

Dying To Self And Entering Into Rest

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of entering into God's rest, finding fullness of joy in His presence, and the significance of surrendering to Jesus' yoke to experience true rest for our souls. It highlights the need to cut off confidence in the flesh, take up the cross daily, and walk in step with Jesus to find rest amidst life's storms. The message encourages a life of continual rest in God, free from unrest and agitation, by diligently pursuing His rest and yoking ourselves to Jesus in all aspects of life.

Scripture: Psalm 16:11, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 4:9, Philippians 3:10, Isaiah 66:2

Topics: "God's Rest", "Surrender to Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

The verse from the psalm that we read over the past few years has been a sort of a guide for me to know whether I'm living in the presence of the Lord. So the way I've read it is Psalm 16:11, the verse we memorized. In your presence is fullness of joy.

I believe that. The Holy Spirit says that. So I say to myself, anytime in my life when I don't have fullness of joy, I'm not in the Lord's presence.

That's a fair deduction from that verse, which means that something has gone wrong. It teaches me that God's will is that I rejoice always, like it says in Philippians 4:4, because he wants us always to dwell in his presence. So if I make that a law or a rule for my life, anytime I lose my joy, even slightly, I will immediately say, hey, it's not because somebody else did something or said something.

It's got nothing to do with anybody else. It's got to do with the fact that somehow I slipped out of the Lord's presence and I'm not in his presence anymore. So that's the most important thing, to get back into the Lord's presence.

Whereas very often when we lose our joy, we're thinking of blaming somebody else or some circumstance and trying to fix that. What we need to fix is that we're not in the Lord's presence. If you turn to that psalm,

before that verse 11 comes is verse 8, which is a prophetic reference to Jesus, where it says, I have set the Lord continually before me, because in his presence there's fullness of joy.

So I've set the Lord continually before me. And when he's continually before me, he'll also be at my right hand, verse 8, and I will not be shaken. When the apostle Peter spoke about, preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost, when he spoke about Jesus' life in Acts chapter 2, he said about Jesus being nailed to the cross, verse 23 and 24, God raised him up again.

And then he quotes this verse, Psalm 16, verse 8. He says, David said about him, I saw the Lord always in my presence. Verse 28, you'll make me full of joy in your presence. So this is how Jesus lived.

Peter quotes that verse because he saw it in Jesus' life, that Jesus' life was always full of joy, even on the last day before he went to the cross, he told his disciples, my joy I give unto you. He had so much, even though he knows he's going to be crucified the next day. So I don't know how many of us take this seriously, that if I lose my joy, I'm not in the presence of God.

You make it a law for your life, I can tell you. Your life will be better. Your whole life will be happier and better.

Your fellowship with other believers will be better. You will stop blaming other people and circumstances. You'll hardly ever get upset with anyone or anything because fullness of joy.

See, it's only if we prove it that we can talk about it. And I can say that for many years I was a defeated Christian. I would be discouraged, and I didn't know what joy was, and I was born again.

And I think that's the condition of many people. When that's gone from my life, I can stand before God and say it's gone from my life completely because I took these verses seriously. And any time I'd sit up, I'd say, Lord, I'm not in your presence.

I don't know what's wrong. Please show me. I refuse to blame anybody else.

I refuse to blame circumstances. I have left your presence. That's why.

And when you read the Gospels, what the Lord was trying to teach his disciples in all those miracles that he did was not how to do miracles because they never turned the water to wine. He asked the apostles. They never walked on water.

They hardly ever raised the dead, in fact. Timothy had a stomach problem which Paul could never cure him of. He lived with it.

Paul told him to take some medicine. So that's not the main reason why he did those miracles. But I see the main reason why Jesus did those miracles.

First, of course, it was an attestation that he was who he claimed to be, the son of God. But also to teach his disciples one simple lesson I remember seeing, taking a study of all the miracles Jesus did in the Gospel of John. And my title for that series was God Can Solve Any Problem.

That's what he was trying to teach his disciples. There's no problem you can face which I can't help you to solve. That's the essential thing.

It's not turning the water into wine or walking on water. But whatever problem you're facing, God can solve it. There's absolutely nothing that God cannot solve.

Imagine if you are convinced about that in your life. Because many of us, we are facing problems all the time. It could be sickness.

It could be problems unrelated to our work. Problems unrelated to our children or other people or neighbors or colleagues at work. And what is there that God cannot solve? Whenever they came to Him with any problem, Lord, there's no food for the multitude.

OK. Well, there's not enough wine here. Marriage is going to be a fiasco.

Or some blind man or whatever it is. You never find any situation where Jesus scratches his head and says, Boy, that's a tough one. I don't know how to handle that.

And it's the same today. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. You can go to Him with any problem.

He wouldn't say, Hey, I don't know how to handle that. That's too tough. Never, never, never, never.

So if I'm convinced of that, I can face the future, knowing that my Savior, if I really seek to live in His presence, part of the reason why I have fullness of joy is because I say, I cannot encounter a problem for the rest of my life which God cannot solve. Imagine facing the whole future like that. I don't know what problem I'll face tomorrow, next year, year after now, and year after next.

But I'm absolutely convinced my Heavenly Father can solve it all. There is nothing that He cannot solve. In the Old Testament, they didn't have a Savior like this.

They didn't have a friend like this. They didn't have a Father in Heaven. They didn't have someone who told them, I'll never leave you nor forsake you, and things like that.

Or I'll make everything work together for your good. Every single thing will work for your very best. There were no such promises in the Old Testament.

So we have not, as Christians, I believe we are not rising up to the level God wants us to live. Paul did. He lived there.

He said, Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. And we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. It's amazing the statements in Scripture which we read, memorize in His presence His fullness of joy, and we go on to the next verse next week.

And this verse is not fulfilled in our lives. So I want to encourage you to take these words seriously because I'll tell you, I read the Bible for 16 years and I never took these words seriously. But I got so fed up with my defeated life at one time.

And I said, Lord, I really want to come to the life that Paul had. In the midst of all his persecutions and imprisonments, he said, rejoice in the Lord always. He wrote that from a prison, Philippians 4.4. Nothing be anxious.

That was written from a prison. It's amazing. And I said, Lord, if that man could live like that, why can't I? Even if we don't believe that Jesus was like us, Paul was certainly like us.

We can live like Him. And so I just thought I'd share that with you. I was on my heart this afternoon concerning two what I call commandments in the Old Testament.

One was two very important commandments. In fact, they were so important that if you didn't do them, you'd be cut off from God's people. One was circumcision and the other was keeping the Sabbath.

They were so very, very, very important. And I'll show you two verses in that connection. First is Genesis Chapter 17.

Genesis Chapter 17. These were commandments given to Israel. They're not for us Christians.

But everything in the Old Testament had a spiritual meaning, and that's what I want to emphasize. Genesis 17, the Lord gave this commandment to Abraham. And verse 11, you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

The sign of the old covenant between God and the people of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants, was circumcision. And if a person was not circumcised, verse 14, 17, 14, he shall be cut off from my people. He has broken my covenant.

It was that serious. You could not be part of God's people in the old covenant if you were not circumcised. And the other commandment was the Sabbath.

And I want to give you one example of somebody who wrote the Sabbath. See, they were not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath day. They were not supposed to light a fire.

They were not supposed to do any type of work. But listen to this. Numbers in Chapter 15.

Now, while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, verse 32. Numbers 15 and verse 32. While the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man among them gathering wood on the Sabbath day.

He didn't light a fire. He knew that you're not supposed to light a fire. He just gathered the wood from it for the next day.

And they found him gathering wood, brought it to Moses and Aaron. And they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. Is it serious? I mean, when the Lord said you should not do any work on the Sabbath day, did it include just picking up pieces of wood? And then the Lord said to Moses, listen to this, verse 35.

The man shall surely be put to death. And the whole congregation, it's not an easy way to be put to death. The congregation must show that they agree with God by taking stones and stoning him to death outside the camp.

And all the congregation, it's amazing how obedient they were. They took him outside the camp and stoned him to death. What was his crime? He picked up some pieces of wood on the Sabbath day.

I'm just trying to show you how strictly God enforced this matter of doing any work on the Sabbath day. And it really got instilled into the minds of Jews. I heard of a Jewish person somewhere in the United

States who would have to get a Gentile from next door to come put on the switch in his house because you're not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath day.

It was a Saturday. It was so drilled into them that I don't do any work on the Sabbath day. So here are two commandments in which God was so strict.

You'll be cut off from the covenant. You'll have nothing to do with God's people if they're not circumcised. And if you pick up sticks on the Sabbath day, you do some work on the Sabbath day, you are cut off.

So these two commandments must have a very, very equivalent, must be of some equivalent importance in its New Testament meaning. So that's what we want to try and understand. I just wanted to show you how important it was in the Old Testament first.

So in Hebrews chapter 8, we read this verse. Though we are not under the Old Covenant, which is what God gave to Moses in the law, yet the Old Testament is three quarters of our Bible. Don't forget that.

And the Old Testament has not been abolished. The Old Covenant, the agreement between God and man has been abolished, but not the 37 books of the Bible. In fact, just by the way, for your information, there's no place in the Bible which says the 39 books are the Old Testament.

Man has just put it there. The Bible is 66 books. You won't find a single place where it says the first 39 books are Old Testament.

Try and look for it. So that's why a lot of people get confused between Old Testament and Old Covenant. It's basically the same word, covenant and testament.

It's the covenant that God made with man that's been abolished. But the Old Testament is a part of the Bible. What we call the Old Testament, those 39 books, are part of the Bible.

And there are a lot of things, all scripture is inspired by God and given through our instruction, and we can learn from that. That's why we look at these two instances of circumcision in Sam. Now Hebrews chapter 8, it says here that these gifts and commandments of the Lord, in the last part of verse 4, speaks about those walk with the gifts according to the law.

And all of that, verse 5, is a copy and a shadow of heavenly things. So a lot of those things in the Old Testament are a shadow of the reality which is up in heaven. And that's why Moses was warned by God, when you make the tabernacle, make sure you make everything exactly according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

Don't alter it saying this may look better. No, because it's a pattern of something in the heaven. And if you change it, if you violate, you go against that pattern in the heaven.

That's the point here. So, I mean, Moses would have been trained in Egypt how to make pyramids and all. He could have made a ten times better tabernacle if God had left it to him.

But it would not have been a pattern according to the, it wouldn't have been according to the heavenly pattern. If he recognized that principle, that so many things start in the New Testament also, we may think, oh, there's a better way to do that. There's a better way to conduct our meeting.

There's a better way to do things than the way the Holy Spirit is shown in the New Testament. You see, for example, there are many things we do which many other churches don't do. For example, we don't have a pastor, because in the entire New Testament, no church was, no pastor was appointed in any church.

So we say, okay, if that's a pattern of everything, we want to follow it. Every church had elders. Why don't we follow that? We try to follow that, because we say it's this.

We don't want to change something if it's got something connected with heaven. I mean, our own mind may say this is a better way. But I say I don't want to use my own mind.

If Moses had done that, that would be no, it may have looked a more fantastic tabernacle if he had done it according to the engineering ability he learned in Egypt. But the glory of God would have been missing. That's what's happened in so many places where people have gone against what scripture says.

Looks nice. The glory of God is missing. Beautiful tabernacle.

The only thing missing is the glory of God. Beautiful church. The glory of God is not there.

The presence of Jesus is not there. People come to the meeting. They don't go away saying, hey, we met with the Lord today.

The Lord spoke to our hearts. That's not there. He sang well.

We had a great music. It was great. Folks who played the instruments were all great.

As soon as they didn't meet with the Lord, he didn't speak to you. He didn't challenge you. He didn't convict you of sin.

He didn't show you how you can be an overcomer. What is the point of having that Sunday meeting at all? So it's very, very important. So coming to the meaning of these two rituals or commandments.

Circumcision first. What does that mean? Philippians chapter 3 and verse 3. He speaks in verse 2 about a false circumcision. Beware of those of the false circumcision.

And that is those who just believe in the external ritual. The external form. That's not the main thing.

That symbolizes something which is a true circumcision. Verse 3. We are the true circumcision. And what is the mark of those who are in the true circumcision? We worship in the Holy Spirit.

Now worship in the Holy Spirit is different from praise in the Holy Spirit or thanksgiving in the Holy Spirit or praying in the Holy Spirit. Praying is one level. Thanking God is another level.

Praising is another level. And worship is a much higher level. Most Christians know about prayer.

Some know about thanksgiving. A few more know about praise. And they call praise and thanksgiving worship.

It's not. It's different. Prayer, thanksgiving, praise, worship.

Worship is an altogether different level. It's the fourth floor. You can climb up to the third floor and say this is worship.

It's not. You missed out one floor completely. That's what happened to most Christians.

I used to call it praise and thanksgiving worship. So I missed out on the fourth floor completely because I thought there is no fourth floor. This is it.

No. So, it speaks about worshiping in the Holy Spirit, which is different from praying in the Holy Spirit and thanking in the Spirit and praising God in the Spirit. Worshiping in the Spirit.

I don't have time to go into that right now. And glorying in Christ Jesus. And here is the mark of true circumcision.

We put no confidence in the flesh. The false circumcision or the old circumcision which commanded by God was a cutting off of the flesh and casting it off. It was a physical cutting off of the flesh and casting it off.

Now in the New Testament, in the Old Testament, the word flesh had only that meaning. Physical flesh. You cut a person's flesh.

But in the New Testament, the word flesh has got another meaning, which is the main meaning in the New Testament. And that is my self-will. My self is called the flesh.

And you get a little understanding of that when you turn to, see when it says no confidence in the flesh, you need to understand what does it mean. It's not talking about the physical flesh that I don't have any confidence in my hands or my physical flesh. See Galatians chapter 5. Whenever you come to a difficult verse in the Bible, don't skip over it.

There is a great truth that you might miss out there if you skip over it. But if you stop and try to understand it, you may discover something. So if you see something doesn't seem to fit with what you understand, you've got to stop there and say there may be something here which is hidden which I've got to discover.

I remember many years ago, more than 40 years ago, there was a friend of mine who used to work for Kodak, a photography company, which was a big company in those days. And he was in the research team. And he was doing an experiment with something.

And he was in the research team and the answer he was getting didn't seem to fit with what he thought it should be in this research. So he was tempted to fudge and just make it fit so that it looks okay. But he was honest and he said, I won't do that.

And so he went away for a while and thinking, why didn't that work like that? Why didn't it fit like that? And while he was away, he got a brain wave that hit him. He said, hey, maybe it's because of this. And so he came back into the research lab and did that experiment again and tried it again.

It didn't fit. And he discovered something as a result, which was a new discovery for Kodak and which they used for a number of years, which they would not have discovered. And he would not have patented it if he had just fudged the result and made it look right.

So I thought of that in relation to scripture, that sometimes you see something doesn't seem to fit exactly and you somehow manipulate it and make it fit. You miss out something completely which God wants to show you there in scripture. See, like, for example, all those who are Calvinists who say that God foreordained us from eternity.

I believe that with all my heart. I was foreordained from eternity, chosen before the foundation of the world. But I'm not a Calvinist.

I believe in 1 Peter 1, verse 1 and 2. It says, I was chosen according to his foreknowledge. That's the one verse, 1 Peter 1 and verse 1 and 2, which most Calvinists won't touch, because you've got to fudge it a little bit to make it fit into the other verses. But it's a difficult verse, but the truth is there.

If you want to understand it, you must have sovereignty of God. You must also understand 1 Peter 1, verse 1 and 2, that we're chosen from eternity, but according to the foreknowledge of God, God doesn't see the future. That's just by the way.

But here we read in Galatians 5, verse 17, I was talking about the flesh. The flesh fights against the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit fights against the flesh. It's not my body the Holy Spirit fights against.

It's something else in me that the Holy Spirit is fighting. And if you want to understand the meaning of flesh, you've got to see it right here. It is something the Holy Spirit is fighting in me all the time.

So if I understand that, I'll understand what the flesh is. And these are in opposition to one another, the Holy Spirit and the flesh. So my flesh is something which is 100% against the Holy Spirit.

There you get an understanding of my flesh. It's not my body. My hand is not against the Holy Spirit.

My eyes are not against the Holy Spirit. There's something else in me which is 100% against the Holy Spirit and which the Holy Spirit is 100% against. If you understand that, you understand what the flesh is, and you'll understand what circumcision is, cutting off of the flesh.

I'm just going step by step so that all of us can understand. And then you'll understand what it means when it says Jesus came in the flesh. He didn't come in sinful flesh.

There's no sin in Him at all. But He came in the flesh. And all these things will fit in if you understand what flesh means.

So many years I've tried to say, Lord, there's something here which I need to understand. It's not on the surface. You've got to dig deep into Scripture to understand.

You've got to meditate, live before God, and be absolutely honest. And get rid of all preconceived doctrines that I've inherited from my parents and grandparents or church that I belong to. If I'm not willing to break away from inherited theological traditions, I'll never understand the truth.

I really believe that many Christians miss out on God's will because they have inherited certain theological traditions from their church. That is more sacred to them than even God's Word. If Martin Luther had followed that principle, we'd all be Catholics today.

And if John Wesley had followed that principle, there'd be no Christian holiness. But thank God there were, through the years and centuries, men who had the courage to stand against the established system and say, God's Word says something else. Like Martin Luther said, God's Word says we are justified by faith in Christ.

Not by putting money in the cattle and offering box. No. So, if I understand this, what flesh means, what does it mean when it says Jesus came in the flesh? I've got to understand what flesh is.

Let's see John chapter 6. John's Gospel, chapter 6, verse 38. John 6, verse 38. Jesus is saying why he came down from heaven.

When he came down from heaven, he came in the flesh. He didn't have the flesh up in heaven. No.

God is spirit and Jesus was equal with the Father for all eternity. The second person of the Trinity. But one day, he came in flesh.

That's when he came down to the earth. And he says, when I came down to the earth, I decided never to do my own will. But always the will of the Father.

I came down from heaven, never to do my own will. You see that in the last day of his life in Gethsemane. Father, I really don't want to drink this cup.

That's my will. If you were to go to Gethsemane and say, Lord Jesus, what is your will right now? I don't want to drink the cup. Are you going to do that? No, I'm going to do the Father's will, whatever it is.

I'm just trying to clear in my mind what is the Father's will. I'll do that. And if it's painful, it doesn't matter.

I'll still do it. So, you see that there was a conflict. It says he prayed for more than one hour.

He wasn't praying over anything else. It says he said the same words. Father, not my will, but thine.

You know, it was not like that in heaven. He didn't have the flesh in heaven. In heaven, for all eternity, Jesus could say, I do my own will.

Because it's the same as my Father's will. No conflict. My will is the same as my Father's will.

I do my own will. You see, if you and I agree on something 100%, I can do what I want to do. Because it's the same as what you want to do.

We're agreed. Jesus could do what he wanted to do because it was the same as his Father's will. But the moment he came to earth in the flesh, he could say, no.

I can't do my will anymore. I have to do my Father's will. It shows that there was a difference.

So, his self-will, he said, I will not do it. I will not do my will. But I will do the Father's will.

That is what is the flesh. And that is what the Holy Spirit is against. The Holy Spirit is against my doing my will.

My self-will is another definition for the flesh. And circumcision is to cut that off completely. Not partially.

They were very careful that in the old covenant that the circumcision had to be 360 degrees. Not 90 degrees circumcision or 180 degrees circumcision. It had to be 360 degrees completely.

Otherwise it was a partial circumcision. Not acceptable. I have no confidence in the flesh means all around I say no to my own will.

And that is the way to follow Jesus. There is no other way to follow Jesus. I mean, there are people who try to make easier ways, but they are all a deception.

If you turn to Luke chapter 9, verse 23, Jesus said so clearly. If anyone wants to come after me, if anyone wishes to come after me, the rule is absolute. Anyone, anyone, anyone.

He must say no to his self. He must deny or crucify or put to death his self, his flesh. And then take up his cross, die to himself and follow me.

That is the absolute unchangeable law for anybody who wants to follow Jesus. So how is it there are so many Christians who think they are following Jesus who do not say no to their own self-will? Do you know how many times self-will is the cause of clash between husband and wife at home? What are the causes of all the clashes in husband and wife? It is self-will. My will is two people with a strong will trying to live together and they always have clashes.

And the only way for them to become one is if both are willing to be crucified with Christ. There is no other way. All the marriage techniques and counseling in the world will not solve the problem.

But being crucified with Christ will solve it immediately. And that is not a once for all event because Jesus said you got to do it everyday, daily. In other words, if I died to myself yesterday, that was good enough for yesterday but not for today.

I have to take up my cross daily. Now these are the verses which for many years I never heard being preached in hardly any church. How many times have you heard consistent preaching on taking up the cross everyday? It is something you got to do everyday.

Don't you think there should be a lot more emphasis on it in Christian churches? How much emphasis there is nowadays on healthy foods? Don't eat, you know, trans fats and don't eat too much sugar. So much emphasis and we are so careful to see the things that are harmful for our body, but the things that are harmful for our spirit we don't seem to take too seriously. The only book that can tell us what is harmful for our spirit is the Bible.

So its total circumcision is I am going to put my flesh to death everyday. And that's why we preach this so often. I remember when I was about 23 years old, I was seeking God for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I was in a brethren assembly. I got converted when I was 19 and a half, 1959. And the first thing I needed to learn was to take water baptism because I came from an Orthodox church where I was sprinkled as a baby.

And so once I got light on water baptism, I took water baptism. And in the brethren assemblies, I was taught to study the scriptures. I really thank God for that.

But they never taught me about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They said, that's all happening. You don't have to ask for it or do anything.

Well, I said, okay. I was a new Christian. I was young and I accepted it.

But somehow there was a lack of power in my life. And however much I convinced myself, I got it, I got it, I got it, I didn't have power in my life. I was scared to be a witness for Christ.

And I didn't have power when I sought to be a witness for Christ. And I saw a lot of other people around me also. A lot of people didn't seem to have the power of resurrection that Jesus spoke about.

The meetings I went to were like, you know, the Saturday on which Jesus was buried in the grave. Can you imagine how the disciples met around? A lot of the church meetings were like those Saturday meetings when Jesus was buried in the grave, all looking gloomy. What a different meeting it was on Sunday after the resurrection.

And I said, I want that type of meeting. I want to be in that type of meeting where everybody's delighted. Jesus is risen, man.

He's conquered devil. He's conquered sin. He's conquered death.

He's conquered everything. But it wasn't like that. And that can only come when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the one who brings the reality of these things into our life. So I began to seek God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Call it what you like.

Fullness of the Holy Spirit is equally good for me. Fullness of the Holy Spirit. And I went to a Pentecostal church.

They said, those are the guys who talk about this. And to tell you honestly, this is 1963. And that guy asked me to repeat some hallelujah a number of times.

I said, I'm not going to do that. That's not what the apostles did on the day of Pentecost. This is all manipulation.

I will not submit to it. I want a genuine endowment to the power of God on high. I don't have that.

I don't want anything just to... I'm not trying to get a testimony that I was filled. I want power to be a witness for Christ. So I decided not to go there again.

There was a lot of noise there. I wasn't interested in noise. I was interested in power.

So I came back to my room. I was in the naval base those days. And I said, Lord, that's not what I want.

I don't want a lot of noise. I don't want a lot of excitement. I want power in my life to be a witness for you.

And I began to search the scriptures in an amazing way. The Lord gave me a revelation, which I've never heard before. And when I looked at the baptism of Jesus, when he was anointed, even he needed to be anointed, which won't be.

Jesus was born of the Spirit the day he came to earth. But he was anointed with the Spirit 30 years later. Something happened.

He didn't become holier in his 31st year than he was in his 29th year. But he had power to do things he never did for 30 years. 30 years he never cast out a demon, never healed the sick, never preached powerful sermons.

Now it all came. All of a sudden. It was not a gradual process.

It was immediate. So I saw there's something in this. The same thing happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

So when I looked at the baptism of Jesus, the Lord showed me, gave me a revelation on that. Jesus submitted to John the Baptist putting him under the water. Now, putting a person under the water is the way to kill somebody, by the way.

You know this waterboarding they torture people with is actually threatening the guy, you're going to die now. So this was sort of permanent waterboarding, baptism. And when you read Romans 6, that we are buried with him by baptism into death.

So what Jesus, I saw that what Jesus was submitting to there was I am willing for people to put me to death. Physically, on the cross later. But prior to that, myself, you can put it to death by insulting me, by spitting on me, by calling me Beelzebul or Prince of the Devils or calling me a demon-possessed person.

They call them all types of names. You're a Samaritan, you're a demon-possessed person. I'm willing to let people insult me, do anything to me, offend me, ignore me, put me to death.

And he would not resist John the Baptist baptizing him. That is the meaning of baptism. I submit.

When God allows somebody else to put me to death, I will accept it because I know God will raise me up from the dead. That's the meaning of being brought out of the water. I'm sure God will raise me up, just like He raised him up from the grave.

Every time somebody puts me to death, I submit to it because I believe God will raise me up and I will experience the power of His resurrection in a spiritual way. And then the anointing of the Holy Spirit came upon him. And what the Lord spoke to me, I have never forgotten for the last 55 years.

The Lord said to me, if you choose this way of death to serve, my power will rest upon you, always. In your life, when you preach, whatever you do, but the day you decide not to go this way, my power will depart. So I learned something, the close connection between the way of the cross, death to self, and the Holy Spirit.

And I believe this is what many people who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit have missed. Maybe they've got a fullness of the Holy Spirit, but they've divorced it from the cross, from the way of the cross. What God has joined together that no man put asunder, the Holy Spirit's fullness and the way of the cross go together.

And I see that in the baptism of Jesus. It's when he submitted to death to self, the Holy Spirit came. So this matter of cutting off of the flesh and having no confidence in the flesh is very closely connected with being filled with the Holy Spirit.

So it's very, very important. That's why circumcision was so important in the Old Testament. They said if you're not circumcised, you'll be cut off from my people.

You will not enter into the covenant. So when you apply that to us in the New Covenant, it means that if I don't take this seriously, this going the way of the cross and cutting off confidence in self, putting my flesh to death in the different situations when I'm provoked, when I'm tempted, when I'm tempted to pornography, watch pornography. That's the old flesh again.

My old self will say, have a look at that, and what do you do? Put it to death. Run away from it. When I'm tempted to respond in the same way somebody speaks to me in anger or evil or any other way, submit like

Jesus did.

Let that fellow bury you. Let that fellow kill you. Let him put you to death.

There will be a resurrection. I guarantee that you'll experience because God will never allow somebody to put you into that water without pulling you out. Definitely.

I've experienced it again and again and again and again. When Paul said he connected these two, you know, being conformed to his death and the part of his resurrection. See Philippians in Chapter 3. Some of these verses come to light when you understand this.

Philippians in Chapter 3, he says in verse 10, remember he's writing this when he's just about six, seven years before he died, and he had already served the Lord for 30 years, and he says in Philippians 3.10, My great passion in life is to know the Lord more and to know the power of his resurrection, and I can know that only if I have fellowship in his sufferings and I'm conformed to his death. You see the connection there? He's not talking about being crucified. Paul was never crucified.

He's talking about this death to self, this circumcision, which he spoke of earlier in Chapter 2. He's explaining it here, this death to myself, being conformed to his death. Jesus died for 33 1/2 years to himself. Otherwise, he can't ask me to follow him.

What does he mean when he says, Take up your cross and follow me? That means he also has taken up the cross. Otherwise, how can I follow him? It's like he's not going to make it more difficult for me than for him. It's like this egg and spoon race.

Okay, you carry an egg and run. I'm going to run without it. But you come with an egg and a spoon and follow me.

How can I do that? I can't run as fast as you. I'm going to carry an egg and a spoon, and you're just going to run without it. So if Jesus didn't have to take up the cross, how can he say to me, Take up your cross and follow me? It's ridiculous.

He did take up the cross himself every single day. That's why he says, Every day you can follow me. And that is being conformed to his death and fellowship of his suffering, where I cut off all confidence in my flesh and I say no to myself.

You can meditate on that. It's a very profitable line of meditation because the power of the Holy Spirit lies along this way. Don't forget it.

And the second thing is the Sabbath. I want to go to that now. The Sabbath is another thing which is a very important law.

In the Old Testament, God taught them so clearly right in the wilderness by putting that fellow to death, he just went and picked up sticks. Absolutely no work. Zero.

When I say zero, I mean zero. Okay, it's explained in Hebrews chapter 4. All these things which are very important in the Old Testament are explained in the New Testament. For example, the veil that was rent in the temple, in the tabernacle, explained in Hebrews 10.

We can look at that another time. But Hebrews chapter 4, it says here, there is a life of rest. He's speaking, first of all, let's begin at chapter 3. Who are the ones, verse 16, Hebrews 3, 16, who are the ones who provoked God, those who came out of Egypt? And how did they provoke him? By not entering Canaan, when he brought them to the borders of Canaan two years after leaving Egypt.

And he was angry with them for 40 years. And they sinned. And verse 19, they could not enter the land of Canaan because of unbelief.

What is the unbelief? They believe the giants were stronger than God. Believe that. That's why they didn't enter it.

Joshua and Caleb were not more powerful than those giants. They just believe our God is more powerful than these giants. And the others looked at the giants and said, we can't conquer them.

They thought they had to do it in their own strength. No, Joshua and Caleb said, no. God is more powerful.

God is on our side. They'll be like bread for us. That's what he said.

So it was unbelief that prevented them from entering Canaan. And that entry into Canaan and living in Canaan is called a life of rest or a land of rest. Because you go on to say this entry, they were not able to enter verse 19, they perished in the wilderness.

And the next verse says they could not enter into his rest. So Canaan is called entering into his rest. You say, what connection does that have to the Sabbath? Yeah, it says in verse 4, chapter 4, verse 4, God rested on the seventh day from his works.

And this passage, verse 5, they shall enter into my rest. So the land of Canaan, entering into the land of Canaan was like an entry into a life of rest. And it's connected with the Sabbath in verse 4. God rested on the seventh day.

And then it says in verse 9, there is a Sabbath rest for the people of God as well. What is that? A life of rest for God's people. A life free from unrest, agitation, getting disturbed in my spirit.

That's unrest. There's a life of rest for God's people. What a wonderful thing it is to live like that in a world full of unrest, to be at rest in our spirit all the time.

There is a rest for God's people. But it says here, let us fear, verse 1, 4-1, that we don't enter into that rest. Let us fear.

Is he talking to unbelievers or believers? He's talking to believers. He's talking to people who came out of Egypt. They put the blood on the door.

They were baptized in the Red Sea. They received the baptism of cloud, which is a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They still did not enter into rest.

He's referring to us. He says, let us fear, lest in your life you don't come into this life of rest, just like those Israelites who didn't enter into Canaan. And it says here, there is a Sabbath rest for God's people.

And we must be diligent, it says, to enter into this rest. Let us fear. Let's become short of it.

Verse 11, let us be diligent, work hard to enter into this rest. So it's not something that you just sit back and say, it'll happen. Let me work hard, verse 11, to enter into this rest.

Say, Lord, I want to understand this. I want to understand this and what this entering into rest is. What does it mean to come into this Sabbath rest in my heart, which is for the people of God.

And he says this is if Joshua, verse 8, had already given them rest in Canaan. Why is it that God speaks of another rest after that? You know, after they entered into Canaan, the Lord told them in Hebrews 4, 3, which is a quotation from the Old Testament, you shall not enter into my rest, that is Psalm 95. And again, he fixes a certain day.

So he says, if Joshua, verse 8, had given them the rest, why should he speak of another day of rest after that? That is a rest for God's people. It's a prophecy in the Old Testament, that entering Canaan was only a picture. There is a rest for God's people.

So that's what we need to understand in the Sabbath. If we go back to Matthew chapter 11, we begin to understand this verse, Matthew 11, verse 28 and 29, where Jesus spoke about this rest. Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Twice he speaks about that rest. It's a life where inwardly I'm never, believe it or not, where I'm never disturbed or in a panic inwardly.

It's a life of rest. It's an amazing way to live on this earth. That's how Jesus lived.

He was perfectly at rest no matter what happened anywhere around him. You remember in the Garden of Gethsemane how Peter got all upset and took out his sword and chopped off somebody's ear? Jesus was at rest. Peter, I have a feeling that Peter wanted to actually hit Judas Iscariot's ear, but being a fisherman, he didn't know how to use a sword.

He swiped somebody else's ear. That poor man, Malchus. So Jesus picked up the ear and healed him.

But Jesus was at rest. He said, put your sword back. I don't see Judas Iscariot here.

I see my Heavenly Father having sent a cup. You know what he sent there? The cup which my father has given me. That's what he said in Gethsemane.

Shall I not drink it? He said, Lord, was it the father of Judas Iscariot who gave it to you? No, Judas Iscariot was only the mailman. It came from my father. It's wonderful to see that when a Judas Iscariot comes to betray you or harm you, he's only the mailman.

He's the father who sends it. What you call a difficulty or an opposition or whatever it is. Jesus was at rest.

He says, follow me. Take my yoke upon you and you'll find the same rest for your soul. It's wonderful to be able to experience this in the trials of life.

You know, God allows us to face trials to show us that he can still those storms. I've thought of, supposing it was written in the scripture. Jesus got to the board and went to the other side of the lake and it was perfectly calm.

There was no problem. He reached the other side. That's a boring story.

Even the Sunday school children say, they're not interested in that. But if they read, there was a storm and the waves were coming into the board and it's going to sink and Jesus stood up and stood. Ah, that's something to listen to.

So what sort of message do you want through life? It's written about your life. He had smooth sailing all through his life. He had no problem in his work.

He had no problem in his home. No problem with his neighbors. No problem financially.

No problem with sickness. Absolutely nothing. He was smooth sailing all through his life.

Of course, he lived 50 years and he learned nothing from God's power. But he reached the other end. I don't want that.

I tell you honestly, I don't want that. I want to say, storm Lord. When you storm this month, next week, continuously and every time, Jesus will still the storm.

That's for sure. God can solve every problem. I believe in the Lord who can still the storm.

See, there's no... I remember hearing about competition for a painting competition for a picture of rest. I don't know whether you've heard this. There's so many people who put pictures of a calm sea and not a ripple out it.

A nice sunset. Pictures like this. Everything calm.

None of them got the prize. One that got the prize was a chap who drew a painting of a terrific storm all over and a little hole in a rock where a bird was just sitting happily. That is a picture of rest.

That's the one that got the prize. I can believe that. All the other things, everything's calm.

I mean, that's not how the world is. We face problems all around us. Come to me.

I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. That again is the same.

The yoke is the cross. You take my cross like I took it. And you will find rest in your soul.

You will not be disturbed and upset. You will not be anxious for anything. I don't know how to explain it, but I believe you've got to experience it to realize it.

And in connection with this, I will also read what it says in verse 25. I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the clever and intelligent people who try to understand what this rest is.

But you revealed it to babes. If you come to the Lord like a babe, say, Lord, I don't know what this rest is, but I want to have it in my life. And if it's a passionate desire of yours, and you're willing to take the yoke of Jesus, see, this yoke is something the disciples understood easily because they saw the farmers in Israel plowing the two oxen.

And there was this wooden yoke on both of those oxen. And if a senior ox had to teach, say, one ox died and they got a junior ox, how to teach that junior new ox how to plow a straight furrow, the senior ox would say, okay, take my yoke upon you, symbolically. And the yoke on the senior ox and the junior ox who doesn't know head or tail how to plow a straight furrow.

And the senior ox is saying, learn from me. Walk in my face. Don't rush ahead.

Don't run back. Stay back. Walk in step with me.

Go in the direction I'm going. And in a few years, you'll be an expert at plowing a straight furrow. That is the picture here.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me how to go absolutely straight without any crookedness in your life. And you will find rest in your life. That means I'm going to say, Lord, I want your will in my life.

I don't want to go here and there where I feel like I want to be yoked to you every single time. I don't want to go anywhere where I cannot go without you. I don't want to sit and watch a television program where I can't have Jesus sitting next to me, watching it, and enjoying it as much as me.

I mean, if he has to get up and go when I turn on that channel, I say, I want to get up and go, too, or turn off that channel. This is what it means to have the yoke of Jesus upon you. I read a book and I come to a page and I say, hey, I can't imagine Jesus looking at this picture or this page.

I shut the book and throw it away or I say, no, I don't want that. To have Jesus with me all the time. All the time.

I went once to a village in, not a village, just one part of India where there were some born-again Christians where they all used to smoke cigarettes. Now, that's unusual because in most other parts of India, we believers don't smoke cigarettes. But in this particular place, it was sort of out of the way in the hills and not many preachers had gone there.

And whichever preacher went there was probably smoking cigarettes himself. I don't know. So, they all had that habit.

But they were good Christians. So, I didn't know how to tell them, this is bad. So, one day, I had seven days meetings there and this guy was translating for me in the local language.

And I said, see, whatever you do, you must do with Jesus. For example, I said, if you are smoking a cigarette, you know how people, when they smoke a cigarette, they always take out and offer you one. So, next time you take out a cigarette, offer one to Jesus.

Say, wow, this is really, this is really filter cigarette which is special. You must try it. And if you think he will smoke it, go ahead and smoke it.

But if you think he will say, no, thank you, you don't smoke it. Don't smoke a cigarette without Jesus. So, the next morning, or the next evening when I came to the meeting, this translator of mine said, Brother Zach, I have given up smoking cigarettes.

I said, really? I never told anybody to give it up. No, he said, I tried offering a cigarette to Jesus and he wouldn't accept it. So, I decided, I'm going to give up.

See, that's the thing. That's taking the yoke, he took it seriously. I don't want to do something which I can't do in fellowship with Jesus Christ.

I don't want to go and visit some place if I can't take Jesus with me there. No. Whether it's a movie theater or any place.

I don't want to watch something on my computer screen if Jesus is sitting next to me and says, hey, I'm not interested in that. If he gets up and goes, I'm going to turn off my computer. I don't want to watch it.

This is what means, take my yoke upon you. Just walk with me. Don't go ahead of me.

Don't go behind. Walk with me everywhere. And your life will be one of rest.

And I can tell you from my testimony, that's exactly what happens. And his yoke is easy. His burden is light.

It's not a heavy burden to give up pornography. It's not a heavy burden to stop watching filthy R-rated movies. No.

No, it's not a burden at all. My yoke is easy. My burden is light.

Problems arise for those people who go to places where Jesus would not go. Sit watching things that Jesus would not watch. Do things that Jesus, they cannot do in fellowship with Jesus.

And what a wonderful thing it is to be at rest all the time. See, I've taught in our churches that if your heart is not at rest, you must not open your mouth and speak. Because that unrest will come forth in something you say, even when you're preaching a sermon.

One of the most important things I ensure when I get up to speak in a meeting is my heart is at rest. If my heart is not at rest, I can have all the knowledge in the world. I will not edify people.

Something will come out. Maybe one sentence which is not spoken from rest. So I've taught in our churches.

At home, for example. If you're agitated in your spirit, husband and wife, zip your mouth. And unzip it only after you've come to rest.

Even if it means you keep quiet for half a day and your partner wonders what's wrong. You're at unrest. That's all.

But you don't have a clash. You don't have a fight. It's a simple principle.

When I'm at unrest, keep your mouth shut. Whether it's in a house, or in a meeting, or any situation. No, I'm not at rest now.

I remember the early days when I tried to follow this rule. It took me a little time in a meeting sometimes to come to rest. But because I was in charge of the meeting, I could continue the prayer time until I came to rest.

And everybody wonders why we're having a long prayer time today. Because this anchor has not come to rest in his spirit yet. And he's not fit to speak yet.

So I came to rest and I say, Amen. I get up and give the word. But in the early days it's like that.

It takes a little time. But over a period of time, if you work at it, you're at rest all the time. You're never at unrest.

All the time. You live in a perpetual sabbath. You know, spiritually speaking, you don't even pick up sticks.

You're not at unrest about anything. You obey that law. There is a sabbath rest for God's people.

I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, to pursue this, to have more confidence in the flesh and enter into God's rest. It is for every one of us. In his presence there is fullness of joy.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, please apply these truths. They are wonderful theories.

But make them apply in our life, Lord. Show us that we are that we can experience the reality of these truths every single day of our life. And bless everyone here over in Ukraine experiencing this.

In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

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