

# The Restoration of Spiritual Travail

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by Gary H. Patterson

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In order for the Church to see, experience, and release into the world the crucial answers from Heaven needed in this final hour, there must be a pushing or a breaking through of the resistance to it. A third Great Awakening is waiting passionately to be released as water behind a concrete dam. What will it take to crack the walls of resistance so the waters of revival can be released? Prayer, intercession, and spiritual warfare “as usual” are not accomplishing it, so there must be something we are missing or, more appropriately, have forgotten. I know of a number of well-intentioned people who often “bind” principalities and powers, but where are the results? Many of God’s ministers in this hour are travelling back and forth and preaching God’s word but are they first travailing? There is a lot of organizing in the Church but how many are agonizing face-to-face with the Spirit of Christ until His convicting power of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16) is released like a mighty deluge upon those under God’s wrath?

The Spirit of God is looking for a *purified* people who can tune in to His sympathetic perception of and passionate determination for fallen creation. As the Spirit of God hovered over the formless void of water at the onset of creation (Gen. 1), so is He now hovering over the abyss of human depravity, waiting for authorization to act. A few years ago, I stayed with my wife and daughter in a hotel in San Francisco, California. While eating breakfast out on the veranda the following morning, the Spirit of God came upon me and I began to weep for the people of the city. Later, the Lord revealed to me: “That for which I have given you compassion, you also have My authority for.” God’s pattern for breakthroughs in the earth cannot be circumvented. First comes the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head (Mk. 4:28). In other words, first comes sympathy with the Spirit of Christ, then the compassion, and then the authority for action. As a warning, we should never confuse common human kindness with Holy Spirit motivated compassion. The former has no transforming power while the latter brings Heaven to earth. On one occasion while joined hand-to-hand in a prayer circle with some other saints, I experienced an anointing similar to a cloak or mantle being thrown over me. The woman standing next to me had mentioned that she was experiencing intense back pain. The compassion of God welled up within me and I turned to her and said, “Be free from your pain.” She experienced immediate healing. God can and does give such mantles not just for individuals but also for towns, cities, regions, and nations.

“For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; (21) because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (23) Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the

adoption, the redemption of our body. (24) For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? (25) But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. (26) Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (27) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:19-27).

There are groanings, birth pains, that the Spirit of God *likewise* desires to release in and through us. All of “corrupted” creation has been subjected in hope, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The sons of God are those who are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14). They live as those who are in debt to that same Spirit, owing Him their lives (v. 12). Their passion is to be in tune with the jealous yearnings (Jas. 4:5), groanings, and birth pains of the Spirit, that is, His longing, passion, and determination to accomplish what is in the mind of Christ. His passionate longing is based on His sympathetic knowledge of what is in the heart and minds of people. Because of this, He is provoked to holy jealousy and yearning to secure their freedom from corruption. “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (v. 27).

Jesus, our Great High Priest, and the Holy Spirit are in tune with one another so that we, God’s people, never fall short of God’s best. They work [exert resurrection energy/power] together to assure that all things work together for our good (v. 28). If we are preoccupied with trying to accomplish this for ourselves, then we will be of little use to the Spirit of God for freeing those of the world from corruption. If we do not experience this transforming birthing power, then how can we release it to the world? I can recall several occasions throughout my life in which the Spirit of travail would come upon me for a specific need and God would almost immediately come through every time. I would place my hands over my face and bow toward the ground and pray in the Spirit until there was a release. There was always a spiritual agony deep within my heart that would accompany the intercession.

Charles Finney attributed the revivals that accompanied his ministry in nineteenth century America to a prevailing and travailing spirit of prayer. He strongly believed that the ability to prevail over the hearts of people through the preaching of the God’s word was contingent on the ability to first prevail with God in prayer. A man named Father Nash would often arrive at a city weeks prior to Finney’s revival meetings. He would check himself into a hotel and pray, not even coming out to eat for days at a time. On one occasion, the owner of the hotel where he was staying was concerned because of the noises he heard coming from Father Nash’s room. After being informed of the matter, Finney told him not to worry because Father Nash was simply travailing in prayer for the upcoming meeting. A great move of the Spirit of God followed.

The Apostle Paul travailed in behalf of others in the Spirit until the Spirit of Christ was formed in those God had placed on his heart (Gal. 4:19). Travailing in the Spirit means to labor as in giving birth just as a woman before delivering a child. Spiritual travail is a level of intensity marked by a Holy Spirit burden to accomplish through prayer, a given promise, a prophetic insight, or a Holy Spirit revealed need in a person, church, city, or nation. It is the anointing and revelation to release into the earth God’s will while it is under the stress of great resistance.

In order for babies to be born in the natural, a greater opposing force must be applied against the resistance of the birth canal. It is known as the mother's *pushing*. Likewise, spiritual travail is necessary for overcoming the resistance to the birth of God's purposes in our lives and in the world. It is often the missing key to the much needed breakthroughs—a "breaking through" of God's Kingdom into this realm. Such breakthroughs impact and cause change within every aspect of society.

People of God, now is the time to begin to ask the Father for the ability to sympathize with the Holy Spirit's agony and jealousy for ourselves and then the world. By so doing, we will see released in the earth those things from God that are awaiting birth. It is time for the "Father Nashes" to take the lead in this epic and final end time battle.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

All definitions were taken from the Strong's Concordance of the Online Bible software.

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