

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus,

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 8:26 (NIV) – Larger reading: Romans 8:18-30

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

And the Message has it this way: *“Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans.”*

STORY:

Dr. Helen Roseveare, missionary to Zaire, told the following story: "A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded. 'Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.' That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, 'If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!' And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles."

OBSERVATION:

Answers are on the way even before we ask. Do we believe this? Sometimes we do and sometimes we don't. It kind of boils down to ... what answers has God given recently.

Prayer is an interesting discipline. Some of us doing it well, others not so much. Some regularly pepper their waking moments with prayers all day long. Some are better at lifting the needs of others than addressing anything of a personal nature. And then there are the vast majority of us who simply sigh or lift up to God the simplest of all prayers – HELP! Prayer is an interesting discipline.

A wise mentor to young clergy suggested that these young men and women keep a prayer journal. The first section of this journal should be the times and dates of when they are conscious that they are praying. The second section should be a listing of whom they are praying for taking particular note of how often their name is entered. Only after those two have received the proper notes did he suggest that they write about what they are praying for.

This is the reverse for most of us. We are good at making a list of subject matter of our prayers and maybe a listing of the people for whom we are praying, especially

ourselves. His purpose was to make us aware of how often we really do pray, to create the discipline of focusing our spirit on people as well as helping us to understand that the subject matter of our prayers really isn't that important except to help us understand how often we simply sigh before God. We sigh out of frustration and doubt, out of being filled with anxiety and worry, out of the very human reality that in most situations we simply do not know what to pray for.

Two lessons were learned. Lesson number one was that much of our life was prayer driven. And lesson number two was that prayer is a dependent discipline. Most of the time we really do have to rely on the Holy Spirit doing the heavy lifting when it comes to our prayer life ... Sigh!

QUOTE:

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." - Max Lucado

PRAYER:

(Sigh) ... (groan) ... (letting out a deep breath) ... (a double sigh)

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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We are always looking for individuals who would like to receive the Prayer Requests that we send out. The more Prayer Warriors we have the better. Be a Prayer Warrior – either respond to this email that you wish to be on Prayer Warrior list or call the church office.

Remember that this Sunday we celebrate Holy Communion. Have your bread and juice ready so you can participate.