

Romans

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Romans 8:26-30



Vss. 26-27

- We do not know how to pray as we should. Ever. There are a good many reasons why this is so. First, there is that inner struggle Paul has been speaking of. We aren't there yet. Hopefully we're moving forward, growing in Christ, but we are not there yet. We still struggle with the inner conflict. We don't do the good we know we should and we do that which we know we shouldn't. So the sin which still battles for its place in our lives, works to cloud our vision and judgement as we pray, so that we are not able to pray as we should. Second, we have neither the vision nor mind of God. We cannot see the future, it is impossible for us to know what is best, so how can we pray for this choice over the other when we don't really know what the outcome will be? If we pray for what we want or what **we** think is best, it may in fact be the worst outcome possible. And we rarely ever pray for that which will bring pain, but it is often the painful situation we need. Again, we are like 3–4-year-old children to our Father in Heaven. We are hungry so we pray that we will have food and cookies taste really good, so it seems sound and reasonable to us to pray for what we know will be good. But the Father knows that we need iron in our diet and that cookies are a poor source of iron. Liver, however, is an excellent source of iron and though it may taste awful, liver, not cookies, is what the Father will be giving us for food. Not what we would choose, but it is what we need. It is the better choice, it is a choice straight from the heart of God.
- So prayer, as with everything else in the life of the disciple, begins and ends with God. As disciples, Christ is in us and we are in Him. "...and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is." So the One who can see the future and who does know the mind of God, searches our hearts and intercedes for us "according to the will of God". God is not going to respond positively or ever consider a prayer request that runs counter to His will, so the Spirit brings our concerns to the Father in a way that aligns with the Father's will...on earth as it is in Heaven.

Vss. 28-30

- Here Paul points out that those who are disciples, who are in Christ and with Christ in them, will see the Holy Spirit work **all things** together for their good. But this works only for them, for those who are called "according to His purpose", this is, people who are disciples, for they are the ones

who **are** called according to His purpose. That is not to say that as He purposes God will not do good for the others. Time and again in Scripture, God worked out things for the good of pagans and other nonbelievers: the Persians who defeated the Babylonians (because God had purposefulness in their victory) and those who were on the same doomed ship Paul was on, none of them perished when the ship sank in the storm, just as God had promised Paul out of His grace. But it is with “those who are called according to His purpose” that God **works** to make things good. But we also need to understand that GOOD is defined by God, not Websters. People almost always think that it is good that someone not die. But for God, it may be entirely a good thing for someone to die “according to His purpose”, for the end result is that they are with Him in Heaven and His purpose on earth is accomplished. Recall the old saying that the blood of the martyr waters the meadow of the church.

- The remaining lines of this passage speak to the Sovereignty of God. Here we are, blissful in our sin, and God comes to us. It is God who initiates the relationship. At Christmas the sinner hears the story of the birth of Jesus. He did not create the story, it comes to him from somewhere else and as God pleases, it comes with the Holy Spirit. The sinner may have heard Linus recite the Christmas story a hundred times, but this time, as he hears the words of Luke at a child’s Christmas pageant, this time the message comes loaded with the Holy Spirit, for now God is calling this sinner to repentance. The sinner’s heart suddenly breaks and melts. In his spirit he cries out to God, begs for forgiveness, and repents. Then he is called by God, he is justified by God and he is glorified by God. On his own, he could do nothing. But with God all things are possible. Even the salvation of the worst of us.