

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG262 – Believe in His Rest

Hi, welcome to this podcast. This is really a fun day for me, we are getting ready for Shabbat and the celebration of the Sabbath. As I was doing that in my own heart and mind, I just wanted to go back into the Scriptures and look at some of the reality of what it is that we are celebrating, and why we keep the Sabbath. So I want to start out by reading the Scripture in Genesis the first chapter, starting with verse 31 and going on into chapter 2, down through verse 4.

God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.

One of the reasons we celebrate the Sabbath is because God created it as a day of rest. It says very clearly here in verse 3, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." To sanctify something in the Hebrew means that you separate it apart from the other things of a likeness. God separated this day from the other days of the week, and that was the sanctification of it. So we are to remember the Sabbath, and we are to keep the Sabbath. What we are keeping and remembering is the fact that God created all things, and He completed that creation; and when He Himself created and finished that creation, then He rested from His works, because His works were done. This is a hard concept sometimes for people to get, because you have to recognize that God literally is done with His creation, and things are completed. When it talks about us entering into His rest, it means that we are to enter into the reality that He has completed the things that He was creating, and all things are there and available for us.

When we go out into the created world around us, the earth is there, gravity is there, all of the issues with physics and nature, they are there; we are able to immerse ourselves into those realities and to appreciate them, to be thankful for them. We are also able to use them. We are able to use the products of the earth – the trees, the minerals, all that is there. They are there, and we do not have to ask for them, they are there. We have to get this concept on a deeper level that when God finished His creation, it was completed; everything that we are looking for is complete, it exists, and we are to appropriate it, and we are to celebrate it and be thankful for it. Entering into His rest is knowing that His works are done; therefore, whatever it is that we need and we look to God for, it exists and it is done. We recognize this when we celebrate the Sabbath. We are to enter into His rest, according to the book of Hebrews. We are able to do that because we understand, know, believe, and trust in the reality that all things are done and available to us, right here and right now.

You can say, "I thought the Sabbath was for the Jewish people." Well, this is Genesis 1:1 that we are in, and there were no Jewish people created at this point; and so, this is for mankind. Sabbath is for all the nations. There is a very special covenant that is made later with the children of Israel regarding the

Sabbath; but in the original blessing of the seventh day and the sanctification of the seventh day, it was something that was given and available for us as humankind to enter into, and that is His rest.

Moving on then, because, like I said, I was in preparation for Shabbat, for the Sabbath celebration, and I just want to be thankful and I want to be careful about how I approach the Sabbath and all that is available for us in the Sabbath. So, I want to go into the New Testament to Hebrews the fourth chapter, and I am going to start reading with verse 3. It says, "For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world." This is going back in Hebrews and picking up the fact that when God finished His work, His works were finished; and therefore, our faith is involved. You say, "How is it an exercise of faith?" It is an exercise of faith because we believe that the works are finished. His works are finished and are there and available for us, and we are able to appropriate all that we need from Him because He is the Creator, He is the Father, He is the God of all gods, and it is there for us to enter into.

Verse 3 says, "'They shall not enter My rest,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world." Going on to verse 4, it says, "For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.'" We just read that, so you know exactly where it is there in Genesis 1 and 2. But Paul did not have a concordance at the moment, and therefore he says, "It says somewhere in there that God finished His works, and He rested on the seventh day from all His works." Verses 5-6, "And again in this passage, 'They shall not enter My rest.' Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it..." In other words, this is still available for us as a people right now, right here in this generation. Today, as the sun goes down, we enter into the time of Sabbath. It is there for us, it is available for us to enter into all of the works that God has created and made. And we know and trust and believe by faith that He has completed all the things that are necessary for us and for our existence, and for His future promises of eternal life. These things are there and available for us.

It goes on to say in verses 6-10,

...and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, 'Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Why is that true? Well, because if we enter into His rest, then we know all things are completed. Therefore, we do not have to try to work things up and work things through and do things under our own strength, on our own power, and worry about, "How is this going to happen in our life, and how is that going to happen?" And, "Boy, I better pray and try to appropriate this, because I do not see it in front of me." That is what God is trying to get us out of. This is what Sabbath is all about: Let's stop. Let's take stock of the fact that He has done it. It is here, it is available for us, and we can enter into this rest that is available. It still remains as a Sabbath rest for the people of God. "For the one who enters His rest has himself also rested from his works." We stop our works. We stop trying to do it ourselves because we know He has done it, and we are able to enter into and become one with what He has done. Therefore, all things are available, all things are ours, all things are possible for us to appropriate right here, right now, in this day and in this age.

When we talk about this idea that some failed to enter His rest because of disobedience, going back to verse 6 where it says, "Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had

good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,” what is he really dealing with here? Why is it talking about disobedience, and how is it then that we really enter in? What does it mean to enter into the rest of the Lord? I want to jump to Psalm 95, and I encourage you to read this chapter. In fact, there are several things here for you to really study. You need to read all of Hebrews 3, all of Hebrews 4; you need to read Psalm 95 that we are getting ready to dive into; and I will give you other verses as we go along. But in Psalm 95, it is a beautiful thing; in verses 1-9 it says,

O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods, in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me.

So here we go. We are talking out of the Psalm, and first we emphasize this fact that we should be worshipping the Lord. We should be singing psalms to Him, we should be thankful. See, this is part of entering into this rest, because there is a knowing, an understanding that His hand has formed all things; the dry land, the heavens, the mountains, the trees, everything is there. And not only that, we are His people, we are the sheep of His hand, and He has provided everything that we need. So it starts off with this beautiful picture again that God created. He is the great Creator, and all things were created by Him; and He finished that work of creation and opened the door for us to enter into that creation in rest, because there is nothing for us to work up. We do not create, we simply receive and appropriate what He has already provided. So then, what is it talking about that they hardened their hearts, they would not believe? “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.” “They failed because of unbelief.” What are we dealing with? There are two pictures of this idea of what happened that brought about this idea of His rest and the fact that people did not enter His rest. I am going to try to cover that quickly here so that you can have a picture of it.

When we go back to verses 8-11, it says, “Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, though they had seen My work.” See, this is why there is a problem here – the people had seen the work of God. They saw it in Egypt when God delivered them, and yet here they are in the wilderness, and they are not believing in His works anymore. They are not believing His works are finished, they are not believing He has done it, they are not believing He is capable of doing it; and so, they get into this contention with God. He goes on to say, “For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways. ‘Therefore, I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest.’” So we see this contention that happened.

Now we go to Exodus the seventeenth chapter, where it paints the picture of this whole story. And again, I encourage you to read the whole of Exodus 17 and really study out what happened here, because the children of Israel were led out of Egypt. Now remember, part of the story is that when they were brought out of Egypt, they saw God’s work. They saw the angel of death come through the land and devastate. They saw the Red Sea part before them. They saw the plagues that had come for potentially over a year’s time, that broke down everything to do with Egypt and its strength. So these people lived that, they saw that, they witnessed that; and then all of a sudden, they are out here in the

wilderness and there is no water for them to drink. They faced the fact of, "What are we going to eat? What are we going to drink? We are out here, where is God? Where is the answer?"

So we will start at verse 2. It says, "Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, 'Give us water that we may drink.' And Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?'" Why was it a test of the Lord? It was a test of the Lord because they had already seen what God was and what He did. They also had the promise that He was taking them into the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He was the one to lead them, to guide them, to take them on into the fulfillment of every promise. But now they find themselves without water, and they are having a hard time dealing with this.

Exodus 17, verses 3-6,

But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Verse 7, "He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?'" Now, the reason it is really important to understand what happened and what Hebrews is talking about is because I think we find ourselves living in very difficult days. Many believe this is the end time, the end days. I certainly believe that it is a time of very prophetic fulfillments, and things get difficult and things get tough. And it is one thing to be a Christian and be a believer and whatever, but it is another thing when we get into a place we have never been before, and really our faith is being tested; that is what was happening here with all of Israel. They had seen all the miracles, they had seen everything that they had seen in Egypt in their deliverance and the splitting of the Red Sea, and all of that kind of stuff. But now, kind of in their minds this is a different situation; and therefore, they cannot have a continuation or a continuum of faith in God. They lose that faith because of what they are into now.

That is why I am talking in this podcast, because it is very important, during these days we are in and moving forward from here, that we do not lose our faith. You have to be able to go back and remember all that the Lord has done. You have to remember in His Word all that He says He has done, all of the promises and provisions; He has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. Well, it is there for us to appropriate; but all of a sudden, when you are in the wilderness with no water, you are going, "Hey, wait a minute. How does this promise apply to what my circumstances are at the moment?" And it is very easy to slip into this thing of unbelief, number one, and testing the Lord, saying, "You provide for me. You do this for me because You said, 'If we ask, then You will do whatever we say.'" So it is this idea of not having the faith by virtue of what we know we have already received. We have already received the salvation of Christ. He has already gone to the cross. He has already been buried and resurrected, and all of these provisions have been made for us. We have promises of our eternal life, of being buried in baptism with Him and raised up in His resurrection; and yet, we could very easily face moments in which we forget these things.

In the moments of forgetting, what happens to your faith? Where does it go? Do you test the Lord and get testy with Him and quarrel with Him? That is the question, and that is why we celebrate Shabbat.

That is why we celebrate the Sabbath. We get together on Friday night, we read through the Word, we rehearse the promises. We rehearse what God has said, we rehearse who He is, and we know that He has created all things and He has provided them for us to the point where at least God is so convinced that He rested in what He had done. And we, likewise, need to learn how to come to this place of Sabbath and rest in the Lord. I know things can get very difficult, but He has provided for us one day a week where we can come and remember all of His provisions, all of His blessings. Therefore, we can look at what we are facing today and what we are going to face tomorrow and realize, Yes, He is with us and He is faithful to His promises. He is faithful to all He has said He would give us and all He has said that He will do, and He will do it. But our challenge is, will we believe, or will we quarrel with Him?

This story goes on again in Numbers the twentieth chapter. This is kind of a part two of it, because this is where Moses faces the same event of the people not having water, and therefore they are murmuring against him, complaining against him; and Moses gets angry. He gets angry with the Lord, he gets angry with the people. And so, we have kind of a part two of this story, which comes together in this whole idea of unbelief and testing and quarreling with God when things get tough around us in our daily circumstances. So, the Lord tells Moses what to do. He tells him to go out with his staff and to go speak to this rock, which he had before struck in order to produce water. God had said the first time, "Go strike the rock," and he did, and water came out. That was the end of this quarrel that they were having the first time. Verses 9-11 in Numbers 20 go on to say,

So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as He had commanded him; and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

Alright, do you see the problem here? A couple of things are going wrong, aren't they? Number one, God told him to speak to the rock, He did not tell him to strike it again. But Moses in his frustration says, "Shall we bring forth water for you?" Again, part of resting on the Sabbath is we rest from our works, knowing that God has provided everything we need. And here Moses is taking credit. It is his works that are going to be witnessed by the people, in order to honor himself before all of Israel. And so, he takes the rod and instead of speaking to it and honoring God in the way the water comes forth, in his frustration he says, "'Shall **we** bring forth water for you out of this rock?' Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod, and the water came forth abundantly." So in verse 12, God is going to deal with Moses about this little divergence from His instructions. "But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'" This is where, as we know, Moses was not able to enter the land because of this one event. It is such a major event to God because Moses did not believe God, and he did not treat Him as holy in the sight of Israel; he did it from his own works, and he did it with disobedience and unbelief. And that is what Hebrews talks about, when you go back and read that story.

So during this time, we want to realize that these are difficult days. We may have faith, and we may have days that we walk with God and everything is fine; but we need to celebrate this time of Sabbath, because it is a reminder to us. It is a remembrance that we stop everything we are doing out of ourselves. We are not the answer, we do not have the answer. God has already created the answer. He has already made the provision for us. We need to believe in Him, in who He is and what He has

done, and believe in His lovingkindness that has provided for us all things pertaining to life and godliness. We need to live our lives from that point of faith, which will allow us to walk in an obedience before Him.

So I encourage you: celebrate the Sabbath and enjoy it. Read the Scriptures of His creation and His rest; and know that He has provided for you all that you need, even in these difficult times that we may be going through. I bless it to your heart.

Amen.