[00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0ttfQZqChAufpUySoOsBDrqeNRIrsRBe23W3xaaphj7G_8H_XtoVwVR_CEsbAYOJcOD2OMuRmpwUb8ZSlwbsJ3EP0fA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.5) Many years ago, I think it may have been 1968, I was a young student and had the privilege, on a variety of occasions, of hearing the late professor **John Murray** speak, after he had retired from his service at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. Most of you in the room will be familiar, I'm sure, with his book, "Redemption Accomplished and Applied", or his commentary on Romans; perhaps his work on "The Imputation of Adam’s Sin"; perhaps his great book on Christian ethics, "The Principles of Conduct"; or many of his other works. We had asked him, as young students, to speak on the subject of "Adam and Christ." Professor Murray had some unusual gesticulation. He was a Highlands Scot and, though he'd spent many years in the United States, you wouldn't have known it by listening to him. When he got excited, he would hit his thigh with excitement. He had an unusual capacity to speak slowly, with intense emphasis; and, he had another unusual gesticulation. When he was speaking, he would examine his fingernails from time to time, as though (somehow or another), before the time he had managed to be able to micro nail his notes, and he was just checking up that he was on target. And I was sitting there listening, as a naive 19 year old, and professor Murray, asked to speak on the subject of Adam and Christ, began in this way. He said, "I find it very difficult to speak on a subject to which I have given so much thought---*I find it very difficult to speak on a subject to which I've given so much thought*." And I thought that, "Surely the dear man is not nervous, speaking to these students. That's not what he meant to say. You don't find it difficult to speak on a subject to which you have given a great deal of thought."

[02:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=E9IiTy6T90K_RXyIOEMJGvGAWLO2W6YGlsC1P8ElSD4Z-ywlYbNX_V1uVJpN9dXB3yEjBPfVqCWVIL_wHyj1vE7tGbQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=150.62) I only thought that, because I didn't know very much about *anything*; that the truth of the matter is, the more thought you give to subjects (like the subject of the Holy Spirit), the more challenging it is to speak on themes where your chief exercise is a matter of editing out the many important things that you might say (but mustn't say), and to find some strand of the whole tapestry of the biblical teaching…. and to pull a little on that strand to show something of the glory of the color of the theology of the Gospel. And, if there is a strand that has run through these three particular studies that we've had together in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I think we can discern it coming to its fulfillment and fruition here in **Romans chapter 8**. We are all very accustomed to having heard preachers of various stripes say that, when you come to Romans chapter 8, you come to the great chapter on the Holy Spirit. It's sometimes pointed out that Paul has almost ***nothing*** to say about the Holy Spirit in Romans chapters 1 through 7!

[04:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jOAxGy_KHTqPJ0CDQcp0fNidcwVRc20JQIU44j4FmkiLPR0ixpmYEzo-ZiOHCem09jX_dS8trzKw7XSXsLHc1hRPCxY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=246.52) It would be more accurate to say that Paul says a couple of really great things about the Holy Spirit in the opening chapters. But it's true that he makes little reference to the ministry of the Holy Spirit; and then, suddenly there, it bursts into his exposition of the Gospel as he is explaining it to the Romans, whom it looks as though he hopes will become the second Antioch Church to him, and provide for him, and send hm on his way to Spain. And, as he has to expound his credentials and defend his gospel, he comes to this amazing chapter, in which he begins to focus on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And you only need to read the section we read, to see the intensity of reference to the Holy Spirit. But there is something else woven into the tapestry---the fabric, the atmosphere---in which Paul expounds the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, in the transformation of the sinner. And that is, characteristically in this chapter on the Holy Spirit, ***the language is dominated by family imagery***. And you see that in different ways. From the way in which, for example, in verse 12 he addresses his fellow believers as ***'brothers'***. And those of us who use the English Standard Version become almost weary of its little footnote (which always appears when the word 'brothers' appears): "Meaning brothers *and* *sisters*." We understand that.

[06:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qL3K2YnB0zp6mS32Us3VXdo-iXWA8XNZSi6MfrKA6LtfLFYjdJCYHK---a5wrJ_l-GaR0_vHkcVLr4III5f7jHye0jE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=361.19) But then, you notice, when he expounds the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is embedded in family language. **Verse 14:** "You, who are led by the Spirit, are ***sons*** of God." Verse 15: "You have received the Spirit of Adoption as ***Sons***." **Verse 16:** "The Spirit bears witness with our Spirit, that we are ***children*** of God." **Verse 17:** "If we are ***children***, then we are heirs." **Verse 19**: "The creation is waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the ***sons*** of God." **Verse 23**: "We, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly, as we wait eagerly for adoption as ***sons***, the redemption of our bodies." In **verse 29**: "Those he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first born among many ***brothers***." And, when you compare Galatians chapter 4 and Romans chapter 8, you notice a very subtle difference, when Paul says what looks as though it is exactly the same statement: that in the mystery of the ministry of the Holy Spirit there is a cry, ***"Abba, Father!"*** But when he takes you behind that cry, he identifies its source in rather different ways. **In Galatians chapter 4 he speaks about God's sending the *Spirit of his Son* crying, "Abba, Father**!" **In Romans chapter 8 he emphasizes that it is *we* who have the Spirit of Adoption as Sons who, through that Spirit, cry, "Abba, Father!"** And the only point I want to make account of that, which is replete with significance, is that **he is clearly speaking about *one and the same Holy Spirit*.** **It is the Spirit of the *Son* indwelling the believer, that grants to the believer the Spirit of Adoption as Sons; and through *him* we cry, "Abba, Father!"**

[08:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tMyANqA58v3zvg6eBUTVrgRtFdQBGK6SyFOG4NVw76ZRnG_zl45oQ5yYAHl22WTyA7eP7aNuPS-J4RMXrUHfvP-h3xs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=525.08) And this ties together, as we come to a number of emphases in Romans chapter 8, what we've been talking about in our previous two studies in this area, as we think about the teaching of the Lord Jesus---that he is going to send his own Spirit; that is, the Spirit who has been with the disciples *in* the Lord Jesus. That same Spirit---one and the same Spirit---he will send. And then, on the day of Pentecost, it is the Spirit who comes, as it were, armed with all the resources of his communion and union with our Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity….and he comes down to us as another paraclete to indwell us. And Paul has his own way of putting this, doesn't he, in Romans 7:9-10, when he says, "If you are in the Spirit, it is the Spirit of God who dwells in you; but the Spirit of God who dwells in you is the Spirit of Christ, who indwells you; and the Spirit of Christ indwelling you is one and the same reality; not a confusion of persons, but a unity of ministry. **It is one and the same as *Christ* dwelling in us**. So that, if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies. "

[10:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VdYqpr42p4igb33DahJTB55VVwK-HjehPXWl2O_uRm7WxCnV3lZBF01-xPx03jShLsvP5_plcwc97BtW3cdKheo-Vf0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=634.98) The Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son dwelling in the believer. It's precisely what John had said: "The day will come when, by the Spirit (Jesus promises, *'by the Spirit'*}, the Father and the Son will come to make their dwelling in our lives." And so, ***in the New Testament teaching, the apex of redemptive experience is always the knowledge that we are indwelt by the Spirit of the Son; and, because we receive the Spirit of the Son, he ministers in the believer as, what Paul calls here ‘the Spirit of Adoption*** ***as Sons’***. Just as adoption is the highest of our present privileges; just as adoption, as it were, stands on the shoulders of justification, granting us, not only the righteousness proclaimed by the ***Judge***, but also the family welcome announced by the ***Father***. So, in the same way, we may well say, I think, that the way in which Paul views the Holy Spirit at the apex of the Spirit's ministry, with respect to the believer, is that we should think of him as the ‘***Spirit of Sonship’***. And those of you who know 'Calvin's Institutes' may remember reading the opening sections of 'Book 3 of the Institutes': how we receive the grace of Christ and are united to him. When Calvin makes this rather striking statement actually, he says now, as he begins to explore the various titles of the Holy Spirit in scripture…..he says, "And the Holy Spirit's first title is 'Spirit of Adoption as Sons'. Now, he was shrewd enough to know that wasn't the first title mentioned in the scripture, so it's not first chronologically; he knew it's not the most common title mentioned in the Scripture (this is actually the *only* reference), so it's not statistical; but he was shrewd enough also to appreciate that it was deeply theological. ***If we want to taste and realize the ministry of the Spirit in our experience of salvation as sinners, then we must come to know him as the 'Spirit of Adoption as Sons'.***

*REPRODUCTION OF FAMILY HOLINESS*

[13:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TnZtDgKGt26uic3-nBogygq4-md-mtQ047-_fFGRFt9ha4F_mAP2XUozwqiWEB5fI9JIz0F5IsvhNDJaAD1iIAQ7nQM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=817.72) And Paul is saying various things here in this context. ***First*** of all, **he is saying that when the Spirit comes, he reproduces in us *family holiness***. That, of course, is the point of his language about mortification in verse 13: "If, by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live (notice the logical connection); for all who are thus led by the Spirit, to put to death the misdeeds of the body, are in fact the sons of God." The family likeness begins to be reproduced, even in *this* age, by the ministry of the Spirit of Sonship. He comes to us as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, as the Spirit of Sonship, in our lives and his whole goal is to produce ***family likeness***. Remember what we saw in John Chapter 14 that, in a sense, the whole of the Christian life can be summed up in this: ***that the Father and the Son come to make my life their dwelling place***. **That's the explanation of both the agonies and the ecstasies, the deconstruction and the reconstruction, the depths and the heights!** And here, the Apostle Paul is simply building on this, and saying that that family likeness means that there will be on-going deconstruction in our lives, as we participate in fellowship with the ministry of the Spirit. So as he comes as the Spirit of Sonship---the Spirit of Adoption---he reproduces in us the ***family holiness.***

*ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD*

[15:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2yQHveigg328-xPHZ654CAVXsAnVFZj5PO7UKzBg8w9OeWebk5KCXNhg8zpTgzm-qxBBD-PXFSB9lS-8xvluvxl4wrE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=946.4) But, ***secondly***, he also comes chiefly to minister in us, Paul says, "**In order to assure us that we really *are* the children of God**." It's very interesting in this connection that, of course, Paul believes that just as at the moment we come to faith in Christ and are united to him, we are ***forever justified*;** at the same time, we are ***forever adopted***!! Adoption is a reality in which we are brought into the family of God, and share all the privileges of that family from the *moment* we become Christians. It is not a higher order of spiritual experience; ***it is the common reality of all believers***. And it is, in a sense, part of the *glorious newness* of the New Covenant.

[16:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=r3kNPfJ7LxCkW2oVlUz7AyCbDHcPi-SLuQvhJIkaHIgJDEiu05_gjLX6CagoGPmkSjGSJ7olzubc6CMry2IrKQ1xyJE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1008.93) My wife tells me never to attempt things like this, because they're so practical, and I'm not a practical man; but let me just try and demonstrate something to you. If I move over in my Bible to the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, and turn to those three chapters that we know as 'The Sermon on the Mount', and hold them up (I think my Bible paper is still able to do it)...... hold up my Bible in this way; between my finger and my thumb, there is a multitude more references to knowing God as your own heavenly Father than there is, on what from your perspective, is the right hand side of my Bible. And the right hand side of my Bible, from your perspective, is the *entire* *Old Testament*. You don't find in the Old Testament scriptures, believer's coming and saying, "Heavenly Father." When the Old Testament scriptures speak about God as ‘Father’, by and large, they're speaking about him as either the creator of the universe or the creator of the people of Israel; and they're not speaking about him in the sense that the Lord Jesus opens up to his disciples in 'The Sermon on the Mount', and says, "Here is the pharmaceutical (the pill) that will deliver you from the sickness of anxiety, and the disease of hypocrisy. You come to know, through me, that God is your heavenly Father. And when you pray, you say, 'Our Father, the one who is in heaven'; and you'll live in the world, as those who have been brought into his family, and you enjoy his riches." And again, and again, again, in 'The Sermon on the Mount' (never mind the rest of the Gospels) our Lord Jesus Christ (and you see, this is why they were so astonished at his teaching).... ***our Lord Jesus Christ is bringing them into something gloriously new in their experience; and all because that when the Spirit comes into our lives, the Spirit comes to give us an assurance that we are the children of God***. "He witnesses," says Paul, "with our spirit….He witnesses with our spirit, as we cry, 'Abba, Father!'" Now if you compare Romans 8 and Galatians 4, from one point of view it looks as though there's a difference there, doesn't it? "God has sent the ***Spirit of his Son*** into our hearts crying, 'Abba, Father!'" That looks as though there's a direct line between the cry, "Abba, Father," and the Spirit. But, in Romans chapter 8 he says, "We've received the Spirit of Sonship and ***WE*** cry, ‘Abba, Father!'" How do we put these two things together? Presumably, in the same way, we put together Paul's teaching about crying, "Jesus is Lord!" No one can cry, "Jesus is Lord!" except by the Holy Spirit. Well then, who cries, "Jesus is Lord?" Well, we are the ones who cry, "Jesus is Lord!" ***but it is only because of the deep ministry of the Spirit that that cry goes out from our hearts.*** ***And in the same way, it seems, Paul is saying in Romans chapter 8 that the reason we cry, "Abba, Father*!", is because of the joint testimony with our spirits---the secret, invisible, *undetectable ministry of the Spirit, whose evidence is the cry coming from my mouth, "Abba, Father!"***

[21:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WTEu4WcTP1-bBdUxTQyDrPfL1iLbgsUCaw6PANhC_pMvzwAtjDj3mwwX5KUYlA--M_VjTrW8T9iSggjEY-UrEVqXtFY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1271.44) It's like regeneration, isn't it? We're not able to look down into our souls and say, "Oh, I see the Holy Spirit is regenerating me." **Our only access to the Holy Spirit's invisible, imperceptible, sovereign work of regeneration, is what? *That we believe in Jesus; that we trust in Jesus*.** And in the same way, Paul is saying that our sense of the Spirit's ministry as the Spirit of Sonship is not because we are able to look down into ourselves subjectively and say, "I hear the Spirit speaking,", but because we find ourselves in situations and circumstances where, in fact, we cry out *ourselves*, "Abba, Father!" "***When this happens," says Paul, "it is this Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit."*** It's a little like the Old Testament law (perhaps he's thinking of this)... Deuteronomy: that things need to be established in the mouths of two witnesses. And here the Holy Spirit joins himself to our spirit in this joint witness that comes out in my cry, "Abba, Father! What's this all about? It is that the heavenly Father employs his own Spirit---the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the Spirit of Sonship--- to reassure his children that they really are the children of God.

[23:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FHJwX0IicxxBNHIc2YQCB_2w5xV2fKVfmpLkFKqfCki4OoC6mI3Z_wJbhHZsVGTjKPyZzNJiXyhATF4cgyz-JQUytOg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1382.2) There are some expositions of this text that suggests that Paul's thinking here is of a Christian who has come to such maturity of life, that they are resting like a quiet child in the bosom of the Father; and that we need to attain to such rest. ***But his language suggests he's actually thinking the very reverse!!*** The language he uses here, his verb, is *'krazo'*. It's onomatopoetic; it expresses by its sound, its inner significance. It's a cry for help. It's sharp, it's sore, it's painful. It's a verb that's used of Jesus crying out (*'krazo'*) on the cross, and in the Greek version of the Old Testament (in Psalm 34), "This poor man cried (*'krazo'*); and the Lord heard him!" It's not the picture of quiet contentment. It's the picture of a child running along the sidewalk, and stumbling, and falling, and bloodying its nose, and instinctively shrieking out, "***Father, help me!"***

[24:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k_I62u1tdQMwDKIOSv6Ic2NeMs0K2ZxzXgDMeSS8YphtaTwOVFlF_2nVJESGNHsyreglfT3WVwurZDULyYJDlez1OG4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1468.63) And the amazing thing about all this (although, alas our reformed churches have not always grasped the principle) is that the Father, through the Spirit of Sonship, desires to give the deepest assurance, not to those who have scaled the heights, but to every true believer---especially when that true believer is in the depths. And it's true to pastoral experience, isn't it? When you move among the ungodly when life goes sour and bad (the ungodly may be members of the church), what is their response? "I can't understand why God is doing this!" Or they will cry, "Oh, my God!" And characteristically, even if they have learned in the liturgy to pray the 'Pater Noster' (the 'Our Father'), it's not their deepest instinct when they are in trouble. The highest of which they rise is, "Oh, God!" But the *true believer* by the Holy Spirit indwelling us---the Spirit of the Son of God who has come to bring us into the knowledge that we belong to that family--- because he indwells us, this deep-seated, fundamental reality of our lives emerges in our darkest hours. And the very fact that there is this instinct to cry "Abba, Father!" is the clearest possible expression of that deep down assurance that we really are his; and that even in the darkness, it is to him we turn. That's the beauty of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the overall salvation of the sinner. That he is so unlike some fathers who, when they see their children failing and stumbling….have you ever found yourself overhearing a conversation between a father and one of his sons, who is tearing the boy to pieces by saying, "When I was your age I was this, and that, and the next thing; and you are totally worthless." And the poor child is sinking underneath the weight of the father's greatness....but the great Father of Glory isn't like that with his children. The great Father of glory has said to his Son, "Now, my Son, they are poor and weak and frail. They will have many experiences of pain. So let us send your Spirit into their hearts, the Spirit of my Son as the Spirit who will make them conscious that they too are my sons by grace; and in their darkest hour they will cry out to me, "Father, Abba! Father!" ***And this is the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit.*** This is the intimacy of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

*OUR GROANING*: *THE SIGNIFICANCE AND MEANING OF OUR SUFFERING*

So he reproduces the family likeness; he gives assurance we are the children of God; **and then *third***, you notice how he goes on in verses 17 through 25, to give us hints that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit**, he teaches us that there is significance and meaning to our suffering**. And here's this glorious passage into which we cannot go in any detail. All I want us to underline is this (you'll notice it when he says this so remarkably)…. He says, the amazing thing is that we begin to understand: "We who have the first fruits of the Spirit (that is to say, the Spirit as the first fruits of our final redemption), groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoption as sons." Well, I thought we had the adoption as sons. Yes, we have the adoption as sons, but it doesn't look like it. "It doesn't yet appear what we shall be (to use John's language in first John), but when he appears we shall be like him!" ***And he is saying that it's the Spirit within us that causes us to groan with longings for that day. In the midst of the sufferings that we endure, the Spirit uses them to cause us to long for that day.***

[29:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qa7fSpVadaOd7RSXBsYn4jLo5ZJ7HpyIlNTHY-KKauBm5tgD0RIBxNKMa9LMgJ8-WVZuVFkD2pfgBiLCiYedH_ganR0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1779.81) I don't know if it's said as much today as it was in my earlier Christian life (it was said frequently enough in my earlier Christian life). "You know, what you need really is the Holy Spirit, because when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you'll be delivered beyond all of these groanings. You'll be brought onto a new plane altogether; you'll be released from these struggles. What you need to be released from this tension in which you live, is the special ministry of the Holy Spirit. And here is the way to experience it." And what you needed to do was to point to this text and say, "***I thought the reason I was groaning was because I already had the Spirit as first fruits of the final redemption; and that's why I'm groaning because I'm not there yet. That's the explanation of my groanings!"*** Yes, there are groanings in us because of our failure and because of our sin, but there are also groanings deeply within us because we long for this future day; and incidentally; just in parenthesis, that future day is *not* my death or your death. ***He is not longing here to be delivered from his present bodily experience. He's longing here for the new bodily experience of the resurrection***. He's longing for that day when, what he has experienced in the depths of his soul will characterize the *whole* of his being.

[31:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kXkViovLt3U02zAx64bgAA0htskRcWiQY4SdW5I5-fi-511LVWAJrEC6a96BJl13uig8m6IndNxQiACTyFYpq5W-nP8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1898.12) And he knows is that there is some sense (at least a metaphorical sense, in which to use J B Phillips’ translation, or paraphrase of these words that beautifully captures Paul's Greek)…. he says, "It's as though, the whole creation is standing on tiptoe, stretching out its neck and looking for the sons of God to come into their own." And we share that groaning; we're stretching out our neck. What's the explanation for it? My! What a comfort, my brothers and sisters, it is to know ***the explanation is because we are indwelt by the Spirit of Sonship, but we are not yet home***.

[32:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aPA5HONKxtBpvZKnJRE5Tc8bI155uhB4Scv1D-oORt3I_26lXOljuLZfDupJ1vvNr707K0pzXzA3g4uC1eIBpAZwarI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1944.05) There is a **homesickness** deep in the soul of every true believer, a mysterious paradox of satisfaction because we have found the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and we are filled with theHoly Spirit; and yet at the same time, ***this longing for more***, this longing for fruition, this longing for its fulfillment. And the way it works is this. Do you notice this? He says in verse 17, "If we are children, then we're heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ; provided we suffer with him, in order that we may also be glorified with him." Now, see this point: that for Paul, the relationship between suffering and glory is not *only* chronological---suffering now, glory then. The relationship for Paul, because of this ministry of the Holy Spirit, is that the ***glory*** ***THEN***, finds its deepest cause in what the Holy Spirit does through our ***suffering*** ***NOW***! Think about Jesus. Wherein will the glory of our Lord Jesus be seen by us, when we see him face to face? It will be in the way in which that glory is the fruit of what the Spirit did through his suffering. And it's the same for the believer. That's why when Paul says this about the way in which the Spirit leads us into an appreciation of what it is the Lord is doing in our lives, that we see that it's not just a matter of *suffering HERE* and *glory THEN*. We know people in our churches (if we are blessed with having anybody over 35 in our church), for whom that glory begins now; and we see among some of the elderly saints, who have gone through such suffering, that the Holy Spirit has, through it, polished their graces; and they are what they are. Some of them turn to us as pastors and say (some of their husbands may have gone on long before, occasionally a wife) ...and they say, "I don't know why I am so long here, in the waiting room, when I long to be in glory." They groan inwardly, as they wait eagerly for the fulfillment of it all. And you say to them, don't you? "My dear, you're here for *us*. You're here so that those of us who are younger may see the glory that your sufferings have produced in you here and now."

[35:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-oTvFoEhoQw4MqySry-Vrm6NiRNs3vQ0j_miH3Ow1C9fnn-6dUT_9s1pS89Zqn9THNPSX213Du5I8vPvXqsKNWLZH9M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2149.18) I remember in Glasgow, I used to visit frequently two sisters---married sisters---whose husbands had gone to glory; and so they'd come, as sisters, to live together again. They even shared a bed together, as they had done as little girls. And every night they would sing together, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and "Shall We Gather at the River". They would lie in bed and sing it. One of them was almost bent over physically. It was painful to speak to her. I mean, it was painful for her, but it was painful for us to speak to her if she were standing, because the whole body seemed to be bent in tension. But in the economy of God, her married name was *'Sweet'*; and in the economy of God her sufferings produced a glory that could have been produced in no other way. It wasn't that she asked for it. It wasn't that she could do very much to contribute to it. But her whole life breathed a sweetness of glory that had been wrought into her by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. ***His ministry is this intimate.***

*THE SPIRIT’S GROANING IN PRAYER:* *HELP IN OUR WEAKNESS*

[37:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QTTgQaMpOsfHKV8Y-herkNUcJJkCeqqCDEF0kcPyWNCLv0euTxX-R8I8d71RMUEBHcS9BxdAKuFcNEXel99y2-849sA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2249.29) So he reproduces the family holiness. He gives us assurance that we are children of God. He shows us---works into us---meaning in our suffering; **and then *fourthly***, says Paul in verses 26 and 27, **he gives us supernatural help in our consciousness of our weakness**. "Oh," he says, "he is the one who comes to us (verse 26) and helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

[38:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EBKtF2vgFQEqXzpVYCx_jlSYQvRMBmIOyxYNs2SJ1gR33VJDqvlf_9yyzHFbcY4UcPBv4qYG0DYSFlux0-2TaV58p1A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2298.61) "The Spirit helps us. I think it's just possible that Paul invented a word here. I sometimes wonder if there was a little touch of the German in Paul, because he seems to love words that are the fruit of several words or prepositions being put together. And his verb here, carries the idea of taking something. But then there are two prepositions that are stuck together as a prefix. One that conveys the idea of taking something *WITH* somebody else, and the other that conveys the idea of standing over *AGAINST* the other person as you do that.

[39:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6kEaaNUmlDvyAbFmCl3bFaAmQF0X6WkHKa31_yBvIzFOb2l_-y1g-LWzaWeR_0Ej6pP7R6SiGqPzF4fYv9QN3x6_7AM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2348.87) I remember, as a person whose wife once said, "What I needed from the Lord was a practical man; and I think he gave me the least practical man he ever made." I decided, since no one else in the family was at home, I would make a table (well, not make one---I bought the kit); and I was in Philadelphia at the time, and you can imagine me in my little shorts and my tee shirt. At six o'clock at night in the summer, I decided, "I'm going to make the table *tonight*." At 12 o'clock, six hours later, I turned to page 42 in the booklet that had accompanied it, and as I turned over the page, to my horror (it was midnight!)....and to my horror, I saw the words in bold, "**Now very carefully, and with the help of a friend**..." And what I was now to do with the help of a friend, was lift up this monstrosity I had created upside down; and I would need somebody who took the other end, and who was willing to lift the thing along with me, so that we would be able to accomplish the goal. And that's the idea that's present in Paul when he says, "*The Spirit helps us in our weakness*." It's actually a wonderful illustration of the principle of the Spirit's concursive operation. He doesn't come into our lives and say, "Get out of the way. I'll do it." **He comes into our lives, and he enables us, *by his inner working,* to do it.** "We work out the salvation that God works in, in fear and trembling, because it is God, by his Spirit, who works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

[41:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DD5BfcEuNROWWikqp0IjQWYIM5Jk4YcuUKqlsS_-XJ1e3nYwqYLy1vmk6VmqIWFBtPHY3uHHEFvN0mwc9VK8QByPVPY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2473.93) And he says, now, when we are weak…. The Spirit doesn't say, "Get out of my way, you useless Christian, and I'll do it myself." That would be our tendency; but the Spirit helps us in our weakness. And then, it seems to me sometimes, getting inside the connectednesses inside Paul's mind is quite a challenge, isn't it? But it seems to me, that here he gives us a specific illustration. "The Spirit helps us in our weakness; and here's an illustration: 'We don't know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps us by interceding with groanings too deep for words; and he who searches hearts---the Father who *hears* prayer---knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit, who intercedes, knows what is the mind of the Father, and intercedes in accordance with the will of God.'" ***Now, by definition, intercessory prayer is itself a confession of weakness, isn't it? We come to the Lord, and we pray to him because we know we cannot accomplish that for which we pray***. This is the reason why, in our subculture, there is so little intercessory prayer together in the churches: because it's a confession of our weakness. But what if in our weakness, our weakness is raised to the second power; and, as we engage in intercession, we have no idea what to pray for? Most of us---all of us---have been in that situation, either for ourselves or for others. We bow the knee, and no words come because all we feel we can say is, "Father, I don't know. I don't know what to pray for here." And here, "The Spirit comes," he says, "and helps us in our weakness; and he makes intercession for the saints with groanings that cannot be uttered." Now, I don't think that is the same as ‘evangelical groanings' that we sometimes hear in prayer meetings. Most evangelical prayer meetings, with which I'm familiar, have groaners. I don't think that's what Paul is speaking about here.

[43:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a3But4OqibXFAsIp3lXEOHiYNiL82-T9kOudCQwWTIttkqoPQmY-JmsClfUeiaLKp8Gn-kD9CZjrLP2bDftCZo6lKGE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2636.47) What are you speaking about? Here are the deep seated groanings of the soul that are evoked by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which the Father hears, as the Spirit through those groanings, makes intercession in accordance with the will of God. And because the Father is able to interpret those groaning, he answered that intercession. Now, as a young boy (my family comes from the North of Scotland). We used to be taken up there in the summertime; and we were toured round the family. I remember as a little boy, as we were put in the corner, while the older ones would sit around and discuss things that were of no real interest to any intelligent human being (we thought, when we were seven); in the room there would be a man in a wheelchair (my mother's cousin), and he'd had a stroke when he was 20 or 21---just newly married---and he was incapable of action. If a cup of tea was put in his hands here, he could bow his head and he could sit some of the tea. And the only other thing he was capable of doing (it was actually at first frightening before it became fascinating)...was occasionally he would just, all of a sudden, groan, “Uh. Uh…uh.” And what was mesmeric to me as a little boy, was that the woman, who God in his providence had provided him with, and who loved him profoundly, would come and give him exactly what he needed, because she was able to interpret the groanings out of love and devotion. And Paul is saying this is the Spirit. When the Spirit comes to us, dear ones, there is absolutely nothing in the Spirit that is unlike Jesus. ***And so Paul is saying, "He comes in this marvelous way to give us supernatural help in our weakness."***

*TRANSFORMATION INTO LIKENESS OF JESUS CHRIST*

[46:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FvCXix-hDVwulk2LdGA3F3c_hwQmZl6V4mtAf3AGNilSH-o5e-dz_n7hs4ygZH4zLl5UkAp71-V2JGSKljoEIyQWZfs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2801.63) Then, with this, I think I must finish. ***Fifthly***, **when the Spirit comes, he marvelously comes as the agent who transforms us into the likeness of the elder brother.** This is the whole goal in view of the Blessed Trinity. This is the goal of the divine conspiracy: "That those whom he foreknew, he also predestined." My friends, don't ever quote this verse, and stop there. "**Those he foreknew, he predestined *to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*"** You see, the Father has said to the Son, "My son, if you will die for them, and I raise you, and you ascend to my right hand, then I promise you that you may send your Spirit to them." "Father, you promised!!" "Then, my Son, send your own Spirit to them." And the Spirit of the Son comes to indwell the believer as the Spirit of Sonship; and ***the reason he comes as the Spirit of Sonship is not simply to reproduce family holiness, in a general sense; but actually, to conform us to the image of our older brother, Jesus Christ.*** I never think about these words without thinking about being a little boy in elementary school, where (as perhaps some of you had) I had the experience of following my older brother, two or three years behind him, and always being compared. And in one particular class, where I had the misfortune of having the same teacher that he had had, she would always do the morning inspection of the boys (I don't remember the girls ever being inspected!). But the boys were lined up at the front. And first of all, we would show the palms of our hands to see they were clean, and then the backs of our hands to see that our nails were clean. And then she would look at the front of our shoes to see that they'd been polished; and then she would go behind and look to see that the heels had been polished. She belonged to the generation of my grandmother, who told my mother she should never marry a man who didn't polish the heels of his shoes….as well as the toes. And then she would tower above us, and she would look to see that we hadn't brought any lice into the school in our hair. And then she would dismiss us in order of cleanliness and decency. The first would be the cleanest; until in this instance….*poor Sinclair, Ferguson*---his shoes scuffed by playing soccer in the playground; dirty because it was wet and we'd been using a heavy ball. And I remember standing there right at the end. And Mrs. Woods (her name was).... she shrieked up me," FERGUSON!!!!" I remember her because she chewed chewing gum, which for my mother, was almost the deadliest of sins. "FERGUSON," she would say, "you're nothing like your elder brother! Go and sit down!" And I would---humiliated, dirty, stubborn---I'd go and sit down. I wish I'd been a believer then who had known Romans 8:29. Because I was awkward enough before I became a Christian (and for all I know, still am), to have said to her, "Mrs. Woods, that may be true; but one day, through the ministry of the Spirit, I'll be just like my elder brother! Maybe you'll see." I don't know whether she was a Christian or not; but I really *hope* she was.

[51:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-7ED06yv4L0aQ0N4Uv2lvrqT7-Rni6XaP4k7cX6Y-_SX8rNpkcyHq2ayVT2YCw5KDyXTfiThOs81SSjVPYu4Be-1iL8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3092) And I hope you're there when I have the satisfaction of saying to her, "***See me now, Mrs. Woods, just like our elder brother!"*** And that's the Spirit's ministry. It's not rocket science. It's divine grace, because his deepest, his deepest desire is that we should be family; and we got a taste of it at a conference like this, don't we? We're brothers. There's no order of precedence here, because we are brothers; and we're brothers because (and that means brothers and sisters, incidentally)... we're brothers because ***the Spirit who was on the Lord Jesus those 30 odd years, has been sent from heaven among his people and into our hearts, to bring us to where he is---to see him face to face and be made like him.*** Now, as we look forward to the final message after our break, may we go home to the families of God, from which we come, and be thrilled by the privileges that we enjoy because we are indwelt by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[53:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ub-gX1aVHYR3y6rFOeweWcIreU4YmrUyJEwysJOdERGEybp9rv-lKMbaIRb6pUIlw9N8xrCv5m9FlN3yIJ78St32dwo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3190.74) Heavenly Father, we thank you again for the riches of your grace to us in our savior, Jesus Christ. We thank you that he is so kind. Thank you that he gave his life for us; and now, he has given his Spirit to us, and brought us to know *his* Father as *our* Father. We remember his words on the very day of his resurrection, "Go to my brothers, and tell them that I ascend to ***my God and their God, and my Father and their Father."*** We pray that we may so live in union and communion with Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that the family likeness will be produced in us, and that in this world, the very atmosphere of our lives, the form of our speech, our love for one another, the familiness of the churches to which you have called us, may be a signal of his grace and a drawing magnet; that in this world where, in families themselves, sin has wrought such dysfunction and alienation, there may be a sense, in the family of the churches to which we belong, that this is how the Father desires us to be, and this is the grace in which we live. So hear us and help us, we pray; in Jesus name. Amen.