***The Intercession of the Holy Spirit, No. 1
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This morning, we continue in the book of Romans 8. We move to a new section, verses 26-27, and the subject is The Intercession of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen in the immediate context that mankind and the world in which it lives suffers under the divine curse which was imposed upon man and nature because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, nature and man groan together under the suffering of pain and the consequence of death. This is the curse from which they long to be released.

The Christian as God's legally adopted son anticipates resurrection of his body when he will be freed from all tinges of this curse because of Adam's guilt. So, we Christians are saved with the great hope of seeing the redemption of our body, the primary expression of release from the curse, that is the resurrection body in the pattern of the body of Jesus Christ, the glorified body, this to be realized by all of us at the rapture of the church.

**The Holy Spirit as Our Helper**

This morning, we begin at verse 26 which now adds to the hope of the resurrected body the dramatic revelation concerning the assistance of God the Holy Spirit. Verse 26 says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought."

The word "likewise" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek "hosautos." This is an adverb, and it means "in the same way." It is put in here to introduce the comparison in verse 26-27 to something that has been referred to in verses 24-25, namely that the Christian who is born again while he is suffering under the curse of upon this world because of sin still functions upon a hope, a hope which sustains him under the sufferings of that curse.

Well, there's another element that sustains him in the midst of the curse in addition to this hope, and this word introduces that fact. There is something else in like manner: also the spirit. This is "pneuma," and this is referring here to God the Holy Spirit. "In like manner, God the Holy Spirit also [that is, in addition to hope] helpeth." "Sunantilambanomai." And this is a very long word because it is a very descriptive word.

Actually, this is made up of three Greek words. This word number one, "sun," means, "with." The Holy Spirit does something together with the believer. This word number two, "anti," is another preposition. It means "instead of" or "alongside of." So, the Holy Spirit comes alongside the believer for some reason. And this third word, "lambano," is a verb, and it means, "to take hold of." That is, the Holy Spirit takes hold of something with the Christian. So, this long word means "to take hold of at the side in order to assist one."

And we do translate it properly as "helper." That is the Holy Spirit, we are told, in addition to the hope we have, we have another encouragement. God the Holy Spirit comes up along the side of every believer to help him shoulder something that the believer must carry, namely a consequence of the curse. It connotes here to help another in bearing a load. It is as if you are carrying a heavy log and somebody came up alongside you and said, "Here, let me give you a hand with that," and took part of the weight upon himself.

This word is only used one other time in the New Testament. Two times, this long word is used. The other time gives us a very clear picture of what it means. It's in Luke 10:40, in the incident where the Lord Jesus is visiting the home of Lazarus and Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, are preparing a meal for a group of people that are there. But Mary is seated at the feet of Jesus getting a lesson in Bible doctrine. She has all kinds of questions, spiritual questions, that she wants some answers for. So, she's there discussing spiritual things while Martha is out in the kitchen doing the work of preparing the meal.

Finally, Martha gets fed up with the fact that she's carrying the load alone, and so in Luke 10:40, we read, "But Martha was cumbered about much serving. [Martha was very concerned that the supper should be prepared, that the meal should be well-prepared, that the guests were there, that the social amenities should be observed] and came to Him [to Jesus] and said to Him, 'Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she ["sunantilambanomai," that she come alongside and shoulder the past with me].'"

Perfect picture of someone coming along and giving a hand. Here, Martha wanted Mary to give her hand in preparing a meal. The idea is to pitch in and carry a burden. So, the picture is very significant here.

**Our Helplessness Apart From God**

What Romans tell us is that yes, we Christians have a great hope of a resurrected body that will be free from the curse of sin, and it will wipe all that burden out once and for all. But, he says, we have something right now in the meantime to help us to make it. We actually have the person of God the Holy Spirit who indwells us, pitching in to help us carry the burdens that are the result of the curse of sin upon the earth, particularly a specific burden that we have that Paul calls "our infirmity."

The Greek word is "astheneia." "Astheneia" is a word that refers to lack of strength, and so, a weakness. And it is not plural (not weaknesses, but our weakness) - a total characteristic of the human being is described as weakness. What this connotes is the inability to produce desirable results. That's not very complimentary, and you might want to challenge that, but you're going to have a tough time, because this is a very clear Greek word, and it tell us that a human being in his natural self has an inability to achieve desirable results.

Now, we've seen this elsewhere in the book of Romans. The Apostle Paul has already gone through those agonies that he's had of soul where he didn't want to be a sinful person. He wanted to be a godly man, and what does he do? Goes ahead and does all those sinful things. He has already referred to the incapacity in man to achieve desirable results, but here is the very clear-cut statement that God the Holy Spirit comes in and shoulders the burden of a weakness that we have as the natural characteristic.

So, what is this telling us? It tells us that human beings do not possess great inherent potential powers with which to face life if only they know how to turn them loose. We're going to look at this more deeply as we go along, but I just want to alert you again to the fact that it is the commonplace concept in our society now that there is great potential within a human being which can be turned loose. He can be turned on if proper techniques are followed to that end. He already has the power and capacity within himself. All he needs to know is how to turn it loose.

But the Bible says, "No, that's not true." The Bible says, "What we have is incapacity; that's what characterizes us. What we have is enormous weakness." So, if we're going to make it, if we're going to be able to achieve desirable goals and results, it's obviously going to have to be done as a result of somebody else coming in and overriding that weakness.

Now, notice that the Bible in many places gives us in effect the caution not to forget that we basically are incapable, that we basically are people who are unable to achieve the goals that we want to achieve. John 15:5, Jesus says "I am the vine, and ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me [he who stays in temporal fellowship], and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." "Without Me, ye can do nothing." This verse tells us that man can do nothing apart from the help of Jesus Christ. What does that tell you? It tells me that we have no inherent powers to tap into. It tell us that without Jesus Christ, we can do exactly nothing. We are zeros. The unbeliever, you see, doesn't have a chance.

Romans 12:3 has this to say, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Here, the Apostle Paul says, "Don't make more of yourself than your limitations justify."

Do you know anybody who makes more of themselves, who thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think? It's a very natural characteristic to think that we have some great potential, that we have some great promise, that we have a great deal of value through which we can accomplish something within us. But the Word of God says, "Don't do that. Don't think of yourself more highly than you should."

How high should you think of yourself? What kind of a self-image should you have? The Bible says you should have the self-image that you are a zero. The Bible says that you should have the self-image that you are absolutely nothing. That's exactly what John 15:5 told us, that without Jesus Christ, we can do nothing. There is nothing within us to admire. There is nothing within us to love. There is nothing in ourselves to love, and self-love is the very thing that is destroying us.

Notice 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Beware of self-confidence in your own strength. Why? Because it's not there! Don't have a great self-confidence in your capacity. About the time you think you've got it, you're going to stand, and you're going to walk with great strength and confidence as a Christian, you're going to fall! It's not there. And the people who are most prone to this are those of you that have been around Berean Memorial Church for many years and have learned a lot of doctrine. You're the ones that are most easily shot out of the water unless you remember that it's only what Christ makes of us that makes what you know count. There is nothing inherently of capacity within ourselves.

1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is God's grace which is the source of man's ability. Paul says, even when I worked, even when I applied myself, I really was a servant of the Lord, I never kidded myself that when I was accomplishing great things (founding churches, writing scripture, doing these tremendous things), I never kidded myself that there was a capacity within me. It was the grace of God doing it through me. And it was when I realized that I was a zero that God rose to maximum power within me.

In 2 Corinthians 3:5, Paul adds this, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." The only capacity we have is what comes from God, not in ourselves as some untouched potential. How could you say it clearer than that verse? Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God. There is no basic, hidden capacity in the human being. Sin has destroyed everything.

In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul summarizes it so well when he says, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Because the Lord has told him in verse 9, the Lord has said that, "My strength is made perfect in weaknesses." What could be clearer? "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Ah, but Christians are told that they have so much power, they have so much potential, they have so much promise, they can accomplish so much for God that they actually begin to believer that if they can just get a good attitude and a right view of themselves, they are going to start being marvelous, productive people.

In Galatians 6:3, Paul says, "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Exalting yourself as a source of great potential is self-deception. Believe it or not, you are not gods, and therefore, you do not have great, inherent potential.

One more. 1 Peter 5:6 adds to this principle when Peter says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Take the humble position befitting those who by nature as human beings are finite. Take the position of humility because you are limited. You are finite.

Now, it's a great comfort for us to realize our Lord understands our inherent lack of capacity under the effects of the sin nature and therefore, the Lord Jesus stands by to come to our assistance. In Hebrews 4:15, we read, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities [that great, overwhelming, consuming weakness, that nothingness that characterizes the human being]; but was at all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He did not have a sin nature to contend with, but he met temptation. He knows what our problems are. He knows how to come to our aid in meeting that weakness.

And in 2 Corinthians 12:5, we read, "Of such an One [referring to Jesus] will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine weaknesses." Now, that's not the way of the world. The way of the world says, "Hey, glory in your capacities! Glory in your potential! Glory in the fact that you only use 10% of your brain! You got 90% there to go! Can you imagine what a tremendous person you are, get that 90% cranking in there? What a fabulous person you'll be." God says, "You're nothing, and you're kidding yourself if you've got a great unreserved, untouched, untapped potential in reserve." We have nothing but "astheneia," weakness.

And so, it is not without significance to us that Paul here in Romans 8 makes this dramatic revelation that in like manner as we have hoped for a resurrected body and all the consequences that will follow that, we now also have the Holy Spirit who comes alongside to shoulder with us the terrible burden all of us must carry, namely an inherent weakness.

**The Holy Spirit as Comforter**

In John 14:16, the Lord says to His disciples, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." And this Comforter that was given to them has been given to all of us. The word "Comforter" is the Greek word "paraklétos." This is a noun that refers to, actually a lawyer. One way you could translate this, really, is a lawyer. The Bible translates it in our King James as "an Advocate," which means a lawyer. It is somebody who comes in a court of law to assist as a legal counsel to a defendant. And here, you have the picture of the Christian in God's court of law, and along comes the Lord Jesus who has gone to heaven who can no longer be here to counsel us, so He sends the Holy Spirit down to substitute as our Advocate. The word refers to one who pleads the cause of another.

The Lord Jesus did not, of course, did not cease being our advocate. Actually, He continues that same role but now in heaven. 1 John 2:1 therefore says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. [I have written you these cautions so that you will not be guilty of sinning.] But if anybody does sin, we have [a "paraklétos"] an advocate [a lawyer] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It is very important for us to realize that we have this person in heaven who is representing us before the Father, and we have this kind of a person pleading our case here on the earth.

In John 14:16, when Jesus said, "I'm going to send another Comforter," it's important to know that it's the Greek word "allos," which is the word in the Greek language for "another of the same kind." So that, Jesus was saying, "I am part of the Godhead; I have been here alongside of you carrying the burden, shouldering the burden, and helping you in your weakness. Now I'm going to leave, but I'm going to send another person just like Myself, another member of the Godhead, who will come along to shoulder the burden with you. And I'm going to do the same thing now in heaven so that now you will have two lawyers on your case, for the price of one."

So, the Christian with his two lawyers in assistance. Jesus Christ in heaven, doing what? Pleading His case in heaven against Satan's accusations. It is in Revelation 12:10 that we read that Satan accuses Christians before the throne of God day and night. Every time we are guilty of a piece of human good evil, a piece of sin evil, he accuses us before the Father, and it is Jesus Christ who comes to our defense as our lawyer and says, "Those people are not guilty; I have paid for that sin." Here on the earth, we have the Holy Spirit assisting in the midst of the angelic warfare, giving us the capacity to be victorious as we meet Satan and as we meet an awfully confused philosophy in the world today. It is the Holy Spirit who has replaced the Lord Jesus here on this earth. And that's what the Lord meant in John 16:7; He's going to give us somebody else in place of Himself.

So, Paul in Romans 8 says that we have another Comforter, a divine person who has been sent to be with us here actually on this earth personally present, residing with each of us. As the Lord Jesus once was with His disciples to help them in their weakness, so the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Then he says, "For," which is the Greek word "gar," a conjunction which introduces a specific, major weakness with which we Christians suffer and with which we need a lot of help.

For, we Christians have a problem of ignorance. We don't know something. The Greek word is "oida." This is the word for knowledge by information or intuition, and it is accompanied by the strong negative "ou." We just constantly, personally do not know something that we need to know. And what is that that we need to know? In the Greek language, it's introduced grammatically in a way that it just stands out like a red light signaling, flashing on and off, here specifically what we do not know. What we do not know, the weakness that we basically suffer from is what we should pray for as we ought. We don't know what we should pray for as we ought.

The word "pray" is this Greek word "proseuchomai." This is the usual New Testament of appeals to God. It is the Christian using the technique of prayer to the Father. In the aorist tense, at any point in time, when the Christian needs to pray. Active in the fact he does it personally. It's a subjunctive mood: it's asking a question, "What should I pray for?" "As we ought," that is, "as it is necessary, the way I should be praying."

Christians don't know sometimes what they should pray for, as they should pray for. Have you been praying for something for a long time? Should you keep praying for it? Should you stop praying for it? Here's a situation that a person is in. Does this person call for prayer, or should this situation now be dismissed from prayer? Is there something you ought to be praying for that never even occurred to you? Christians need help in prayer because we do not automatically know what to pray for in terms of God's will. It would be easy if we could see, "Here's God's plan for me." Then I would know what to pray for. One. Two. Three. All of these are the things I need to pray for.

But the incapacity in prayer is a very serious weakness for the simple fact that is the basic tactic in the angelic warfare for defeating Satan. This is what Ephesians 6 tell us, praying always, and the capacity to pray is the way we whip the devil. Now, if we don't know how to pray as we should, then we have a major tactical problem in coming to grips with Satan and the demons in the angelic conflict. The technique of prayer is the basis of all spiritual, divine good production. Therefore, it has to be done right.

So, it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Christian in his praying, like a lawyer. He guides his client to present the case properly to the Father. Unbeknownst to you, as you open your mouth in prayer, God the Holy Spirit is there guiding you in the presentation of what you mouth says. He guides you to a proper prayer request. He guides you so that you avoid praying for certain things which the Bible says would be to pray amiss.

When the Christian faces a trial, for example, we face some kind of a trial, we've got some kind of suffering, we've got some kind of a problem, what's the natural thing for you to do and pray? "Lord, I've got this physical ailment. Please take it away from me." Are you sure you should be praying for that? "Lord, here's this great tragedy on the horizon. Please don't let it happen."

Is that what you should pray for? The pain is what we want removed; the pain is what we pray for. But there are times when that is the wrong thing to pray for. The real issue to pray for may be something else that needs to be solved, which is the reason that the suffering is there. The real thing to pray for is something totally apart from the trial. That trial and that pain has been brought on by something else. That's the thing you should be praying for.

So, God hits you between the eyes with a bit of suffering, and what do you say? "Oh, Lord, please take this suffering, take this burden, take this pain away," instead of saying, "Lord, why the suffering? Why the pain? Why the burden? Why did this happen? There's something out here that triggered this in your divine wisdom that I need to take some action on, and I need to make correction." And so, it is the Holy Spirit who comes in to give guidance at the point like that.

It is true of the greatest of Christians that that is the way we tend to pray: get rid of the suffering. No less person than the Apostle Paul did exactly that. He had this physical thorn in the flesh that was a great pain for him to work under, to carry around, and the Bible tells us that three times, he went to the Lord, he says, "Please, God, remove this pain from me. Please get rid of this thing."

But the Apostle Paul did not understand that he was praying for the wrong thing. He was praying to remove the pain, the thorn in the flesh, when he should have been praying for something totally different, namely that that thorn in the flesh would do its job of reminding him not to reveal what he had seen in heaven and would give him the capacity to recognize how weak he is so that God could be free to make him a great and powerful Christian.

And so, in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 that we've already read, this was pointed out to him, "And [God] He [God] said unto me [to Paul], 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore [Paul says] would I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." I'll take the weakness. I'll take the incapacity if that enables God to come through without me standing in the way and for Him to really make something great and useful and wonderful out of me. And so, he takes pleasure in these various things that actually produce the five facets of the spiritual maturity structure.

And he ends verse 10 saying, "When I am weak, that's when I'm strong." What does he mean? He says, "When I recognize that I am zero, and it's all of God, then I become a real powerhouse." So, this business of God the Holy Spirit helping us to carry the burden of our weakness, and particularly the weakness of our prayer, should be a thing of enormous comfort to us.

You see, you practically discover, and as you will in a moment, there is someone on the line to heaven like you wish you could be. There is someone on the line to heaven saying, "This is God the Holy Spirit." You have a picture of God talking to God, God the Spirit praying to God the Father. "This is God the Holy Spirit. I'm just calling You in behalf of Sam Jones here. He should have asked you in prayer to meet this problem and this problem, and I'm sending that request up. I wish you would act upon it." And you don't even know that the request has been sent up there. You don't even know that you should have been asking for it but that because of your incapacity in weakness, so that you have a limitation of knowing how you should open your mouth, God the Holy Spirit comes in and overrides that weakness so that you have a direct line to heaven. Someone else acting as your lawyer covering the ground for you.

The Apostle Paul himself, of course, recognized that sometimes it was a problem making a decision. He just did not know how to ask God to act in his behalf. One example of that is in Philippians 1:22-[24], where Paul says, concerning whether he should pray, "God save my life. I'm in the Roman prison. They could take my life. Save my life." Paul says, "I don't know whether I should pray for God to save my life or whether I should pray for God to take me home to heaven.

So, in verse 22, he says, "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I know not. [I don't know whether to choose to live or to die.] For I am in a strait between two [I'm tight, I'm pressed in between two walls on both sides of me], having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

So, the Apostle Paul said, "I don't really know what to pray. For me, I'd rather go to heaven. I'm sick of it. I'm tired of Nero. I'm tired of all the hassle. I'm tired of all the problems. I'm tired of all the flack I take from all the churches. That gang in Corinth really burns me up. And I'd like to go to heaven and let them stew in their own juice."

But on the other hand, he says, "When I'm here, I know I'm here because God gives me capacity to contend with your weakness and your evil and to help get you straightened out and to maybe save you for rewards that you don't deserve but which God is ready to give you." And so, Paul says, "I don't know sometime which way to turn, but God the Holy Spirit came in and was praying the right way in behalf of that problem for Paul so that the right solution was arrived at.

So, the Apostle Paul says, "In like manner, the Holy Spirit is here also to help our weakness [to help us to make it through this time when we're under the curse]. For we do not know as human beings what we should pray for as we ought: but." He says, and he uses a strong word for "but," the word "alla." "Alla." There is a solution. It introduces what the Holy Spirit does to solve our ignorance in praying.

"But the Spirit [again, referring to God the Holy Spirit, and then it makes an emphatic "himself," and that's in the Greek Bible too. The Spirit Himself - He personally steps in to take charge of this problem. What an enormous honor. To do what? "To make intercession." Another one of those long Greek words: "huperentugchanó." This is made up of the word "huper" which is a preposition. That means "to bend over." "Entugchanó" is a verb. It means "to make a petition." So, what this word pictures for us is somebody who bends over a person in order to hover over him to protect him and to make petitions in his behalf. So, indeed, we translate it as, "to intercede."

This word is in the present tense which means it is the constant ministry of the Holy Spirit on earth for the believers. The Holy Spirit Himself speaks to the Father for us. It's a statement of fact. This intercession is made in behalf of all Christians of the church age. And the intercessions are very significant to God the Holy Spirit. They are described by the word "stenagmois," which connotes a deep concern, groanings. The Holy Spirit intercedes in our behalf with groanings. He groans in our behalf, in Romans it says, "In groanings which cannot be uttered."

The word "alaletois" means "unutterable." He has a deep concern that He does not even put into words. The Spirit of God is so deeply concerned He cannot even put it in words. All of us sooner or later had that kind of experience. We have had a deep concern for something that we've not even been able to verbalize. We can't even put it in words. Our hearts are burdened for something, and we don't even put it in explicit words. It is unutterable. These groanings of the Holy Spirit cannot be expressed in articulate speech, yet He pleads with the Father as our lawyer with petitions that are beyond words to express, but they are not beyond the Father to understand. He understands the mind of the Holy Spirit.

So, when we say that the words are unutterable, we do not mean that they are unintelligible. He cannot express them, but He knows exactly what the Holy Spirit is burdened for in our behalf. Now, that's amazing thing, that God the Holy Spirit should be burdened for you and me individually and go before God the Father to express that burden in such a way that God the Father has to have the communication brought to His mind without specific words being spoken to express that concern. Now, whatever the specific concern in your life is, it's a concern which, again, is an expression or prayer on the part of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 27 tell us that God the Father understands, "And He that searcheth." The word "search" is "ereunao." "Ereunao" means "to examine." This is the constant activity of God the Father. He personally does this. He examines something about us, namely our hearts. The word for "hearts," is "kardia," and that refers, of course, to the mind of the soul. The Father is able to look into the mind of all of us so that He makes a true evaluation. In like manner, He is able to search the mind of God the Holy Spirit so that He comes up to a precise evaluation. There are many passages of scripture that stress the fact of the capacity of God to see and to understand our thinking.

1 Samuel 16:7 is an example of that, where we read, "But the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature [picking a man to be king of Israel]; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'" When God wants to pick somebody for a special mission, He doesn't look on Him outwardly, to see how tall He is, how good-looking He is. He looks upon what is in the heart, because He is capable of examining the heart.

1 Kings 8:39 says the same thing, "Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.)"

Psalm 139:1 makes this same statement, "O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me." In Jeremiah 17:9-10, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I test the conscience, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." So, the Bible is very clear that God in heaven is indeed the searcher of the hearts. He is fully capable of knowing what is in the heart.

So, when God the Holy Spirit is burdened in our behalf with something that He does not even put into words, we are told that God who is able to understand the mind is also able to know what is in the mind of the Holy Spirit. And this is the word "oida." This is the word for knowledge by information, and God gives this information by His omniscience. And the information He gets is what is specifically, He says, in the mind of the Spirit.

And the word for "mind" here is a word that tells us a great deal, because it is the word "phronema." "Phronema" means "a thought, the content." God looks into the mind of the Holy Spirit, and He knows what God the Holy Spirit is thinking. God the Father, by His omniscience, knows the unspoken on our behalf of God the Holy Spirit because, furthermore, he says, He knows that because He makes intercession.

And here we had a short variation of the word we had a little earlier, "entynchanei," which means intercession, falling in step with somebody to speak with them, to plead with them. Intercession for the saints. "Because He makes intercession for the saints."

Who are the saints? This is the word "hagios." This word means "holy, separated from evil, separated unto God." It refers to those who are compatible with the holiness of God. Believing sinners are brought into this position of holiness by the grace of God. And it is used here as a noun to refer to all the Christians of the church age.

You understand that this does not refer to some super godly group of people like the Roman Catholic Church likes to establish certain saints. In spite of the general carnality which characterized the Christians in the church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 1:2 calls them all "saints," every one of them. So, the weakest and the most sinful Christian has the same position as a saint before God as the godliest person. God's grace salvation remains a perfect provision, and all of us are saints.

So, we are the people even in carnality that the Holy Spirit is going to bat for, and it says he does this "kata," (that is, according to) in keeping with (the word "the will of" is not in the Greek; it just says, "according to") God. To us, which could just as well be said, "according to the mind of God." The Father knows what the Holy Spirit is asking for because the Holy Spirit acts in perfect conformity and compatibility with the Father. They're on the same wavelength.

And as 1 John 5:14 tells us, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." It is the Holy Spirit who is burdened to ask according to the Father's will for us so that God praying to God in our behalf, and the result is the thing for which the Spirit of God is burdened is brought to fruition in our behalf.

This is why Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that ye ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Whatever you brought before God in prayers this week, whatever you brought in intercession to Him, whatever you brought in requests you brought to prayer meeting, and whatever results of positive fulfillment that you receive form those, you receive a great deal more than what you asked for, above all that you asked or all that you thought. God the Holy Spirit overrode what you failed to think of that you should ask for in your behalf. Well, we don't have a good sense because of our natural weakness of not knowing how to pray as we should, God the Holy Spirit comes in, and He makes the prayer for us. And we are the beneficiaries of it. We have a direct line into heaven.

So that, the more faithful you are in prayer, you get all that, but you get all the gravy, and all the surplus, and all the added benefits of the prayer life of God the Holy Spirit in your behalf. What a tremendous addition to the hope that we have of a resurrection body, what a tremendous addition of comfort this indeed is while we're here on this earth struggling under the burdens of the curse. And it all begins with our realization that it's all of God and none of ourselves. All of Him and none of us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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