

## “The Intercessor”

*Romans 8:22-29*

### Introduction

God wants to see people look like Jesus. With this end in mind, He allows us to go through circumstances within His providential will so that we might be conformed into the likeness of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Often, the difficult experiences and tough seasons that God’s children go through cause them to groan with discomfort. However, these experiences often help transform them into the image of Jesus. Not only do God’s children groan when life is tough, so does God’s creation. Natural disasters are examples of creation groaning. But groaning does not always have negative result, for instance, the discomfort in childbirth results in something good – a new life.

Much like the groans of a woman in labor, the Christian’s groans are the sounds of bad pain in a good situation. The lament has a purpose. If you look at the world and only see suffering, you are missing the beauty of birth, the spiritual and theological viewpoint of tough seasons and the purpose in the pain. In Romans 8:18, Paul speaks about the oppressive suffering and trials of life and, in verse 22, he lets us know that these times are a part of the natural order of things. In verse 23, Paul says even we ourselves groan within ourselves. In the midst of this groaning however, the Holy Spirit is present as a helper and a comforter.

When life causes us to groan, The Holy Spirit has a responsibility to help when you are collapsing in your soul. In our seasons of difficulty, we are never alone; The Holy Spirit loves you enough to intervene in your circumstances. His purpose of intervention is to prompt you and refocus you to an eternal spiritual perspective. If you will allow the challenges in your life to turn you to God, you can experience a spiritual shift. God often allows reminders in our lives in the form of suffering to bring us to a new spiritual perspective. If we don’t allow the groanings to recalibrate our outlook, then we will not experience the benefit of the Intercessor, which is the work of the Holy Spirit joining us in our pain, problem and groans.

Having the mindset of the Spirit when life is burdensome means that you now have divine spiritual help (Rom 8:6). Even the most spiritual of people can get weak, cry out and feel as if they are on the verge of quitting (2 Cor 1:8). The good news is that you have Someone – The Holy Spirit – praying with you and for you when you can’t even pray for yourself. God hears these prayers and acts according to His will (1 John 5:14) as the Holy Spirit knows God’s will and is able to interpret your prayers based on your audible and inaudible groans.

Providence is the way in which God intercedes within His laws to stitch things together to get to His sovereign goal. When we groan, we should groan knowing that the Spirit is helping to conform us to the will of God because God providentially arranges things (Rom 8:28). The truth of Romans 8:28 is for “those who love God.” This means you should still have a genuine love for God when life hurts and you can be confident that God is working things out for your good and His glory. God’s ultimate purpose is to conform us to the likeness of His Son (Rom 8:29). As He uses circumstances outside of you to conform you, transformation will happen from the inside out.

### Getting Started

1. What does it mean for creation to groan for God? What are examples of the earth’s yearning? Based on your understanding of the sermon, what is the earth yearning for?
2. In what specific way(s) have you seen creation and people in the world groaning during 2020?

### Let’s Get Personal

1. What oppressions and trials have specifically challenged you this year? Have you allowed those challenges to conform you? If so, share the changes you have noticed in your spiritual life this year. If not, share why you think transformative work hasn’t occurred.
-

2. If you only look at the hardship of life and don't see the blessings, you don't have a spiritual perspective. What pain have you experienced in your past for which you now have a heavenly view? What blessing in hindsight and time has given you the ability to see?
3. What current circumstances in your life are causing you to groan. Has this week's message given you a different perspective or challenged you to look for the purpose in your pain? Share takeaways from the message with your group.

#### Take the Next Step

1. To navigate the hard parts of life with the right perspective, we have to have Christ's mindset. What can you do this week to develop this mindset?
2. Take a moment to be intentional about choosing your perspective. Think about how the Holy Spirit has already been at work in your life helping you. What are you grateful for as it relates to His love and care in your life?
3. The Bible says, "In the world you have tribulation" (John 16:33). This means all of us will have moments where we experience things in life we don't enjoy. But you don't have to navigate these seasons alone! Jesus is interceding on your behalf, but others can, too. What can you do to stay connected and be authentic so that you can experience community, belonging and receive covering by others in prayer?
4. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Romans 7; 8:6; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 2 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 7:25; Isaiah 29:13; 1 John 5:14; Job 23; and James 4:5.

#### Renew Your Mind

*"When He has put me to the test, I will come out as gold."*

*Job 23:10*

---