

*"When Winter Comes"*

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©  
 Title: When Winter Comes and the Supplication of the Holy Spirit in behalf of His people.  
 Text: Romans 5:1-5 and 8:15, 16, 26, 27  
 Theme: The Supplication of the Holy Spirit in behalf of His people sustains us during the winter seasons of life.

Introduction:

Over the last three weeks we have or will see that the entire Trinity is for us. Each one according to their specific ministry calls us to comfort and rest. Two weeks ago we looked at our winter seasons and the sovereignty of God. God is the one, who like Jesus, leads us into our winter seasons. Last week we noted our winter seasons and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. **No matter what we are feeling God looks upon us with unconditional love because of His Son's substitutionary and sacrificial death in behalf of His people.** Today, I want us to consider our winter seasons and the supplication of the Holy Spirit.

**Why am I teaching this?**

Many of us have this fuzzy idea that the Holy Spirit is an enabler. That we are to cooperate with Him and in so doing we succeed. And to the degree to which we yield to Him or are filled by Him to that same degree we are living the victorious Christian life.

ILLUSTRATION:

We see Him much like a spotter in weight lifting. He is there making sure we do not hurt ourselves and to help us only if our strength fails.

My understanding of this idea is just slightly different. I do not believe the Holy Spirit is an enabler, but a doer. In His absence nothing gets done. In His presence He is completing the work He began.

ILLUSTRATION:

As all of you know when you own a home sooner or later the home begins to own you. A couple of winters ago I received a snow blower. After a few problematic beginnings it stopped running. I tried everything I knew. Finally, I had to call in an expert. He came to my house and the first thing he did was check the fuel tank. It was bone dry. He put fuel in the tank and it started right up. I pretty much had to eat humble pie and look incredibly stupid, but I did learn a valuable lesson in what to do if my engine stops running. **CHECK THE FUEL TANK FIRST.**

The word picture is not exact, but it does say this much. He is the fuel that drives this engine.

## ILLUSTRATION:

Mowing God's Lawn (by Bruce Foggerty)

I pushed my little plastic mower around the yard of my universe trying to help God mow. God didn't need my help, but he let me tag along anyway and let me feel important. Back and forth I labored in neat little rows wasting the years, oblivious to the absence of any real motor or cutting blade in my toy machine.

I made rumbling sounds to heighten the sense of my importance and occasionally emptied my press clippings bag of imaginary accomplishments.

Lawn finished, I attacked the hard edges of my life with my imaginary toy weed eater, hacking at perceived problems that had sprouted on my landscape. And, the Great I AM, softly chuckled, when I finally ceased struggling, as at last I realized he had long ago installed astro-turf.

**What is the biblical idea?**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not ours to debate but to enjoy. Most of us are woefully negligent in our knowledge of Him as to who and what the Holy Spirit is or does. Yet our ignorance does not negate who He is or what He does in behalf of His people in fulfillment of the Father's promises to His people.

## ILLUSTRATION:

I am woefully ignorant of how the human body works. Often times I neglect it and mistreat it, but it keeps on working even in the absence of conscious choice.

This is equally true and more so concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Who He is and what He does is not conditioned on what I know and how I respond. His ministry to me and through me is often done in my absence of conscious choice. Yet He does it nonetheless and for this we should be immensely grateful.

**How will they best hear it?**

Today, I would like to address the issue of Holy Spirit's Supplication in behalf of His people and the winter seasons of life. There are three aspects of the Holy Spirit's supplication that are sustaining me during my winter seasons.

**I. The Supplication of the Holy Spirit in behalf of His people assures us of God's unconditional love during our winter seasons (Rom. 5:1-5).**

Romans 5:5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The active agent in making us the recipients of God's unconditional love is the Holy Spirit. It is a part of His ongoing ministry to us to make sure we know that we are unconditionally loved by the Father.

“This pouring out of God's love is done through the Holy Spirit. The thought is that of an action of the Spirit of God on our human spirits. The Spirit is given (the aorist indicates a single, decisive act), which reminds us that this is not a human achievement or insight.” (Morris, Romans, 221).

#### ILLUSTRATION:

“He does not send His love as dew drops, nor in light showers as the rain, but like a flood does His love pour in upon the thirsty believer.” (McBeth, Romans, 151).

The word used for ‘poured out’ means, “To gush out.” It is used 6 times in the New Testament. Perhaps the most graphic usage of the word can be found in Acts 1:18 to describe the splitting open of Judas' bowels and having them gush all over the ground. The imagery is of an overflowing and excessive outpouring.

Ac 1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, **he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the people of God during this dispensation uses the same word (Acts 2:17, 18 and 10:45). God the Father has poured out on His people the Holy Spirit. This outpouring is excessive. It overflows its boundaries. It is a perfect passive indicative.

The perfect tense describes an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. But the consequences of that action continue to this day. The passive voice represents the subject as being the recipient of the action.

When the Father did this the accompanying consequence was an assurance of His unconditional love. The Holy Spirit intercedes in our behalf making sure that the lies of the Devil do not stick. He is actively washing our minds in order to renew our thinking. He wants us to live free.

You and I have grounds for hoping in God because the Spirit of God brings with Him the love of God that gushes within His people.

“Hope will triumph because it rests in the abundant love of God, which gives full assurance of final salvation. Our assurance is heightened by His generous love to us.” (McBeth, Romans, 150).

“The Spirit's outpouring of God's love into our hearts is a creative act. It kindles love in us.” (Morris, Romans, 221).

## ILLUSTRATION:

Why is it that we often do not feel loved by God? The reason, I believe, is because everything around us is attacking this idea. Everything is about measuring up and about conformity. No charge raised by things created can ever make us any less the object of God's deepest affection and good will.

## **II. The Supplication of the Holy Spirit in behalf of His people assures us of God's intimate love during our winter seasons (Rom. 8:15, 16, Gal. 4:6).**

Romans 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

The word "Abba" is an Aramaic word for father. "The word itself was originally derived from baby-language (NIDNTT, 1:614)." It was typically used by a child when addressing their own parent. As the word was used it extended beyond that of a baby to that of a son or daughter. It contains the warmth and bond of "Dear Dad." Jesus used the term when addressing God. "Papa" might be the best translation in English. [www.religioustolerance.org/gl\\_a.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/gl_a.htm)

The word "Abba" occurs only 3 times in the New Testament (Mark 14:36, Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:6). "In the other Greek literature of early Christianity it is found only in quotations of these passages. Nowhere in the entire wealth of devotional literature produced by ancient Judaism do we find **Abba** being used as a way of addressing God." (NIDNTT, 1:614).

You and I having been adopted through Christ as sons have the same authority as Christ in crying out to God as Abba. It is through regeneration that we enter into a relationship with the Father that was previously only known and experienced by His only begotten Son. He is our "Father."

## ILLUSTRATION:

Abba is the term of endearment. It is a word used only by family of family. How many of you have grand-children? How many of you are called something special by your grand-children? What do they call you? That term is a term of sweet nothings. It is between you and them. Other people do not call you the name and if they did, it would not mean the same.

That is the power of the word "Abba." This relationship assures us that we are not slaves but free, not outcasts but family, not strangers but friends. We no longer have to be afraid of God. "He has not given us the spirit of servitude to a master but of fellowship with the Father." (McBeth, Romans, 192).

The ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit within us testifies to our sonship before the Father.

### III. **The Supplication of the Holy Spirit in behalf of His people assures us of God's attentive love during our winter seasons (Rom. 8:26, 27).**

Romans 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also **helps our weakness**; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words**; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Holy Spirit is taking our feeble attempts or lack therein before the Father and causing to come to pass the will of God in and through our lives during our winter seasons.

This intercessory work is conditioned on only one thing, "Are you His child?" After the relationship is established, then His work in our behalf is unconditional.

He helps us. John describes the work of the Spirit with the word 'comforter.' John is the only one who uses this word and of the five times it is used four refer to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7) and once to Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1).

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;

John 14:26 But the **Comforter**, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the **Comforter** is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the **Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

The word comforter means, "One called alongside to help."

#### ILLUSTRATION:

"It is the kind of help a doctor gives when he is called alongside the sick bed; the kind of help a fireman gives when he is called alongside a burning building;

the kind of help a lawyer gives when he is called alongside to undertake our case.” (Phillips, Romans, 133).

He helps us when we are weak. In our infirmity, our disease, our sickness, our inability, He is helping us. What kind of help does He provide for His people? He is interceding in our behalf before the throne of Grace.

His prayers in behalf of His people are effective. They are effective for three reasons.

- **First**, God knows and searches our hearts as only He can.
- **Second**, He knows the Spirit’s mind.
- **Finally**, He prays according to the will of God.

The word intercedes is a compound word. It takes the word meaning “To chance upon or to deliver” and puts a prefix of high octane into its tank. It is the only time this word occurs in the New Testament. The root word is found in Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25 to describe the intercessory ministry of Christ in behalf of His people.

Romans 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, **who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them.**

Right now as a Christian we are in a huge ‘win-win’ situation. Right now the second and third persons of the Trinity are interceding in behalf of their people before the throne of the Father. And what does that throne look like right now?

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the **throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

There is a throne of grace upon which the Father sits and before whom the Son and the Holy Spirit intercede in behalf of their people to secure for them mercy and grace to help them in their time of need.

### **Before the throne of God above**

Charitie L. Bancroft, 1863.

Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong and perfect plea.  
A great high Priest whose Name is Love

Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
 My name is graven on His hands,  
 My name is written on His heart.  
 I know that while in Heaven He stands  
 No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair  
 And tells me of the guilt within,  
 Upward I look and see Him there  
 Who made an end of all my sin.  
 Because the sinless Savior died  
 My sinful soul is counted free.  
 For God the just is satisfied  
 To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,  
 My perfect spotless righteousness,  
 The great unchangeable I AM,  
 King of glory and of grace,  
 One in Himself I cannot die.  
 My soul is purchased by His blood,  
 My life is hid with Christ on high,  
 With Christ my Savior and my God!

During our winter seasons God can seem distant, and at times forgotten, but the Holy Spirit is praying for us so that what is necessary is taking place.

God has not left the completion of His work in and through His people in the hands of His people. In ways that are unexplainable, God is working in and through His people both to will and to do according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12, 13).

Listen to the words of 2 Corinthians 4:7-18.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you. 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving

of thanks to abound to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Oh friend, there is awaiting you glory. But until the day you arrive at your eternal home how do you endure? By not looking at those things which are temporal but by looking at that which is eternal. God is in control, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has made sure that all you need before the Father you have and right now the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> members of the Godhead are interceding in your behalf before the throne of Grace in order that they might secure for you grace in your time of need.

APPLICATION: (What's next?)

These truths do not fix broken bones and bleeding hearts, but they do assure you that your situation is not the result of God's judgment against you.

ILLUSTRATION:

In January of 2005 I had a cervical laminectomy. The experience though necessary was not pleasant. When I came out of having been put under my heart began to race and I was not feeling very well. But during my stay in the hospital my wife was at my side. There was nothing she could do but her presence was a soothing comfort and throughout my stay when I was struggling she would simply squeeze my hand. That squeeze assured me that we would get through this and that everything was okay.

My prayer for you today as you live in your winter season is that God the Holy Spirit would squeeze your hand and thus assure you that you will get through it and that everything will be okay.