

# God's Word Provides a Resting Place (In His Will and Plan)

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In His Word, God used things familiar to us, to explain spiritual Truths, such as, a valuable lesson regarding a Vine and its branches (as Jesus referred to John, chapter 15). He used that analogy to illustrate the position that true believers are privileged to have in their sincere relationship to Christ (the true Vine). "He is the Vine, we are the branches." (He said).

A person cannot (by human intellect) understand the true meaning of that analogy, but the Holy Spirit will give spiritual understanding to anyone, if they pay heed to what Jesus said (vs.4) "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."

If we will choose to abide in Christ, believing on Promises given in God's Salvation Message (telling us what Jesus' Atonement work on the Cross has done for us), then through our believing we can abide in the true Vine, Jesus Christ, (and He promises to abide in us so that we can bear spiritual fruit). That is the true resting place with God that we all need to be brought to and includes all provisions that God has for those who maintain faith in Him. Each blessing received by faith carries spiritual fruit with it, which enables the "growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord." (Hebr.12:14)

Our resting place (through faith in Christ) is like having a nest already made for us to take refuge in, (even in the face of trying or difficult conditions of the world). However, we have to be dumped from that nest at times when God tests our faith, but that is when we learn valuable lessons of growth and development in a true life of faith on God. Most importantly, it is the way we grow in true faith on God in this life, so we can be 'kept' and prepared by God for Eternal Life. (1 Pet.1:5 says, of those living by faith on Promises in God's Word) (and His testimony about what His Son's

Atonement work on the Cross has done for us), those who are kept by the power of God, through faith for salvation." (We need to trust God to be kept for salvation, just as we are to trust on Him for all needful things and Scriptural desires in this life).

We should be very thankful when God finds us worthy for Him to deal with us. The apostle James told us (Jam. 1:2-4), "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."

Jesus told us (John 15:5-6), "He who continues in me and in whom I continue, bears abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If any one does not continue in me, he is like the unfruitful branch which is at once thrown away and then withers up. Such branches they gather up and throw into the fire and they are burned."

Those words of Jesus are a valuable illustration of the importance of maintaining our position in Christ (or staying connected through faith to the true Vine, Jesus Christ).

When we first come to a knowledge of God and His Truth, we are deaf to His Word, and unable to see or understand spiritual Truth. We are not able to follow the directions that He gives in His Word. The apostle Paul explained (1 Cor.10:) that we are like the Israelites were in the desert. (Vs. 2-5) All were baptized into Moses in the cloud (that followed them), and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But, with most... of them God was not well-pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness."

Paul noted that these examples were recorded as admonition for us to take heed, and not to allow worldly things to become idols for us, by capturing our mind. (Nor should we follow evil ways that 'capture the minds' of a multitude of people in the world). (Verses 6-7), "And in this they became a warning to us, to teach us not to be eager, as they were eager, in pursuit of what is evil. And you must not be worshippers of idols, as some of them were. For it is written, "The People sat down to eat and drink (nothing wrong with that as long as we have control of our eating habits), (vs.7 continues and (then they) stood up to dance." (like the world).

(NIV says), "Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink," and (then) "got up to indulge in

pagan revelry."

By saying that Israelites were examples for us, the apostle was emphasizing that they could be likenesses of us, for human nature today is just like theirs. Our way of meeting situations and indulging in worldly activities will be like theirs, and we will act as they did (if we do not take heed to directions, warnings, and Bible examples). (We could easily allow worldly attractions to mean too much to us, which will become a snare and stumbling block to our spiritual growth and development in the Truth, and our being prepared for Eternal Life (instead of eternal torment in the Lake of Fire).

(Vs.8-12) "Nor may we be fornicators, like some of them who committed fornication and on a single day 23,000 of them fell dead. And do not let us test the Lord too far, as some of them tested Him and were destroyed by the serpents. And do not be discontented." (NKJV says do not be complainers) "as some of them were, and they were destroyed by the Destroyer." All this kept happening to them with a figurative meaning. (examples for our admonition) "but it was put on record by way of admonition to us, upon whom the ends of the Ages have come ... So then, let him who thinks he is standing securely, beware of falling."

It is thousands of years later, but human nature still reacts the same (in similar circumstances), if we are not familiar with God's Word, nor understand what His presence and power means to us. When we first come to know of God's Word and Truth, we can be fearful when facing difficult circumstances and be tempted to make wrong decisions and take wrong actions. It is result of not knowing God, and what His presence really means to us.

If we continue to study God's Word, however, and ask and believe for enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to understand His Salvation Message, about what the Atonement work of Christ on the Cross has accomplished for us, . we will soon learn that God really is "a refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." Therefore "we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." (Psalm 46:1-2)

[As we take our position of trust on God's written Promises, He will enable us to learn what His presence should really mean to us and enable us to enter into our Atonement rights (through our

faith on the Atonement work of His Son, Jesus Christ). A life of faith at Jesus' feet (at the foot of Calvary's Cross in faith), is the only place where spiritual growth can be received. That is, however, an absolute necessity in the true Christian life of faith, as well as for our preparation for Eternal Life.]

The natural inclination of our heart just wants to rest where we are, and not make spiritual progress through tests of our faith. Human nature does not want to be dumped out of a nest (so to speak), but God knows what is best for us to advance in the true Christian life of faith. And (being the perfect Teacher), God knows when to test us and just how fast He can take us along that road that prepares us to meet His Son on His return to take with Him those who remain faithful to the end (Matt.10:22).

God, (who loves us as much as He loves His only Son), knows all about those >false resting places where we would like to stay, but they are not the true rest as we might think they are. God's true resting place is only received through the continued teaching and training of the Holy Spirit (which enables us to get a true knowledge of God). Our spiritual progress is hindered when we assume our own resting place. We, by our efforts of self (and following plans of man), voluntarily take ourselves out of a place of trust on God. We would be shutting out the Holy Spirit from our life (Who is our only means or source of spiritual growth).

Paul assured Thessalonian believers, that "God has chosen you for Salvation, through ...the Spirit's ... sanctifying influence, ... and, your belief in the Truth." (They were not pre-destined, rather, chosen through their "belief in the Truth", chosen by God who knows of hidden unbelief in every person's heart. (John 6:64) "For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were that did not believe." (We can't fool God. He knows our heart).

(Hebrews 2:10-11, the writer says), "For it was fitting that He for whom, and through whom, all things exist, after He had brought many sons to glory, should perfect by suffering the Prince Leader who had saved them. For both He who sanctifies and those whom He is sanctifying,... have all one Father; and for this reason He is not ashamed to speak of them as His brothers."

In order for God to teach us how to trust on Him, He (in His mercy), will have to dump us out of our nest, so that we can learn how to bear spiritual

fruit, (and be led by Him to His true Resting Place). "If any one does not continue in me," Jesus said (meaning continue to believe in Him), "He is like the unfruitful branch which is at once thrown away and then withers up. Such branches they gather up and throw into the fire and they are burned." We must bear spiritual fruit and strive for that "growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord." (says, Heb. 12:14).

Humanly speaking, we would like to think we have all the spiritual light and strength we need, always have good health, all the money for expenses, and all temporal needs supplied. We would like to feel sure of all these things coming from seen sources (rather than to exercise faith in God). But those false resting places would be misplaced trust, which is idolatry, (instead of trusting on God for things in our life).

If our commitment to trust on God is sincere, however, God's love for us is so intense that He will not be satisfied until we are perfected (in faith), and we have every false resting place removed from our life here, so He can make us ready for Eternal Life. We must be brought by God into the true resting place in His will, not only for our happiness (received by faith) in this present life on earth, but for our Eternal Life hereafter.

The Bible story about the prophet Elijah, is an illustration for us, of how a stream became a false resting place to him, and the measures taken by God to deliver Elijah from that nest where he had settled (instead of him advancing in his faith). At that time, King Ahab of Israel was resolved to trust in everything and everybody besides God. The way God could reveal that idolatry, was to allow a famine to come on the land for 32 years. (1 Kings 17:1), "And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." (With no rain, not even any dew for 32 years, we can only imagine what kind of a dry, dusty place that turned into).

However, Elijah was a true child of God, and he had given his life back to God as every Christian must do. God was teaching him, leading him, and using him (as He would like to do with each one of us if we will allow Him). We must know in our heart that God has an exit from (or out of) any kind of trouble that comes. It doesn't make any difference

where it comes from, or what kind of problem it is, God always has a plan for deliverance and protection of His true people (who will trust Him).

God took care of Elijah during the famine (verses 2-5), AThen the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." (Elijah did according to the word of the Lord, and he stayed by the Brook Cherith.)

No question Elijah's human nature would think the same as you or I and would have liked to have spent the whole 32 years in such a safe, sure position of having his needs supplied. (Vs. 6 says), "The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook." (while others in Israel suffered through the famine).

Even though Elijah was a true child of God, he had to be tested in his faith, the same as God has to test every true believer today. (Vs. 7 says), "And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." Even the ravens stopped feeding him, so that was the end of Elijah's source of supplies.

We would (at first), be upset and worried about a situation like that. God didn't find the same means of supply for Elijah, like he had been enjoying. He did not bring rain to replenish the brook, nor did He bring back the ravens to feed him.

However, God had a way of escape for Elijah (just as He does for us if we do not turn to some other place of rest or source of supply). When the bottom drops out of some thing or plan, we are trusting in, God always has something better for us, which will be more valuable to us than any loss we may have suffered (if we wait patiently on God, knowing that He is faithful to His Promises). It is always a test for us to hold steady and to trust only Him for the things we need, but those circumstances are what perfects our faith on God. If we will remain faithful, He will lead us into a new, greater, and better source than we had. Most importantly, the spiritual blessing of coming to really know God (His awesome power to provide), is something of which the spiritual value cannot be put into words.

God gave Elijah the next step of His plan to

teach him in a life of trust and obedience to Him. Elijah obeyed God(vs.10-14), “So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” So, she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”

Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. “For thus says the Lord God of Israel: `The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.”

The widow believed the word from the Lord through Elijah, and she did as instructed. She first had to believe the word before she could act in faith on the Word (and the Lord did not fail His Promise. (vs 15) “So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.”

We all need to realize that when we lose any earthly thing that we have depended on, we should always be ready for God to lead us to something far more spiritually valuable to take its place. When we receive anything in God’s divine way, it always carries a spiritual blessing that enables us to know God better than before. Nothing could be more valuable (spiritually)than that, for it is a vital and necessary step in our preparation for Eternal Life. (through abiding in Christ, by faith).

SOME MAIN POINTS OF “GOD PROVIDES A RESTING PLACE IN HIS WILL & PLAN:”

- 1.. The human heart likes to make a nest in which to rest where we are, rather than to make spiritual progress, through tests of our faith.
- 2.. The example of the prophet Elijah and a widow of Zarephath is used, to enable us to realize how God has to dump us from our nest, so that we can also bear spiritual fruit through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit .. and, be prepared by God to receive Eternal Life. 3.. Emphasis is placed on continuing to abide in Christ (trusting on Him), so that we might learn spiritual Truths from God’s Word, ... to attain spiritual growth and produce spiritual fruit, so that we will not be thrown away (as Jesus said), and cast into the fire to be burned

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