



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

February 17, 2019

The Dawn of Redemption

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

—Romans 8:19-25

Creating is fun. Developing an idea and bringing it to life brings a one-of-a-kind joy, almost like giving birth. Struggle pays off. Difficulty brings a reward. Turn on a light bulb or computer, take a ride in your car or watch TV, and you partake of the benefits of the creativity that made life what it is today.

But starting over is a drag—all drudgery without inspiration. All demand and no motivation. Starting is exciting, but starting over brings a sigh. All life on earth as we know it is God's "redo," but God never becomes weary or tired. He's fully committed to making all things new.

And humanity is what's broken. We are the thing that's gone wrong in God's creation, and He's determined to make us right. After all, we're the race He created in His own image to rule the earth. What God accomplishes in mankind He is accomplishing for the whole world. He's making us new in order to make all things new.

The God who spoke light into a dark world, gave shape to a formless world, and filled an empty world is doing much the same thing in those who trust Christ. Redemption through God's Son ushers in a new creation free from sin and corruption. Here's what this process looks like.

Deep inside we know that things aren't as they should be. Conflicts in nature reveal this truth. Conflicts in society make the human disorder painfully real. There's no denying the problem, but we refuse to admit that the problem is our sin, nor do we look to God to solve it. So a deep longing remains in each individual. All creation is groaning with the desire to be put right.

From God's perspective His creation is in labor pains, giving birth to a new creation. God is remaking the fallen world. In Christ, the pains Christians suffer are not pointless. They anticipate a new world created in Christ Jesus, because each Christian bears the seed of God's new and eternal creation—the Holy Spirit, who resides in everyone who trusts Christ.

In essence, the Spirit within us is that new life, growing and developing. Eternal life is being born from this fallen and doomed world in the heart of the believer.

From start to finish, birth is an uncomfortable process. Something inside needs to come out. The new world that God's creating in us is foreign to this world. Divine righteousness is alien to the fallen world we live in. There's no way to imagine what a child will be like before birth, and no one can conceive what God has in store for His new creation. But we know that it's good, and we long for it to come. Our hope is certain. It just isn't here yet. So we groan with patient but hopeful anticipation.

But God's Spirit helps us in this process. Since He's God, He understands God's purposes. Since He lives in us, He knows our limited understanding and appreciates the pain that goes with new creation. In our pain, we call out for help, often not knowing exactly what we want.

The Holy Spirit helps our inarticulate groanings, by praying them for us, in a way that make sense to God and aligns our longings with the His *good and acceptable and perfect will* (Romans 12:2). As life goes on and labor pains increase, we grow into the mind of God and come to appreciate—even desire—His will. We learn to want what God wants.

Prayer is so much more than getting what we want from God. Prayer teaches us to want what God has for us and cultivate a taste for eternal riches. And it gives us strength to endure the things God uses to accomplish His work in us, knowing that the plans of a good God are good. We don't know what our future will look like, but we know we'll look like Christ, because the Father is perfecting His image in us.

Prayer is how we participate in God's new creation. As we pray for ourselves, God's answers prepare us for the day when He adopts us as mature children, ready to receive our inheritance. God's answers to our prayers usher in the new creation the world's been longing for since it was wrecked by sin. That's how God works all things together for our good and to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Northpoint

*By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established;
By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches*
—Proverbs 24:3-4

Ask God to give our leaders at Northpoint wisdom to lead our church and lay the foundation for our future. Ask Him to give them understanding of who we are and what God desires us to be as a body. Pray for knowledge to inform their thinking and planning, as we step into the future God has for us. Pray that they learn to walk by faith in the God they don't see but is always with them.

Pray for them by name.

1. **Our Pastors and Directors:** Tony Chute, Taylor Mendoza, Scott Williams, Terilyn Brown, Geoff Grant, and Marti Wiegman.
2. **Our Lay Elders:** Tim East, Steve Flood, Mark Kiker, Mike Russell, and Vinoj Zechariah.
3. **Our Church Staff:** Michelle Balga, Bob Brown, Andria Brucks, Carolee Jefferson, Amber McEwen, Mark Norland, Corie Saunders, and Teri Vaughn.

Praise Record

Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

—Romans 8:31-32