

What to Do?

John R Gavazzoni

Among the transcriptions of messages delivered in China by Watchman Nee, that later were published in book form, was one titled, "What Shall This Man Do,? There was a period in my life when brother Nee's books were a great influence in my life, and, though I can't recall much, if any, of the content of that particular book, compared to others like "The Normal Christian Life," "Sit, Walk, Stand," and several others, the title keeps coming to me at certain times, and I find myself saying to the Lord, and myself, "what shall this man do?"

Now, we preachers just seem to delight in telling folks what to do. It sort of comes with the territory. What's the use of being a preacher if you can't tell people what to do, right? Even if we're not disposed to giving advise, folks will almost demand it of us, needing to know generally, and in all kinds of life-situations---"what shall this man do? Well, it just occurred to me that there's something I've never told folks to do.

Within the cacophony of voices telling the brethren how to---we might say---"make the system work" to bring us to realize "the victorious Christian life," I've never heard anyone give the advise that I'm about to lay on you. (By the way, I hope that, if you've read my stuff, or heard me preach, you realize that essentially I believe that Christ alone is God's how-to. Any how-tos that are peddled to you as the way to get the Way to work for you is quite essentially anti-Christ).

OK; now that I have you breathless with anticipation---imagine an anticipation-building drum roll in the background---here's brother Gavazzoni's profound word of wisdom: You need to groan. Yeah! That's it.

You need to groan. Groan and groan some more. Groan great groans. Keep groaning, Groan magnificent groans, because that's what all creation is doing, that's what the Spirit is doing, and that's what you're really doing, though you try desperately to suppress and deny your groaning. Go ahead, GROOOOOAN!

All this groaning, according to Paul is the groaning of giving birth.

It's travail-type groaning. Of course, by even speaking as I am, it's just possible that I could trigger a whole new movement replete with seminars on how to groan scripturally and effectively, and sure as shootin,' eventually someone will organize a world-wide day of groaning.

Everyone could sign on to groan for so many minutes of the day so that every second of the day, some groaning will be going on. Wow! That ought to impress God.

Get serious, John. OK. This groaning of all creation, this groaning of the Spirit, this groaning of our own creatureliness, according to Paul, comes from the pain of child birth. Caught up in the groan of the Spirit, we, with all creation ARE in the process of birthing. Strange as it may seem, our terribly corrupted, needy, pathetic creatureliness is the womb for the bringing forth of our own deliverance.

A Child must come forth destined for the throne; destined for the adoption---the full placement of the sons of God in their rightful place of exercising our Father's authority in the earth.

Except for those anomalies that only serve to remind us of the norm, one thing I've observed as the father of three girls, when the baby's ready to come, it's gonna' come. We'd have Jan's suitcase packed, and then would come that moment when she'd say, "Hon, it's time." When the due time has arrived, that baby begins to make its way down through birth canal, and the resulting birth is pretty much a matter of letting nature take its course.

So much of the teaching on victorious Christian living, on the revealing of the sons of God, of calling upon the saints to get their act together so that the kingdom can come to earth, is just so much distraction from the necessary groaning going on in each of us. Much teaching serves to make us at least uncomfortable with that deep groaning, if not outright ashamed to be in such a condition, because would a truly victorious Christian be groaning so humiliatingly?

This preacher's advise: Get in touch with the groaning. Get in touch with feeling of "this Baby's too big for me to give birth to." Get in touch with the futility that your creatureliness has been subjected to in that, in the case of THE CHILD, it seems like He'll never come, and then GROAN!

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