

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG87 – A Passover Of Deliverance

Preparing for the Feast of Passover this year, I have been very burdened about the whole concept of deliverance. And so I want to address that in this podcast today in speaking about the Feast of Passover, believing very much that God is going to bring for us a Passover of deliverance during this year. I believe that we celebrate the Feast as Christians because each of these feasts has a divine window and purpose in God. I do believe that there are times and seasons when God is specifically doing things, and He is opening very specific doors for us as believers to move into. The seasons of the feasts are very much, I believe, one of these times when God is going to do things for us that we really cry out to Him for.

I want to give an illustration of this idea that God does have times when He is moving, and it is outside of what seems to be the normal. So I am going to use the story in John 5, starting at verse 1 you will find the story: "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." So we understand that this may or may not have been the Feast of Passover. Some believe it was Passover, others believe it was Tabernacles. But the Lord, as He was an observant Jew, goes up to Jerusalem to celebrate the time of the Feast. Verse 2: "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in the Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes." And of course, this is very significant to the story, because in Hebrew, this name is *beit hesed*, meaning the *house of love*. It is a very, very deep word in the Hebrew, which is actually so deep there are people who have written their entire doctoral thesis about the word hesed. It is an expression of God's love which goes beyond really our ability to even fathom, and that is where this miracle or these miracles were taking place.

In verses 3-9, it says. "In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted. A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, 'Do you wish to get well?' The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.' Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day." Here we have a very interesting story, which again, I am using to illustrate the reality that God moves in special ways at certain times, and things happen. Here we see different events kind of coming together. This was during the time of a Feast; it was also a Sabbath day; and it was in this house of hesed where the overwhelming love and lovingkindness of God was shown to people. So God would send an angel every once in a while to stir up the water; whoever stepped into the water first was instantly healed of whatever disease that they had been burdened with. And here we see this man that for thirty-eight years – talk about being faithful to the Word, and having a faith for your healing – this guy had been coming for thirty-eight years, waiting for his healing to take place. So there was a drive, a cry in his heart, to be delivered from the disease and the sickness that bound him, which made him unable to walk.

I just want to point out, it is like these times of the Feast. There are times when God makes things available – Himself, His healing, His Presence. It may not always be there, but there are special times when He comes and is ready to meet you, and ready to work. And I think that it is important for us to recognize that when we speak about the Feast – because many Christians ask, “Why do we as Christians celebrate the Jewish feasts?” And I would say, well, number one, they are biblical feasts. They are in the Bible. They are part of the Bible. They are commanded for us in the Scriptures that we keep these times. And we are not just keeping these times by some rote calendar celebration; but instead, what we really are doing is exercising our faith. When we recognize what these times are and what God has given them for, then we come to them with a deep faith in our heart, looking for things to happen. Just like this man who came daily to the pool, waiting for his miracle. We should have that kind of anticipation as we approach the feasts and the celebrations that God commands us to participate in.

I believe very much that we as Christians should come to the times of the biblical feasts and we should engage with them. We should find our celebration with them in very special way; dig out of the Scriptures what is the meaning for us as Christians; and then we should participate, believing God to meet us in one of these very special windows of time – just as this window was when He would send an angel to stir up the water. So what is special for us, then, when we talk about the Feast of Passover? Well, I think there are two points that we anticipate with Passover and that we see through the Scriptures. The first is that we know, by the blood of the Lamb, we are delivered from death in Passover. That was very much the celebration. They would kill the lamb, catch the blood in a bowl, and they would put it over the doorposts; and those homes that had the blood of the lamb over the doorposts, when the death angel went through Egypt that night, they were saved. In every other household, the firstborn was slain within that household. So here we have something that obviously is very meaningful for us as Christians, the fact that by the blood of a lamb, they were saved from death. And we know that by the blood of Yeshua HaMashiach, we are also saved from our sins. We are washed of our sins, and we are saved from eternal death and brought into life in God. So this aspect of Passover runs all through the story. And again, I am encouraging you to read through the Scriptures about Passover. Find them, and let them come alive to you as you study the Bible.

Another aspect of Passover which is very much part of the anointing – in fact, a special anointing surrounding Passover – is that of deliverance. It was a time of deliverance. Israel had spent four hundred years in the bondage of slavery to Pharaoh and Egypt. They had served under the brutality of task masters, and it was a very difficult, if not horrible, time for them. And Passover comes to deliver them out of their slavery, to deliver them out of their bondage. Yes, there was the blood of the lamb that saved them from death on the night of Passover; but there was also the reality of deliverance that came, and they were freed after four hundred years from the slavery that they had suffered under. This anointing of deliverance is a very real part of Passover, and it is the thing that the Lord has been burdening my heart with. I would love for us to see a Passover of deliverance in this year. I believe that because it is Passover, it is one of those unique times in which God is going to move. And so as we look at the story, we should expect salvation. We should expect a freedom and deliverance in our lives. All of these things should come alive for us, and we should have something unique in God be our portion as we celebrate this time of Passover.

Now, there was a reason that God brought deliverance to Israel. I believe there is always a reason for Him bringing deliverance to His people. Because when we are in bondage and in slavery, we are serving what we are in bondage to; and because of that bondage, we are not free to serve God fully. And I think that part of the reason I feel so burdened for this Passover is because I believe that for so many of God's

people – even though saved, forgiven of sin, covered over by the blood of the lamb – there is still a bondage that I see in the body of Christ that is really very disturbing. There are many things to be in bondage to in this world. People are in bondage to alcohol; drugs; some people are in bondage to food; many are in bondage to wrong relationships that they have, which literally hold them prisoner. There is bondage to fear, depression, illness; bondage to religion that has deception woven through it. There are many other things, and you can probably name more than what I am just bringing up here. But I simply want to illustrate: I believe the body of Christ still suffers under a slavery and a bondage that we should no longer be serving. And I want to see God, really during this time of Passover, set us free. I believe this is the reason that we have a Messiah – to set us free, to loose us from those things which we serve and we should not be serving.

I want to read a few Scriptures about this idea; and this is what we see, through the Word of God, that Yeshua came to the earth for, in order to perform. I will start with Luke the fourth chapter, at verse 16. It says, “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.” What we are seeing here in this verse is very interesting. It was the custom of Yeshua to go to synagogue. He was here in Nazareth where He was raised, and so because He was in that synagogue and they knew Him, He was brought up to read. Someone who enters a synagogue, a Jew who enters a synagogue that people are familiar with, will be invited up to read part of the portion or part of the Haftorah, the Prophets that go along with the portion of that week. So this is what was happening here; Yeshua, Jesus, was brought up by the leaders of the synagogue and He was asked to read. That is what was transpiring.

In verses 17-21 it says, “And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.’ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” In other words, He is saying, “I am the one who was sent by the Father. And I was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight; to set free those who are oppressed.” Yeshua came as the Messiah to free us from slavery, to loosen us from oppression, so that we would no longer be captives to anything – whether it be drugs or other aspects of life that we just finished naming. God wants us to be free. And Jesus, Yeshua, came to set us free, to set the captives free. He came to fulfill the prophecies.

We see those prophecies in Isaiah 61:1. This is what He was quoting in the synagogue: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me” – in other words, the anointed one is Mashiach, Messiah – “to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners.” It is time that we no longer be prisoners to these other things that we serve. We are to be free. “Whom the Lord sets free is free indeed,” the Scripture says, and we should in Christ be free. We shouldn't be under bondage. We shouldn't be captive. We shouldn't be prisoners to anything other than the Lord.

He goes on in verses 2-3 to say, “To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning.” God is proclaiming prophetically, way before Christ ever came into the earth, why He was being sent. And that is one of the reasons we see Passover is such a

deep expression of the Lord and what He was sent for as Messiah. God was very specific about what He was to do. Yes, He was to heal. He was to open the blind eyes. He was to open the deaf ears. He was to heal the sick. But He was to set the prisoners free. He was to turn the captives loose from everything that had them bound in those days. That is one of the reasons why, when Yeshua came, they wondered if He was going to do away with the Roman oppression over Israel and set them free. Because they were captive by the Roman soldiers, and they expected the Messiah to set the captives free. So it wasn't ridiculous when they talked to Yeshua and asked Him if He was going to bring an end to the Roman rule, and set them free from the oppression and the slavery that they had in serving Rome at that time. It was very reasonable, because they understood the prophecies of Isaiah. And not only that, they have, again, Christ reading the very Scriptures themselves in the synagogue, and saying, "Today these words are fulfilled in your ears."

We have these same prophecies in Isaiah 42. He said, "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations." This is Isaiah 42, verses 1 through 7, and I encourage you to go and read the whole of these Scriptures; because again, they very much have to do with this idea that Yeshua was the manifestation of Passover. He was saving us from death through the blood of the Lamb. He was delivering the slaves from their bondage. And He came to release us, no matter how bad off we are. I love verse 3, it says, "A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice." So, He is coming, and you can say that you are in a terrible need for deliverance; maybe the things that you are in bondage to just seem impossible to get free from. But I want to emphasize to you, this is why He came. This is what was prophesied about Yeshua, about Jesus. He came to set us free. He is not going to quench or put out that dimly burning wick. It may just seem like it is hardly smoldering any longer, but He came to bring you back to life. He came to set you free from everything that is an oppression, everything that is a bondage, everything that you are in slavery to. This is Passover. This is why we, as the body of Christ, need to be celebrating the Passover time. We need to be entering in with all of our hearts, with a heart cry unto the Lord, saying, "Deliver Your people, Lord, in this hour!" It is not enough that we be forgiven of our sin, we must be delivered from our bondage. He came to release us from the jail that we are locked into, and to fully set us free so that we might serve Him.

In verse 7, it concludes by saying, "To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison." We are in such need. I believe, in this day and age, even in the church, in the body of Christ, we are in a need for the prisoners to be brought out of the dungeon; to be brought up from the darkness of the prison cells and to be brought into His true light; and to be released to serve Him with all of our hearts. This, for me, is what Passover is all about, and it is what I am contending with the Lord to see happen for us in this time.

The story of Passover really begins in Exodus the third chapter, when Moses sees the burning bush and turns aside to behold the marvel of this bush that was burning, but not being consumed. In verses 4-7 of Exodus 3, it says, "When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said also, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.'" I want this to be the sense that we have as we come into the season of Passover this year: God is seeing the suffering of His people.

People can love God, but still be locked into horrible bondage and addiction to many, many things. I am sure all of Israel loved the Lord. They believed in the Word that He had spoken to Abraham. They knew that He was their God – He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their fathers. But they were suffering miserably under the taskmasters, and they cried out to Him in their affliction. And now God comes to answer the prayer. We must understand this and have faith in Passover. Believe. This is a special window of time when God comes to answer your prayer. If you are crying out in your suffering because of the bondage that you are under, believe God is ready to bring deliverance.

Verses 7-8, again, “The Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’” And so it is with you. There should be a cry for deliverance, and there should be a faith that God Himself will come down. Yeshua will come down, and He will answer that cry. He will bring you up out of a land of slavery. He has the power to subject all things unto Himself, and that includes you. It includes the power to break the bondage of whatever you are addicted to, whatever you are suffering under, whatever you are suffering from; whether it be illness or any other thing, He has the power to subject all things unto Himself. And He is not just coming to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians; I would translate that to say, He is coming to release us from this age that we live in, because we suffer under the things that are taking place in this time. But He is also coming to bring us up to a land, to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He is coming to release you into His Presence. He is coming to release you so that you will be free to serve Him. And that is what we should remember about this time of Passover. They were not just delivered. They were delivered for a reason, and that reason was to serve the Lord. Whatever our bondage, it stops us and makes us unable to serve Him and Him alone. That is why God will come and deliver you. If your cry is to serve Him, if your drive is to serve Him, and if you know that whatever your bondage or your addiction or your problem or your illness is, if it is stopping you from being totally free to serve Him, He will come and break that bondage.

In Acts the seventh chapter, we have this wonderful defense that Steven gives. In Acts 7, verses 6-7, Stephen says, “But God spoke to this effect, that his descendants would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. “And whatever nation to which they will be in bondage I Myself will judge,” said God, “And after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.”” So Steven understood it. He understood the reason for Passover. God was not just delivering them to deliver them; and God is not going to deliver us for no reason. He is going to deliver us so that we are able to come out of our bondage and serve Him.

In Exodus 10:24-26, it says, “Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, ‘Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.’ But Moses said, ‘You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the Lord our God. Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the Lord our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the Lord.’” We should have this in our hearts. As we approach Passover, if we are going to cry for deliverance, let there be a recognition in our own hearts: We don't really know what demands the Lord will put upon us to serve Him. We don't know what it is going to take to serve Him with all of our heart. But we know that we must go out with everything that we have. We must take a whole heart and a drive with us that we are going to serve Him, no matter what His demand is.

Moses understood the reason for deliverance; he did. He recognized that they had to take everything, and they had to go out ready to serve God, whatever that meant. And he knew that he wasn't aware at the moment what all it would mean. As we enter into a walk with God, we never know what He is going to demand of us. It is like signing a blank check – He will fill it in later. That is what Moses understood. And we too, if we are going to cry out to the Lord, if we are going to believe for a Passover of release and deliverance, we must know in our heart that the understanding fully of what we must do in our service to the Lord has not been clarified yet. So we go, signing a blank check, saying, "Lord, whatever You want from me. If You bring my freedom and deliverance, I am willing to serve You, and to serve You only."

In Exodus 20, starting at verses 1-6, is where we find the Ten Commandments. And it is interesting that they are based on this same principle: "Then God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness' – hesed – "to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.'" The Ten Commandments were based on the fact that God had delivered them from Egypt, from the house of slavery. And now He was saying, "You are not going to have any other gods before Me. You cannot serve anything else. You can have no idols. You can have nothing else that you are given to except Me. I bought you out of your slavery, and I delivered you for this purpose, that you serve Me, and you serve Me only."

In Joshua 24, it talks about this same idea, starting at verses 14-15: "'Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'" Joshua was set. He had one purpose in being delivered out of slavery and coming into Canaan land, and that was to serve the Lord with all of his heart. And remember, Joshua was one who survived the wilderness and came to this place; and he made it through because of this one drive – he was determined to serve the Lord, and serve Him only.

In verses 16-18, "The people answered and said, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. The Lord drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.'" This was the heart of many who were determined after having lived through this bondage, having their parents live through the bondage of Egypt; they were set to serve God only.

As we come to this Passover season, I really loose a cry in your heart: whatever bondage you have, whatever you are enslaved to, whatever has imprisoned you in your life, begin to cry out to the Lord – but don't do it just because of your suffering. Do it because of your determination that if He delivers you, you will serve Him, and serve Him only. I wish all those who came out of Egypt had that cry, because they would have lived through the wilderness, as did Joshua. But because they were not set in their heart to serve the Lord and do whatever He asked them to do, they ended up dying in the

wilderness. We don't want to be delivered in this day and age only to die because we refuse to serve Him only.

I believe this Passover could be a dramatic time of release for the body of Christ. I believe we could see deliverances on a level that we have not seen before. I know we have seen many miracles; but I think the greatest need of miracle in this hour that we live in is the miracle need of deliverance from those things that enslave us. Are you tired of being a slave? tired of being in bondage? Cry to the Lord. But be prepared in your heart, because when He delivers you, you must serve Him, and Him only.

Some final points about this idea of our Passover. Passover is about the blood of the Lamb that saves Israel from death, and it is about the deliverance from slavery so that they are free to serve God. God delivered them because He heard their cry, and God brought deliverance so that they would be free to serve Him. When they served other gods, He judged them. I believe, during this Passover, God is ready to bring deliverance; but we better be ready in our hearts to serve Him only.