

Where Does God Rest?

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

God loves to rest. As Christians, we often get overwhelmed with duties—doing what may indeed need to be done. But when we try to live our lives outside of a Finished-Work, seated-above vantage point, we can easily miss the provisions God would give us to make the burden light.

God lives inside every believer, and He is completely at rest. Jesus Christ finished the work of Redemption at Calvary, and now His glory is revealed through us. Our failures and infirmities do not disturb the Lord. “Peace, be still,” He commands the storms in our lives (Mark 4:39). He is resting in His love (Zephaniah 3:17).

Chapter One

BEING SPIRIT-TAUGHT IN THE VALLEYS

As God's people, we are only able to know and to grow in relationship to what we hear and receive. Every time we hear the Word of God in a church service, that message is prepared by God to teach us another step in the mystery of godliness. Every time we meet, any time we have fellowship around the Word, God provides an opportunity for us to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church at that moment.

Problems with hearing have consistently troubled, hindered, and interrupted the Church of Jesus Christ. Sadly, many Christians assemble regularly and hear the Word, but if they are not being Spirit-taught, they may miss the message God has for them. Therefore, once we have heard properly and have received God's message by faith (instead of reacting to it), then we need to be Spirit-taught (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).

Being Spirit-taught is one of the great privileges of learning and growing as we magnify Christ. Along with having a deep understanding of wisdom from above, being Spirit-taught includes receiving the Word with meekness. This means that we are totally occupied with Christ. And because we are not occupied with self, there is no preoccupation with Adam and his impulsive reactions to Satanic stimuli from the air (1 Corinthians 2:14).

In Deuteronomy 4:10, God said He would teach His people how to learn and how to hear. In the original language, the Hebrew text indicates that this hearing would inspire a great reverence for God, that they might know Him and teach their children about Him.

Dealing with Our Humanity

In Matthew 4, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. There, Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days. Knowing that He would be very weak in his human condition, Satan then came to tempt Him. "If thou be the son of God...." Here, the word "if" was of the first-class condition, which means, "if, and you are." This temptation tested Christ's humanity, but it revealed the strength of His relationship with the Holy

Spirit who led him there. Jesus' humanity was weak. His body was frail, and He was being attacked with demons and everything that hell could throw against Him. Jesus' fasting was the fasting of a perfect man who had no old sin nature. He let the Holy Spirit lead His humanity. He did not quench Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19). He did not grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30). He did not resist Him (Acts 7:51).

That wilderness was a valley for the man Jesus Christ. But first and foremost, He was led there by the Holy Spirit. In that valley, He found rest, and He made for Himself a glorious name. The Holy Spirit always gives glory to the Son, and that is where God rests. God's rest has little to do with a place, but it always regards a condition. That is why He could sleep soundly in the back of a boat during a raging storm.

Jesus said to His disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now." They could not apply it personally because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given (John 16:12-14). Now we can bear these things because the Holy Spirit is in us, glorifying Jesus Christ.

Valleys Build Character

"As a beast goeth down into the valley, the

Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name" (Isaiah 63:14).

"And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes" (Isaiah 7:19).

"The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him" (Job 21:33).

The Spirit leads us into valleys, but there He will give us rest. Heaven rejoices in seeing the strength that we find in the valleys. We will find fruit in the valleys (Song of Solomon 6:11). And in Luke 3:5, we read that in due season, every valley shall be filled and every hill and mountain shall be brought low—and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. That is the ultimate glory.

I am very broken when I see certain pastors step up to the pulpit. I know things they have gone through. I know the valleys they have visited. I know of pains, heartaches, and battles they have encountered and overcome. Now there is joy and beauty for them to rejoice in. They were led into valleys and there they found rest.

Chapter Two

THE GLORY GIVEN FROM ABOVE

"LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions:

"How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;

"Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

"I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,

"Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

"Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.

"We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

"Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength" (Psalm 132:1-8).

It is important that we operate with God's imputed righteousness, always ready for action.

The only place God can rest on this earth is in His glory as it is revealed to us by His grace. As Christians, we are God's representatives operating in Satan's world system. Because Satan is the god of this world, God cannot rest even in His own people except in the glory of His grace.

Face to Face, Moses Spoke with God

"And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

"And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

"For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

"And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

"And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy

on whom I will shew mercy.

“And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

“And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by” (Exodus 33:14-22).

We understand that no man can see God's face and live. And yet, the Lord did reveal that His relationship with Moses was face to face and mouth to mouth (see Numbers 12:8, Deuteronomy 5:4).

Jesus Christ is in heaven. He is the head of the Church and we are His body on earth. In this present dispensation of grace, we represent the front part of God and He is our backbone. As God is in heaven, so are we in this present world (1 John 4:17). We are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live. “It is no longer *I*, but Christ who lives in me,” as Paul said in Galatians 2:20. The life we live in the flesh, we live by the Son of God, who gave Himself for us, and it is Christ who lives through us.

Through our faith, Christ has redeemed us. He is the backbone of every manifestation of the

Body of Christ, here in His stead. We are His ambassadors, presenting the face of God to the world. Jesus Christ revealed his hind parts, and He indeed is the backbone for everything we do.

The Glory of the Throne of Mercy

David said he would not sleep until God had a habitation to rest in. But the Lord told David that He would not rest in a place built by man. God rested in the glory of the cloud that filled the tabernacle (Exodus 16:10). He rested in the glory present in the ark and in the tabernacle (1 Samuel 4:22; Exodus 29:43). God rests in the glory of the heavens, which declared His glory (Psalm 19:1). He rests in the glory upon the earth (Numbers 14:21). Finally, He rests in the glory of His throne (Matthew 19:28).

The glory over the Mercy Seat represents God's manifestation of His character to all who go there. The incense represents our approach to God with a sweet-smelling savor (Ephesians 5:2).

The only place God can rest is in His glory. Referring to the disciples, Jesus said to the Father, "The glory that You gave Me, I have given them" (John 17:22). Long before Pentecost and the upper room (Acts 1), Jesus had already given them His glory. And once a disciple receives

God's glory, all he needs is a revelation of it.

Living in God's Rest

"It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Proverbs 25:27).

When a man refuses to live in God's glory, there is no resting place for God in him. That man manifests negative emotions, so he cannot be transformed from glory to glory.

We must learn to rest in the manifestation of mercy. Otherwise, we will be restless, oppressed, fearful, insecure, passive, and inactive. Grace is always available to us, and when God's righteousness is at work on the inside, He reveals His glory on the outside.

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan understood his need to rest in God's glory. Before a gathering of three thousand pastors, he said of his position, "This is such a lonely place. The eye of the camera, the pen of the journalist, the criticism of the politician make it such a lonely place. I need the glory and wisdom of God. Please, will you pray together with me?"

A Christian sculptor was being shown an ancient statue of a human figure without arms, and he began to weep. When someone asked what it

was that moved him so, he replied, "It is very beautiful. The one who made this piece was truly a master. I can see it in the beauty of its form, the softness of its features. But it has no hands, therefore it represents something beautiful that is powerless." He went on to say that he wept because he thought of the many churches and ministries that possess a measure of beauty but have no hands, no power to reach the world for Christ. There is no glory of God resting in them.

Ezekiel 27 describes how the city of Tyrus was a major center for trade in the world, having tremendous wealth. But then an east wind sank its ships filled with gold, and all of her riches went to the bottom of the sea. This is what happens when we seek our own glory and attempt to manifest our own idea of glory.

Jamaican sprinter Don Quarry had a great rivalry with Haisley Crawford of Trinidad. They took turns beating each other in 200-meter dashes throughout the 1970s. In 1974, Quarry won in the fastest time for the 200-meter event. In 1976, Crawford won in a photo finish. Then Quarry, a Christian, became consumed with the next opportunity to face his rival. That meeting came in 1978. Crawford was confident, telling

Quarry, "I am going to beat you again." But Quarry surged ahead as the race began. Just before the finish, Quarry pulled a hamstring muscle and collapsed to the ground and lost.

The moment marked a transformation in Don Quarry's life. "Winning that race meant more to me than winning Christ," he explained. "I got to know Christ better after that hamstring injury than I had ever known Him before."

Moses understood the glory of God. He was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies any time he desired. This is revealed in the Hebrew text of Numbers 7:89. The imperfect tense used there indicates that Moses went to the Holy Place often. But God told Moses to tell Aaron that in the future, the high priests would only be allowed in the Holy of Holies once a year, to put the blood on the Mercy Seat. Even when the high priest would enter, a cloud would descend. And the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of God was above the Mercy Seat (1 Kings 8:11), and it filled the room.

Moses was taught face-to-face by God because Moses had found grace in the sight of God (Exodus 33:17-18). God proclaimed His name, manifested His nature, and revealed His glory

to Moses.

Chapter Three

MEDITATION: AUDITING THE SOUL'S RECEPTION

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3).

Our brains are made up of eight psychological zones—memory, mind, conscience, self-consciousness, frame of reference, viewpoint, emotions, and volition. These zones must be motivated and activated continually by meditation on the Word of God, or they will become inactive in relationship to the life of God.

Categorical meditation is the key to my ability to recall and remember the Word of God.*

My frame of reference, my mind, my volition, my emotions—all of the psychological zones in my brain—stay spiritually healthy because of meditation on the truth of God. Meditation keeps activating and utilizing the godly potential of these zones. I can't afford to let them become inactive. Grace is always active while God rests in His glory and manifests His mercy and love to me.

Through meditation, a Christian “audits” his soul. He regulates everything that goes in and out of it. He captures sensations of inspiration. These sensations of inspiration go in through the network, or grid, of God's Word and take over our capacity with God's frame of reference, God's viewpoint, God's mentality, and God's emotions.

It is a beautiful thing for us to be auditors of what goes in and out of our souls through the grid of God's Word. When we do not allow our thoughts and perceptions to go through this grid, pressures will build up. Many, many seemingly quiet Christians do not know how to deal with pressures. The pressures grow and grow until their emotions reach the boiling point. The “lids” on their lives blow off eventually because they are not resting in God's glory.

Mercy Covers Iniquities

“But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

“Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:15-18).

“Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin” (Deuteronomy 9:27).

God has found a place to rest in us. In the midst of all the hell and corruption and sin and iniquity and immorality on earth, God has found a place where He can rest and manifest His mercy in fellowship with you and me (Philippians 2:15).

God does not look upon a person's sin. When a person receives Christ as his Savior, He takes His Holy Spirit, the manifestation of His nature, the grid of His Word, and comes right into our hearts. There, He rests in His love.

We get into trouble when we allow ourselves to remember any iniquity that we (or others) have done. That is one thing that God does not remember. We cannot have the confidence of God when we look at our iniquities. If we do look, we put ourselves in bondage to our transgressions. Instead, we must look to Him (Numbers 21:9; Hebrews 12:2).

The glory of God was revealed at Calvary. There, sins were paid for. He rests in His love toward us, and now *we* are to rest in His love toward us. The glory and manifestation of His mercy is in us. Refuse to recognize the iniquity that God has dealt with once and for all. This is the only way for us to have confidence in God and to stay out of bondage.

He who repeats a matter separates friends (Proverbs 17:9). God's glory, however, conceals a matter and covers the multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). The Christian who seeks love does not behold iniquity. Instead, he covers, just as God has covered it with the Blood of Christ shed at Calvary. This is the glory God rests in forever.

**Be sure to read Categorical Meditation: The One Answer to All Problems, as well as Seeing the Glory of God, both by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

CONCLUSION

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

Why do people want to remember someone’s sins? It does not manifest the Cross; it is not living in the zones of faith. It drives away our confidence and brings us into bondage.

“It is My glory, the manifestation of My mercy, to conceal matters,” God declares. “I will be merciful to those in unrighteousness. I will not remember their unrighteousness.”

Oh, it is so precious and sacred to see the freedom we have in God’s glory. If we fail—and we will—we name our failure and claim the truth that God does not look upon our iniquities. Then, we go forward.

I thank God that I have seen His glory in people. I love to live in the midst of the manifestation of God’s love, grace, kindness, and mercy. I love to live in the midst of those who hunger

and thirst for God's righteousness. These people are real, and they have a love that is genuine, because they know how to rest where God rests—in His glory.