

Weeping, Groaning, and Travail

I. Intro

- A. As we close out this mentorship, I want to truly charge each person to no longer view themselves as “students” in prayer but “leaders”. Though we always learn, we must now actually “do the stuff” if these teachings are to ever become reality in prayer meetings. We must pray in prayer meetings. We must set the atmosphere. We must resist internalizing. We must lift up our voices even when not on the mic. We must tag-team prayer to help hone in. When someone unintentionally prays and shifts topic, we must come up and help shift it back. We must take **ownership** during prayer meetings and help the body come into more. Otherwise our knowledge isn’t **producing** anything.
- B. As we mentioned, I believe the Lord is desiring to bring back the earth-shaking, fiery prayer by the power of the Holy Spirit into our prayer meetings. I want to give us context for this by the Word. This can also be constantly found in revival history.
- C. Though the Bible gives a lot of language for groaning, weeping, and travail, it does not give an outright teaching on “travailing prayer”. It is therefore important for us to embrace the concept as both biblical and historical, while not forming a dogmatic doctrine on the verses we look at.
- D. A note in corporate services: I believe that groaning and travail in services still have to follow the 1 Cor 14 guidelines of order and edification of the body. When I feel this in the Spirit in the middle of someone speaking in a service, I am trying to keep the volume to where people can hear/not be overly distracted until there seems to be “permission” from the leadership to fully let it out in service.

II. Weeping

“Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh, that I had in the wilderness A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men. "And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me," says the Lord....I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains, And for the dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation, Because they are burned up, So that no one can pass through; Nor can men hear the voice of the cattle. Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled; They are gone....Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come. Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water.” Jeremiah 9:1-3, 10, 17-18

“who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” Hebrews 5:7

“Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him.” Psalm 126:5-6

- A. This concept is based on the emotions of God and our connection to His emotions through our connection to His heart.
- B. As we stated in a teaching at The Altar School, God’s actions are tied to God’s emotions. God displays a vast depth of emotions in His Word, and typically they are what drive Him to divine action.
- C. So in seeing the emotions of God expressed in this way, we understand that when connecting to His heart, we can also bear His emotions. There has been a move in the earth to connect to fleshly emotions yet cut off God’s emotions. This needs to be changed around.

III. Groaning

“Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.” John 11:32-35

- A. Shows the groaning of Jesus and connects it to the deep troubling of His Spirit and weeping.

“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....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.” Romans 8:22-23, 26-27

- B. Specifically connects groaning to prayer that comes from the Holy Spirit Himself. It also connects groaning to the longing in creation and us for the Lord and the things to come as well as “birth pangs.”

IV. Travail

- A. Examples of God and language of travail

“The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies. "I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once. I will lay waste the

mountains and hills, And dry up all their vegetation; I will make the rivers coastlands, And I will dry up the pools. I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, And crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, And not forsake them. They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed, Who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, 'You are our gods.'" Isaiah 42:13-17

B. Example of Paul and the language of travail

"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" Galatians 4:19 (to feel the pains of childbirth, to travail)

C. Example of someone taking the position of birthing in the place of praying

"Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower." So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back " seven times. It came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.' "In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower." 1Kings 18:41-45

1. "Elijah persisted in his intercession until the Lord answered with a downpour. In other words, he took the mental position of a woman in the travail of childbirth as he kept praying. After seven times (the number of completion) the answer came." - CBS Tony Evans Study Bible
2. "Elijah's position was similar to that of a woman giving birth. We are meant to see that Elijah was actually in travailing or "birthing" prayer. The word "earnestly" in James 5:17 indicates that Elijah's prayer was an intense time of intercession. Dutch Sheets, Intercessory Prayer Study Guide

D. Examples in the Word on travail

"Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; There the Lord will redeem you From the hand of your enemies." Micah 4:9-10

"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as

Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the Lord. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God." Isaiah 66:8-9

"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you." John 16:20-22

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs." Matt 24:7-8

E. Quotes:

1. "So, in essence, we, God's people are heaven's womb on earth." - All Peoples Church & World Outreach, Bangalore, India
2. "They told of the attitude of brokenness and desperation that stirred Christians in that day, a spirit of necessity and audacity, a manner of prayer that could be daring and agonizing. They called it "travailing prayer," from how Paul described his prayers for the Galatians "of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (4:19 KJV). Ever since I looked into the eyes of people who experienced the revival that we so desperately long to see again, I have come to believe that the link from here to there is in the hearts of men and women willing to receive this gift of travail." - DAVID R. THOMAS, How History's Revivals Teach Us to Pray

V. It's time for their return

- A. Weeping and groaning seem to be commonplace in prayer as it's the connection to God's heart and being overcome by His burden in a particular area.
- B. Travail (as giving birth to something) seems to typically be used for something in the spirit to come forth in the natural - either at the end of praying something through or the end of a step of something.
- C. Weeping/groaning/travail are all powerful tools the Lord uses to connect us to His heart/burden and allow things to be birthed from the spirit into the natural. I believe the Lord wants to fill our prayer meetings with these realities again to go beyond our human nature and allow the power of the Spirit to use us as vessels to bring things forth.
- D. Building prayer allows us to stay connected to His heart for a period of time to begin to be truly gripped with the burden. I believe we must be aware of these realities, ask the Lord for them again, and be intentional about deeply connecting to His heart and specific burden for something in the place of building prayer to see the church return to this type of supernatural prayer that shakes the earth.