

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG313 – Before the Foundation of the World

Hi, and welcome to the podcast. This is a special edition for our *Growing In God* podcast, as it is produced from a Zoom call that we at Hargrave Ministries have occasionally with our donors. When we have these times together and feel it is important for others to be a part of what we are discussing, we create the meeting into a podcast for release. So I hope that you will enjoy this podcast; and if you like being a part of these discussions, I would encourage you to go to our website at hargraveministries.org and join our Fellow Workers.

I know we have taken a lot of time here, but I want to do something with a message for us. It has been where my heart and my focus is, thinking about these points. I want to go to First Corinthians chapter 11, and I will start reading with verse 23. This is Paul speaking, of course, and he says, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread.” This is always important to me because we know that Paul was not there; he was not part of the Last Supper, and he was not a part of the disciples when Christ was on the earth. So what he is speaking from here about, “What I received,” means that these are part of the things that he received when he was taken up into the heavens and saw things that are not legal for people to see, or however you want to express that back into English. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)

Paul had these amazing experiences, because I do not believe it was just one time; a lot of his perspective about things is unique because it is coming from a different perspective. It is not what he experienced with Christ in the flesh on the earth, in this material world; it is what he experienced with Christ in resurrection life at the right hand of the Father. Sometimes we kind of lose that reality, and we need to hold it closely, because I think the impact of it is tremendous. He is talking about receiving Communion, talking about the Last Supper; he is giving the instructions for it from this perspective, not because he was there at the Last Supper. So just keep that in mind, that these are instructions for us coming from another realm.

In the subsequent verses it talks about how He took the cup and gave thanks. So in verses 26-29 he goes on to say,

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner [now that is important, “in an unworthy manner”], shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

I know we have all heard this many times, and I have heard it many, many times. Usually when I read this last part about if we do not judge ourselves correctly, that we are eating and drinking judgment – “He who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly” – I have always had that idea, “Okay, well, I really have to dig in now. We are getting ready for Communion, and I really need to get my shovel out and dig through my pile of sins that are here and make sure that

I am looking at everything I have done wrong, and what my needs are." It just has this negative thing about it, that we are supposed to go in and focus on the negative and deal with the negative because we are getting ready to take the body and the blood of the Lord; which is then, as we know, going to wipe away the negative and bring the positive.

I think there is another way, if we could just for a moment flip this on its head and say, "What if he was saying something besides that?" In other words, is there a way to look at ourselves not from a negative perspective, but is he possibly trying to get us back to a perception of who and what we are that is different, and therefore we are taking the body and the blood of the Lord from a place of power? What was he looking at? He was looking at the risen Messiah. He was looking at the glorified Christ who was at the right hand of the Father. "And that glory," Christ said, "I have given to you, that you may be one." So there was this idea that the perception Paul had of what he was seeing was not from a negative concept, but he was doing this in remembrance. Remembrance of what? Well, we think remembrance of Him being on the cross, but maybe Paul was talking about a remembrance like, "Remember this, Christ is glorified. Christ is risen. Christ is in a glorified body. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. Christ has all power and authority. Christ is in the process of dealing with everything to bring it under His lordship, until He rules and reigns on the earth." Now that would be a little bit of a different perspective than saying, "We are coming to the Communion table because we are trying to dig in here and remember everything we did wrong, and take Communion to sort of cover that."

Does anybody get what I am saying here? Is anybody relating to this, that we tend to kind of have this negative perspective when we read these verses? I think the Lord is trying to flip something in our own heads. Paul goes on to say, "For this reason, many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep." Literally he is talking to the Body of Christ, saying, "You guys have lost your power because you are not aware, and you are not moving from the place of power. You are not moving from the place of authority. You are not moving with Him," because He said, "Where I am, there My servants shall be also." (John 12:26) We should be with Him in the heavenly places, moving from that place of authority, moving from that place of power in the resurrection in all that we are doing and being as the Body. And Paul is saying, "The ministry of the church is a little bit sickly, because you guys are over here trying to dig through the pile of manure and find the pony in your life somewhere," when Christ is saying, "I have given you My glory, that you may be one," and, "Where I am, there My servants are to be also." So we are trying to be enjoined into something, I think, that is a different perspective, and it is a powerful perspective. I just felt this; and like I said, I know we have used a lot of time already this morning, but I want to minister this to you as a personal word from the Lord, because that is the way it came to me, that it is for this group. This is a group that I think can relate to what the Lord is speaking to us, and can make it come alive in a way of changing how we move and the perspective from which we move. Because like I said, we have to hold in our minds and hearts that no matter how you slice it, Paul moved from a different perspective than everybody else, because that is where he was taught; that is what he saw; that is what he experienced; and he is trying to bring us into that level of experience.

I do not want us to be sickly anymore. I do not want a number of us to be sleeping because we are losing out on the resurrection. I do not want the weakness in the body of Christ. I want us to judge ourselves; but if we judge ourselves rightly, we will not be judged. I think it is important that we as a people judge ourselves rightly. And in order to judge ourselves rightly, the only way I know to do that is to go to the Scriptures and find out, "What does the Word of God say about us, who we are, and what the Lord has done, what He is doing in us?" So let's try to do that a little bit if we can.

I just threw this Scripture in at the last minute, it is John 17. I will start with verses 13-14. Christ again is speaking directly to the Father, with the disciples all there. "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves." Christ is recognizing, "I am speaking this to My disciples while I am still in the material world." He goes on to say, "I have given them Your word [and boy, do we have a Word]; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Now He is speaking to the Father about you, okay? This is the Lord speaking to the Father about you. And He is saying, "Because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world...." We know that Christ was not from this world. He made that clear over and over and over again when He was here. Even before the crucifixion, He said to Pilate, "Listen, My whole Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then those who are of My Kingdom would be fighting you right now, and they are not, because My Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) And now He is talking to the Father about you, "Because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And I have a message for you guys this morning: You are not from this world. You are not of this world. But everything about the world, when we live in this material world, is constantly pulling us down to its level. And one thing, when we go back and read the Gospels, Christ refused to be pulled down to the level of the natural, material world. He knew He was from the Father: "I know where I have come from. I know where I am going back to. I know the Father. None of you know the Father. I know the Father." Everything was about who He was as being someone from another place, that He had come down to minister here something that was very important. He was not dragging Himself down to this level, even though He was at that point in a physical body in the material world. He was still placing himself and realizing that He was another manifestation. And just like He is saying to the Father here, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of this world."

He goes on in verse 15, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." God bless us and protect us from everything about this natural world, because I think we are so easily convinced that we are of this world and from this world, and captivated by this world and limited by this world, and on and on and on I could go. Verse 16, "They are not of the world." They are not of the world! "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christ is bringing us here onto His level, and He is saying that we are on His level. We have get that. Remember, we are talking about, "What do you do in Communion? You examine yourself." We should examine ourselves. Who are we? What are we? And we should not be going, "Oh my gosh, I blew it the other day. I got mad at the dog and it was a horrible thing." No. You are not of this world, and you are not here to deal with things of the world from a material world perspective and thought process. We are here to be moving from another process.

"They are not of this world." That is verse 16, by the way, in case you want to memorize it, which would be a good idea. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Verses 17-18, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth." We have the Word. "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." Christ was sent by the Father into the world from another realm, from the realm of the heavenlies; and He is saying, "As You sent Me into the world, I am sending them into the world." Do you know what that means? That means you came into this world not from this world either. That means you existed before you were born here. You existed before you put on flesh, just as Christ existed before He put on flesh; and you were sent into this world by Christ. Is that what He is saying? "As You sent Me into the world, I also have" past tense, "sent them into the world." Christ sent us into this world as He was sent by the Father into this world. So again, we have to see what all this means. We have to listen to what He is saying and let that be our reality. Christ was sent here by the Father to minister to

the world. You were sent into this world by Christ, having existed with Him prior to your being sent into this world. You were not just born, you were knitted in your mother's womb by God, by the hand of God, and we were formed and created.

I hope this is getting through to you guys, and I hope it is okay if we maybe take a little bit more time with this. Let's jump to Romans the eighth chapter. We have heard this a lot in the words that have been ministered to us. Verses 26-27, "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; 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." There is a lot of intercession going on for us right now, and I want us to know that. The reason it is going on for us in such intensity is because of the dullness that we have, the lack of understanding that we have about what has been implanted into us as we were sent into this world.

We know that when Christ was sent here, He was the Word made flesh; but He was first of all the Word. He did not give up being the Word. He was the Word; He was made flesh; He had these different aspects. We know that the Spirit descended upon Him and remained, and moved in Him and through Him. We talk many times about being spirit, soul, and body. We have talked about this reality of the trinity that we are and that we exist in, but I do not think we really put it together in the truth of what that means. That means that we are spirit, soul, and body. That means that you are a triune being. So yes, we have a physical body. Now that physical body is very necessary for us, because we have been sent into this world to minister to this world; therefore we had to become flesh and blood as He became flesh and blood, because if we are going to minister to a world that is a material world, and everything exists about it in a material sense, then there is no way to minister to it without being in that form so that we can relate to it, and it can relate to us. But you do not stop there. You are not just body, you are spirit, soul, and body. In other words, you now have, we have, Christ had, the ability to move in the material world, which is the first dimensional world. It is the three-dimensional world, right? But we are equipped right now as we are to move in the first dimensional world, the second dimensional world, the fourth dimensional world, the fifth dimensional world, these other aspects; we are equipped to function dimensionally in the world of spirit. We are able to move in these things. And I do not want to get into a teaching on dimensions right now, and I do not want this to be confusing. But I think that we have lost something when we just say spirit, soul, and body, because we still feel like we are just here on the earth in this body, and that is what we are limited to; and that is not what we are limited to. We literally have the ability born into us right now that we can function in, and transition to, these other realms.

I thought about going into a whole thing about death, but it is just too long and involved. Suffice it to say that when you really study biblically the idea of death, you have to look at really what the meaning is; because the Scriptures talk about the seed of the Word that is in us, and about our transformation and our transition into another realm. Even when it talks about the return of Christ, we are not raised first, but He comes to those who are asleep. So what does death really mean? Because if in us abides this eternal seed, and now you are already living and moving in your eternal life, you were moving in your eternal life before you got here into this flesh. You were put into this flesh as a step God was taking you through, and we have to get back to the awareness of this.

When Christ tells about the parable of the seed that is spread, and the seed that is spread along the side of the road, what does it say? "The wicked one comes and steals the seed away." (Matthew 13:19) And how does he do that? From a lack of understanding. It is not a lack of faith, it is because of a lack of an

understanding of who and what you are that satan is able to steal away from you the reality of who and what you are in this presence. And that is what Paul is telling us to do: "Listen, examine yourself." Can we go back to figuring out who we are, and what we are, and why we are here, and stop putting ourselves down? Because, like I say, I read that Scripture about the Communion and the first thing I do is put it into a negative concept about myself. And I think that he is trying to get us to look at the truth about ourselves and who we are.

There is an understanding of the seed when it was spread into your heart; and it is not a matter of faith, it is a matter of understanding. We have to have the understanding, and where you do not have the understanding, then satan is able to steal it away. The Scripture talks about the fact that the godly ones die because of ignorance, or lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6a) There is this reality that stealing away your understanding is literally eviscerating who and what you are in God. And the Communion should be an experience that takes us back to the understanding of who we are because we are examining that reality in detail.

I know I am going fast, and I know I feel pressured because we are over time, but you are going to get this. In verses 27-29 it says,

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. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose [and you are called according to His purpose]. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

When we think about what is being said here, it says, number one, "For those whom He foreknew." You were foreknown by Christ before you came into this world, okay? So, "Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined." What did He predestine us to do? "To become conformed to the image of His Son." What was the image of Christ? Spirit, soul, and body. Part of the image of Christ is not just the spiritual image of who He was; He was put into a physical body. So if we are going to be conformed to the image of His Son, this was necessary, even though we were foreknown. See, we were with Him before, we were foreknown by Him. But to be put into the image of Christ, it was necessary that we go through this time being in a human body, because that is the image of Christ. That is part of the image of Christ. Yes, He is glorified; and yes, He gives us His glory; and yes, we are transformed into every aspect and all aspects of Him, including His resurrection, right? We are brought into His resurrection, into the life of His resurrection. All aspects of Christ we were predestined to be brought into, so that we would share in the likeness of Christ.

Why was this necessary? It is necessary, verse 29, "so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." He had to be the firstborn among many brethren, and therefore what He went through, we go through. We know that He is the only one to die on the cross for the sins of the world, but do we suffer in this age? Are we persecuted in this age? Did we go through things in our eternity before ever being put here? Of course we did. And part of the reality of being in the flesh is you do not remember that. So really, it is not a battle of faith. It is not a war of faith, it is a war of remembering. It is a war of remembering being with Him. Christ had that. Christ said, "I was with the Father. I came from the Father." He knew His place with the Father. So in the flesh, at some point, His whole relationship with the Father was restored. That is what we are looking for. It is not like we do not have enough faith; no, we do not have enough understanding. Remember the seed by the roadside; it does not say that the people by the roadside did not have faith, it said they did not understand what was going on. It is this

understanding that must be restored in us and to us by revelation. That is why the Holy Spirit is given to us to teach us, to lead us into the truth, because these things that we are talking about, this is the truth. You were with Him, and you were predestined to be in His image. Let's just read that again, Romans 8:29-34,

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son [that includes being in the flesh], so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 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."

We are not going to be condemned in this phase of our eternity, because Christ died on the cross that anything that we have experienced while in this flesh nature is going to be removed from us through the act of His being on the cross. But nonetheless, if we are going to be in His image, we had to experience the reality of being in His flesh. But all this was foreknown. All of this was predetermined, predestined, if you will, for you and about you, and I love that. And we are going to see that and know that.

He goes on. And you need to go through and read these verses from verse 31 down, because he talks about, "What can separate us from the love of God?" Verses 38-39, "...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

So again, we get this fact that we are here, we are in this human form, but it is true that we are divine beings. This is actually a step, a phase of our eternity. But our eternity started before we landed in this realm of the material world, before we were born into this flesh body. What are we going to say about this flesh body when it is all over? We are going to say, "Well, I got through that stage, and now I am in the image of the Son. And that was His purpose, that I experience what He experienced."

Let me jump to another Scripture in Ephesians the first chapter, verses 2-4. It says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him, in love...." Do you get that? How many times have we just read over that and it does not hit us? That statement should hit us like a Mack truck, to say, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." So when the Scriptures talk about those sons of God that were singing at the creation of the world, you were there. (Job 38:7) You were one of them. He is talking about you. That is your existence, that is your life. That is part of what you are supposed to be remembering when you come to the Communion table to evaluate yourself. I mean, how can you compare what you are going through now with what you lived before the foundation of the world? My gosh, what you have seen, what you have known, what you have understood in your existence; and still, what we have yet to re-experience.

Like Christ said to the disciples, "You should be overjoyed because I am going back to be with the Father where I came from." (John 16:5) And at some point, it is not death; we are going back to where we were with the Father, with the Son. He chose us. He chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. So this is a good way to celebrate the Sabbath. We are rejoicing in the Sabbath because He called all

these things into existence, and we should rejoice in it because we watched it happen. We were there. Verses 4-11 continue,

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.

So this is who we are. This is what we are. We are those that He chose before the founding of the world to be with Him, to be in His image, to be in His likeness, to be filled as He is. I bless this, because I think that we need the understanding. In all that is going on in the world right now, as we live in the turmoil of this material world that is constantly trying to shout us down as being something less than who God created us to be and what He created us for, we need to be realizing our purpose. He said, "My glory have I given to them. I have chosen them. They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." We are here as those ambassadors who do not have a citizenship in this place. Our citizenship is in heaven, where we were before the founding of the world; and we have been sent here with a purpose, and I believe that purpose is going to be fulfilled.

Lord, give us understanding. Let us see and understand who we are, what we are; that You created us to be in Your image. Not just Your glorified image, but Your human image; in all aspects of who and what You are, we are to carry that same image. We believe for the understanding, the revelation, and the knowledge of it to be real to us today, and real to us tomorrow. And as we come from this time on to Your Communion table, let us do this in remembrance. Let us do it in remembrance of all that You are, and all that You have predestined us to be.

I bless this word to our hearts. Lord, make it real. I love you guys so, so much. Thank you for some extra time here and attention. But we believe for this to be real, very, very real to us. Let it wipe away every lie. Let it wipe away every other way of thinking, every process that we go through. And we believe for it to be our portion today.

Amen.