

God Gives Us The Desire And Ability To Do His Will (Video)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the concept of the Sabbath as explained by Jesus in Matthew 11 and 12, contrasting the true Sabbath rest with the false interpretations of the Pharisees. It emphasizes the need for humility and childlike faith to understand spiritual truths, highlighting the importance of not relying on one's cleverness but on God's revelation. The speaker encourages listeners to enter into God's rest by learning from Jesus' humility and gentleness, allowing God to initiate and guide their actions.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Matthew 12:1, Matthew 12:10, Matthew 11:25, Hebrews 4:9, John 5:30, Hebrews 8:10, 1 Corinthians 1:26

Topics: "Sabbath Rest", "Humility and Faith"

Description

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Transcript

Okay, we all know the beautiful passage in Matthew 11. Let's look at it, where Jesus explained the Sabbath. You probably didn't notice it, but in Chapter 12, by the way, of Matthew, you see a number of places in Chapter 12 of Matthew where Jesus is explaining the false keeping of the Sabbath.

For example, Chapter 12, verse 1, they were picking grains and the Pharisees said in Chapter 12, verse 2, see your disciples are not doing what's lawful to do on the Sabbath. And then again, another instance, when he went into the synagogue, verse 10, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? And people complained against him because he healed somebody on the Sabbath day, and so on. But before that, you see the place where the Holy Spirit has put this beautiful verse, explaining what the Sabbath really is, Matthew 11, 28, come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you the real Sabbath and take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm humble and gentle and humble in heart and you will find the real Sabbath in your soul.

He explained the Sabbath there, and then he went in the next chapter to destroy this false Sabbath. It's very important to understand it, but the Pharisees were the most brilliant people at that time, couldn't understand it. And some of the things I said in the previous session, you probably didn't understand either.

If you try to understand it with your cleverness, you can be as blind as the Pharisees. And that's why immediately before he spoke about this rest, he said something very enlightening, and that's in chapter 11 and verse 25. I praise you, Father, you have hidden these things from the wise and the clever and the intelligent on earth, but you have revealed them to babes.

That is a great truth. You try to understand spiritual truth with your cleverness and your intelligence, you cannot get it. God has hidden some of the greatest truths in scripture from the clever and the intelligent.

I've seen this. I mean, I've preached these truths in CFC churches in India for many, many years, and I've discovered people never entering into it. Many people, they've understood it in their head so well, they can explain it to somebody, but it doesn't come into their life.

They don't come to a life of rest in their place of work or in their home, even after many years, because God has hidden these things from the wise and the clever and the intelligent. Then I asked the Lord, I said, what shall I do then, Lord? I'm not a stupid person. I'm a little clever and intelligent.

But the Lord said, it's not your cleverness and intelligence that will hinder you from knowing the truth. It is your pride in your cleverness and intelligence. It's pride that hinders God from revealing himself to us.

And if I'm willing to give up that pride, it doesn't matter whether you're dumb or clever, it makes no difference. What is it that babes have? It says, reveal them to infants. What is it that babes have, which clever people don't have? Jesus himself explained it.

He took a babe and said, if you humble yourself like this child, you will enter God's kingdom. Or I could say this, if you humble yourself like this little child, that means you acknowledge that you know nothing and you're willing to learn everything and you're not a sharp, clever, intelligent person. When it comes to spiritual things, you can enter into the new covenant.

The kingdom of heaven is the new covenant. So there's something that babes have, which clever, intelligent people don't have. And that's what we can have.

If I come to the Lord with humility and say, Lord, when I come to scripture, I'm dumb as anything. Out in the world, I use my cleverness and intelligence for so many things. I can use it to make money.

I can use it to accomplish things in the world. Good. But when I come to scripture, I have to say, Lord, I'm like a child.

I don't know. Teach me. There's a veil over me which has been taken away.

And if I come with that humility, then I will understand the meaning of these words. Take my yoke upon you, verse 29, and learn from me, for I am humble in heart, not clever and intelligent. I believe Jesus was probably the cleverest and most intelligent person that ever walked on this earth, without a doubt, because there was no sin to pollute his mind.

But he never went from giving people the impression that I'm so clever, I'm so smart, and I can teach you a few things. That's not how he, I mean, lepers and adulterous women could come freely to him, because

he's not trying to impress people with his cleverness. I love that.

I see so many preachers today trying to impress people with that cleverness. They're not at all like Christ. I'm not impressed by them at all.

Jesus said, learn from me. He never told us to learn from him how to be, how to preach or how to sing. He told us to learn from him humility and gentleness.

So my dear brothers and sisters, if you want to enter into the new covenant, come to Jesus, and I'm talking about the Sabbath now, and try to learn from him gentleness and humility. Take his yoke upon you. Now, what does yoke mean? We don't see it much here, but in India we see it all the time.

A yoke is a wooden bar kept on the shoulders of two bullocks, and they plow the field together. And if the one bullock is a junior bullock trying to learn from the senior bullock, this yoke makes sure that the junior bullock doesn't wander off in some other direction and doesn't go too fast or too slow, which is where the senior bullock is saying, listen, if you want to learn from me, you have to move at my pace. Don't rush ahead.

Don't lag behind. What that means in practical terms is when the Lord says, when I tell you to do something, do it immediately without question. When I tell you in your conscience, don't look there.

Don't say that. Do it immediately. That's taking the yoke.

And don't lag behind and don't rush ahead. Don't go off somewhere where I don't permit you to go. Don't rush ahead and don't lag behind.

Learn from me. Learn humility from me. And you will find, verse 29, what the Sabbath is all about.

This is the New Covenant Sabbath. And I want to tell you, just like a lot of other things in the New Covenant most people haven't understood, or sometimes think they've understood because they've understood in their mind, they have not entered into rest. The test of whether I've understood the Sabbath is, have I entered into rest? Turn back to Hebrews in chapter 4. In Hebrews 4, it says, there remains, verse 9, a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

And the one who has entered into rest has rested from his own works. He's not struggling to become holy. He's just responding to the promptings of God within.

He's not a robot that God has programmed him and he does nothing. And God does everything. No, that would make man a robot.

It'd be like the planets. The planets don't do anything. They just, God just makes them go round and round and round.

Man was not made like that. It's this delicate balance where I don't do anything myself on my own, but I listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. That's why Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, that proceeds.

That means God is always speaking. And if I'm listening, I will know exactly what to do every time. And gradually I'll get used to responding to God's promptings.

And that's what it means to rest from my own works, my own bright ideas. There's so many Christians who've got many bright ideas of how to serve God. They say, I'll go out and do this here.

And I'll go out and plant a church here. It's chaos. A lot of God's work today is wood, hay, and straw, which is going to be burnt up because God never initiated it.

Do you know that a work which God did not initiate, however good it may be, will be destroyed? How many of you believe that? That a work that God did not initiate, however good it may be, however Christian it may be, however wonderful it may be called Christian work, it will be destroyed. Turn with me to Matthew's gospel and chapter 15. Yeah.

Chapter 15. Listen to this verse and try and understand it. Verse 13.

Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Lord, what about if it is a good plant? It'll be uprooted. Because it came from the bright, brilliant brain of some clever man.

The Lord, do you know what it means to live by faith? The best definition of faith that I've ever understood, that I've ever seen in scripture, is what Jesus said in John chapter 15 and verse 5. Without me you can do nothing, but like the branch remains in the tree and produces fruit, so you can also bear fruit, but apart from me you can do nothing. So my picture of faith is this. It's not claiming a promise.

God will make me prosperous. God will heal me. Those are all people who have not understood faith.

Faith is, Lord, I'm as helpless as a branch by itself cannot produce a single fruit, but it can produce abundance of fruit if it just remains attached to the tree and allows the tree to let the sap flow into it. It's almost effortless. You go and ask a branch, how do you produce all these wonderful apples or mangoes? I don't do anything.

I just remain in the tree and the sap keeps flowing in as a picture of the Holy Spirit just coming in and produce the fruit. And any person who's really served the Lord in this way will tell you that my service for the Lord is effortless. It's not a strain.

It's not something I get exhausted with afterwards. No, it's effortless because it's like the branch. This is the life of faith.

Fruit produced for the glory of God. So that is how God wants us to live. And so God has to initiate it.

That's why it says we've got to wait on the Lord. God does not want man to initiate something. He wants us to depend on him and let him prompt me.

You know how Jesus would never do anything on his own? See John chapter 5. Here also it's related to the Sabbath. Ask God to give you revelation on this. Not understanding, but revelation.

You know it says here that John 5 18. The Jews tried to kill him. One, because he was breaking the Sabbath.

And second, because he was calling God his Father, making himself equal with God. So why did the Jews want to kill Jesus? Number one, because he broke the Sabbath. Understand this.

And secondly, because he said God is my Father, making himself equal with God. I mean, today people have a question whether Jesus is equal with God. The Jews understood it very clearly.

When he said God is my Father, that I'm equal with God. And then Jesus said, I can do nothing of myself unless it is something I see the Father doing. That means the Father tells me something and then I do it.

Or see verse 30. I can do this beautiful expression. I can do nothing on my own initiative.

Even if Jesus did something on his own initiative as a man, it would be uprooted. Every plant which my Heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. The man who has come to rest in Christ, like the branch rests in the tree, has understood the Sabbath and say, I'm not called here to have bright ideas to do this, that and the other for God.

No, those are all for businessmen who want to start new projects and start new businesses. They all have bright ideas, these venture capitalists and all that. I'm not one of those.

I'm like Jesus. I say, I'm not going to do anything on my own initiative. I can't do nothing on my own initiative.

I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters, ask God to give you a revelation on John chapter 5, verse 30. If you want to know how Jesus lived. We think of Jesus lived, he lived a pure life.

He had a holy life. He didn't fool around with women. He was faithful with money.

No, no, no, no. Those are all the external things. But deep within the principle of his life was he never did anything on his own initiative.

He waited on the Father, what do you want me to do? For example, when a world around him was dying of sin, you know what he was doing? He was making stools and benches in a carpentry shop. Why? Lord, what are you wasting your time making stools and benches here? There's a world dying of sin. Don't you go on? You go out as a missionary like people are today, challenged to go out as a missionary because there are people dying over there, people dying over there.

What are you doing? You couldn't move Jesus like that. He would not step out of that carpentry shop until the Father told him to go. And he would not leave Israel.

Lord, there are people dying in Africa, China, Rome. Don't you want to go there? No, no, no, no. The Father has told me to stay in Israel.

Only once or twice he went outside to Tyre and Sidon. What a wonderful way he lived. You meditate on the life of Jesus, you learn so many things.

And at the end of three and a half years without traveling to China or Africa or India or Rome, he said, I'll finish the work the Father gave me to do. Lord, but there are so many needy people in the world. That's fine.

The Father gave me a certain work to do and I did it. And 90% of that work was making stools and benches and taking care of my younger brothers and sisters at home. Really? We have no understanding of what God's work is because we are so clever and so intelligent.

And we think we can do the work of God. The greatest requirement in Christians today is humility to say, Lord, I'm a dumb, stupid person when it comes to spiritual things. I say that to God many, many times.

And therefore I want to learn. Jesus said, learn from me for I am humble. Here is his humility.

I will do nothing on my own initiative because if I do it, I'll bungle up God's work. I've traveled enough around the world to know that a lot of so-called Christian workers messed up what God wants to do on this earth. Absolute confusion because people are doing whatever they come to.

They haven't come to rest. They haven't come to that Sabbath rest where they live before God like Adam the first day. Before I go out to serve God, I must come to rest in God and learn to do nothing on my own initiative.

Then I can go out. But Adam did not learn it. The very first day he went out, he did something on his own initiative and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And that's how chaos and confusion came into the world. So there's a lot more to say in this. As I said, I'm only giving you starters here, but let me show you one more verse before I finish.

And that's in Hebrews in chapter 8, where it specifically speaks about the new covenant. And it says here in Hebrews chapter 8, this is Hebrews 8.10. This is the covenant, the new covenant that I'm going to make with the house of Israel. And that applies to us today.

They will not try to keep my laws. I will put my laws into their mind. I will write it in their hearts.

What does that mean? Let me explain it to you. When God says, I will put my law into your mind. He's saying, I will give you a desire to do my will.

And when he says, I will put my law, write it in your heart. He's saying, I'll give you the ability to do my will. There are two things God wants to do for us.

Give us the desire to do his will and give us the ability to do his will. Desire is in our mind. Ability is in the heart.

Hebrews 13, in verse 9, it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace. Grace is God's power. To do his will.

So there are two things God wants to give us. In our mind, he wants to give us the desire to do his will. And in the heart, the ability to do his will.

So I want to say to you, brothers and sisters, if you have a desire to do the will of God, don't think you got it yourself. Don't be so proud to say that I got a desire to do God's will. I'm not like these carnal Christians who have no such desire.

Brother, be humble and say, it is God who gave me that desire. You're not one bit better than the worst sinner on the earth. I often say that to God.

I say, Lord, there's no difference between me and the greatest terrorist on this earth. Absolutely no difference. I don't believe that.

There are people who despise other Christians, all those people who have false teachings, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholics. They're all wrong teaching. I say, Lord, I would be worse than all of them.

I'd be the worst terrorist on earth if you didn't put a desire in my mind to do your will. There's a fundamental lack of humility in most Christians, born-again Christians, even among CFC believers. They're proud of their knowledge.

They're proud they understand the new covenant. And that's why in their personal life, they never seem to come to rest in their home life or in their mind. I'm trying to urge you to really ask God to give you revelation on the Sabbath.

It'll change your life completely, believe me. Learn from me, the Lord says, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find a Sabbath in your souls, which all those Pharisees could not understand. And what is the message of the Sabbath? That I am the Lord who will make you holy.

You cannot make yourself holy. I will put my law into your mind, and I'll write in your heart and give you the ability so that finally, in conclusion, one verse, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 26 onwards, consider your calling, brethren, not many wise among the flesh or according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. See, I've traveled a lot around the world.

I've seen believers of all types. And I find this to be absolutely true. Some of the most noble, mighty, richest people in the world are not Christians.

God has not chosen them because of pride. But God has chosen the foolish to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak to shame the things that are strong.

Verse 28, God has chosen the base. These things mean the really low cost, despised, lowest level of humanity type of Christians, people, people. He has chosen to nullify the things that are people who think they are somebody.

Why? Here's the purpose of everything. Verse 29, so that no one will ever boast before God, saying, I have done this, or I did this for God, or, you know, Nebuchadnezzar boasted about what he had done, and God humbled him and made him like an animal for seven years. But by God's doing, it's a very important verse, 1 Corinthians 1.30, by God's doing, not your doing, you are in Christ Jesus.

If you're in Christ Jesus today, it was God's work. And he has become to us wisdom. And he has become to us righteousness, not I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

No. Christ himself is my righteousness. Understand that distinction.

Not I'm clothed with Christ's righteousness. Christ is my righteousness. That's how I come before God.

Christ is my holiness. Christ is my redemption. Why? So that, as it is written, if anyone boasts, let him boast to the Lord.

That is why the Apostle Paul could say he was the least of all the saints and the chief of sinners, because he knew if there was anything good in him, God had done it all. And if you've understood that, and if you can live in that, not occasionally come there and then forget all about it and go back to boasting, but live there, then you have entered into the Sabbath rest of God. May God help us to get revelation on this.

Amen.

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