

Tailwinds: Prayers for the Church of America

Brave Sparrow 2022

The following is a clip from a book I'm working on, *Not as Man Sees*. I write about pursuing God a lot and will continue until I am out of breath. The pursuit of God's heart is our highest calling, and leading others to do the same is our mission. I believe we are in a time when grabbing hold of God's heart and not letting go is vital to the life of the American church. I'm not the only one saying this, so you can probably find a better version out there. But, here's my voice joining the call.

I believe the American church will go through persecution we have yet to see. The shaking has already begun and will continue to grow. It's exposing faulty foundations. We are learning how to be the church. How do we live out Christianity when there is no governmental support? How do we live kingdom-minded when everything we hold so dear is shaken?

One of the foundations of our nation—religious freedom—has served the American church for hundreds of years, but I believe we are seeing that this will not always be true. The very thing that has given us freedom in the past will be an obstacle for us in the future.

But. Freedom isn't in the laws of a nation. It's in the tailwind of the Spirit.

The church will be victorious as it is built in the Cornerstone. Everything else will not last in the shaking. This is a time to check our foundation as we unify with the Spirit and with each other.

I'll resound the cry—pursue the heart of God as you've never done before. In his heart, we will find the longing for unity and the wisdom to endure and be victorious in this hour.

That clip serves a purpose in the book, but as I was writing, I felt it was also timely for right now in a different way, specifically this line.

Freedom isn't in the laws of a nation. It's in the tailwind of the Spirit.

For the next few weeks, I will post prayers for the American church pulled from scriptures that highlight the work of the Spirit with the church. I'm calling these Tailwind Prayers.

One of the impressions I had at the beginning of the year was to befriend the Holy Spirit like never before. He is sent to us from the Father and the Son—for our benefit. If he's leading, I want to be in the Spirit's tailwind. Amen? He is the Spirit of truth.

No. 1 Join Together

Ephesians 2:18-22

Through [Jesus], we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the Cornerstone, in who the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Spirit of wisdom and revelation, open our eyes to see

- We have access to the Father through Jesus in one Spirit. Give us a heart to be near the Father!
- We are fellow citizens in the house of God. We are not each other's obstacles. Guard our hearts (words and actions) against division
- Jesus is the Cornerstone, nothing else. We smash ideologies and idols that want to be the foundation of our beliefs and the church
- We are meant to join together as a dwelling place for God. We surrender to your ministry, Holy Spirit. It's in Jesus and by you that we are joined together

Ephesians 4:1-6

I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Holy Spirit,

- Give us an eagerness to maintain unity - To abide as one body in you through you, Holy Spirit
- As we surrender, produce the fruit of humility and patience the church

1 Corinthians 12, the whole chapter in context

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greek, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- Holy Spirit, help us realize our need of you, and our need for each other

Assemble — Follow Up from No.1

I keep hearing the word Assemble as I pray about the church. I want to follow up on the first Tailwinds post with a picture — a remarkable picture — of God's people joining together.

One of my favorite parts of the Bible is 2 Chronicles 20. I encourage you to read the chapter, but here's a quick summary.

King Jehoshaphat was afraid because he received news of a "great multitude" coming against him and Judah. His response? He sets his face to seek the Lord and proclaims a fast throughout all of Judah. As they assemble, the Spirit of the Lord gives one of the Levites a comforting word and strategy for the battle. The next day, as they took their position and gave thanks, the Lord confused the great multitude, and they ended up destroying each other.

There is so much in this passage, but the highlight for today is a people assembled together. Look at how God responds. Consider the results of people who set their faces towards the Lord, listens, and obey.

- *And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah, they came to seek the LORD.* vs. 4
- *ALL of Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel (a Levite)...* vs.13-14
- *Jehoshaphat bowed his face before the Lord, and ALL of Judah fell before the Lord in worship.* vs 18
- *EVERY man returned (from battle)...rejoicing* vs.27
- *The fear of God came on ALL the kingdoms of the countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel.* vs. 29

Remarkable!

I know it's hard to fathom. But I believe that kind of remarkable unity and victory is in God's for the church! So, I'm after it, too. Amen? Here are three small and practical ways to be part of the assembling church.

1. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how.
2. Join in with others to pray. There are all kinds of places and organizations to join with—from our churches to nationwide gatherings like The Send, etc.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit to show us when we are sowing division with our words and actions.

Tailwinds: Hear and Follow the Spirit

Now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
2 Corinthians 3:17 (see also Isaiah 61:1)

"Freedom isn't in the laws of a nation. It's in the tailwind of the Holy Spirit." (See Tailwinds No.1 for more information)

No.2 Hear and Follow the Spirit

The Spirit is speaking and leading us. We need ears that will listen and obey.

Revelation 2 & 3

The letters to the Churches found in Revelation repeats this phrase SEVEN times.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22

- Holy Spirit, we need ears to hear you! We need hearts that will listen. Sharpen our discernment as we read the Word and set our face on Jesus! We will be a church that listens and obeys.

Acts 13:2-3

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

- Holy Spirit, we want ears to hear what you are saying about brothers and sisters, and the willingness to release them to do your work. Thank you for your leadership!

Acts 15:28

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden than these requirements...

- Holy Spirit, we seek you. We give you our ears to hear the wisdom you are speaking in every situation.

Acts 16:6-7

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

- Holy Spirit, we want to be *that* in tune with you—ears to hear when you say go and when you say stop. When you say yes and when you say no. The smallest whispers and nudges! We're asking a heart to follow you, to stay in your tailwind.

What would you add?

Tailwinds: Spirit and Truth

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No.3 Spirit and Truth

Meditate on this verse — wow!

John 4:21-24

Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know, we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

Prayers

- Thank you for the gift of salvation. Thank you, Father, for sending Jesus, your son, the perfect lamb. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice and for buying us back from sin and death.
- Jesus, make the church of America aware of the hour. We will tarry with you. Matthew 26:40-41
- We want to know you more — Teach us what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. If that's what you're looking for, find it in us!
- Find us seeking you as you seek us. Face-to-face collisions with you, God. 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 27:7-8
- Spirit, take the lead! Lead us in truth. That's what you do. John 14:17, 15:26; 16:13
- We give you our unadulterated, unashamed worship in full abandon. Hebrews 10:19-25
- Father, Almighty, Lord. No one provides like you. We stay with you. Jesus, we seek you like a treasure. You're the only one worthy. We stay by your side. Holy Spirit, no one leads like you. We stay in your tailwind.

Tailwinds: Holy Spirit Demonstrations

Now where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
2 Corinthians 3:17 (see also Isaiah 61:1)

"Freedom isn't in the laws of a nation. It's in the tailwind of the Holy Spirit." (See Tailwinds No.1 for more information)

No. 4 Holy Spirit Demonstrations

The person and gift of the Holy Spirit is many things — help, comfort, guidance, conviction, and he bears fruit in us and gives us gifts. But, as prophesied, he comes with power. With him, we become demonstrations of the power of the kingdom of heaven --bold demonstrations. Boldness is a necessary part of being the church. This is how we bear witness to Jesus and the freedom he brings through the cross and resurrection. Thank you, Holy Spirit!

Below are five passages demonstrating the work of the Holy Spirit. Each one is followed by a prayer. What would you add?

Acts 1:8

So when they had come together...Jesus said to them, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and the end of the earth.

- Holy Spirit, thank you for coming and bringing the power of heaven with you. Come fresh again and again. We declare our need of you! We need you to be witnesses of Jesus to the people around us.

Joel 2:28-32

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit.

- Make us good receivers and vessels as you pour out the Spirit. Help us to see you on and in each other without partiality! We're asking for a multi-generational outpouring in our nation. More than ever before. Be exalted, Jesus!

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting, and divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- Holy Spirit, as we gather together (figuratively and literally), rest on us and in us. Give us your utterances for this day and hour — to encourage our inner man, to miraculously communicate the Gospel, to hear the word of God clearly, and to unify us!

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place in which they gathered together was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

- Make us aware of our need for you, Holy Spirit. You are truth and you make us bold! Fill us afresh and anew so we will continue in the truth and power of the Word of God.

Acts 10:44-47

And while Peter was still preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word...and those who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out...

- Holy Spirit, as we speak and bear witness to Jesus, fall all around us, pour out on those who hear that they too will know Jesus!

Tailwinds: Temple of the Holy Spirit

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2 Corinthians 3:17 (see also Isaiah 61:1)

These are prayers for the American church pulled from scriptures that highlight the work of the Spirit with the church. I'm calling these Tailwind Prayers.

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No. 5 Temple of the Holy Spirit

The section highlights that the Spirit is in us and that we are a dwelling place for him. Jesus introduces his disciples to the work and importance of the Holy in John 14, 15, 16, & 17. These are incredible passages. I encourage you to study them again and again.

For today, consider these words of Jesus.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17

We know the Spirit because we know Jesus — he dwells in us.

Wrecked!

Here are some other verses about the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

See also 2 Corinthians 6:1-18

Prayers

- Father, we say again. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit! We love him, and it's an honor to host him.
- Jesus, help us be good resting places for the Spirit—just like you were.
- Teach us what holiness means. Help us embrace it.
- Individually — I surrender my life to your life, Jesus. Holy Spirit, my heart, soul, mind, and strength are yours. Convict me of sin. Come rest in me.
- Corporately — We surrender our lives to your life, Jesus. Holy Spirit, we make a dwelling place for you as the body of Christ. You are welcome here.

What would you add?

END

The Spirit and the Bride say come, "Come." And let the one who hears say, Come." And one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Surely I am coming soon amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Revelation 22:17 & 20