in our hearts with the testimony (frail though it is) of our own spirits saying, "*I am nothing less than a child of God*." **And the supreme example of this is when we cry, "*Abba Father*!"** Why is that the supreme example? Well, interestingly, the reason lies not so much in the noun ‘*Abba’*, as in the verb ‘*cry’*. That is often today taken as though what Paul was describing was the height of spiritual experience: I've come to such a height of intimacy with God, that my soul is resting in God like a weaned child resting against its mother's bosom; that in gentle love and embrace, I coo, "*Father*".

[00:31:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7fLPIFjSQfmLorGHj0qHRyX7LTTMSSWLrvmo33SZ9PMrgdDQoCgcZzrAaFk02mp_LktYGKjYwYdcdWKTmxlvdNVTxyw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1861.71) But Paul's language is onomatopoeic; and, even the sound of his verb indicates the sense of its significance. It's the verb "*krazo*"; and it's used, generally, throughout scripture, both in the New Testament and in the Septuagint, of loud appeals---loud cries---almost, invariably, from a context of need and, oftentimes, dark despair. "*This poor man 'cried' (krazo)*!" Our lord ‘cried’ (*krazo*) on the cross. The blind Bartimaeus cried out (*krazo*), "*Jesus have mercy on me*!" It's NOT an expression of the Christian believer when he is at the height of his sense of intimacy and communion with God. My brothers, it is the cry of the believer when he has fallen on his face, like a little boy in the mud and in the shingles, and bloodied his knees, and bloodied his face, and looks up and sees that his Father is there and cries out (*krazo*), in his absolute weakness and frailty, "Daddy! Daddy!!" And the glorious thing is this: how could it ever be anything else, if he is our heavenly Father??

[00:32:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U7Bx4InzKyOfH_Wcp43KaONNjTAsX6fYo7X9e77I6vYI_ysNJ7lBD5NSuZt8Jq6OIXZqbkDZ0-lxqApfKtOR1NdeHHk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1947.07) **But the glorious thing is that he does not hold out this assurance to Christian believers when they have climbed to the apex of Spiritual experience. *He is a Father who longs for his children to know it when they are in the depths*.** But, do you see that the very cry, "*Abba, Father*!" Is the clearest indication any of us could ever, ever need in this world, that we really belong to him? But when all around our soul gives way, the most basic instinct of our beings is still to call him, "*Father*." You don't get *unbelievers* doing that, you see. You don't come to the *unbeliever* in distress and in need, and hear the unbeliever say, "I don't know why my Father in heaven is doing this." You don't hear the *unbeliever* cry out, "Abba, Father!" You hear the *unbeliever*, at best, cry out, "Oh, God!" ***But you hear the true believer crying out, "Abba, Father!"***

[00:33:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uYbpZm-b17fjBfz4-uzT5qORSVQcXbT07XdCiRyJcUo3qp5g8s1Hlac0pxkpComh9rBz42yhgKd2udCez-z0xJd4Ex4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2029.18) The great thing about conferences like this, or at least speaking at them, is you can use illustrations that you could never use at home, for fear of embarrassing your children or your family. I was writing to one of my boys yesterday and, just as I was about to sign the end of the letter, the thought crossed my mind, "There are only four people in the whole world whoever called me 'Father'." The sheer uniqueness and intimacy of the relationship, of which this bespeaks, just takes our breath away. “We are bold (as the liturgy of Saint Chrysostom used to put it)….we are bold to call you, ‘Father!’"

 *4th EXPERIENCE: PURPOSE IN OUR SUFFERING REVEALED*

[00:34:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0zjf0Zc_k2u1U8PuYW_xFrhbM6olIF97jdDMG9RYLtMLdzHeQ5aNHbRd9Cn_ZD3UU0mNP_t0zUL0agt3gYxsXH7HihM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2083.571) But, then, you notice the Apostle goes on to **a *fourth* principle. And that is, that, by the Spirit, we begin to discover that there is purpose in our suffering.** And, you see the reasoning he is using: that the Spirit brings us into the enjoyment of our inheritance. "But now," he says, "***if we are children, then we are heirs…heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if, indeed we share in his sufferings, in order that we may share in his glory."*** It is beautifully, and poignantly, and pointedly expounded to us, what the Spirit does in our lives is to bring us into union with Jesus Christ (yes, risen and exalted), but as the one who is marked forever with the stigmata of his crucifixion. And, although Paul doesn't mention, by name, the Holy Spirit here, it is certainly the undergirding principle of his theology that we are brought into participation with Christ in his sufferings, through the Holy Spirit. He himself has not filled up in him (Paul) the sufferings (in his union and communion with Jesus Christ), that he understands the Spirit means to employ, to make him fruitful among the believers.

[00:36:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PZcHntmtF3M8zcPxO4xX4Z6ugVTPspUXgjQvlM9esJPZAD_xZxiBtekr3kJofe2UaUWpk20Jei6iOvhEGVEo1kZ6E50&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2183.62) Perhaps the chief illustration of the principle is what Paul says in **2 Corinthians 1:5,** when he is speaking about the afflictions of the Corinthians, and the way in which he's able to bring comfort to them because he himself has been comforted of God (have you ever noticed the way he puts it?): 2 Corinthians 1:5: "*Just as*." The picture, I think, is the picture illustrated in the **133rd Psalm** that we were singing yesterday afternoon---of the oil of anointing that pours down over Aaron---over Aaron's beard, onto his robes, and then flows down upon the signs of the whole people of God.

[00:37:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vnTUggFL7FKHQfEtW22oFXLZ0WeFeQZqvxXKfyYko1yM3nENu-S3rS2fIiEvXYvh6BOFffYdMxMNPTeIe4R6-w-dhkw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2230.09) And here is our Great High Priest, anointed by the Holy Spirit, baptized for the suffering of the cross. And Paul says, that because we are united to him, just as comfort overflows to us from Christ in his resurrection, that comfort does not overflow to us from the anointed one without, first of all, the sufferings of Christ flowing over into our lives. "*You cannot be part*," he is saying, "*of the anointing of the Holy One without simultaneously* ***sharing****,* ***both in the triumphs and comfort of his resurrection, and also in the suffering and ignominy of his death!****"* "*We always carry around*," he says in **2 Corinthians 4**, "*we always carry around in our very lives, the dying of the Lord Jesus, in order that the life of the Lord Jesus might be manifested in us."* It is one of the fundamental principles of Paul's theology. He learned that, obviously, on the Damascus road (if he hadn't told already learned it in the face of Steven and his experience), that those who belong to Christ participate, yes, in his glory as their inheritance; but, the pathway along which the Spirit leads us to the glory of our inheritance, is identical with the pathway in which he led our Savior to his inheritance: through sufferings to glory. But, what the Spirit does in that context (and we need to recognize this**)…. what the Spirit does, is not merely to make the relationship between suffering and glory chronological (i.e., suffering now, glory then); but to make that relationship causal**. **He employs suffering *in order that he may create glory.*** "*This light affliction,"* says Paul, "*is working for us---creating for us---an exceeding weight of glory*.”

[00:39:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FCv7hx60HIZYeWOJv2acxwZRZxAV9IldmL0_DTzP5m-IvikrcwcSlmaBLF1HN82L9oRNTOWsmwpOsk6E2o0agPVvouY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2372.48) Jesus makes the same point in the farewell discourse: a woman in the travail of labor--- the pains give way to joy. But when you're visiting the hospital, when you find yourself getting past the armed guards and the battalions of nurses, and accidentally stray near the labor room, and you hear the noise of a woman in labor, unless you are at the very beginning of your ministry, you don't rush in and say, "Will someone please put that woman out of her agony?"; because, you know that it's out of the agony, that the glory of new life will be born. And we don't begin to understand this. We don't begin to understand how it is out of the body that is sown in weakness, and shame, and corruption, that the glory of the body that is pneumatic in character will emerge from the tomb. But we have the prototype in Jesus Christ; and we have the prototype of this principle also in Jesus Christ: ***that the Father, by the Spirit, employs suffering, in order to bring us into the inheritance of our glory***. And so, we have been changed from one degree of glory to another. And this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

*5th EXPERIENCE: RECEIVING HELP IN OUR WEAKNESS*

[00:41:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WA8DHHWGbNV1n3GM5pAZVDLNm6idYJ5yfiPjFHBstoVhX70UWP-7-2h-aQoWgo5cfp3yDM_hiyu6enFb4IKhehVoWlk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2470.86) The ***fifth* principle** is this (verses 26 and 27), **That, by the Spirit, we receive help in our weakness.** “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what we ought to pray for, or, how we ought to pray; but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." I don't need to tell you, I'm sure, that Paul seems to have to create his own vocabulary to describe the Spirit's ministry. He creates this amazing term, which is weakly translated, inevitably, in, for example, the NIV as 'helps'. And it's composed of three ideas: the prefix *'sun'* (to do something along with); the prefix *'anti'* (to do something instead of); and the idea of bearing, taking (*'lambanomai'*). And he presents to us this multifaceted picture of the Spirit's ministry: that he does something, it seems, ***instead of us***; but, simultaneously, ***along with us***, to enable us to bear the load that we would be incapable to bear otherwise (like a man trying to carry some great piece of furniture; going to one end and lifting it up, and going to the other end and lifting up; then, putting it down in despair; until someone comes along and says, "I'll take this end. And all you need to do is keep holding onto the other end, and we will get this thing going. "***The Spirit comes when we do not know what to pray for.”***

[00:43:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Hdz7QMBLanUcI0ts7wts5dM-joqaoNrjy7LbMsEapRdMyhjZW5JuVF_4tNiSC9tdIhJdqA_3sLg2JA6hoiTn-UXDnyY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2583.26) And, you see, what Paul is saying here is that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. Earlier on he'd spoken about the way the Spirit helps us in our weakness in dealing with sin. We are weak to put sin to death; but, by the Spirit, we're enabled to do it. Here he brings us to a more poignant illustration, when he speaks about prayer; because prayer is weakness. Remember the opening words of Hallersbee's book that many of us read: "a student's prayer is weakness." But Paul isn't, here, speaking about the fact that prayer is weakness. Of course, prayer is weakness. Otherwise, we wouldn't address God and say, "Help us!", if we didn't know we were impotent to do anything for ourselves. **What he's speaking about here is when, in our desperate weakness, we are *utterly* weak.** In the expression of weakness (namely prayer) we are too weak to be able to formulate words and express petitions; too foolish to understand what God's purposes may be, in order that we may pray according to his will. When we are weak in the absolute weakness of our being in prayer, the Spirit will not override our beings, but, rather catch us up by God's grace. He will have his children participate in the extension of his purposes. And so, if we cannot pray articulately ourselves, he helps us. "*And the Spirit prays*," says Paul, "and *intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*" And listen to this, "*He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will*." How does this take place? Well, he tells us in **verse 26**: ***"With groans that words cannot express."***

[00:45:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nx3RlVP4taPZRCXquX4zQHTGeLFnEazB_aVDyeOG1TNs-I9zGk4LNrfFh_nK8JW7EAIISseJoUx_JzyPrhrqVyfzlpU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2721.41) My family comes from the North of Scotland, which is Sinclair country. And, when we were children, we used to be taken up there (the long journey north), and, I remember (I think, probably I must've been six or seven the first time I became conscious of it)…. one evening we were in the home of one of my mother's relatives, and I sat---as small boys did in the 1950s---I sat there rigid with my cup of tea (which I hated since they had no orange juice, uh, probably still rationing days, I suppose), and tried to listen to this boring adult conversation. But, in my mother's family there was a cousin---cousin Johnny--- who in his early twenties had suffered a massive stroke that had left him completely paralyzed; and he sat there, day after day, in a wheelchair. And the only thing he could do was, if someone put a cup of tea into his hands, he could bend his head a little and turn the cup of tea; and he could sip the tea. And he could groan; and, whenever he needed anything, he groaned, "Uh, uh…uh, uh." And, whenever he groaned, the woman he had married in his early days, came instantaneously to his side; and, like a little boy would, I just stared in wonderment (after I'd got over the fear of what was happening)… I stared in wonderment at the way this woman, who had so wonderfully loved him, seemed to be able to perfectly interpret every groan he uttered!

[00:47:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=clO7YFtt4sZHAQeyTX8w0x8BSZW6yxZNeknNZgLfoxMD2CYjxf0wiw_87fV-W41cAcMsxbpd9E0d3OcrXsJSfx976Kg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2838.2) Well, Paul is saying something intimately glorious to us, when he says, "When we don't know how to pray (have no words, have no understanding of what God's sense of purpose is), he will have us pray." "Indeed," Paul says, "there is a sense in which we never pray more perfectly than when we are incapable of articulating our prayer; because, he who searches our hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit; because, the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Many of you are Fathers. Wouldn't you want to engage your children when they are at their weakest, too?

 *6th EXPERIENCE: GAINING CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY*

[00:48:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CP72WxXO2HZ9pZJEibqMea60qb5RvksHtwYZxMsqRj41aoONtRHlsnthDtTATXngsPpCkJtlZhlQBeshVirgoMhavEQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2888.35) Well, ***sixthly***, says Paul, as the Spirit and ministers in this way, **we gain confidence in God's sovereignty**. You may know there is some discussion (indeed occasionally there has been debate) as to exactly how we are to translate verse 28; and although, I think, the case is not the strongest, there certainly is a case for understanding the Spirit to be the ***subject*** of the statement in verse 28. "***We know that, in all things, the Spirit works for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.***" But whether that's true exegetically or not, it's certainly true theologically: ***that it is the Spirit who executes the work of the Father and the Son, not only in the redemption of the believer, but in the governing of the entire world.*** And, even in that sense, we may say that one of the things the Spirit does, as he ministers in our hearts, is to produce the kind of confidence in the perfection of his executions, of which Paul speaks here in verse 28, ***"we know that, in all things, the Spirit works everything together for the good of those who love him and who have been called according to His purpose."***

[00:49:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=imsqXCHrvXTejotR8cFMZCCCTdNNruWndBumyqsqZ_GiSpAc9z_7GGstMpD1Lh2Qk-iB5mDRUVIALKYgSFbC9BCQ_sw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2968.541) I use a computer, although I don't understand it; and, I'm always most keen to find things that describe themselves as being 'user friendly'. And, it strikes me that this is part of what Paul is saying here. The only people in the world for whom the world will ultimately prove to be user friendly, are those who are indwelt by the Spirit, in whom he is working out God's perfect will in a way that is analogous to the way in which he is working out God's perfect will in the circumstances of the entire cosmos. So that, we are able to say, "*We know that everything will work together for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose*." And the reason, chiefly, we are able to say that, is because of what he tells us that 'purpose' is in **verse 29**: "*Those He foreknew, he predestined."* And note his language that is so similar to the language that Paul uses in **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**, "***Those he predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers."***

[00:50:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uMDy0tFWZ4ibRIfJz7O0oz6sGV9OdZWjPFGXNzbjl3UVu5psoUvegm2HUpLQCRiruIgMmgY0br_YhuRPrXS5wc4ErXc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3057) This, of course, is the Spirit's great work: to take what we are, and, by his inner ministry and his superintendence of all the affairs and events of our lives, to coalesce these things together in our lives ***so that conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ is the product***. So that he works everything together for this central good: to change me to be like Jesus, so that every friction in my life is but the Spirit's rubbing to transform me into the One he supremely loves, and into whose image he means to change me. "*And because I know this is so*," he says, "*I know that since God is for me, nothing ever, ever, ever can be against me."*

[00:52:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nnC6LdaNqK4koDD47i4yTK9wZN4qutn1vnuroVXvAYa5AQd5n3OBNguBLNyydekwbrSBSF1uxvJh4dqO5k_zBx0POxQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3127.59) When we were kids playing soccer in the streets of Glasgow, at tea time at night, I remember, a gang of us often would play, and occasionally some of us would find ourselves on the winning side, just 10 minutes, or maybe five minutes before we knew we were going to be called in to have tea. And the thing we dreaded most was that David Ross's father would come home early; because, David Ross's father had played professional football in the Scottish 1st division; and we knew what David Ross would do. If he was on the losing side, he would call out to his Father, "Dad, come on!" And we knew that no matter how many goals we were up, that if his Father came, we were sunk. Nothing could withstand David Ross's father. "Brethren," said Spurgeon on one occasion, "there's no stopping this God." "*If your Father is on your side, then you're able to say*," says Paul, "*who can be against us??"*

*7th EXPERIENCE: BEING CONFORMED TO JESUS CHRIST*

[00:53:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yJR0YtKwrWc1uXMRmyj20JfalQZsvaDH_K_OSVc9IRLSc8FPg5ES4qZYzuQUS0GPHVVaMAC48eOy1dp8oZIslM0wgxY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3206.1) And then, his ***seventh* principle** is this: that **by the same indwelling Spirit, we grow in admiration of Jesus Christ as our elder brother;** not only in the sense he speaks of in **verse 29** (that he means to confirm us to the image of Christ, that he might be the first born among many brothers), but in the sense in which he speaks, in **verse 32**, of the great manifestation of the love of God: "*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things?"* It is the logic of the gospel that the Holy Spirit teaches us; the gospel, that employs language here of judgment (the Father giving up his Son to the judgment of the cross), the language of sacrifice (it's straight out of the Septuagint version of the story of Abraham and Isaac), the language of the Father who is prepared to give his Son up in sacrifice. It's the language of exchange *("He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all")*. ***The Spirit teaches us to stand before the Father and the Son and gaze in wonder at the love the Father has shown to us***; that he should give Christ for ungodly ones like ourselves; and causes us to whisper (although we know the answer), "Father, did you love me more than you loved your Son? Did you give him for me? And grasping that, the Spirit teaches us--the irrefutable logic of the Gospel teaches us--to live on its basis: **If the Father has given his Son for you, there is *nothing* he will withhold from you.** Everything, for your good, is for you. And, nowhere else in all of the world, are these privileges to be found.

[00:55:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FRc53zK49yEMYo9piPnqp1Hx0bgyglQHRWoSU75il2xZ7qGef-Cpie-aJKV_FEes3dMvj9qBy2cXOzGOz87zMIImVRE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3359.21) One more family story, and I'm done. When our two golfing boys were younger, the 3rd boy very young, I remember, one summer day, taking them out to the golf club where we play. Kind of later on, at night, it had turned out nice; and, they were keen to go and play. And I said I would pick them up; and, the sun was setting. And, at the course where we play, thankfully, the last hole is all the way downhill. And I remember standing, waiting by the car. The golf course was empty; the sun was setting. There was one of those, just beautiful, kind of red-orange skies. And I saw my two boys come off the 17th green, and walk along the brow of the hill,---the 40 yards to the 18th tee to play the last hole. I saw them silhouetted against the sun. It was like watching a movie, really. The older boy: tall and slim; the younger boy: like a tiny tot walking with his golf bag behind his elder brother. And I saw these two silhouetted figures move across the landscape. And something in me cracked and melted; and I thought, "There's my boys, whom I love, my children whom I love. And if it had been humanly possible, my spirit would have gone up, up, up, up, up the mountain and embraced them, and said, 'Your mine, your mine; and, I love you with all my heart.'"

[00:57:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MvQnAvcq-hJ73Q3DwZRfEEtZAXUI-scrxHiHmLZTqvn77ObxNhsIdZ6oTSyDVSdXOnr-Vjc8dZvtvK8MixjI6zdXH6c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3471.23) What Paul is saying to us here, if I can put it as simply as I could ever prove it is, that what I cannot do for my own children, the Father can do for his. He can send His Spirit from on high in ineffable glory--- the Spirit who has born his Son to the right hand of the Father. He can look down upon the children that Christ has won; and, with his Father heart, say, "My children, I love you. But he can send his Spirit into our hearts so that we, in return, cry, "Abba, Father!"

[00:58:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yTv7M1IW8fUc0UdN9dyN7YtxgrCooq22WdfN6LbJEXswihgjNqbVJeNn67YJYO0XtBeUX1CJiTuVCiG9X0QbJ6_AjBs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3521.81) Listen to this, dear brothers, "***If you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Let's ask him!!***

[00:59:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qYrqLQUcufyYPiWRvks-0y425UutOzWl9frs84Li4EP7S_bgR4fKhoecC2xhPrVh6TdeEpSLzJYdCir8E1svqhlna3M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3551.14) Let's pray. Father, we praise you for your word. We thank you for the riches of its truth, for the spreading before us. Although all of us are conscious, as we handle your word, that we touch only the edges of your ways, we're thankful for what we do know, and for this gracious ministry of your Spirit who has, first of all, inspired these pages, and comes to us so constantly in our need, to illumine us---to give us a Spirit of revelation and knowledge of Jesus Christ. We praise you for the mystery of your Triune Being, into the fellowship of which, by grace, we have been brought, so that, by the Spirit, through the blood of your Son we have come to know you as our Father. We praise you and magnify you for who you are. We can begin to understand this. We see how blessed is your ministry in the Spirit to us.

[01:00:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aZtVe1_5YHeVg2hFL0b5TFYvjcy7nNYnIg75no8LxhmnPcTe99bHFi4-l5Dv3vU4rW-oFFAx4erZopRC8Ruh_XwyCrY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3652.63) We can begin to understand how it is that you could have been from all eternity, apart from a creation, and utterly satisfied in your own being, you, our Father, with your Son and with the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the taste of your grace, the taste of the heavenly Spirit, the Spirit of grace and glory. And we come to you as little children. We are little children. The oldest of us, by your grace, feels far younger than we are in human terms, as you have renewed us. We are all little children in your presence. We are not great ones of the earth; we are little children. We call you "Abba, Father," and we pray, that since you have given us your Holy Spirit, more and more, the glory of his ministry may be exercised in, and through, our lives; that, we too, in all our strange, fragmented characters and personalities, may be made more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we thank you for what we see of him in one another. For, the fragments of his image that make us instantaneously cry silently, "Lord, make me more as he is, because that is the way my Lord Jesus is. So, give us a sense, in our fellowship together (not only in this conference, but in our own congregations), that Christ is all; and, the same Christ, who is all, dwells in all of his children. And so, fill us more and more with your Holy Spirit that we may minister, as ministers of the New Covenant, in the power of the Spirit of Christ. We ask these things, remembering how much we need the forgiveness of our sins, in Jesus name.