

"THE PRAYER MEETING IN HEAVEN."

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First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden, WA

August 30, 2026, 6:00 pm

Text for Sermon: Romans 8:26-28, 31-34

Introduction.

How is your prayer life? On a scale of 1 to 10, how is your prayer life? That question humbles every Christian. I don't know anyone who answers that question saying "great, awesome, couldn't be better."

If you are at all like me, you feel like your prayer life is inadequate, weak, less than you would like. Even the Apostle Paul expresses that same sentiment. He says "we" when talking to the Romans about prayer. "We don't know how to pray as we ought." We are weak.

Our weakness is a given. That we need help in our weakness is a given. And God gives us the help we need. Notice, when God gives us help in our weakness, He doesn't take our weakness away and transform us into a strong man. No, we remain constantly dependent on God, so that He may be glorified, and His power might be revealed and perfected in our weakness.

How many times has I said prayer is our declaration of dependence.

We are all weak, we all have weak prayer lives. Weakness and inadequacy in prayer are not surprising to God. He never intended that our prayers should be left to our own unaided abilities. Feeling weak and inadequate in prayer are how we are to come before God. Always. We never grow out of it.

The Apostle Paul does something remarkable in chapter 8 of Romans. He pulls back the veil of heaven and gives us a glimpse of the most amazing prayer meeting.

Did you know there is a prayer meeting going on right now in heaven? We are being prayed for in heaven. Jesus is there at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is there on speaker phone calling in from our hearts and interceding for us.

We would be greatly encouraged in our souls if we reflected and meditated on these two passages in Romans. Let's take a closer look at what is going on in that prayer meeting and what Jesus and the Spirit are praying for us.

Every believer has two divine intercessors, one in heaven and one on earth in our hearts. In essence, God praying to God for us. Paul puts them both together here in Romans 8.

Holy Spirit	Jesus Christ
Intercedes within us	Intercedes for us before the Father
On earth	In heaven
Helps us pray	Pleads our cause
Addresses our weakness and ignorance	Addresses our sin and need for acceptance

The Holy Spirit intercedes because of our weakness. Our weakness is not merely we don't know *what* to pray for, we don't even know *how* to pray as we ought.

He doesn't just tell us what to pray or how to pray, He prays for us. When words fail us, He engages, He goes deep, He intercedes with groaning too deep for words.

There are times when we don't know what God is doing; we don't know whether we should ask for healing or grace to endure; we don't know whether a particular trial should be removed or continued; we don't know what God's larger purposes are; we cannot put our deepest desires into words.

We say, "Lord, I don't what to ask" and the Spirit says, "I know" and He takes up our cause on our behalf.

The Spirit's intercession in Romans 8:26 relates to our weakness.
Christ's intercession in Romans 8:34 relates to our sin and the possibility of condemnation.

Look at Paul's sequence:

“Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

What is that charge? It is Satan and our consciences and our sin condemning us before God. So the great question is: Is my sin ultimately separating me from God?

Paul answers: No. Why? Because Christ died and was raised. Christ is at the Father's right hand. And Christ is interceding. Jesus says, “Father, don't look at what they have done, look at what I have done for them.”

Christ takes His finished righteousness and presents His perfect merit before the Father.

1 John 2:1 If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Spirit deals with the inadequacy of our prayers.
Christ deals with the inadequacy of our righteousness.

When we are weak, the Spirit is strong.
When we are sinful, Jesus is perfect.

The Spirit helps me endure suffering that I don't understand.
Christ guarantees that the suffering will not ultimately destroy me.

The Spirit turns our inexpressible groaning into prayer according to God's will.
Christ's own righteousness stands between us and our condemnation.
And we are held from both sides.

We think we are praying when we pray. But we aren't alone, the Spirit is helping us pray more than we know. We don't realize how much we owe in our prayer lives to the grace of God.

What is He praying? He is bringing our needs, our concerns and desires, our deepest longings before the Father. The Spirit knows the will of the Father and only prays for us in accordance to that will. We can be confident the Father will answer His prayers on our behalf.

If you don't know what to say, if you are at a complete loss for words, if you feel utterly inadequate, you can't get the words out, the Spirit is in you with groans you can't hear.

The Spirit takes our groanings, and He turns them into intercessions beyond our capacity of expression. And better yet, He expresses our longing so they are perfectly understood by the Father and are in keeping with His will which is best for us.

If Jesus and the Holy Spirit are already interceding for us, then why do we need to pray? Aren't they way better at it than we are?

The Holy Spirit does not pray so that you stay silent; instead, He lives inside you to prompt and guide your prayers. The Spirit works to overcome our reluctance to pray and gives us a desire to pray.

This is meant to encourage us to pray and even to embolden our prayers, confident they will be heard and rendered acceptable and answered according to God's very best will for us.

When you feel weak, suffering, sickness, futility, failed plans, baffling afflictions and decisions, don't despair.

Jesus teaches us to pray directly to the Father, using prayer as the primary way to align our hearts with God's will.

We pray because prayer builds a personal relationship with God and expresses our daily dependence on Him. Jesus and the Holy Spirit empower and complete our prayers rather than replace our voice.

Do you know how loved you are that the Holy Spirit of God is in you loving you, caring for you, helping you, bringing your deepest needs and prayers before God and makes them perfectly acceptable to God? The Holy Spirit is praying for you.

Do you know how loved you are that the Son of God while we were weak and helpless and still sinners died for us and now He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and ever lives to serve you and intercede for you before the Father?

This is not just a Wednesday night prayer meeting, this is 24/7. We have two intercessors praying for us right now. One in our hearts who makes our prayers acceptable to God according to His will. The other in heaven making us acceptable to God according to His own sacrifice.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens...let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Prayer: Jesus, teach us what to pray and how to pray. We are so inadequate and we fall so far short. We ask too little and too infrequently. The Christian life you hold out to us is impossible without dependent, persistent prayer. We need you to help us to pray by your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, guide those who struggle and prod those who need a wakeup call. Father, thank you that you are sovereign, that you are the one true prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Help us to see your answers when they aren't what we asked for or wanted. Make yourself our wholehearted desire, that we might be godly, loyal, devoted, wholeheartedly committed to you so that I might fulfill the purpose of our creation and glorify your name forever. And all of this we ask, boldly, confidently believing in the strong name of Jesus our Savior, Amen.