

CONCERNED FOR SOULS

Isaiah 66:8

Introduction: Why is it that some churches have enormous numbers of baptisms every year while most churches have fewer and many have none? What kind of programs and staff members do these churches have that have a lot of baptisms that the other churches don't have? What is so different that some churches have so many baptisms each year? Some churches have sought different methods and programs to get people to come to their church, even built "family life centers" and other attractions. What secret do these churches have that have so many baptisms each year? There is a secret, you know. It is what God calls "travailing!" "Travail" is to be intense and in continual agonizing distress, painful work, toil, labor and torment over something or someone. THAT is the secret!

I. TRAVAIL MUST COME BEFORE SPIRITUAL BIRTH HAPPENS

1. History reflects this truth: Israel's bondage in Egypt; David's thirst after God; Josiah's anguish over Israel; Nehemiah's concern over rebuilding Jerusalem; Israel before Christ's advent; the disciples waiting for the Holy Spirit; the world during Martin Luther's day; any person seriously desiring God's guidance and power.
2. Travail IS necessary: God has so ordained such for every human's birth; harvesting the crop by a farmer requires travail, ("no pain, no gain." Travail is good for a person and it brings God's grace, strength and is very Christ-like.
3. Travail qualifies for the proper taking care of the new-born. Who better fit than the one who travailed to give birth? God never sends converts to a church that doesn't travail. That church would not know how to care for the new-born.
4. Travail reveals itself: When one or two become anguished over lost souls, it spreads to others. Prayer takes on a different meaning and the preaching is different. People begin to do things without having to be asked. It all will be spontaneous.

II. TRAVAIL BRINGS SUPRISING RESULTS

1. Things happen quickly! The more travailing, the more spiritual will be at work. God's power is the quickest thing under the sun.
2. Great things happen. 3,000 were saved after a night of praying in an upper room. Unbelief cripples God! Ever think about that?

III. TRAVAIL'S RESULTS ARE DESIRABLE

1. The world is lost! There is no hope without Jesus Christ. The Church is God's ONLY means of reaching the lost world.

2. Satan's power is stronger than ever. Like a giant serpent entwined around the world, slowly squeezing the life away.
3. A Church not travailing is in trouble. Churches are either fruitful or they are dead. Dead things need to be buried, out of sight of the lost world it never travailed over.
4. God is not glorified. Where there is no travail, there will be no conversions and where there are no conversions, there is no glory, therefore a dead church.

IV. THERE IS TROUBLE FOR THOSE WHO HINDER TRAVAIL

1. Either a Christian is caring, compassionate, travailing or he/she is indifferent. One or the other.
2. Worldly Christians hinder. Their secret sins, their deliberate sins, their selfishness, their carelessness about spiritual things, their barrenness.
3. Christians often distract. There are some Christians who seek to distract the church from it's ONLY business and that is soul winning.
4. Some Christians refuse to participate, share in travail. They are not trouble makers, but are quiet, out of the way persons, a part of the church family but seldom seen. They say nothing. They do nothing, but they HINDER. They stand in the way of those who do want to travail, by their uncare, their indifference, they dampen the spirits of those who try.

CONCLUSION:

1. Travail! Your heart will be warmed. The story is told of two men who found another man frozen. One stayed to warm and revive the frozen person but the other man walked away. When the frozen man was revived, he and the one who revived him began to walk and soon they passed the man who refused to stay and help. He had frozen to death. They had saved each other by staying together.
2. Travail! You will have the joy of knowing people who are lost and lost but not because you have failed to care and travail over them. You have done your best, now God will do the rest.
3. Pray that YOU would begin to travail for the lost, right now.
4. Pray that God would send a revival to your Church.