

The Holy Spirit . Persevering, the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit

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*(Ezekiel 37:1-14)[The **Dry Bones** Live] The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of **bones**. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed **they were very dry**. And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” So I answered, “O Lord GOD, You know.” . . .*

I used to get so depressed when I'd see dry bones but after Jessica's reading of Ezekiel, I thought that I'm not supposed to be depressed when I see them. Wait till you start to hear the “rattle” and then the breath of God comes down and wakes them up! Then they stand before the Lord a great and exceeding army! What an awesome picture of what God alone can do in the United States of America . . . in this world, anywhere we see God moving. This picture is what He is doing right now. You could envision this happening even amongst the Muslim countries, in the East and the Far East. It doesn't matter where on earth you want to look at to see dry bones, that's where He is. The Holy Spirit can move. Is that true or not? That is something to be excited about!

Well we've heard over the past few weeks teachings and exhortations on the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is the integral part of the Godhead. He is the Comforter. He is the Teacher. He is the Promise. Last Sunday Owen Carey shared about the Holy Spirit as the Power and how much we need Him. So the Holy Spirit is not something optional or an accessory to our Christian Faith. But He is integral to our actual Faith. You cannot have a relationship without the Holy Spirit. *You cannot have a relationship with Jesus without the Holy Spirit.* It is a fire shut up in my bones; I've got to let this out.

You cannot go to church and pretend you are a Christian without the Holy Spirit. He is so awesome in what He does. Today, I want to go into the aspect of the Holy Spirit we may not be so happy about, that is **persevering** in trials, sickness and the circumstances in your life.

PERSEVERING

(James 1:2-8)² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, . . .

Whenever I read that I say, “*Sure, go ahead. Preach it.*”

³ . . . knowing that the testing (or the proving) of your faith produces patience. . . .

It isn't testing to see if you pass or fail. He is proving your faith, as you are NOT going to fail. **Even if you do not succeed, you have not failed, you have only learned the next step.**

4. . . . But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

So, the Holy Spirit is about being a Comforter, being a Promise, about being our Teacher, and about Jesus Himself being our All-in-All in our everyday walk with Him. The Holy Spirit did a work even in Jesus' life. It says that after Jesus was filled with the Spirit, the Spirit led Him out into the wilderness to be tested. Who led Him out? The Spirit of the Lord! So, it wasn't because Jesus wanted to go out there, or that He was just being obedient to the Father like so many, many times before. How could He not be? But, the Holy Spirit *led* Him out into the wilderness to be tested in a trial.

At first Jesus wasn't hungry when He started fasting. But He eventually became very hungry and that's when the enemy came to work on Him. However even in this the Lord demonstrated the Holy Spirit's work is not to fear the enemy, but rather to *challenge* him. Do not be afraid of the enemy in the trials. Challenge him even in the middle of the trial! So, when we find ourselves in sickness, what do we do? Challenge the enemy! Pray, "*Lord, take this sickness away from me. Let me be healed, in Jesus' name!*"

Do you know what Jesus said about healing? He said, "*You will know that the Kingdom of God is coming near to you when you see the healing that I'm doing in your midst.*" Our problem is, we are in a microwave-popcorn society. We are conditioned to "having it now." Whether it is popcorn or ice cream. It has to happen and it has to happen fast. Well the perfection gained from trials is not microwave/popcorn stuff.

Paraphrasing Romans chapter 8: Why do we bother? Do you know why you are here? Do you know why God chose you? To bring forth the Kingdom of God. To be conformed into His image. In order to bring forth the Kingdom of God, you *need* to be conformed into His image. How does that happen? By the Holy Spirit, the Teacher, the Comforter, the Promise. How does that happen? He comes and He brings you into trials so you can prove the awesome nature of your God. When you should be sad, you are not sad. When you are supposed to be sick, you are not sick!

(Romans 8:28-29) ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. . . .

That's me. I love God. That's me. He has called every one of us to His purpose which is to bring the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

²⁹ . . . For whom He foreknew, . . .

He didn't just happen to know you. He knew you even before you were born. He also predestined you to be conformed to the image of His Son. You are to be conformed into the nature of Christ. The nature of Christ is the fruit of the Spirit: love, peace, joy, long-suffering. We think that we just want to be like Jesus, dress like Him, grow our hair long with a beard, etc. That's not being like Jesus. That's pretending to be like Him. "*Verily, verily I say unto thee.*" That's not being like Jesus either.

Being like Jesus is being in the trial and having victory, in the circumstance, having victory. Even in the afflictions that we have in our body, still having victory. That's being like Jesus, coming against the schemes of the enemy at every turn. Notice Jesus did quote scripture to the face of the enemy, but, it wasn't the fact that He was *just* quoting scripture. The enemy also knows scripture, but Jesus was always referring back to His relationship with the Father, the same as we can do! Yes! If the Father is for you, who can be against?!

Who can stand against the power of the Almighty? Can anyone? No. So you are being conformed to the image of Christ, that He might be the firstborn among **many brethren**.

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

That is He, Jesus Christ, can be the firstborn among many brethren, you guys, whom He is calling to be conformed into that image through the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit that bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. We'll get to that in a minute.

So how can I do this? You might say, "*I'm not worthy!*" Yes, you are. He called you and He justified you. You can stand in any court and there will be no law against you. Against the gifts and fruits of the Spirit there is no law. You are under a different judgment, a *different justification*. Your justification is from God, the Almighty, the all Powerful.

Whom He justified He also glorified, that is Jesus. And we will have glorified bodies also. Isn't that good? Yes. It has not appeared yet what we shall be at His coming.

As I was weeding and hoeing yesterday, and the blisters started to come up, I thought, "*Someday you won't have that.*" That won't be a problem. God is so good, so good. Do you know why Jesus said, "*Don't call Me good. There is only one who is good.*" Do you know why He said that? Because the word "good" has the word "God" in it. Jesus knew that goodness could only come from His Father. Jesus was like a channel, the exact representation of His Father on this earth, the King of Kings, Lord of lords, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty, wiping away every tear.

When I think about trials and tribulations and James saying, "*Count it all joy. . .*" It is pretty tough to do. As I was worshiping today a tear ran down my face from my left eye. That was significant because my left eye never tears (for whatever reason). I thought, "*You know, that tear could be for somebody that I don't even know.*" So, I pray in the Spirit. "I don't know, Lord, who is suffering, but I pray for their healing." Remember He says when healing comes the Kingdom of God is coming near to you. Amen.

—*Nine Power Gifts of the Spirit*—

We are given the Holy Spirit for a purpose. The nine Power gifts are for the purpose of bringing forth the Fruit of the Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Don't lose sight of these since even as Paul talks about other gifts, ministries and administrations, all these first nine gifts have to be present fundamentally in order for the Holy Spirit to work the others correctly. What are they?

(1 Corinthians 12:4-8) ⁴ There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. (Ministries and gifts are linked together.) ⁶ And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. . . .

People get so hung up in semantics. This verse covers it all. Apostle Paul is good at covering everything. It is the same God who works all; the same manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.

⁷ . . . But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom . . .

1) *Word of Wisdom*

A word of wisdom is a valuable thing. It is not a trick just to impress people. It is not a parlor game bringing forth the gifts of the Spirit so you can be happy and joyful like a great circus. This isn't a circus. In a circus, animals are trained, people are performing but they may have very sad and desperate lives. That is the reality. When the Spirit of God comes it *changes* people's lives from sad and desperate to joyful even in the middle of their circumstances. The word of wisdom can be given in your trial and you may not see it happen right away. That's a microwave/popcorn concept; if we don't see God moving right away we give up. When people come up for prayer, people really like to see results. *"I felt the Lord. I felt the Spirit. He came down and I was touched, fell on the floor slain in the Spirit. And I was healed!"* That does happen sometimes but what if it doesn't? Oftentimes people get discouraged. Not necessarily the one who came up for prayer, but those who were praying for them. *"I don't know why I pray any more. Nothing ever happens."* Then they find out the next week the person was healed on the way home or whatever else.

Our expectations are instantaneous. If it doesn't happen right away, we are discouraged and put down. If someone isn't healed right away, we tend to say, *"Lord, she's Yours; You are going to have to pray for her. You are the Great Intercessory, not me"* But the Lord says, *"No, I want **you** to pray for her. You are not to give up. I don't want you to walk away and turn your head. I don't want you to look at those dry bones and say, 'You know, Lord, they should have been breathing five years ago and yet there's no sign of life. I don't hear a bone rattling.'"* The Lord is saying, *"You know, you need to **wake up. Stir up** the gifts in your midst! Prophets, start to prophesy again! Those that have a word of prayer, pray again! Those who have scripture text, read it again! Those who have a testimony, encourage us again!"*

We sang the song this morning, *"By the word of their testimony . . ."* We are saved by the blood of the Lamb AND our testimony! It takes *you* to make it work! The Holy Spirit isn't a circus trick or a game. He is real in our life. So when the word of wisdom comes we need to embrace it as an awesome manifestation of the Spirit of God

2) *Word of Knowledge*

This is also awesome. When we see this happening, when someone is preaching and they say someone is suffering from this or that ailment, perhaps a headache they've had for three days and it is only on

their left side. Somebody stands up and we pray for them and they get healed!

A word of knowledge can be much more accurate than even that. For example, if you are praying up front or in home group, the Lord can give you a word of knowledge. More importantly it can happen there or in your family. I've been praying for my children and the Lord would give me a word of knowledge, *"You know what he (or she) is saying to you isn't true."* *"I didn't take the cookie, dad. I took it for Hilary."* *"Son, we need to get to the root of this because it isn't about the cookie it is about truth and being truthful."* Communication needs to be truthful. So a father needs to have a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge. We all need that. How about the workplace? Those in administration?

I used to pray for a word of knowledge every morning before I went in to oversee the office, on the way to and from the job, in the middle of the trial. *"Lord, I don't know, when this person came to me . . ."* When you are an administrator it is your job to solve problems. By the time it gets to your desk as an administrator, people are expecting you to solve the problem. But this is not necessarily true. The mistake most administrators make is to think that they have to solve the problem right away. Sometimes the problem should simmer for a while. That doesn't sound like microwave popcorn, does it? Sometimes the problem has to manifest itself in a deeper way to the people involved before it can be properly understood. Even though the administrator may know the answer, the person involved needs to learn and by giving the answer too soon, the lesson wouldn't be learned. *You are trying to encourage and strengthen the employee in your care.*

3) Faith

Faith, not your understanding of Jesus, but your faith in what Jesus can do, is a gift of the Spirit. Without the Spirit you will not have the faith that reaches out to the unknown. *"I've never had the faith to do that before!"* And yet now the Lord, supernaturally, gives you the faith to pray for someone else, for someone who has no hope. The Lord gives you that hope.

4) Gifts of Healing, Miracles

Every breath can be a miracle, but here it means something supernatural, something that doesn't have any reference in the physical, scientific sense. But it happens. How?! Wow. Something in you in your "knower" says, *"Yes, that was a miracle."* There is no other explanation. So you may be on your way home and you're going through a dan-

gerous intersection and become involved in an incident where you absolutely know your car should have been destroyed, but it wasn't. Suddenly you are driving away. What was that? A Miracle. Miracles don't have to be a person in a wheelchair suddenly walking. Miracles happen every day.

The gifts of the Spirit are there so you can look at reality. A word of wisdom, knowledge, prayer, faith so you can deal with real things not false news or some scheme the enemy has for us. Rather the reality of what is going on.

5) *Prophecy*

You are going to go beyond what is happening to another level. Prophecy says it knows where you are now but in two years you will be somewhere else altogether. The Lord says *"You are going to be on top of a mountain. You are going to see things you've never seen before. You think the job you have now is where you're going to be in fifteen years, that's not going to happen, something better is coming."*

We need the prophetic voice in our life so we can actually see the reality of where we are going and what God has in store for us. The gifts of the Spirit are not just pretend. They are not just for a Pentecostal church somewhere. It is for the whole church. Not just for some family you may know; It is for you!

6) *Discerning of Spirits*

I used to think the discerning of spirits was the discerning of the Holy Spirit. *"I discern that is the Holy Spirit."* That's true but it is also discerning the *not-so-good spirits, demons*, things that are there that shouldn't be there. For instance, you go into a restaurant and you don't "feel good" about this place, dark feelings, maybe that person in particular over there. Now what do we do with that? Obviously you need the wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit to know where to go with this. Oftentimes I'll just pray. *"Lord, protect me. Protect my wife and whom-ever I'm with. Also, Lord, reach into that strange person's life so they can see what You have created them for and bring it out."* I don't care if they are witches or warlocks or whatever they might be involved in, or what hex sign they might be wearing on their garment. None of that has power over the Spirit of the Lord which is within you.

Then concerning the discernment of spirits, you discern your Spirit, the Holy Spirit within you taking over the darkness. The darkness cannot comprehend it. True. Darkness doesn't just get upset. It

doesn't understand it. They might think, "*What?! What just happened.?*" Well, they don't realize it's because I walked into the restaurant. That's what happened. Sometimes I will pray in tongues.

7) *Tongues*

Apostle Paul says even if you pray with the tongues of angels, it is not enough. Tongues of angels? What is that? We sing in the Spirit and sometimes somebody may say it sounds like German or Norwegian or whatever. It doesn't matter. Tongues of angels are cool since no matter what language you are speaking, the Spirit of the Lord speaks through you. Speaking the word of God is *powerful*. God, Himself, said the first words which were, "*I am. I am that I am.*" He *spoke* this universe into existence. He stepped into time and space. Things began.

Scripture says He existed even before then. He is without beginning and without end, before the Alpha and Omega. He is the Alpha and Omega for sure. Therefore when I speak in tongues, I am speaking the very words from the Holy Spirit. What power those words must have! They formed the galaxies, the stars, our solar system, amazing things that we still don't know nor comprehend.

8) *Interpretation of Tongues*

I want to encourage that. There has been little of that recently, a few, but more like a Pentecostal thing rather than understanding them in the here and now. When you hear a prophetic word in tongues the scripture through Apostle Paul encourages us to have an interpretation, even to *wait* for the interpretation. How do you get an interpretation? Well, you will get a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge that lets you know the meaning. You just know and understand what that word was and so you share it. It doesn't have to be the same person that gave the tongue. Oftentimes no one has the interpretation. I expect that the Lord will give the person who gave the original tongue the interpretation also. It is for the empowerment and encouragement of the brethren. It isn't for some freak show. It is for *power and encouragement* of the church because it is the word of God. I used to be concerned when prophets would use "*thus sayeth the Lord.*" However, the Lord corrected me and said He could do anything He wants! We have to laugh and enjoy God. He doesn't want us to be hemmed in and bound up. He wants us to be free!

Tongues, and the interpretation of tongues are not just some super-spiritual, "*thus sayeth the Lord*" thing. The power of the Holy Spirit is supposed to be freeing to us, coming and giving us a word of

wisdom or knowledge that we would not have otherwise, that we might need in our circumstance. And if we don't hear it, we are probably not getting the full measure. Listen, you are not getting the full measure of what the Lord has for us in this day and in this hour. If we say it was for another time and not for 2017, I'm here to say that is wrong thinking. You need to prophesy! You need to break forth with the word of God. You need to pray.

I was so encouraged last Sunday when we were all at the public park and you were all sharing prophetic words and prayers and exhortations. I said to myself, *"This is what He is talking about! Body ministry,"* the love of God being poured out upon the earth. There were people at that picnic that were barely saved hearing that and were very, very encouraged. Some people asked if we were on TV! Imagine. TV is about microwave popcorn. Fortunately we are here for the long term. If we don't make the ratings we will not get cut.

All of this that the Holy Spirit gives us, the Promise, the Teacher, the representation of God in our life, is the person of the Holy Spirit. He brings fruits for us like we could never any other way. Sadly one of the most renowned Christian leaders in the world just recently said, *"It is dangerous for the church and for the people in the church to have a relationship with God."* He actually said a *relationship with Jesus Himself!* I was devastated. There was a grieving of the Spirit within me.

—*The Fruits of the Spirit*—

The Fruit of the Spirit is the outcome of what we are looking for, to be conformed into His image, our Savior Jesus Christ. The reason He died was to bring forth the Holy Spirit in our lives. The reason He died and went to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, **was so that He could send the Holy Spirit to empower the church to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth.** He sent the Spirit to bring forth love, joy and peace, not just words to put on your T-shirt. The love of God is so deep and so strong, it doesn't just change your life but it changes everything around you. Like a tree planted by the water, it grows so big that the birds of the air come and nest in it and around it and underneath it; it changes the whole environment of what is going on. Just so, when the Lord comes into your life with the love of God, it is going to change everything, the way you think, the way you behave.

Sometimes I look at Christian behavior and I just don't see it. But the Holy Spirit comes to me and says, *"Well, look harder. In the circumstance that person may be going through, what you see is exactly what I am after. You, Peter, go and encourage him. Do it right now. You, Peter,*

go and give them a word of encouragement, a word of prayer. Say, 'You know I've been praying for you in your circumstances. I am not just listening; I've been praying.' ” Do you know what I do most on Facebook? My most common response is one word, *“I'm praying.”* I pray. It might seem kind of shallow, but it isn't to the person hearing it.

1, 2) Love and Joy

The first fruits of the Spirit we will look at are Love and Joy. I have one photographer friend of mine who had lost his laptop; someone stole it out of his car. He never had it backed up and he was a photographer for a lot of years. So I told him I was praying. The police found it two days ago. My friend's response was to tell me it was an answer to my prayer. He said, *“Thank you.”* He knows that I wasn't discouraged by the original theft weeks ago. My prayer continued for him; he needs his camera back. He got it. The Lord answered our prayers. The love of God goes forth from your heart in many different kinds of ways. The joy that you have is infectious just like yeast you put into bread; it grows and the whole bread becomes filled with it. You put it into the oven to bake and people taste of it and it is good. The joy of the Lord is like that in your life. When you have it people like to be around you. *God created you to be a joyful person.* There is a joy that the enemy cannot take away. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy.

3) Peace

Number three, peace, not peace as the world gives, saying let's settle back and have a brew this afternoon and take a nap, watch TV. But peace of the Spirit comes in the midst of a trial when it is not likely, peace that comes only from the Holy Spirit. I was in a couple of meetings in which I should not have been peaceful at all. As I was sitting there, the Lord spoke peace to me. Even though I had to say some things that everybody did not want to hear, there was a complete peace in my heart about it because I know that I was saying exactly what the Lord wanted me to tell them.

4) Longsuffering

Number four, longsuffering and perseverance, forbearance. These are all the same, the ones we don't really like to hear in our American Christian Church. We would rather hear that the Lord has profit for you and if you give, you will get so much money in return you will never have to worry again. You will never have to have long suffering.

You will just pay your way out of it, a “Get Out of Jail Free Card” like in Monopoly.

Well long suffering might mean you will go to jail, you might have to go through that circumstance, you might have to go through that suffering. But, there is something cool that happens with perseverance. I learned what it is when I was having kidney stones a few years ago. I was getting kidney stones every other day and every third day, about three times a week. On a scale of one to ten, they were between 7-10. There were times when I would be on the floor in the bathroom unable to get into the shower, just completely paralyzed with pain. During that time I would cry out to the Lord for healing. I was not necessarily a great person during these times. But I would say, “*Lord, it doesn't matter what the enemy has.*” At times when you are at the level 1-10, you cannot even think. The only thing I could think was, “*Jesus Christ is Lord. I will never leave Him or forsake Him.*” Physical pain is one thing but emotional pain can be even worse, a lot worse.

Well what did the Lord say to me? “*Why are you going through this? Why are you allowing this?*” I remember the words clearly, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and said, “*Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked permission to sift you as wheat.*” This means the trials are just starting. I remembered asking the Lord to deliver me from the trial and the Lord responded, “*It's going to get worse. So, Peter, put on your joyful face. Put on My righteousness. Put on the gifts of the Spirit. Stir them up because you are going to need all of them! And **then** it is going to get better.*” Like He said, “*Peter, Satan has asked permission to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail.*” Did Simon Peter's faith fail? In some ways it did; he denied the Lord. But in a lot of ways it did not. Because Jesus says to him, “*When you have returned to Me . . .*” Don't you like that? It is a doctrinal verse. He didn't say when you return to your faith in Me. He said when you **return to Me**. So you see some may go through trials and walk away from the Lord. There are people who actually do that. They say to themselves, “*This is too much. I don't need this in my life. Forget it. I'll find another religion. Atheism has got to be better than this. I'll go anywhere. I'll just take drugs. It's better than this.*”

But Jesus said to Simon, “*When you have returned to Me (**this is the purpose**) strengthen your brethren.*” So the trials I go through are not just for me and the proving of my faith. It is for you, my brothers and sisters. I can tell you that Jesus never really left me even in my worst pain, even in my worst emotional trial. Jesus never left me. That's perseverance.

Once you learn perseverance, He wants you to go on to the next step. Remember love and joy and peace affects everything for and in you. But perseverance brings forth the next fruits of kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

5) Lovingkindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

After persevering through a trial, you are able to express lovingkindness like never before, goodness like it was only fake and pretend before. Now it is genuine goodness in you, the righteousness of God. Where you could never have been so faithful, now you are faithful beyond your wildest dreams. Where you were cruel and heartless, you are gentle and kind. Self-control, where you were never able to resist, you are now able to stand firm in the promises of God and say, “*No, this isn’t for me.*” Then the Lord says in Galatians 5:23, “*Against these things (these fruits) there is no law.*” There isn’t any law. You can go to South Viet Nam, anywhere in this world and there is no law against these things. Against the character of Christ, there is NO law, anywhere.

Examples of Perseverance

God persevered as He waited for the deliverance of Israel. When the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians, He heard their cry! Many, many times, He saw their suffering and one might say He did nothing. No. He collected every tear; He knows every single one of them. But *God* persevered through that and He said to Moses, “*NOW is the time! Now is the time for the deliverance of Israel.*” It wasn’t before then but *God* Himself persevered through the suffering that they endured. *God suffered with them.* He feels pain. Why else would He ask you to weep with those who weep, have joy with those who have joy? Because if He asks you to do that, He does also.

Jesus Himself endured the cross for the promise of the church, not just for Himself to sit at the right hand of the Father. He wasn’t motivated by the thought of becoming the most powerful being in the universe. No, He did it for the promise of the church, for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the gifts being stirred up, in the fruits being manifested by the gifts, in your ministries and in your activities, in the trials. You are now going to have more joy than you thought you were going to have.

The *apostle Paul* endured imprisonment. Why did he do that? He could have thought it wasn’t worth it, not needing to stand for this faith. He could have walked away. *No, I believe he endured it for the birth and*

the clarification of the doctrine of the New Testament church. So many of his letters he wrote from imprisonment were exactly that. He clarified the beliefs and began to bring light to what they all were experiencing. So, are we glad that Paul suffered? I'm not glad that he suffered but I'm glad that he was faithful to bring what God had for him and for us.

Conclusion

What God has called us to do, whether in a home-group, or our private lives, a special church meeting, wherever we find ourselves in prayer, it is for intercession and forbearance in prayer. If we don't see the bones start to rattle, if we don't see the breath of God in what we are praying for, DO NOT GIVE UP. The Holy Spirit isn't about microwave popcorn mentality. He is in it for the long run. It may take a long time, long suffering. This is actually a joyful thing because when the end comes it is going to be awesome!

When I was a paperboy, my parents were going through their own trials. They had a separation and divorced later. But at the same time, I would go through things that were crazy, a lot of long suffering. When it was 38° below zero, I would have to fold papers! We didn't have a heated garage to do that in. In Vermont when it is 38° below zero, you had better dress warmly, have three pocket warmers, etc., praying that you don't freeze. I would save up my money, getting \$12.50 per week. That was a lot of money then.

Then there was the opposite in Summer, heat temperature being 102° with humidity. You know what was really good? I had a milkshake or maybe a tall A&W rootbeer. Remember those? Maybe with some ice cream in it. There would be born in my spirit a joy even before it happened. Back when I was suffering the heat and cold, I thought of the money that would enable me to buy these things as a kid. Right? I would think of these things and it would carry me through. I'd go and buy one and sit down all by myself and enjoy it to my heart's content.

Just so, when the Lord God Himself comes upon your life and brings forth something you've been praying for, whether it is a person, a group, or a region, the joy is going to be just awesome! And you better savor it. It is the working of God. You will know the Kingdom of God is near you when His healing power comes, in the gifts of the Spirit. We're being sent for intercession and prayer and in the meantime. Stir up the gifts within you, for healing, a word of knowledge, word of wisdom, prophecy . . . It is not just practice. It is already happening and we need eyes to see to bring forth the fruit of love, joy and peace from within and learn that long-suffering isn't so bad.

After the kidney stones were over for me, I said, “*You know, it was bad but not as bad as it could have been.*” The enemy is right there trying to frighten you with thinking he could make it worse. I said to myself that I didn’t care because the joy that is set before me is so awesome. The love that I’m surrounded with on a daily basis in my family and my church family is wonderful. Your smile isn’t just a trivial smile to me. It is heartwarming. Your word of encouragement isn’t trivial to me. I feed on the Spirit that you are stirring up within you. Then I am able to endure circumstances that I might not have otherwise, to have supernatural understanding and power. We need to pray for His Kingdom to come and move, because it is going to come and move. “*You will know the Kingdom of God is come near you . . .*” The people around us are going to be awestruck.

This is like a fire shut up in my bones and I’m going to let it out. So if it is a prophecy, I’m going to prophesy. If it is a word of encouragement, I’m going to give it. If it is a prayer, I’m going to pray it. I pray that you would do exactly the same. Are we up for it?!

*Let’s stand together and pray: Lord, we are amazed at the work You are doing in our midst in this hour. It seems like You’ve drawn down our numbers and yet these children come in here from parts we didn’t know. I know You yet have places for us to go and people for us to meet that we never knew. That doesn’t really matter because we know that Your Word is true. It is faithful. This fire you’ve put into our bones is not just for us but it is for those who have not heard yet, for those who are far off. They will see the light. What is dim to them now will be bright and blinding. So we ask You, Lord God, to give us the power you have promised us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to bring forth the fruit not only in our lives but upon this earth that You have caused us to walk upon day to day. And whether or not you take us tomorrow there will still be a remnant on earth to bring forth the Kingdom of God here and now. We pray **earnestly**, in Jesus’ name. Amen.*