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Mighty Prevailing Prayer: Experiencing the Power of Answered Prayer

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## **36. Prayer Groans and Prayer Agony**

This chapter argues that deep, wordless prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit praying through us, and that agonizing prayer is the most Christlike thing a believer can do. It points to Christ's suffering in Gethsemane as the model and calls the reader to take up 'the cross of prayer travail' as a daily, disciplined choice.

### **Key takeaways**

- The Spirit prays through us with 'groanings' too deep for words (Rom. 8:26). We are finite and can't fully express His infinite longing, but God understands and answers.
- These groanings are usually silent and inward, not loud. God hears them without any words spoken aloud.
- No prayer is more godlike than agonizing prayer, because no one agonized like Jesus in Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood as He saw the sin and suffering of the whole world.
- Christ deliberately chose that agony; He could have refused. In the same way, wrestling prayer is something we must choose to take up, not something forced on us.

- Costly, prevailing prayer and fasting is the most universally available way for any Christian to 'take up his cross daily' (Luke 9:23).
- The early church spoke naturally of 'wrestling' and 'agonizing' in prayer (Paul, Epaphras). We have lost these words because our prayer lives are weak.
- The Spirit won't discipline your schedule for you. A life of prayer is a deliberate, self-denying habit you have to build.
- Jesus is interceding now and waits for us to join Him. God has chosen to work through this partnership of Christ's intercession plus ours.

## Passages worth keeping

*"I question if any believer can have the burden of souls upon him —a passion for souls—and not agonize in prayer."*

Luther, linking real love for the lost to costly prayer

*"Will you follow Jesus closely in intercession till the Spirit teaches you the secrets of prevailing prayer, or will you disappoint your Lord?"*

The chapter's closing challenge — the choice is the reader's

## How it connects

Gethsemane and Romans 8 are held together: the Son agonizes in prayer on earth, the Spirit groans within us now, and the believer who shares that burden is drawn into the intercession of Christ Himself.

## Scripture referenced

- **Romans 8:26-27** -- The Spirit intercedes with wordless groanings God understands
- **Luke 22:43-44** -- Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, sweat like drops of blood
- **Isaiah 52:14-15; 53:6, 12** -- His suffering disfigured Him; He bore our sin and interceded for transgressors
- **Luke 9:23** -- Taking up your cross daily — applied here to prayer travail
- **Mark 14:33-34** -- Jesus 'deeply distressed,' soul overwhelmed to the point of death
- **Joel 2:15-17** -- Closing call to a sacred fast and the priests' weeping intercession