

## ***Pressing for the Prize: Laying Hold of the Fullness of Our Destiny (Pt. 2)***

### **I. GREAT CHANGE WILL OCCUR IN THE NATIONS OVER THE NEXT DECADE (2020-2030)**

- A. I see the roaring 20s as the most dramatic and significant transitional decade in human history. The global body of Christ is in a very important training season in terms of the future of the nations.
- B. Analogy—the body of Christ is swimming against a “one-mile-an-hour current of resistance.” We are not yet prepared for “two-miles-an-hour of resistance.” The Lord is leading the body of Christ in such a way that we develop strong “spiritual muscles,” knowing the current of pressure increases.
- C. It is not complicated to develop spiritual muscles. We do it by making many small, godly choices on a regular basis. As we talk to God while reading the Bible, we choose obedience, humility, intentionally realigning with His leadership in difficult times, agreeing His leadership is perfect.
- D. Matthew 24 speaks of the birth pains—the pressure intensifies, and the reprieves get shorter. They are global birth pains that culminate with Jesus’ return. The “child” that is born is glorious: a new world order called the Millennium with Jesus ruling on a restored earth that is filled with His glory.  
*<sup>6</sup>...See that you are not troubled...<sup>7</sup>For nation [ethnos] will rise against nation...there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...<sup>8</sup>All these are the beginning of sorrows [birth pains]... (Mt. 24:6-8)*  
*<sup>9</sup>“Then they will...kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup>And then many will...betray one another...<sup>11</sup>Many false prophets will...deceive many...<sup>14</sup>This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world...then the end will come.” (Mt. 24:9-14)*
- E. David prophesied the persecution of the Lord’s people that will occur in the end-time (Ps. 2).  
*<sup>1</sup>Why do the nations rage...<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth...and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD..., <sup>3</sup>“Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” (Ps. 2:1-3)*
- F. Jesus will rescue the body of Christ in the nations from Laodicean-like spiritual compromise. The greatest corporate miracle in human history is the transformation of the end-time Church from the majority walking in compromise to walking as a mature family, as a prepared Bride (Rev. 19:7). Jesus exhorted them to acquire “gold refined by fire”—this gold is highlighted in John 13-17.  
*<sup>16</sup>You are lukewarm...<sup>17</sup>you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—<sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire...<sup>19</sup>As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. <sup>20</sup>Behold, I stand at the door and knock...I will come in and dine with him...<sup>21</sup>To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:16-21)*
- G. The Lord is calling His people to be humble, to pray and seek His face, and turn from compromise.  
*<sup>12</sup>The LORD appeared to Solomon by night and said...<sup>13</sup>“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, <sup>14</sup>if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will...forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chr. 7:12-14)*

## II. PRESSING FOR THE PRIZE OF WALKING IN THE FULLNESS OF OUR DESTINY IN GOD

- A. At the end of Paul’s life, while in prison, he *pressed* (Phil. 3:12, 14) for *the prize* of receiving God’s testimony about his life—that he sought to walk in the fullness of all that God ordained for him. As the premier teacher on grace, Paul exhorted believers to press into God for this personal prize.
- <sup>8</sup>...I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...I count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ...<sup>10</sup>that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...<sup>12</sup>Not that I...am already perfected [attained]; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me [fullness of his destiny]...<sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God... (Phil. 3:8-14)*
- B. Paul wrote Philippians towards the end of his life; he still had several years before his race was over. Thus, he had not attained the prize—Jesus’ testimony that he finished “the race” pressing in to God or contending for the fullness of his God-ordained destiny, purpose, and blessing.
- C. We are all running a race with our heart, not our legs.
- <sup>24</sup>...those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup>And everyone who competes for the prize...they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty [lack of focus]. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup>But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)*
- D. At the very end of Paul’s life, while in prison he was assured of receiving the prize of the crown of righteousness—just as his “life race” was being completed (2 Tim. 4:6-8)
- <sup>6</sup>For I am already being poured out...and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup>I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race...<sup>8</sup>Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will give to me on that Day...but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)*
- E. Jesus taught on the blessedness of hungering to walk in “more” of the grace of God. Jesus called us to press into God for the release of righteousness in our personal lives, in others’ lives, and in society. Hunger is one of the most important signs of life. Lack of hunger is a serious sign of sickness in the spirit. When there is no hunger for a sustained period, then there is no life.
- <sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt. 5:6)*
- F. We hunger for the “*gap*” between what is *available right now* in the Spirit and what we are experiencing in our personal life. This also includes contending for God’s long-term promises.
- G. **Pressing while rejoicing:** We hold these two truths in tension. We rejoice in who we are in Christ and what we are experiencing in God, while we are aware of how much more there is to experience. We are grateful for all that we experience, yet continually seek the Lord for a greater measure.
- H. Common obstacles to those who determine to press in diligently without drawing back or quitting are *delayed promises* (resources), *being alone*, and *being treated or spoken about a negative way*.