

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG80 – The End Of Futility

I want to talk about futility. Now I know that doesn't sound like a happy subject, but nonetheless, it is extremely important that we understand the concept of futility as it is presented in the Scriptures – where it comes from, and how it is to be abolished. So I want to talk about the end of futility. For me, this subject drives the concept of the sons of God coming forth. It drives the concern and the deep burden that I personally have for us as believers to mature in God, to grow in God, to grow into the likeness of Christ and mature spiritually. I feel like futility must be ended; and it is only ended, as I understand it in the Scriptures, by sons of God coming forth to this place of maturity. So let's dive in.

I want to begin by reading out of Romans the eighth chapter, starting with verse 18. It says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." We must remember that. This great glory that is going to be revealed, the fulfillment that we are to have in God, is something that we look forward to; and it drives us on, no matter what we face. As Paul is saying here, "I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared." What sufferings was Paul referring to? I don't think he was talking about persecutions, those types of suffering that he went through on a natural level. When you read the entirety of Romans the eighth chapter, he is talking instead about being led by the Spirit, the spiritual things that take place; breaking out of a life of sin, and really growing up in God into the likeness of Christ in His maturity. So the suffering I believe he is referring to here is the suffering that we go through and face as humans living in this earth because of the futility that we live under. And I don't feel like we really emphasize it or realize it very often, but we exist day by day under what we call a spirit of futility, or just under futility, if that wording works better for you. So Paul is saying, "I consider the suffering of this present time"; he is talking about the suffering under a life of futility that every human lives under.

But it is a suffering. And I don't think we oftentimes recognize how much suffering we experience in life – how much of life's problems, how much of what people go through – is really related to the idea of the bondage of futility. I want to unpack that a little bit so we have a more clear understanding of where it came from, and kind of the elements that make up this futility and this suffering that we experience. Open your heart and your mind, and recognize that every day that we get up, every day that we go through life, we are battling. It is almost like life is an uphill battle at times, because we are always fighting against this futility that creation exists under.

Verses 19-21 say, "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Now this is really dynamic, what is being unveiled here for us to grasp. Creation was subjected to futility. Where does futility come from? It was imposed upon us by God. Because of the nature of humanity, God brought futility in order to stifle our ability to function, really, in many ways, because of the wickedness that is created out of the very nature of mankind as we live life. We are given free will. God had to give us free will. Why? Because He searches for those who will be pure worshipers of Him. Well, you can't be a worshiper if you are a robot. If you do not have a will of

your own, we would never be the worshipers God is looking for. So God gave man at creation a free will; and in that, things began to go wrong, which we will read about in a few minutes here, when we get to the Scriptures in Genesis. But creation was subjected, not willingly. Creation did not want to be subjected, the creation itself. And when it is talking about creation, it is literally meaning all of creation – the heavens, the earth, mankind, animals, everything surrounding us in the created world is subject to this futility. God is the one who brought futility. He didn't bring it with evil intent. He brought it with hope that by virtue of really our striving against the futility, we would come into the relationship and the walk with Him that would allow us the ability, as we become and mature as sons of God, to literally break the futility off of creation, to deliver creation from futility. And that is what these verses are saying. "The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." We must see this, that futility is broken, the corruption is broken, by the sons of God, the children of God coming forth in maturity. This is why it is so important that we grow and mature, and that we expand in our walk with God, to have the kind of authority that we need and ability that we need, in our prayer, in our spirits, to break this futility which all creation is subject to.

Verses 22-23: "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves," talking about humanity, "we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit." When we receive the Holy Spirit, it is a cry in us. And it is not just a vague cry; it is a cry because of the futility that we suffer under, and the drive to see that futility broken. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." Our physical bodies are under futility, and at some point that futility will be broken. Again, we see that futility every day – we grow older, our health goes downhill – all of these negative things that happen under the restraint and the confinement of futility that rests on us as well as all of creation.

Verse 24 says, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?" Our salvation – we have been saved, but we relate too often to salvation as the forgiveness of sin. Yes, our sins are forgiven us; but there is something else that salvation is about. "He appears a second time without reference to sin," it says. He is not coming because of sin. He is coming to break futility off of, to bring us to the place where creation is released in true total salvation from the futility that it has been under. This is the hope. And a hope that is seen is not hope. We don't hope for something that we have. Our hope and our drive of growing and maturing in the Lord is for things to transpire that we have not yet seen. But don't confuse it – we have seen the forgiveness of sin. We are forgiven of our sins. But now we are growing as the sons, the children of God, to a place where the authority will rest upon us to deliver all of creation from futility.

Verse 25-28 say, "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." This goes back to this waiting on the Lord that I have been talking about. One of the things we are waiting for is for this hope of release from futility to be ours. "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should." See, we don't know how to do this. We don't know how to intercede. We don't know how to pray to bring this release. "We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." See, this may be a negative thing that God subjected all creation to futility. But He is not an evil god and a bad god, as people would say. Instead, He did this

in hope, to bring about good; to bring about His end purposes, which is His Kingdom manifesting on earth and all creation being freed from the spirits of futility.

I want to read just a couple of Scriptures that relate to this idea of futility and vanity. These are out of Ecclesiastes, which of course is Solomon, which is the wisest man on earth. And part of the wisdom of Solomon was to be able to actually perceive the futility that rested upon creation, upon himself, upon all mankind. And in Ecclesiastes – which some people just consider so negative they do not read it. But it is not just negative. It is really a dissection to try to bring about a clarity in our own thinking of how deep this futility goes, and how totally we ourselves, as well as everything around us in the physical world, is in fact subject to the spirit of futility. In Ecclesiastes 2:11 he says, "Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity." Vanity is the same word in Hebrew for futility. "All was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." Now think about this – this is Solomon. This is the guy who built the Temple. The Lord came down out of heaven and appeared in the Temple in shekinah glory, and no one was able to stand and minister, and He claimed that this was going to be His abiding place forever. This guy accomplished many, many things. He built palaces; he developed Jerusalem after David, his father, passed away. So when he talks about the works of his hands and the things that he accomplished, they were things we could only dream of doing in our lifetime. Yet when he observes them through this lens of wisdom, and is able to discern the spirit of futility resting on all creation, he calls it out. And he said, "Behold, all of it is vanity and striving after wind, and it has no profit to it." See, nothing will matter until we see creation delivered from futility.

In Ecclesiastes 2:17 he goes on to say, and I know this is kind of harsh, "So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind." Solomon saw no matter what he accomplished, how great it was in the sight of man, the truth is, when looked at through the lens of God's eyes, everything in this creation is now under futility, waiting for hope. So you could ask Solomon, "What is the one work that could be done under heaven that would not be futile?" The breaking of futility itself would be his answer.

Ecclesiastes 2:15, I will just read this one more. "Then I said to myself, 'As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?' So I said to myself, 'This too is vanity.'" I had to read this one because we all think of Solomon as the wisest man who lived; it was God's gift of wisdom that was given to him. No one could stand against the wisdom of Solomon. And yet he looked at the very wisdom itself, and said, "This too is vanity." In other words, everything is vanity until all of creation is delivered from the vanity and the futility that rests upon it.

I want to go now to Genesis, and let's talk about the first incident. In this podcast, I want to try to cover very quickly – and believe me, this could take a book to really thoroughly understand. So I apologize in the beginning for the fact that this is going to be just scratching the surface of this reality of futility that rests upon all creation. But I want to cover three major incidents in which this futility is brought to bear against the creation. As Romans was saying, and Paul understood, this futility, this vanity, was brought about by God. It was brought about with the intention that at some point it would be broken. So He did it in hope. And the hope that God has is the hope of our growing up in Him, and that this futility, as we grapple with it, will literally drive us into God; because we see that our becoming like Him, and our being changed and transformed into His image, is the only way that creation will be freed from this futility.

We are going back historically now to this first incident of futility being brought to bear upon the earth. And it happens, of course, in Genesis, in the Garden of Eden. So I am going to start at Genesis three,

with verses 13-15. "Then the Lord God said to the woman" – now they have just disobeyed God and they ate the fruit which they were directed not to eat, and so God has come and is speaking with Adam and Eve about what is going on. He is addressing them, He is addressing satan – "'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you.'" See, futility is a curse, and it is brought through a curse; and this curse comes from God. God here is cursing satan, the serpent. And He curses other things as we go along. So futility is a result of this curse that is brought, and that curse rests upon creation until it is broken. "'Cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and the dust you will eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.'" Now think about this – part of this curse of futility is this battle that we find ourselves in as humankind, but especially as believers, with satan, the adversary. He is made here, by God, our adversary. And we find ourselves in this battle and conflict with him all of our lives. Much of humanity does not recognize that there is an adversary, that there is evil, and that they are up against that evil, and they are caught into a battle that they did not choose, but was brought to bear upon all mankind; and it was brought to bear right here: "I will put enmity." In other words, you will be at war, with yourself and this woman, her seed and your seed; in other words, carrying it down beyond Adam and Eve through all mankind. "And you will bruise him on the heel and he will bruise you on the head." This of course is also prophetic about Christ coming, bringing an end to satan.

Verses 16-19: "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.' Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it"; cursed is the ground because of you.'" Here is futility, the futility on all the physical earth. People are so throwing up their hands, "What, what is going on with the climate change and all of the things about the earth?" This has been going on for a long time; this didn't just start with the invention of the automobile and fossil fuels. This is the curse. There is a curse on creation. There is a curse on the ground. There is a curse on the earth where it does not function as it was made to function, when the Garden and the earth were originally created by God. He said, "'Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'" Now this again is part of the futility – death. Death is part of futility. It was not originally in God's plan that man die. We were supposed to be able to grow and mature. Walking with Him in the Garden and being taught daily, Adam and Eve would come to a place of maturity and be able to eat from the tree of life, and they would have lived forever. So part of the curse is futility in which we return to dust, because from dust we were taken. But let's not forget – it was not originally God's plan that we were created to die. We were created as His image. What is His image? Eternal life. He lives eternally; and we were likewise to grow and to be able to partake of that tree of life and live eternally with Him. Therefore, Christ comes to bring back our relationship to the Father, and to open once again the door of eternal life for mankind.

Verses 20-21: "Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them." So here we see salvation being brought to Adam and Eve through the death of another – which of course is signaling what eventually happens through Christ for us. Yeshua on the cross dies in order that we might be

clothed with forgiveness, with salvation. God literally had to kill an animal. It says, "God made garments of skin for Adam." How did He get skin? He had to kill an animal. It is devastating to see death comes into this great creation because of the sin of Adam and Eve, because of the sin of mankind. So God kills an animal, makes a garment to clothe him. And God does that with His Son. He sends His Son to the cross to die. He kills His Son on the cross, in order that from Him might be made a garment of salvation that we are able to put on. Thank You, Lord, for Your great plan. See, this is reflecting the hope that He had when He brought about this futility onto all creation.

He goes on, verses 22-23, "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'—Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden." Here we see two more aspects of futility being brought about. One thing is, God recognizes, "Now, man does understand; he has the knowledge, the knowing of good and evil." We do have innately in us from this event knowledge of good and evil. So when man acts evilly, he is acting out of a choice to do that. He has a choice by his free will. We can act with evil intent, or we can act with good intent – that is our choice. But God said he had that choice. He knew that man was going to choose to live mostly an evil expression of life, and fall into sin more than what he already had. Therefore, He had to remove man from the Garden, and He had to protect man from the tree of life. Or maybe it would be better said, He had to protect the tree of life from man, so that we would not have access. So we lost our access to live eternally through this curse of futility. And we also lost our ability to live in and with the Presence of God, because man was driven from the Garden. God stayed in the Garden; man was driven out.

We lost so many things here; but each one of these is an element of that which makes up the totality of futility, when we refer to what futility is. And we can see how devastating it is, and we can see how it affects every moment of our life. Every time a woman brings forth a child in pain, it is by virtue of this curse of futility that was brought. Every time we have to go work to earn our bread, that again is futility. Why? Because originally God provided all food. He provided everything in the Garden, and they didn't labor against futility to eat. So all of our lives, we see, are affected by this reality of futility that surrounds us and binds us.

I am going to go now to Genesis the eleventh chapter, and talk about a second event that brought another level of futility into the world in which we all now live. Genesis 11, starting at verses 1-4, says, "Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words." So obviously we are going into the story about the Tower of Babel, as it is called. "It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.' And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, 'Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name.'" Here they are competing with the name of Yehovah. They are trying to make their own name, and to glorify it above the name of God. There is no greater sin than that; because the Ten Commandments start with, "I am the Lord your God. There is no other god, and you are to have no other god before you." Here man is trying to make himself out to be God, which of course is following the pattern of satan's influence – just like Adam and Eve had that influence – because he also competed with God to raise himself above God. And so obviously, his influence on man would make us tend to do the same thing.

Verses 5-9 say, "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they

began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth." So now here, what you see is instead of oneness, we have division. Instead of communication, we have misunderstanding and confusion; which as we know, brings division. So man, instead of being all together, was scattered.

We see the beginning of nations now. And what happens with the nations? Well, the nations are separated by language, and they are separated by disagreement and misunderstanding. So what do they do? We war against one another. We fight against one another. We try to take over one another's territory. We have lived from the very beginning, from this time on, under war and rumor of war. War has never stopped. And it goes beyond war; we see it in every aspect of our lives. We see it in the church. How many different schisms and divisions are there in the church? We see it especially happening today. It is strange in the day that we live in, because it is almost impossible to find people who are willing to sit down and discuss in a reasonable way, with a right spirit and an open mind, to find how someone else thinks or feels. Nobody wants to do that. And therefore things escalate immediately from disagreement to violence; and we find ourselves in that world. Violence surrounds us; road rage surrounds us; everything. It is amazing how it is impossible to talk or to debate or to discuss ideas that are different from your own. And when we do talk, it seems impossible to come to an understanding of one another. This is a curse. It is a curse that God brought upon us, that we are not able to be one. And yet at the same time, Christ said that we should be one in Him. And only in Him are we going to find the ability to mature into His likeness and image, and be able to communicate with one another, and become one, even as He is one.

How important is this issue of oneness? I'll tell you how important it is. Go to Psalm 133, and in this oneness of the brethren is where God brings the blessing of life forever. Eternal life is going to spring out of oneness. And yet it is impossible just to try to achieve oneness; we must first break this curse that was brought upon the earth. It was brought by God Himself. And again, as Romans said, it was brought in hope, that we would overcome this curse. We would break it and see it broken off of ourselves, and off of all of creation, until there is absolutely an ability to achieve the oneness with one another that Christ spoke of. As He and the Father are one, we are to be one; but to try to come into oneness and agreement and discussion, we find ourselves up against this very curse of futility. It must be broken. But at least we can look here, we can understand where it came from, why it exists; because man, again, was seeking to go off track and build a name for himself and a city for himself, everything leaving God out to create a kingdom of man. God is not going to allow a kingdom of man. He is going to allow one kingdom, His – the Kingdom under Christ the Lord, who is going to rule and reign on the throne of David as was promised. But we must see this spirit broken. Don't try to just come into oneness to fix things. We first must break the spirit. You have got to bind the strong man. You have got to bind the futility, and then plunder the house.

Lastly, I want to talk about the curse that came through the prophecy of Isaiah. Because again, these three curses, I feel like, are such the cornerstone of futility that we are facing in this timeframe that we are in; and that is why I am focusing on them. They are not the only elements of futility, but for me, right now, I feel like, let's start with these, and then see where the Holy Spirit leads us.

We are talking about the prophecy that came through Isaiah the prophet. So we go to Isaiah, the sixth chapter, starting at verse 8. This was at the time of his commission. As you remember, when Isaiah was commissioned, he saw the Lord. He was taken into the heavenly realm and he saw the Lord high and lifted up, and he saw the whole heavenly host surrounding the throne of God. We get to verses 8-13 and it says, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here I am. Send me!' He said, 'Go, and tell this people: "Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand." Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.' Then I said, 'Lord, how long?' And He answered, 'Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate, the Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, and it will again be subject to burning, like the terebinth or an oak whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump.'" So again, the last part here is expressing the hope that God has that there will be a remnant of people that come into an ability to see and hear and understand.

This is something that I really want to see broken. Because, again, we live so deeply affected by this spirit of futility in our day-to-day. People can't read the Word of God. They can't understand it. They can't hear it, whether it is brought through the Scriptures, or through the voice of someone who is preaching the Word or testifying about the Gospels. Their eyes are blinded, their ears are deafened, and their hearts are hardened against the Word of God. We see this, and we are going to see it more and more in this day and age. It must be reversed. We are in a time when the persecution of Christians is growing by tremendous percentages, and the closing off of the society to God and the things of God becoming illegal. We are seeing Christianity becoming illegal, literally, in nations, because to follow faith as is taught in the Scripture is to violate the civil laws of countries. And that is happening, unfortunately, more and more in America. It is happening, devastatingly so, in Canada. In other places of the world we are seeing the same reality, that people's hearts are closed. They cannot see the need for God. They cannot hear the Word of God. They cannot believe in what God wants to do in their lives personally and nationally, because of this curse that was put upon mankind.

Jesus repeated it. Yeshua talked to the disciples. In Matthew 13, verses 10-11, it says, "And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' Yeshua answered them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.'" We are in a time when we need to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, because we are in the days when I believe God is wanting to bring that Kingdom to earth. We are at the time of His return. We need to understand the Kingdom of God. And yet, because of this curse that was brought upon mankind by Isaiah, we see it almost impossible to understand what it is that God is doing in this age. But there is hope. Again, we always see this ray of hope. And Yeshua had it with the disciples. He was saying, "To you, it has been granted." There is a granting that will bring a breaking of this futility that rests upon our eyes and our ears and our hearts where the Word of God and the promises and the Gospel are concerned.

Verses 12-16 say, "'For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled.'" So Yeshua Himself is recognizing and letting them understand that what futility is resting upon the people He is talking to literally was placed

upon them by the prophet Isaiah; and that is where this futility sprang forth and entered into the age. And we are still under it. And it must be removed. So we have to believe that there will be a time when there is a reversal.

Yeshua went on to say, ""For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them." But blessed are your eyes, because they see." And I bless your eyes. I bless my eyes. Lord, let us be of those that see. Begin to break this futility. We begin to cry out, like Romans said. As creation is crying out, so do we cry out under this bondage to futility, seeking to be free, interceding. Remember, he said we don't know how to pray as we ought, but we know how to pray in the Holy Spirit. We know how to pray in tongues. We know how to cry out to God with this deep understanding. If we understand futility, we are able to cry out with an expression to God, saying, "It must be removed, and let it be now, Lord. Let it be taken from us now. Let all creation be set free – not just us, but everything You created. Let it be loosed from this spirit of futility. You brought it forth in hope. So if we can return to You with all of our hearts, if we can seek You with all of our hearts to find You, then we believe that You will fulfill Your Word and grant the breaking of futility off of us, Your people, and off of all creation."

Just a couple of points to re-emphasize. We live under God's imposed futility. But God imposed that futility in hope. And it will be the fulfillment of the sons of God coming forth to end that futility as it exists today. Lord help us to enter into it, and be the ones who can see all creation set free. Amen.