

## Groaning

---

*When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.*

*– John 11:33–*

---

The older I get, the more familiar I become with groaning. The human body seems to lose significant step by decade. As I am closing out my fifth ten-year cycle of life, I can say that there are many ambulatory motions I make today that elicit a groan that never would have been required ten or twenty years ago. How comforting to know that the next few decades will only bring about many more of these inarticulate utterances to accompany the most common of movements!

But there is also another, more intense type of groaning, residing deeper down in the inward man, experienced by the whole creation (Rom. 8:22), yet uniquely perceived by the spiritual man or woman (Rom. 8:23). It is an ardent loathing, a troubling of spirit that recognizes and bemoans the bitter effects of sin and the curse. It is felt most keenly by those who risk heart and emotion in living and loving. It is momentarily present during times of significant strain or loss, or through prolonged afflictions. It is a pang of soul that recognizes that the agony of the moment is not something that was ever intended – something quite foreign to God’s original plan. This groaning emanates from our broken hearts when we see “good people” going through unspeakable tragedy, or when we stand at the grave of a dearly beloved friend or family member being laid to rest. It churns within us when wayward loved ones destroy themselves with addiction, rebellion, and selfishness. It disturbs our own peace when the doctor delivers us or someone in our immediate circle a grim diagnosis, and it relentlessly molests us when we begin to see the effects of malevolent disease.

But beyond all the rude intrusion of such groaning lies wonderful solace and irrefutable hope. Our Lord Himself, Who is the Resurrection and the Life, partook fully of this bitter component of human experience. He knows what it is to groan and to desire that mortality be swallowed up of life. In the days of His flesh, He wept and He even groaned! At Calvary He drained the dregs of the cup of human suffering, crying, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Because He was tempted in this way, yet without sin, He has secured a day when He shall finally and totally eradicate this awful curse, and forever remove this bleating of soul from His redeemed ones. Until then, lest we get too comfortable in this fallen and foreign land, He has sent His kindred Spirit into our hearts Who maketh intercession for us with groanings so intensely deep they cannot be uttered.

Let us not shun a deep spiritual life. Life lived properly will present its many difficulties, and its correlative heartbreaks. But just as in the days of the exodus of Israel from the land of Egypt, we can rest fully assured that our Lord hears our groaning, and is coming down soon to deliver us (Acts 7:34). -- D. Murcek