

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG323 – Oue Hunger and Thirst for God

This is officially the last day of Sukkot. Of course, outside of Jerusalem it is celebrated for another day, or not¹. But we realize that today is the eighth great day, and luckily it is a Sabbath. So I just encourage us all to really set our hearts as we are leaving this time to look for what God is going to do in our lives, and I want to talk about that in the word; because we are in the eighth great day of Sukkot, and we are just finishing up the celebration. Of course, we have people here at our house watching the Zoom call from out in the sukkah, which at some point will be coming down. But I really want us to connect with just the drive that I am feeling. In my time of prayer earlier, during Sukkot, I had what I would almost describe as a vision, and it was a vision of being in the wilderness. In the vision, it was just me on my knees out in the middle of this wilderness, which of course I can picture because I have been to Israel and have been to the wilderness to see what it is like. It is an awesome feeling, impossible to really describe what that is. But with my being there and just on my knees, I was looking up and the Presence of God was there. I thought, “This really represents what Sukkot is all about.” They were directed to build the sukkah as a reminder that when God brought them out of Egypt, He led them into the wilderness; and they lived in tents, and they dwelled for forty years in what we call the wilderness.

I know that the tendency, at least that I have always had, is to have sort of a negative connotation about or feeling about the wilderness: “You know, you are in a wilderness experience. It is difficult, it is hard.” And the wilderness is a harsh place. The sense that I had was, “Boy, this is getting down to the reality of life. It is just me and God.” At some point it is me and God. And what the wilderness represented to me in that moment was that everything else was pushed out of my life, out of the picture of my surroundings. There was nothing else to focus on. There is no food, there is no water; there is certainly no television, there is no internet; there is nothing out in the wilderness. And that really is the point, isn’t it, that there is nothing you can depend on. Yeshua said that He could do nothing without the Father. There is no ability, there is no enabling that we have, there is nothing to reach for in the wilderness other than God.

I know that when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were all out there; so there were however many people that came out of Egypt, and they were all neatly organized in their tents according to families and they were camped around the tabernacle. When we do the sukkah, it has that memory to it, how they were camped together. And there are so many depths of meaning and positive things about the wilderness; it is not a negative experience, it is something of a reality. And I did not just take this for myself; I felt like God is bringing us out into a wilderness experience because He is scraping away and pushing away everything except Himself in our relationship with Him, and what that means, and what it really is all about.

And so, I wanted to read out of Deuteronomy, in chapter 8. I am going to go ahead and start at verse 1. It says, “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers.”

¹ The tradition of adding a day to the celebration is not followed in the more liberal branches of Judaism.

We want to remember that everything about this experience, in the heart and the mind of God, is to enable us to go in and possess all that He has for us, because it also enables us to do His will, to follow His Word, His commandments. Everything that He commands us, He does not just command us, He enables us. And He talks about that, that they heard His voice and it was a fearful thing. And He wanted them to be afraid, but He only wanted them to be afraid of Him so that they would know to follow Him. So we have this idea that there was a purpose in going out into the wilderness; it was in order that they could be multiplied, that they could learn to live, and that they would go in to possess the land that the Lord had sworn to their forefathers.

In verse 2 he goes on to say, “You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” And I thought, here we are on the eighth great day. We are leaving the Feast, we are not coming into it. It is ending, and we should be looking back and seeing all that God has done for us during this time. I think we should be seeing all that God has done for us in our lifetimes – what He has taken us through, how He has led each of us individually in the trials and the testings and what we have experienced in His dealings in our lives – but experience it as this wilderness experience. Because what does it all mean and what does it stand for? It stands with just you and Him. It is all about just you and Him. He brings us to that place, and it is a place of grace. And the purpose of that place is so that we can go in and possess all that He has sworn to us and to our fathers.

It says in verses 3-11,

“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 feet 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. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today.”

This is where in Judaism you say grace after meal, right? Because the Scripture says that after you have eaten, then you thank God for all the bounty He has given you. So that is why the Jewish prayer of grace is said after the meal; and that kind of got lost somewhere in the Book of Acts or something. But anyway, we are going to have that sense among us of what we have gone through. We are going to be able to look at it and evaluate it properly, because God is never trying to hurt us or destroy us. God is always trying to prepare us and equip us for what it is that He has for us to walk in of the things that He has promised. And I just bless us that as we are leaving this Tabernacles, we do not leave the memory, because really the celebration of Sukkot is all about remembering. It is remembering those forty years. It is remembering what God did before those forty years in bringing them out of Egypt. It is the memory

of many things – difficult, good, bad, all of it – with the understanding in the heart of God that He is preparing you. He is preparing us for the fulfillment of His Word and the fulfillment of His promises.

And we are to keep His Word. We are to be given to His Word. In verses 15-17, and I am going to jump down and you can read the rest of it later, but it says,

“He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’”

And he goes on. I encourage you, please go back and read all of this as we are leaving this time of Sukkot, to recognize that God is working with us to do good to us, to bring the blessings and the promises to us which He promised to our fathers, which He promised to Israel, which He has promised through Yeshua that He would give us. If it has been difficult, it has been difficult. If sometimes we felt like the Lord was starving us, and that is what Israel faced, are we going to misunderstand? Because I feel like where the murmuring and complaining comes from is because we lose our focus on what God is and what God is doing, especially in us, and I do not want us to lose that as we leave this time.

I want to go down to John the seventh chapter at verse 37. It says, “Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.’” This is so amazing because, again, this is the last day of the feast, and so what is He referring to? He is referring back to the wilderness. He is referring back to what God said, “I took you into a land where there was no water, where there was no food.” And so, Yeshua is saying, “Hey, if anyone is thirsty”; if you are learning from what we have been through so that there is a hunger, there is a thirst for God, there is a thirsting after Him.

I think one of the greatest things we could leave this time of Sukkot with is a hunger that cannot be satisfied, with a thirst that can never be satiated, but it is a constant daily thing that we are remembering that without Him, without His provision, we have nothing. We are dead men and women, because there is nothing we can do or provide for ourselves. As Yeshua said, “Of Myself I can do nothing.” Without the Father, nothing takes place. And whoever we are and whatever we are believing for and whatever we see in the Word, we have to remember this idea that without Him, we cannot bring water out of the rock; we cannot bring manna out of heaven; only God can do those things. And so with our faith in Him and our looking to Him in these days as we walk forward, I wish there would just be a hunger like we have never known before, a thirsting after God in a way that we have never thirsted for Him before. Because that truly is the focus He wants, not only in our hearts, but it is the focus He wants us to bring into the world. As we encounter people, as we minister His Word, as we minister His heart and Spirit and blessing as His priesthood, the greatest thing we could give the world is a hunger after God so that they seek Him.

As He said, “In the day that you seek Me with all of your heart, I will be found.” The greatest answer the world could have right now is a spiritual hunger, it is a spiritual thirst; because if we can truly see a world that gets hungry and thirsty for God, we can see a world that can be saved.

It is easy to look around and read the news and see all that is happening; truly, the world is in a wilderness, and there is nothing it can seem to do to get itself out of that place. It cannot bring water out of the rock. It cannot bring manna out of heaven. With all of its technology and everything else,

it cannot solve the problems that it finds itself in. That is the beauty of the wilderness. You can truly look at where we are at and where we see the world at right now, and just go, "They have no solution." And we can come to them and say, "Oh, we have no solution either, but we have something we can give you. We can give you a hunger and a thirst after Him, so that if you pursue Him with all of your heart, He will be found by you. He is the ultimate answer that you need, because He has the ability to bring forth the answer to all of the things that you need."

We find that when we go to John 7, and I will read verses 37-39 again,

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Yeshua was not yet glorified.

Christ is saying, "Hey, we have just finished Sukkot. Have you been in the wilderness long enough to be thirsty? Are you really thirsty yet? Are you really thirsty? If you are really thirsty, come to Me and drink." It is not going to happen because there is a rock of flint over here that Moses is going to strike with his staff, but out of your belly is going to flow rivers of living water. And this is what is going to minister to the nations. This is what is going to feed those who are really seeking after the Lord.

I so believe in this. And what Christ said is interesting to me, that this is by the Spirit. It says that He spoke of the Spirit when He said, "From your innermost being will flow rivers of living water." He was speaking of the Spirit that was going to be poured out. We are believing for an outpouring of God's Spirit in this hour to the nations; but it is really interesting, and I am going to read out of Mark the first chapter, verses 9-13. It says,

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased." Immediately the Spirit impelled Him [you look at it in other translations, it is the Spirit "drove Him"] to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

Isn't it interesting that Christ says, "This living water that is going to come out of you, that is the Spirit." When the Spirit comes upon you, what does the Spirit do? He drives you into the wilderness. Why? Because He is keeping that hunger going. He is keeping you in a place where you are going to have to hunger after Him and thirst after Him. And if we are hungering and thirsting after the Father because the Spirit keeps us positioned in that place of thirst, in that place of hunger, then what happens is out of our bellies it is this constant flow. We are going to live in a memory, we are going to live in an experience of this wilderness that keeps us continually hungering and thirsting after the Presence of the Lord, keeps us hungering and thirsting after His Word, after His will. I want to see a hunger come forth in the body of Christ born out of this time of Sukkot, out of Tabernacles, like we have never seen before, a hunger for His Word, a hunger for this Holy Spirit. We keep talking about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We say, "Lord, pour out Your Spirit upon the world." But do not tell anybody what happens when the Spirit is poured out – it is going to drive you into the wilderness experience. It is going to bring you to a place of hungering and thirsting after God until out of you is coming this living water that is going to flow.

So I bless us. I want this to be for us this revolving experience. We hunger after Him; what happens when we hunger and thirst? We come to the Lord and drink. And when we do, it is the Holy Spirit coming and beginning to flow out of us, and it drives us into the wilderness, which makes us more hungry and more thirsty after Him; and it just keeps going and going until the Spirit, as it says with Christ, the Spirit came upon Him without measure. I want this experience of the wilderness for us to be something that generates that true outpouring of His Spirit that comes upon us without measure, without stopping. The Spirit does not come and go; it rested upon Yeshua and never left Him. It drove Him into the wilderness and He had His wilderness experience; but we know that was the making of the Son of God. Certainly, He will do nothing less for us.

I believe that at this conclusion of the Feast, our hearts are just branded with an experience of, and a love for, what God is doing with us and for us in this wilderness. Because truly, truly He is removing everything that surrounds us, and there is nothing out here except worship and prayer and hunger after God. And we bless our own hearts that we walk in that during this year. Amen? Amen.

Thank you, guys. I know we ran a little bit over time, but I think it was worth it. Okay, who wants to bless this word? Silas, you got it.

Silas Esteves: Yes, this is a major light that the Holy Spirit is shining, explaining, and giving us His understanding of everything we go through in the life with Him, in Him. In Job chapter 23, verse 10, he says, "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." And that is His purpose in His personal relationship daily, after, you know, this hunger and thirst after Him. We turn that loose. And I know we expect an outpouring, but also we believe for this outflow of His Holy Spirit to invade the whole earth and have this being a blessing to all of us.

We seal this word. This is major, a word from God. You placed myself in the vision you had and made it very real and personal. I take this, and I am very excited about this. Thank You, Lord, for Your Word.

Gary: Amen. We do, we bless it, Lord. We thank You for this time, and for this feast. We carry it with us unending in our hearts.

Love you all very much. Thanks for the extra time today, and we will see you in a couple weeks. God bless.