

God Renews Us and We Enter His Rest

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's way of thinking through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, and making scripture a priority in our lives.

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Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 11:28, John 14:18, Hebrews 4:9, Hebrews 4:11, 1 John 2:6, 1 John 4:17

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Inner Rest"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of entering into God's rest, highlighting the need to diligently seek God, learn humility and gentleness from Jesus, and submit to the Holy Spirit daily. It stresses the significance of finding inner rest in Christ, walking in obedience, and experiencing victory over sin and anxiety by abiding in God's will. The message encourages believers to prioritize spiritual growth, seek God's presence, and enter into a life of rest and peace.

Transcript

One of the things we teach in our churches is that the old covenant has been abolished. I believe it's because of the ignorance of so many Christians on this one truth that the old covenant has been abolished, very clearly taught in Hebrews chapter 8 and that Jesus established a new covenant and that's the reason why many Christians go to the Old Testament to claim promises of prosperity and healing and find themselves frustrated or live in a world of unreality. But yet three quarters of the Bible is the Old Testament.

So there's a difference between the old covenant which God established with Israel and the 39 books which somebody called the Old Testament, I mean the Bible doesn't call it the Old Testament, it's just printed like that in the front page. It's 39 books as part of the Bible and we can say it was before Christ and the 27 books is after Christ but that Old Testament is certainly not abolished. We need to read it because there are a lot of things we can learn from it for ourselves.

First of all, the history of Israel, the mistakes they made are almost exactly the same mistakes that Christians make today. And if you don't learn from history, we will repeat the mistakes that other people have made before. A wise man learns from the mistakes of others and that's one reason why we have the Old Testament.

I've learned a lot from the mistakes of many people in the Old Testament. You can be saved from adultery if you read how David fell or you can be saved from backsliding if you read about how Saul backslid or how Israel backslid. There are many many lessons we can learn from the Old Testament and which will help us because we can make the same mistakes.

At the same time, there are also pictures in the Old Testament that some of them we apply to us. Some of them we are very familiar with like the Israelites were saved by putting the blood on the door. They killed a lamb, put the blood and that's how they were redeemed from Egypt which I think most Christians know is a picture of our redemption through Christ the Lamb of God.

Many times in the New Testament we read about Jesus as the Lamb of God and that expression is based on Old Testament. You wouldn't know what it is unless you knew the Old Testament symbol of the Lamb being slain every Passover for the sins of Israel. So, I want to show you something else which many are not familiar with.

An Old Testament picture which has a New Testament application and that is in Genesis chapter 1. You know how the Bible begins. Chapter 1 we can say is the whole Bible in a nutshell and I'll show you in a moment how that is in case you haven't already seen it. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

That's a picture of in the beginning God created man perfect. The heavens and earth were perfect. But the next verse we read and the earth was or literally it could be translated became shapeless, empty, dark.

That's not the way God created it because God never creates anything shapeless, empty, and dark. He creates everything perfect. James 1.17 says every good and perfect thing comes from above, from the Father of lights.

So, the earth was not created in six days. It was created in a moment. Genesis 1 verse 1. There are people who don't read carefully what scripture says.

If you read carefully you will find in Genesis chapter 1 there are two words created and made. The earth was remade in six days, not created. It was created verse 1 in a moment.

It's important sometimes it's difficult for us to change understandings we have heard because we've been taught by people who have not read scripture carefully. Now I'll just mention that because you know there's a lot of emphasis on creation and evolution and even they don't read scripture carefully. Let me show you one verse which makes it clear.

Let's turn to Genesis a chapter, sorry Exodus chapter 20 and verse 11. That'll explain what I mean. Exodus 20 verse 11.

This is the Ten Commandments. Many of us may have read the Ten Commandments but we may not have read it carefully. Exodus 20 verse 11.

In every translation of the Bible you'll find in six days the Lord did not create. He made. Have you noticed that? He made the heaven and earth.

Or you turn to Exodus chapter 31 and verse 17. Exodus 31 17. In the middle of that it says in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.

If you want to read more about it you can go to our CFC website CFC India.com and see an article of mine called the creation of the earth and of Satan. I mean that's just in passing. And coming back to Genesis chapter 1. When God creates something it's perfect.

There was no defect in Adam and Eve. Then how did the earth become shapeless, empty and dark? And that is we learn from Adam's sin. When Adam sinned the earth was cursed and the animals became wild, a snake became poisonous and weeds and thistles grew up which never existed.

That's what happens when sin comes in. Sin causes a disturbance in creation as well. Even in the animals and we see in Romans 8 it says all of creation is waiting for Jesus to come back.

You know that creation is waiting for Jesus to come back? It says that more than a lot of believers are waiting. Creation is waiting. Lions waiting to become tame and the weeds and thistles want to disappear.

So that's what happened. Between verses 1 and 2 something happened which made the earth lose its shape, become dark and empty. And that was the fall of the angels.

Head of the angels became the devil and one-third of the angels of millions who followed him who have become the demons. Now that's not mentioned here because this book was not written for angels. It's written for men.

So the fall of angels is mentioned somewhere else. So that's why it's not mentioned here. But that's how the earth became shapeless, empty and dark.

The devil came there and fell and became dark. So how does this apply to us? God created man perfect, symbolically verse 1. And the devil came and intervened and man became shapeless, lost the image of God, empty and dark. And then, wonderful, God doesn't leave it like that.

Immediately the Holy Spirit moves. That's number 1. And number 2, the Word of God goes forth, verse 3, let there be light. So the two most important things here are the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Not one without the other. If you study the Word of God without the Holy Spirit, you'll become a Pharisee. You'll become a scribe and you'll go completely astray as much as the Pharisees went astray.

Know how much the Pharisees went astray? The entire Old Testament spoke about the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. But when he came, the Pharisees called him the Prince of Devils. That's how far you go astray when you study the Bible without the Holy Spirit.

I hope you get that lesson because today there are a lot of people trying to study the Bible without the Holy Spirit. Imagine going this far astray that you think the Son of God is the Prince of Devils. And I'll tell you another guy who did not read the Bible.

A Roman centurion. He looked at Jesus and said, this is the Son of God on the cross. How did that happen? Or take an unlearned person who was not a scholar like Peter, a fisherman.

He said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And the people who studied the scriptures called him the devil. There's something there we got to learn.

Jesus said to Peter, you haven't discovered that with your own cleverness. Flesh and blood did not reveal it to you. My Father in heaven through the Holy Spirit.

There's a beautiful word in the New Testament called revelation. Different from understanding. Revelation comes through the Holy Spirit.

Understanding comes through our mind and the study of the mind. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 11 25, thank you Father you have hidden these things from the clever, the intelligent. Do you know that clever and intelligent people cannot understand the Bible? Pharisees were clever and intelligent.

Couldn't understand the Bible. But you have revealed, Matthew 11 25, you have revealed the word revelation again to babes. Babes have got one quality that clever intelligent people don't have and that is humility.

God reveals his truth to those who are humble. There's something else that little babies have, little children have, and that is a simple trust. Now those are the two qualities that we need if we want to get revelation from the Holy Spirit.

Humility, a simple trust in our Heavenly Father. Even when we can't understand something. There are things in the Bible we may not be able to explain, but trust.

The clever intelligent person finds it difficult as his mind comes in the way, hinders the Holy Spirit. Remember the people who crucified Jesus, not the Romans, not the idol-worshipping Romans. The idol-worshipping Pilate said I want to let him go.

But the Bible believing Pharisees said no, crucify him. I don't know whether you believe it. It's the same today.

I have seen this truth. I work among a lot of people who have never read the Bible, never knew anything about the Bible, the villages of India, idol-worshipping people and I found them come to simple faith in Christ. I've seen great scholars who've gone through Bible schools, who are blind as a bat when it comes to the truths of the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ, and the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

So it's good for us to remember right at the beginning that the earth was transformed as you see at the very end in such a way that God Himself could certify, verse 31, very good. How did this corrupt earth become very good? Through the joint operation of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Don't neglect either.

Don't neglect the study of the Word of God. I've spent 55 years studying this book and I still find things in it now which excite me. If you find the Bible boring, I'll tell you why.

Because you're using your mind. Open yourself to the Holy Spirit and the Bible will not be boring. It'll be the most interesting book of all.

So it's this joint operation. So as I was saying, this is a picture of the Bible in a nutshell. The message of the Bible in a nutshell is in Genesis chapter 1. Let me interpret it.

The man was created in the beginning. Sin came and man became shapeless, empty, and dark. And immediately God in great love began to operate through the Holy Spirit.

If man allows the Holy Spirit to work in him, allows the Word of God to work in him, you know how he'll end up? In the image of God where God looks at every area of our life and says, very good. That's how Genesis 1.31 ends. But what you see here is the Holy Spirit operates right through.

And another thing you notice is every day there was the Word of God. First day, God said. That was the first day.

And then the second day, verse 6, God said something else. And that was the second day. And then the third day, verse 9, God says something else.

Like that every day God said something. God said, God said, God said. So that teaches us another thing, that if we really want to be transformed, we must hear God speaking to us every day.

It was not that the second day God said nothing. If God said nothing, nothing would have happened. If you don't open yourself to the Word of God, nothing is going to happen.

But here God said something and immediately something happened. Imagine, light came out of the darkness, it says in verse 4. And God said something else another day and the dry land appeared. And God said something else another day and the tree-bearing fruits appeared.

It's amazing what happens. And Isaiah, God says, my word that goes forth from my mouth will never return empty. Never.

If we receive God's Word through the Holy Spirit, it will never return without accomplishing something. Every day. Turn with me to another verse before I come back to Genesis.

And that's in Deuteronomy and chapter 8. Deuteronomy and chapter 8. And verse, we all know that the Israelites received manna from heaven every day in the morning. And it says if they went out too late, the sun would have melted it. They would have got nothing.

And a whole family would have to go hungry that day. So they all got up early in the morning to go and get the manna. It was the only way to get food in the morning in the wilderness.

And it says here in verse 3, Deuteronomy 8.3, that God, you know, this is the end of 40 years, Moses is reviewing their journey through the wilderness. And he says, he humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you with manna, which you did not know. And I don't know, let me just digress here a minute and mention that God who created so many, such variety in the flowers, such variety in the colors and creation and such a variety in the animals and creatures on the earth.

Why didn't he create a variety in the type of food he gave them every day? It was the same shape, same color, same taste every single day for 40 years. And it's like a loaf of bread dropping down from heaven every single day and nothing else, just that every single day. And that's why Israelite said, what is this manna? God was teaching them to be content more than that.

It says here, there was a lesson he was trying to teach them by giving them manna every day that he might, Deuteronomy 8.3, that he might make you to understand something that man does not live by bread alone, but by that which proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. And do you know that's the first word that Jesus quoted in his public ministry? In the temptation in the wilderness? What are the first words that Jesus spoke in his public ministry? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And that's how he lived for 33 and a half years himself.

And that's how he wants us to live. And that's what Genesis 1 teaches us that every day God said something, next day God said something, the next day God said something. Do you hear God speaking to

you every day? I mean, if you watch television every day, or if you watch the internet every day, you live by that? People say, I don't have time.

I tell people that it's not you don't have time. Be honest, say, I don't have an interest to read the Bible. How do you don't have time to read the Bible? How do you have time to watch television? How do you have time to go to the internet? Interest.

If you are honest, God will help us. If you say, Lord, the real truth is I have time, but I don't have any interest in reading the Bible. Or in other words, I have no interest in growing spiritually.

Be honest. He taught you. He taught those Israelites for 40 years.

Every day, they had to go out and get the manna. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able, they'd starve in the wilderness. And that was to teach us a lesson with Jesus endorsed by quoting it the very first time when he was being tempted by Satan.

Man shall not live by food alone. Is there a day you forget to eat your food? The old saints lived a hundred years ago, used to say, no Bible, no breakfast. That's how they taught their children.

Very good. Know the scriptures. It is so important in our day, my brothers and sisters, because we have a generation growing up that knows more about movie stars and about football players and baseball players than about Nahum and Habakkuk and Haggai and Zachariah.

They don't know who they are. It's tragic. Who is Thaddeus? He's one of the apostles, by the way.

How are we bringing up our children? You know, for example, memorizing scripture, reading it publicly. Let me show you a verse in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Paul says in 1 Timothy 4 to Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 13, Paul says, until I come there, Timothy, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Have you ever read that verse? Give attention to the public reading of scripture.

Of course, there was a reason for that in that time, because they never had a printed Bible in those days like we have. And Paul's letters were not widely distributed in those days. And so there was a need for whatever, you know, the Bible was in scrolls those days and they could, they had to read it.

Otherwise people wouldn't know what's written in it. Everybody couldn't, so scrolls were so expensive, everybody didn't have a copy. That's what amazes me about Jesus.

You know that Jesus never had a Bible at home? How did he know the Bible by the age of 12? So well that he could even question the great scholars of his time. And they were surprised at the questions he was asking. Because from the time he could read, remember Jesus grew up as a little boy, just like any child today had to go to school to learn the alphabet, to learn, to read the Bible.

Maybe by the age of, let's say five, he was reading. And the only way he could hear the scriptures was on Saturday, go to the synagogue and hear what this scripture was read, maybe a little bit. And then one of the things that amazes me about Jesus going to the synagogue for at least 25 years is how he sat through listening to all those boring sermons of the Pharisees for so many years, week after week after week.

There was no anointing in any of that. I think he sat there whenever the word of God was spoken. You know, before the Pharisees preached their boring sermons, there was a public reading of scripture and that, Jesus absorbed it, 25 years.

But he knew the scriptures at the age of 12 and I often wondered about that, how he could have known it. And I believe after school was over, he had a little spare time, he'd run across to the synagogue and ask the rabbi, can you read me something from scripture? And the rabbi must have been so excited, the six-year-old coming to know the scripture, want to know the scriptures. I mean, wouldn't you be excited if your little boy came and said, dad, can you read me something of the Bible? Well, that's how this rabbi was excited and would read him.

And he'd come the next day, there was no child like this in Nazareth. He said, can you read me the next chapter? The next day, the next chapter, seven years, he went like that in his spare time to the synagogue. And by the time he was 12, he knew the scriptures thoroughly.

This challenged me. When I was converted, I was 19 and a half. I left the Navy when I was 26 and a half.

I had seven years in the Navy, converted. And in those seven years, I really knew the scriptures. I said, if Jesus can learn the scriptures without a Bible at home in seven years, I can learn the scriptures with a Bible in my room in seven years.

And I tell you, that has been the foundation of my life, changed my life completely, changed my family life. It changed my attitude to money, attitude to people, attitude to everything. Word of God, every day, God said, God said, God said.

Please learn that one lesson. If you have not learned anything else from Genesis chapter one, something happened. As I told you, let me quote you that we're showing you that was also in Isaiah 55.

I don't know whether you're familiar with this verse. It's a very important verse. Isaiah 55, show you two verses here, which refer to God's word.

Isaiah 55, first of all, verse eight, my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways declares the Lord. We have a way of thinking and God says, that's not my way of thinking. And how much is the difference, Lord? The difference, verse nine, is as different, I mean, the difference is as great as the difference between heaven and earth.

You can't think of a greater difference than heaven and earth. And God says, my way of thinking is so different from yours as heaven is different from earth. And Lord, how can I know your way of thinking? Well, read my word.

If you want to know God's way of thinking, read the Bible. And what will happen is my way of thinking will begin to change to God's way of thinking. And then in a tough spot where you're in, you will know God's way of thinking and know the answer.

You'll know how to take a decision. That's what it says in Romans 12, verse two, by the renewing of your mind, which is through God's word, you will prove the perfect will of God. Why is it so many Christians are confused about the perfect will of God? Because they don't allow their mind to be renewed by constant meditation on scripture.

We know more about earthly news and about a lot of things that we get through Google searches. I'm not against that, but I say all that must be secondary to God's word in our life. And we must teach our children that God's word must be primary.

We give food to our children. We must teach them. Man does not live by food alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

So God's thoughts are not my thoughts. And that's why we are so confused because when we come to take a decision in our life, yet going by our way of thinking, and that is not God's way of thinking. And then there's confusion at the end.

And then you pray and say, Lord, why did you allow this to happen? Because right at the outset, you never cared to seek his will. Don't blame him after you didn't even seek his will. You won't mess up your life and say, why did you allow this to happen to me? And if you're not a Christian, understandable.

But if you are a Christian, well, but if you understand his will, see what it says here in verse 11. So shall my word be, which goes forth from my mouth. It will never return to me empty without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the manner for which I sent it.

If you accept it, verse 12, you will go out with joy and you'll be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills will break forth in shouts of joy. The trees of the field will clap their hands.

Amazing things happen when we submit to God's word. It will never return empty without accomplishing what I have sent out that word to do. And that's what we read in Genesis chapter 1. God said, let there be light.

It cannot return empty immediately. Light was there. God said in verse 9, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and the dry land appear immediately.

The dry land appeared. Remember Isaiah 55. It cannot come forth without accomplishing what it is supposed to.

Okay. And then verse, God said, let the lights appear in verse 14. And God said, let the water swarm with creatures in verse 20 and so on.

You know, every time God said something, that same thing happened. Why doesn't it happen in our case? There's one big difference. The earth had no will of its own.

It had to submit. God spoke to the earth, let the water separate and the dry land appear. Immediately it came up.

It's amazing what happens when we submit to God's will without question. But when God speaks something to us, we have a thing within us called my will, where it clashes with God's will and what God says doesn't happen. We must recognize that.

And that is why one of the most important ministries of the Holy Spirit is to break down this thing called my will. And if God succeeds in doing that, same thing will happen as in Genesis 1, what God says happens. What God says happens.

I want to say to all of you, my dear brothers and sisters, that that is the perfect will of God for your life. You can live substandard to that. You can live the third-rate type of Christian life that most Christians live if you want to.

I lived like that for 16 years after I was born again. And I was so discouraged because my life was not measuring up to what I read in the New Testament. I'll tell you honestly, I was born again.

I'd studied the Bible, as I told you, in seven years I studied it. I was serving the Lord, I was preaching, I was gifted. But inwardly in my life, I was defeated.

My thoughts and attitudes were not spiritual. But I was a good, accepted Christian. I wasn't committing sin outwardly, so I was accepted.

But I was happy with my substandard life. I was to read words, commands like, rejoice in the Lord always. And I never accepted it as a command.

I thought it was a sort of a suggestion. I mean, if you feel like it, rejoice always. Of course, you may not be able to, but it doesn't matter.

That's not what God was saying. Be anxious for nothing. Oh, another suggestion, not a command, but if possible.

Doesn't matter if it doesn't work. Ephesians 4.31, put away all anger. Okay, another suggestion, not a command.

Or Philippians 2.14 and 15, do everything without ever murmuring or grumbling. Another suggestion. I took the Bible as full of suggestions, which, you know, I could accept it or not accept it.

And I discovered one day, there are no suggestions in the Bible, only commands. I was insulting God by treating his commands as suggestions. And when I began to take it seriously, and I said, Lord, I do not want to continue this type of third-rate Christian life, which the devil can keep on pointing out and saying, God, look at this fellow, claims to be a Christian, but look how he's living.

He doesn't care two hoots for your commands. He treats them all as suggestions. I believe the devil's pointing out to millions and millions of Christians like that in the world today.

And millions and millions of preachers who lead Christians in that direction. But I thank God that I got fed up of that life. I got so fed up and I said, Lord, I'll stop preaching because I'm not living this life.

How can I preach what is not true? But you got to do something for me. You got to make these verses real in my life. Just like it says in Genesis 1, God said something and it happened.

God says to me, rejoice in the Lord always. Why doesn't it happen? You know, there's a verse like that, Philippians 4.4, rejoice in the Lord always. Always means how many hours a day? 24-7.

Be anxious for nothing. You know what nothing means? Zero. Why don't these words happen? Be anxious for nothing.

And it happened. Let the dry land come forth. It happened.

Let the sea swarm with creatures. It happened. Let the lights come forth.

It happened. Rejoice in the Lord always. It doesn't happen.

Be anxious for nothing. It doesn't happen. Let all anger be put away.

It doesn't happen. Love your enemies. It doesn't happen.

Let your yes be yes and your no be no. It doesn't happen. And yet we call ourselves Christians when we believe the Bible is the word of God.

I tell you it's hypocrisy. Permit me to speak the truth. I don't hate you brothers.

I love you a lot. That's why I speak the truth. I spoke it to myself first.

And as I said for 16 years I was satisfied with this third rate thing which called itself Christianity but was an absolute disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ and which the devil could keep on pointing out to God. But because my external testimony was good, I wasn't committing adultery or stealing banks or committing murders or any such thing. I had a decent testimony before people.

I was happy and that's how most Christians are. They're happy with a decent external testimony. Not an inward life which God wants.

A decent external life is an old covenant life. Know the commandments. Don't murder.

Don't commit adultery. Don't steal. Honor your father and mother and etc.

etc. You say I kept that. That's Old Testament.

In the New Testament it's far higher. Don't lust after a woman. Love not only your brothers but your enemies.

Forgive everyone. Many things like that. Most Christians live in the old covenant and they are happy with an external life.

Do you know that if your external life is good and your doctrines are all evangelical and correct, it only proves you're a good Pharisee. I want to tell you the truth because some people don't, you don't hear these things much in pulpits today. You'll never hear it on Christian television because that type of this type of preaching doesn't bring money.

But here's what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 23. There were two things that Jesus commended in the Pharisees. We've thought the Pharisees are all good for nothing.

Everything was rotten about them from top to bottom. No. There were two good things in the Pharisees and I want to point them out to you.

Number one, their doctrines were all correct. Matthew 23 verse 2 and 3. Jesus said the scribes and he's telling his disciples by the way the scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses. Everything that they tell you to do, do.

Do you think the Lord would say everything the Jehovah's Witnesses tell you to do, do? Or everything that the Mormons tell you to do, do? Or everything that the Roman Catholics tell you to do, do? You think Jesus would say those things? Or some other religions what they say tell you to do, do? About whom can Jesus say everything that these people teach, do it? He said that about the Pharisees. But don't do according to their actions. Verse 3. No, no, no.

They don't practice what they preach. But what they preach is absolutely right. So Jesus was commending one thing in the Pharisees that doctrines are right.

Their actions are all wrong. They're hypocrites. But their doctrines are right.

It's good to have our doctrines right. The second good thing in the Pharisees you see in Matthew 23 and verse 25. What do you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites? You clean the outside of the cup.

That is the external life. But the inside, the inner life is all corrupt. But the outer life is clean.

Isn't that a good thing if your outer life is clean? That you're not an adulterer or a thief or a murder or a nuisance to society. You don't go shooting people. Your outer life is clean.

Jesus said that to the Pharisees. Your outer life is clean. A lot of Christians, who claim to be Christians, even whose outer life is not clean.

So here are two good things in the Pharisees. Their external life was spotless. Their doctrine was correct.

Now compare yourself. If your external life is spotless and your doctrine is correct, you could be a Pharisee. It's your inner life that matters.

Your thoughts, your attitudes to people, the way you speak to your wife at home. Not the way you speak to people in a church meeting. The way you speak to your husband at home.

Your attitudes to people and your motives with which you do good things. Not the good thing itself, but the motive. For example, a man can preach a very good sermon and his motive may be to make money or to get honor or something like that.

A man may give money in the offering box and his motive may be, well, I probably get a hundred times back. According to some scripture which says I'll return a hundred fold or something. I mean, which man will not put money into a bank that promises a hundred percent interest or something? I mean, any crooked businessman will do that.

Motive. Even in giving, what is your motive? That is the life Jesus calls us to. Motive, attitude, thoughts more than words and actions.

Private life more than public life. The man who's serious about his private life being as pure as his public life, who's more interested in his thoughts, attitudes, and motives being clean as much as his words and actions, that is a true new covenant Christian. Even if he has not attained it, he's serious about it.

But if a man is not serious about his thoughts, attitudes, motives being as clean as his external life, he's not a new covenant Christian. He's living in the old covenant and it's like the Pharisees, your doctrine is right, your external life is clean. So dear brothers and sisters, why is it when God says, my word will never return without accomplishing what it has gone out to do, you see in Genesis 1, it happened, it happened.

I told you Genesis 1 in a nutshell is God's plan for man. Let's go back again, number 1, verse 1, God created man perfect. Verse 2, through sin man became, lost his shape, the image of God became dark and empty, but God loved man so much the Holy Spirit began to brood, the word is brood over man and God sent forth His word every day.

But man does not respond to the Holy Spirit like the earth did. Man does not listen to God's every day. They're interested in many other things every day and then they wonder, why am I not changing? You won't change because in our case we have to respond to it unlike the dead earth.

The inanimate objects of creation like the earth and the planets and all just obey God automatically. God could have made man like that, like a robot automatically obeying God, you know, and if God had made Adam like a robot, he would have just come to the tree of knowledge of good and evil and turned away and gone to the tree of life. That's a robot.

God didn't want a robot and Adam would have bowed down to God and like a robot. You like robots or children in your home? You have little, little robots in your house who will never disobey you or you like little children? God is a father just like you and a mother. He doesn't want robots.

But the danger with having children is they don't obey like robots. But you'd still rather have children, right? Because what a joy it is when your children do obey. What a joy it is when one child comes and hugs you and says, Daddy, I love you, more than a robot coming and saying, Oh, Daddy, I love you.

Yeah, so God wants children and that's why He made us different from the earth. He gave us a free will. But if we respond like the earth, that means our will is yielded to God, the same result will happen in us.

And there was one man who walked on this earth like that and that was Jesus Christ. All through his life, he said in John 6, 38, I came from heaven never to do my own will, but only the will of Him who sent me. So he responded just like Genesis 1, the earth, whatever the father said, that's it.

It wasn't easy. When he was 10 years old and his father says, Obey Joseph and Mary. He had to stay in that house till the age of 30.

The Bible says in Luke chapter 2, the last verse, he obeyed his earthly parents completely so that he can be an example for us, for little children. And he honored his earthly, it was not his real father, but foster father and mother, real mother. It wasn't easy.

You think it's easy for a 10 year old to do whatever the parents say? What if they are playing out in the game with their, playing baseball outside and it's come for his turn to bat, Jesus' turn to bat. Mary says, Jesus come in here. I want you to do some work for me.

That's not easy to drop the bat and come in. All the other boys would say, Hey, wait, mom, I'll come a little later. You know what Jesus would do? It's his turn to bat.

He drops it and says, Hey folks, mommy's calling you. I gotta go. That's obedience, even as a child where he denied his own will.

That's what he did for 30 years. And that's why the father in heaven said, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. Not because he did miracles for he did nothing.

Not because he preached sermons. He preached no sermon, but because he did what the father told him. What is that? Obey imperfect parents.

You know, some people say I like to obey God. It's easy to obey God who's perfect. But God trained Jesus for 30 years to obey someone, two people who are imperfect, Joseph and Mary.

Is it easy to obey someone who's imperfect? Will you obey somebody who's imperfect? Your boss in your office may be imperfect. Many ways. Why do you still obey him? Because money will do a lot of things for money, which we won't do to please God.

Because of money, people obey imperfect bosses in their office, do whatever they say. Otherwise I may be fired. I may not get my salary.

And when God tells us to do something, wives say, how can I obey my husband? He's not perfect. How can I love my wife? She's not perfect. I like to obey God.

Most people are not spiritual. Remember, Jesus was trained to do what the father told him even when it was inconvenient. That's where our will is broken, where the Holy Spirit seeks to break our will and bring us to obedience, where God's word will accomplish in us.

And if you seek, that's why I say, seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, the genuine power of the Holy Spirit. There's a lot of counterfeits in the world today of the Holy Spirit. But if it's the real, genuine work of the Holy Spirit, I'll tell you how you'll know it.

It'll make you more Christ-like. Because the most perfect example of the Spirit-filled man was Jesus Christ. He's my example.

Fullness of the Holy Spirit. I don't look at the people today, the denominations today that talk about being filled with the Spirit. I look at Jesus, the perfect example of being filled with the Spirit.

I don't see him rolling on the ground and kicking his legs and saying, this is how I'm filled with the Spirit. No. I see all these types of what I call rubbish today.

That's not to me. I don't see Jesus uncontrollably laughing and saying, this is the Holy Spirit. I don't see Jesus doing what I call stupid things.

You know, people say, oh, it's like being drunk with wine. The disciples were drunk, like drunk with wine on the day of Pentecost. Well, the most perfect Spirit-filled man was Jesus.

Did he act like a drunken man anytime? No. It's a misquoting of Scripture. Peter didn't say we are drunk with wine.

It's the other people who said it. Imagine people quoting all those unconverted people and saying that when you're filled with the Spirit, you'll be like a man drunk with wine. Not at all.

You'll be like Christ, the perfect Spirit-filled man. That's what helped me to steer clear from all this counterfeits. There are counterfeits.

There's counterfeit gold. There's counterfeit diamonds. There's counterfeit silver.

Everything valuable is counterfeited, including the gifts of the Holy Spirit, beneficence of the Holy Spirit. How shall I be protected? I have an example. They never had in the Old Testament an example.

They only had God's Word. Now I have an example, Jesus Christ. I can see in him what it means to be filled with the Spirit, to be compassionate, to be sacrificial, to deny myself every day, never to be offended with anyone, never to complain and to have such a dignity that he never stooped to anything cheap or

mean or take advantage, fearless, fearless.

When Pilate said to him when he was stripped and bleeding, don't you know I have power to crucify you or release you? Jesus said, you have no power against me except what my Father gives you. I remember I had an experience like that when some religious people took me to court in India. I could say that.

In my heart, the judge was judging me, you have no power over me except what my Father gives you. Couldn't do a thing. Remember this, my brothers and sisters, look at Jesus as the perfect example of the spiritual person and you'll never be deceived by any counterfeits.

That's what's protected me through all these years. Spirit of God, when he fills you, if there's one mark, the Spirit of God, your heart will be filled with love, fervent love for Jesus Christ where you love Jesus Christ more than you love money. If you love money more than Jesus Christ, I'll tell you this, you're not filled with the Spirit, no matter who tells you that, the truth, whatever they say or whatever experiences you may have had, you cannot love God and money.

You can have money, but if you love it, it's different. If you, a spiritual man will love Jesus Christ more than anything on earth, more than pleasure, earthly pleasures and anything. Christ will be supreme in his life, always.

And that makes him love unlovely believers. Yeah. So that's what happens when God says something and I submit.

That's what I learned in Genesis chapter 1. If I keep submitting like that, finally we read, man was made in the image of God. Verse 27, Genesis 1, 27. And I will be made complete in the image of God as well.

Perfect. Because each day I submitted, submitted, submitted, submitted, submitted and allowed the Holy Spirit to work in me what he wanted to do. Every, you know, God could have made everything in one day, that remaking.

Why did he take six days to teach us something that I can make you like Christ in a moment, but I'm going to do it slowly, little by little, day by day. It makes me a little more like Jesus. Apostle Paul experienced that.

He says in 2 Corinthians 4, 16, we are renewed day by day. Paul had such a wonderful experience that he came to the place where he was changed into the likeness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4, 16.

Every day, a little more like Jesus Christ. I mean, if we manage it every year, a little more like Jesus Christ, that'd be great. Imagine if your wife could say to you, darling, you're a little more Christ-like now compared to what you were six months ago.

Or if your wife says to you, or your husband says to you, hey, you're more Christ-like, what's happened? And that should be happening to us. Paul said he, Paul came to that experience every day, not just once a year. That is the message of Genesis 1. Every day, not complete yet, a little more.

One day, the light, then the heavens, then the earth, then the trees, then something else, little, little, little, little. Finally, perfect in the image of God. See the progression in Genesis 1? This is the message of the Bible in a nutshell.

And then I want to come to this Genesis chapter 2. On the seventh day, God completed his work, and he rested on the seventh day. It's not because God was tired. It was God does everything for the sake of man.

He wanted to be an example to man. Work six days and rest. God rested on the seventh day, and he blessed the seventh day, and that's what he called the Sabbath.

And when he gave the Israelites ten commandments in Exodus 20, we saw that. Just turn for a moment again to Exodus 20. He said in verse 8, Exodus 20 verse 8, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall work and do all your work, and the seventh day you must rest. You shall not do any work. Your son or your daughter, your servant, male, female, your cattle, shouldn't do anything either.

Amazing. Why? Because, verse 11, in six days the Lord made heaven and the earth, not created, notice again, made, that means remade, the heaven and the earth, and rested on the seventh day, therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. It's the only commandment, by the way, in the Bible for which a reason is given, in those ten commandments.

The others are just commandments, but when it comes to Sabbath, he says, I'll give you a reason for it. The reason is that God rested on the seventh day and he's turning them back to Genesis 1, which is the Bible in a nutshell. At the end of it, he came to rest.

And do you know, if you read the Old Testament, I don't have time to show you these verses, that whenever anybody disobeyed and didn't keep the Sabbath, they were killed. We read in one place, I think it's in Numbers 15 or 16, where one man just went out to pick up sticks. Now they were told not to make a fire on the Sabbath day, understood.

But this man wasn't making a fire, he just went out to pick up some sticks on the Sabbath day and they brought him to Moses. Moses, what shall we do? This man just picked up sticks. Moses said, I better find out from God.

God said, stone him to death. It's in the Bible. You read it.

To teach them a lesson that on the Sabbath day, no work at all. And the really serious Jewish people follow that even today. What is the meaning of this for us today? Just like the Passover lamb has got a meaning, the circumcision means a cutting off of confidence in our flesh.

That was a cutting off of the physical flesh. Today it's a cutting off of our confidence in what the Bible calls the flesh, our fleshly life. What about the Sabbath? Very important.

If it was so important that people would be killed if they didn't keep it, it must be having a very important meaning for us. And that's what we need to understand as well. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 11.

Matthew 11 and verse 28. Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest. That is the meaning of the Sabbath.

An inner rest, which the Lord gives to those who are weary and heavy laden. And I paraphrase it like this. See, the context is, if you must always read a scripture in its context.

Verse 20, the Lord began to reproach the cities which did not repent of their sins. So it's in the context of sin that he's saying those who are weary and heavy laden come to me. So I paraphrase it like this.

Those of you who are sick and tired of your defeated life, come to me. I'll deliver you from that. I'll bring you into a life of rest where you're not defeated.

But if you really want this rest, you have to take my yoke upon you. You know what the yoke is? It's two bullocks. You don't see it much nowadays, but you still see it in the villages in India.

No tractors there. Two bullocks and a yoke on top of their neck, together, pulling a plow or even pulling a bullock cart. A yoke.

And they have to go together. One bullock can't go ahead and leave the other behind. One can't run.

One can't run off another direction. Same direction, same speed. That's the meaning of the yoke.

Very simple words. Same direction, same speed. So the Lord is saying, you got to walk with me.

You can't rush ahead. You can't lag behind. You can't wander off another direction.

You got to walk with me. Take my yoke upon you. That means you can't do your own will.

Basically, it means that you may want to go there, but you can't. You might want to slow down, but you can't. You may want to rush ahead, but you can't.

You have to go according to my will. You know what the result will be? You will find rest. Verse 29.

You will find rest in your soul. Learn from me. It's like a senior bullock telling a junior bullock who's trying to learn how to plow a straight furrow, learn from me.

I am humble. You know, Jesus never told us to learn from him how to sing, or how to preach, or how to do anything. One thing he taught us to learn from him, learn from me humility.

How many of you can honestly say, my brothers and sisters, that you've taken that seriously? Learn from me how to go to church? No, that's not what he said. Learn humility from me. That's a daily affair.

What do you send your children to school for? To learn some subjects. You don't send them to school to just play games there and come back and yeah, score a goal, mom. Yeah, what do you get in maths? I got zero in maths, but I scored a goal.

You'll be happy with that. What does the Lord want from us? Learn humility from me and gentleness. There are two things that are not found in the race of Adam, it is humility and gentleness.

We are proud and we are hard and harsh in our language. In our behavior, in our attitudes, proud and harsh and hard. Jesus is the exact opposite.

Can you imagine what your home life will be like if both husband and wife from today start learning humility and gentleness from Jesus Christ? There will be rest in your home and in your souls. God says, I know the plans I have for you, the plans of to give you welfare in the future. Jeremiah 29 11.

Very often he'd say to the Israelites, why don't you come to me? Say through the prophets, why don't you come to me? I have good plans for you, but you think you're going your own way and you'll be happy. You will never be happy. It's the same thing the Lord says to his people today through his prophets.

Why don't you come to me and listen to me? What I say, learn humility and gentleness from me. Take my yoke upon you. Don't go your own way.

Deny yourself. Choose my way and you will be at rest. In Hebrews in chapter four, you know how serious this is? It's not an optional subject.

Sometimes in school, certain subjects are optional. Sometimes in examination, certain questions are optional, but this is not optional. This is compulsory.

There may be certain things in the Christian life that are optional. Going into the church, going to the synagogue, going to the synagogue, going on a vacation, optional. But coming to rest, compulsory.

But Christians are the other way around. Going on a vacation, essential. Coming to rest in Christ, optional.

You got it all upside down. Hebrews 4.1, let us fear. Let us be afraid.

Lest God has promised that we should enter his rest and we come short of it. That's a sabbath. So important.

Let us fear that God wants us to come into his rest and we don't enter it. We neglect it. We ignore it.

We don't think it's essential. Another place there remains, verse nine, a sabbath rest for God's people today. If you can understand what it means, it's an inner rest.

There's a beautiful song, I don't know whether you know it, which says, there is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. Place where sin cannot molest. Near to the heart of God.

I love that song. There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest near to the heart of God.

You know, when Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day, the seventh day they spent with God and the devil never came anywhere near them. It's on the eighth day when they went out into the garden and they did not remain in that spiritual sabbath rest that the devil came and led them astray. Sabbath day, the devil never came.

He cannot come. There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. That is a place of sabbath rest, a place where sin cannot molest near to the heart of God.

The reason why we are so defeated in our lives is because we do not enter into this rest. I did not enter into many, many years in my life after being born again. And you know, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Like we heard earlier today, you seek Him with all your heart, you'll find Him. But if you don't seek Him with all your heart, you don't find Him. But if you don't diligently seek Him, why is it some people find this life of rest and peace and victory and some others don't? There's only one reason.

There's no partiality with God. That guy sought God with all his heart, decided that God is more important to me than the honor of men, the approval of men. God is more important to me than money and comfort and everything on the earth.

God is more important to me than knowing the world news and God is more important to me than television and internet and everything else in the world. That guy found God. These other people who put God on the same level as all these other things, they don't find Him.

Why? Because God is not partial. Those who seek Him with all their heart, find Him. Those who fear lest they miss out on this rest, enter into the rest.

Those who couldn't care less and think it's an optional thing, never enter in. Those who take seriously what Jesus said, learn from me for I am humble. They say, Lord, I want to learn humility from you more than anything else.

Some of you have got professions. How do you get it? What is the difference between you and some other people who don't have such a good job as you have? I'll tell you. You studied hard.

Certain subjects which qualified you to get a job that enabled you to earn plenty of money. That's the difference between you and that another uneducated person who's struggling along trying to make ends meet because he didn't study hard. Imagine a Christian who studied hard to learn humility and gentleness from Jesus.

He's going to be spiritually wealthy compared to the other person who's spiritually poor. Just like you are materially wealthy because you studied hard certain subjects. It's exactly the same in the Christian life.

And Jesus says, learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart. And some Christians take that seriously and say, Lord, those are the two important subjects I must learn. They come to a life of rest.

They experience verses like this. Be anxious for nothing. Rejoice in the Lord always.

Let all anger be put away from you. Do all things without grumbling and complaining. They're all New Testament verses.

In everything, give thanks. Have you experienced some of these verses in your life? You can, my brother, sister. This is what it means to enter into rest.

There is, our hearts are not troubled and disturbed and anxious. Think how Jesus was when they were going to crucify him. And he says, you can't touch me.

You can't touch me, Pilate. Pilate was a slave. He wasn't the king.

He had the robes of a king, but he wasn't the king. He was a slave to people's opinions. He was afraid Caesar would sack him from his, fire him from his job.

You know who the real king was that day? The one with the crown of thorns and bleeding and beaten. He was the real king. He said, you can't touch me.

Even when he carried the cross and fell down, he told the women of Jerusalem, daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me. I'm okay. I'm okay.

I'm bleeding and I'm falling down, but I'm okay. I'm in the center of God's will. Weep for yourselves.

You who live comfortable lives, weep for yourselves and your children. You're not in God's will. Do we understand spiritual values? Who do we need to weep for? The poor people, the homeless people? No, I'd say weep for yourselves who are not in the will of God, who have not come into that rest of God.

Let us fearlessly. There's a Sabbath rest God has kept for his people. We haven't come into it because we don't submit day by day by day.

You don't enter into that Sabbath rest unless you do everything else the other six days. I say, Lord, I want to hear your word every day. I want to submit to your Holy Spirit every day.

I don't want to do my own will. The seventh day God rested and you rest with God. Adam rested with God that day.

The devil won't be able to molest you. Isn't it wonderful to come to a place where the devil can't harass you? No, that's how Jesus lived on the earth. He wasn't always escaping.

Oh, the devil's here. No, it's the devil who was running away from Jesus all the time. Oh, Jesus is coming.

I better go. You know that we are supposed to live like that, where the devil's scared of us? I believe that. 1 John chapter 2 and verse 6. The one who says he abides in Christ must walk as Jesus walked.

You hardly ever hear that preached, but it's in God's word. You say you abide in Christ, you must walk as Jesus walked. And don't say that is impossible.

It is impossible if you don't receive the word of God every day. It's impossible if you don't submit to the Holy Spirit every day. It is impossible if you are not eager to learn humility and gentleness from Jesus.

Impossible. Agreed. But if you are willing to submit and open to the Holy Spirit, possible.

And then further, 1 John 4 and verse 17, the last part. As Jesus is, so also are we in this world. I know how the devil, how the Lord spoke to me from that verse.

As Jesus is, so also am I in this world. And if the devil was scared of Jesus, he's going to be scared of me. If I seek to walk as Jesus walked.

I want to say to all of you, that is the way God wants every single one of you to walk if you call yourself a Christian. And it's not by struggling. It's not by doing a lot of works.

Maybe I can conclude with Hebrews chapter 4 again. I could go on for another hour, but I found our absorbing capacity is about one hour. So I'll stop.

Hebrews chapter 4. How do we enter this rest? Verse 3. We who believe enter this rest. It's by faith, by dependence upon God. And we have to seize from our own works.

Verse 10. The one who has entered into his rest has rested from his own works. That means it's not by my struggling that I enter into this rest.

No. It's by resting in Jesus and say, Lord, I want you. I want your Holy Spirit.

It's not by my struggling and fasting. The devil will say, you're not fasting enough. You're not praying enough.

Don't listen to those words of condemnation. You're not struggling enough. You're not.

Father's day announcement. Yeah, we need a good reminder. We need to know God is our father.

That's what we need to remember on Father's day. And that will bring us to rest. I believe that.

So it is good I was reminded. Most Christians are like orphans. Jesus said to his disciples in John 14, I will not leave you as orphans.

I will send my Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes in, he'll cry out. Abba is Hebrew in English.

Dad. Father. The Holy Spirit comes within us, cries out.

Dad. I've got a dad in heaven. So I'm not anxious.

I've got a dad in heaven. So I'm not worried about the future. Because he lives, I can place tomorrow.

He can hold a little child like we sing in that song. I know that child can face uncertain days because he lives. We've got a dad in heaven.

Praise the Lord. Therefore, we can be at rest. Dear brothers and sisters, let us be diligent.

Let us be diligent. Verse 11. Hebrews 4.11. Conclude with this.

Let us be diligent to enter into that rest. Holy Spirit will do that for every one of us. If we are open, what he's done for others, he'll do for you.

I used to occasionally in the first few years, 16 years of my Christian life, maybe once in a thousand messages, I would meet a really godly man, spirit-filled, would speak about this. I'd say, I wish I had that. I didn't have it.

And then after another few years, I'd meet another one in a thousand preachers who would say, there's another godly man. I'd want it. I longed for it.

I said, Lord, I want this life at any cost. If there's anybody like that here, I want to say to you, the Lord will meet with you as he met with me. Changed my life completely.

Changed my family life and began to build a church in many, many places. It wasn't my work. God will do that for you.

There's a plan God has for your life. Maybe it's not being fulfilled as it should be because you're pursuing other things more than this life of rest in God. You'll accomplish a lot more with your life if you put God first.

Don't seek to honor men. Make Jesus your example. Don't be carried away by every wind of doctrine.

And I tell you today, there are many winds, 360 degrees. There are winds blowing this way, that way. Out to find out the truth.

Look at Jesus. He's the perfect example. Seek first holiness more than healing.

Seek for spiritual wealth more than earthly wealth. Seek to know God and his word more than all the information the world can give you. All those things, keep them in their proper place.

And I tell you from today, your life will be different. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heavenly Father, we pray in Jesus' name that many here will come into this life, will have a hunger for this life and will come into it.

Lord, there is no partiality with you. What you did for Jesus, you'll do for us. What you've done for one and others, you'll do for each one of us.

Make it real in our lives, Lord. Don't let us forget what we heard today. Don't let the birds of the air take it away.

We pray that you will create such a hunger in many hearts that they will not rest until this word is fulfilled. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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