

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG58 - Tabernacles, The Test Of Our Trust

We are entering into the days of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the biblical Feasts which I believe is significant for us as Christians, because it is an appointed time by God and it is a time when God moves to accomplish certain things in our lives. Today in this podcast, I want to talk about what I see the Lord doing for us in this year's celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

During the Feast of Tabernacles, we look at the time period in the Scriptures where Israel dwelt in the wilderness, having been delivered by God out of the land of Egypt. They were in the wilderness, and we know that they were not supposed to be there for a prolonged period of time; but because of their lack of obedience to God in His directions, it turned out to be a forty-year wandering in the wilderness. The Feast of Tabernacles has us look at these days, and there is much that we can study and remember about the time that they spent in the wilderness. There is tremendous significance for us today as believers in the Scriptural story that takes place in the wilderness, leading up to the time of Israel going into Canaan Land to possess it.

In today's podcast, I am not going to give an elementary introduction about the Feast of Tabernacles, or about our Christian celebration of it. For that, I would encourage you to please go to my website, [Hargrave ministries.org](http://Hargraveministries.org), navigate to the podcast page, and search the archives of my *Growing in God* podcast for: number one, the title, The Feast of Tabernacles Introduction, episode seven; and also, The Feast of Tabernacles 2020, which is episode eight. These will give you more of an introduction and foundation about the Feast of Tabernacles and why we celebrate these times as Christians.

For now, I would like to go into the story itself by reading out of Deuteronomy, the eighth chapter, starting at verses 2-6. It says, "You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years," And remember, that is really what we do during the Feast of Tabernacles. We look at this timeframe of Israel in the wilderness and what transpired for them. We know it was a dynamic time. We know that they were in the Presence of God, that He led them when they were to walk, when they were to camp. There was always this pillar of cloud over them during the day to shade them, there was the pillar of fire by night that was to warm them and to give them light.

Now here Moses is saying, "I want you to remember these times, these forty years that He led you," in order "that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son." And we will see this idea of God disciplining His Son, His Son Christ, the Lord, as that plays into the theme of the Feast of Tabernacles. "Thus, you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his own son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him."

It goes on in these verses to talk about what God was preparing them to receive, a land that was blessed, a land of milk and honey, a land where there were brooks of water and fountains and springs and all of these things that they were to possess. But before receiving them, God was testing them to know what was in their heart. Would they follow Him? Would they be obedient to Him? Would they trust Him? And that is the main concept that we find throughout this time of the Feast of Tabernacles – Will you trust Me? Or, will you not trust Me?

I want to go now to Deuteronomy the first chapter, verse 24, and we will see again part of the story from these forty years of wandering. This is at the time when God led them up to the edge of Canaan Land, and was to give them the land at that time. They didn't need to spend forty years in the wilderness; God was ready to give it to them immediately. And yet there was a problem with their trust; therefore they were turned back into the wilderness, and it ends up being a forty-year journey.

We are right at that time when God brings them up to the edge of the land and tells them to go in and possess it. Deuteronomy the first chapter, starting at verses 24-30: "They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eschol and spied it out. Then they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, "It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us." Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; and you grumbled in your tents and said, "Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, 'The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there,'"" which are giants. "Then I said to you, "Do not be shocked, nor fear them. The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.""" Moses is trying to remind them of all the things they have been eyewitnesses to God doing – what they saw in Egypt of the miracles and God delivering them out of the hand of Pharaoh; watching the Red Sea split before them and seeing the Egyptian army drowned in that sea. He is going, "Why do you not trust that God will fight for you now? He will. He will give you this land."

Verses 31-36, ""And in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place." But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you are to go. Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying, 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb.'"

So Moses recounts to them, "Look, God has been carrying you like a man carries his own son. He has been providing you food. He has been providing you water. He has been giving you light. He has led you." But, it says in verse 32, "But for all this that you have witnessed, you did not trust the Lord your God." This is the foundation and the very root of what Tabernacles is all about. It's what it was all about in their lives. It's what it is all about in our lives – Will we trust the Lord? Can we trust the Lord? This is the challenge. He said in the beginning, in Deuteronomy, He said, "I took you into the wilderness to test you." What was He testing? He was testing their ability to trust Him in all that He promised and said that He would do. Now, I know it uses a lot of different terminology to express the problem here. It talks about unbelief; it talks about disobedience; and we are going to dive into that right now, because I don't want us to get lost in the words and the terminology that is being used and lose sight of the fact that what we are dealing with is trust.

I read a dictionary article about trust, and it makes this statement: "The deepest essence of faith is trust, and that there is no Christian faith that is not personal trust in God." This is out of *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (Volume 2, page 766.) So it is trying to make this doctrinal statement, which tries to clear up all the terminology. Are we talking about believing God? Are we talking about faith in God? Are we talking about obedience to God? What are we dealing with here? And this is trying to dive down to the root. Really, our Christian experience comes down to a personal trust in God. That's what it is all about.

When we think about the fact that we are having a problem with obedience, or believing, or faith, or sin, the real root of the problem is trust. Now I am going to read some verses that talk to us about the failure here in the wilderness. And I want us to look at some of the terminology again that is being used in the Scriptures, and bring our focus back, no matter what the terms are, to the issue being their trust, and the issue for us today being our trust.

In Numbers 14:11, "The Lord said to Moses, 'How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?'" So see, He is addressing these days in the wilderness and what is going on with them in their refusal to go in and possess the land; their grumbling; their murmuring; their complaining; and everything that is going on. He says, "How long will they not believe Me?" So here He uses the word *believe*. In Psalm 106, starting at verses 21-26, it says "They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, wonders in the land of Ham and awesome things by the Red Sea. Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood in the breach before Him, to turn away His wrath from destroying them. Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe in His word, but grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of the Lord. Therefore He swore to them that He would cast them down in the wilderness." Again, we see all these terminologies; and it's important that we look at them, because these are things we usually talk about: "Well, I'm having a problem believing the Lord," or, "I'm reaching for real faith for a healing," or, "For the Lord to do this"; "The Lord spoke to me, I'm not hearing what He is saying." All of this is something that we are familiar with in our walk with Him. But I want to keep our focus on what Tabernacles is focused on, and that is, really, that the foundation of the problem is trust, not these other terms.

Hebrews 3:17-19 says, "And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?" So here He is talking about it as sin. We sin before the Lord. Think about it – sin is based on a lack of trust at its root. "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient. So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief." So here we have sin, disobedience, unbelief, all these terminologies being used; but we are remembering that their problem was they didn't trust God to provide for them.

Hebrews four, verses 1-2, says, "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed, we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard." We feel this sometimes. We have the Word of God that has been spoken to us, but sometimes it doesn't profit us, it doesn't seem to work in our lives, because we don't unite it with faith. Well, we don't trust the Lord to follow through with what He has promised.

Jude 5 says, "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe." All of those who did not believe at that moment when they were supposed to go in and possess the land, they

were all destroyed. That is why it took forty years in the wilderness; God waited for that generation to die off before He would allow Israel to go in and possess the land. So this is all keeping with the story about Israel in the wilderness and what they faced.

Again, whatever terminology you want to put upon it – they sinned, they didn't believe, they didn't listen, they disobeyed – whatever it is, God points out that it was a lack of their faith. And it's interesting, because as we go into the Scriptures, we see that this idea repeats itself. In Isaiah 31, at verse 1, it says, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many and in horseman because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord!" During the days of the prophet Isaiah, Judah, which included Jerusalem, the city, were under assault and under the threat of the Assyrians overtaking them and overrunning them through all these years. And one of the things that Isaiah kept encouraging them in prophesying is, don't trust in anything to save you but the Lord your God. He will save you. And that is what he is emphasizing here. He is saying, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt." Why would they go down to Egypt? They were trying to escape into Egypt for protection. And those who "rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord!"

And we find this is what happens to us when we are going through testings of different situations and circumstances. Our tendency is to look around, whatever we can find to grab on to, to trust in, to try to bring us out and bring us through whatever dealings that we find ourselves in the middle of. So the lesson of the Feast of Tabernacles doesn't just begin and end with the story of Israel in the wilderness. It's something that we see through the Scriptures, this problem of trusting in something other than God to be your provision, to be your fulfillment, to be your safety, to be the one who gives you all that you need. That is what we are being tested on.

We see this same problem being played out over and over through the Scriptures. And honestly, I am afraid that we are about to see God's anger manifested in America. Unless we can truly as Americans learn the lesson of the Feast of Tabernacles, I am afraid that we may suffer His wrath. Remember, America boldly declared on its currency, "In God we trust." But do we? And have we? I believe as God tested Israel in the wilderness, He is testing our words, that we would trust Him. Lord, help us to find a trust in You.

Let's look at some Scriptures about trust. I am going to start at First Peter chapter five, verses 6-7. This doesn't use the word trust, but it includes this idea of casting everything on Him. It says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." This verse has two elements that I think are important. One is: to trust in God, we must be humble. If we go back and reread the verses that we read in Deuteronomy, it says exactly that. God was humbling Israel in order that they would trust in Him. So God brings a humbling to us in the testing, in order that we are able to trust Him and able to cast all of our anxiety upon Him. In Psalm 125, verses 1-2, it says "Those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever."

Proverbs three, beginning at verses 5-9, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce." We

are to trust in Him. I want these Scriptures about trust to sink deeply within your heart, to take root in our lives in a way that we realize everything in our relationship with the Lord, our walk with Him daily, is about our ability to trust Him to provide all that we need.

Isaiah 26:3-4 says, "The steadfast of mind you will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting rock." What do we need in the time of trial and testing? We need a rock. What do we need in the circumstances that we face in our daily life? We need a rock. Where does that rock come from, and what is it? It is our trust in Him.

Jeremiah 17 verses 5-8. "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert and he will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord.'" Trust is the Lord. "For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit."

We have these ideas of the Scriptures of trust, but I also want to go to the Lord Himself, when He is teaching in Matthew six. These verses, of course, include the Lord's Prayer; and we see, just before we are reading here, the Beatitudes being taught. All of these things the Lord is teaching, and we focus on them many times. But I think we don't focus enough on this idea, starting with verse 24, where He begins to talk about really our trust in God's provision for us: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." So you either trust God, or you are going to trust something else. You can't do both. You can't be trusting in something besides God, and then pretend that you are trying to trust in God. That is idolatry. Your trusting in anything other than God is idolatry. And that is why He is saying you can't serve two masters. You can only trust in one thing, and one thing alone, at any given moment; and Christ is trying to bring this out in a way that just confronts us.

Verses 25-34: "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

It is interesting how Christ really in these verses is going back and pointing to the time of Israel in the wilderness. He is talking about all the things they were worried about, and all the things that they failed to trust God about. What would they wear? What would they eat? Where was the water coming from? All of these were issues in the wilderness that they murmured against God because of. And yet He brings this beautiful teaching, and He doesn't say that language of the wilderness or the Feast of Tabernacles;

but yet He is pointing for us to the same issues of life, and saying, "Why are you worried about these things? Just as they were worried and failed to trust God, don't fail in this day to trust Him." You say, "Well, that's easy for the Lord to say. He was the Lord." We always, I think, have a picture that He was some kind of Superman and didn't go through the same testings and trials. He went through His own Feast of Tabernacles testing, and we see it in Hebrews the second chapter, starting at verses 10-13: "For it was fitting for Him," talking about Christ, "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." Christ was perfected through sufferings in what God put Him through. "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father;" saying Christ and we are all from the same Father; "for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, 'I will proclaim Your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.' And again, 'I will put My trust in Him.' And again, 'Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.'"

These are interesting verses, and they may seem to be a little elusive, but read it through and try other translations. But see what is being said. It begins by talking about how fitting it was that God tested Christ just like He tested Israel, just like He tested all of humanity in this issue of being able to trust Him. Christ was tested through the same Feast of Tabernacles experience that Israel was tested; the same Feast of Tabernacles experience by which we will be tested: Can we trust the Father? And He was perfected in that. Out of that perfection, in verse 13 it says, "I put my trust in Him."

Christ was challenged and tested, and passed the test of trust in the Father. And we see that even in the last moments on the cross, when He felt He had been abandoned by God, He says, "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." At that last moment, we see the execution of the trust of Christ in putting His life back in the hands of the Father.

Some final thoughts about this idea of the Feast of Tabernacles. When we think about the Feast of Tabernacles, we generally think about the pillar of cloud and the fire, the Presence of God that dwelt with Israel in the wilderness. But I would say, God's purpose during the wilderness wanderings was to create a people that wholly trusted in Him to provide for every aspect of their life. That was the test of Tabernacles. So, can we today celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles that God has waited for, by finally becoming a people that trust in the Lord with all of our hearts, knowing that He will provide for us everything we need in life and to bring forth godliness?

I want to end this podcast by giving us a memory verse: Philippians four, verse 19, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Trust that He will supply all your needs. Amen.