

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG22 – Occupy Until He Comes

Someone recently asked me about the Rapture and when it would take place relative to the Tribulation. I chose to answer the question from a perspective of spiritual maturity, rather than answering it theologically. Now they say that there is no such thing as a bad question, but there definitely is such a thing as a wrong focus. In these days of transition and tribulation which proceed the establishment of God's Kingdom, we must have a clear and fixed focus on who we are and what the will of God is for our lives.

I want to jump right into some Scriptures that will help us understand this. In Luke 19:11, the Lord brings a parable. He says,

While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'" (Luke 19:11–13)

If we look at the Scripture in the King James Version, it is a little bit of a different wording. And it simply says that He called ten servants and delivered to them ten pounds and said to them, "Occupy until I come." I like that translation in this instance because it gives this emphasis of what we are to do. Christ is giving a parable of a nobleman who went into a country to receive a kingdom. And that is exactly what Christ did. Following the cross He ascended into heaven to establish the Kingdom in heaven, knowing that He is going to return to this earth. And He called His disciples, and He gave them these talents that they were to work with.

But He said, "Do business with this until I come." And again in King James, it uses a little bit of different terminology. It says, "Occupy until I come." But the emphasis Christ is giving is, "I've gone into the right hand of the Father, and I am working to fully establish My Kingdom in the heavenly realm. And when that is accomplished, I will return. But until I return, your focus is to do business with the talents that I've given you and focus upon what is necessary to be accomplished in this earth, so that as I return, I am able to establish My Kingdom on this earth."

So this concept is something important for us to realize. We should not be worried about a rapture or what's going to happen and looking off into the heavens. It concerns me at times because I feel people really are just worried about reading the book of Revelation and worried about the idea of tribulation and worried about what we are going to go through.

I think we need to, as difficult as it can be, just trust the Lord for what is going to happen in our days. We've seen the saints of God all through history go through very difficult times. And we likewise are preparing our own hearts. This is why I'm concerned about our spiritual maturity is

that we should be preparing ourselves to walk through whatever we must experience and accomplish in this earth for the Lord during this time period that we are in. So we are to do business with the talent that He's given us until He returns. We are to occupy until He comes.

I want to look at Ephesians the fourth chapter. Starting at verse 11, it says, "He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers." Now this is talking about after His ascension. And what did He do? He gave these gift ministries of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service. There is something that He wanted us prepared to do in this earth, in these days, looking forward to His return and the establishment of His Kingdom—not looking, waiting, and focusing. We are not to sit back and say, "When is He coming? How is He coming? What will take place as He returns?" No, we are worried about every day what we should be accomplishing with the gifts and the preparation that He is giving us, "For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12–16).

As we read these verses, we see there's a lot of work to be done from where we are now until the coming of the Lord. We need to see the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, the building up of the Body of Christ, that we come to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. When I look around at the Body of Christ at this point, when I look around at the Church, I could say we are a long way from this, and we need our concentration not on some rapture and not what is going to happen in a rapture. We need to be concerned about what is taking place right now on a daily basis surrounding us prior to the Lord's return.

We are not to be children. In verse 14,

No longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:14–15)

We have a lot to do here. It's because of every person who is supplying their talent into the working of God on the earth in these days, in these moments prior to His return that is really what our focus should be. We must attain to the proper working of each individual part because that is what causes our gift being exercised in the Body of Christ; it is what causes the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in love. And this is who we are in this day. This is what we are to be accomplishing. He has given the apostles and prophets in preparation for us, but we also realize that they are preparing us to do the work. They are preparing us to do the job. And it's each of us individually, as we are moving in the gift that He has given us and

preparing us to do, that the Body comes to its place of maturity. And we can see this great return of Christ in the establishment of His Kingdom.

In Ephesians 2, starting at verse eight, it says,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8–10)

I mean, grasp what's being said here. We are His workmanship. We are created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand. He has already predetermined these works. He has given us these gifts and these callings that we are to walk in. He has prepared beforehand that which we would walk in. So we have these works that He has prepared for us and that we are called to walk in.

I want to look at John the seventeenth chapter now. This is Christ speaking. He said, “I glorified You on the earth.” He is speaking to the Father. “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:4–5). There will be that time where we are with the Lord forever. But in the meantime, as Christ, He said, “I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You gave Me.”

Christ had a work to do, and He was driven to do that. And He accomplished that work. And so we likewise have been given these gifts, these callings from God, and we are on this earth to be focused on the completion of the work which He has given us to do. And I know sometimes we don't feel worthy, and we feel like we've got problems, but I want to look at the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, starting at verse 9. He says,

“For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me” (1 Corinthians 15:9–10).

So we see that Paul had the problems he faced. He lived with the reality that he had been a persecutor of the Church. And He says, “I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle. But by the grace that was given to me, I labored more than all of the other apostles.” Sometimes I feel like people are concerned about the problems they've had, the needs that they have, what they've gone through in their life. But we have to understand that God has prepared us, and He's given us grace. And in that grace is the giftings. It is the talents like we began in Luke 19, where Christ called those in the parable together and said, “Look, I'm giving you these talents and I want you to do business with this. I want you to occupy until I come. I want you to labor in the earth. I want you to focus on what needs to be accomplished here on the earth that triggers and opens the door for My return.”

That is the way that we should think about ourselves. That is the way that we should be driven. Let's not get caught up into concerns about theology and how this is going to take place. Not fall into the trap of fear as we look at some of the stories that we read about in Revelation of what is to happen prior to the Lord's return. These days we will find God's grace for us just like Paul found grace for him, just like Christ found that He had the grace of God in His life, that He was able to endure what He was given to endure. He completed the work which God gave Him to do. And we likewise will be able by the grace of God to complete the work which God has given us to do. And by those talents and enabling of His Holy Spirit, we will be able to bring forth in this earth that which is necessary during this great time of transition into His Kingdom.

We have to think about this podcast and what God wants us to understand from it. God has always used humans to perform His will and His works on the earth. When we look at the Scriptures, we see that men and women were moved by the Holy Spirit during times of trouble and transition to do the will of God. If you think about it, how many prophets existed in the Old Testament during wonderful easy times? I can't think of one off the top of my head right now. The prophets of God manifested in the Scriptures during times of need, during times of trouble, during times of transition from one age into the next. That is what was necessary. Moses came on the scene when they had to be delivered out of the bondage of slavery. So we have to realize this in our own hearts that God is looking to use us as His instruments. And He's given us these talents by which we can function through the Holy Spirit, using the grace which He has made as a provision for us.

We will see in this age men and women of God moving in God during this tremendous time of trouble and transition. And by His grace, we will be able to move and accomplish His will and His works on the earth just as Yeshua was able to do. "I have completed the work on the earth that You've given me to do and by virtue of that, I have glorified You" (see John 17:4).

We see that this is a great time of transition and tribulation, bringing the earth into the Messianic Age of God's Kingdom. And now more than ever, God is needing sons and daughters who will walk in the footsteps of Yeshua, of Jesus, who glorified the Father by completing on this earth the good works which He had beforehand prepared that we should walk in them. They are prepared; the grace is there. Let's remember that. By grace we are able to walk in all that He has prepared for us to walk in, and we will be able to do His will. We will be able to glorify His name on this earth and bring forth all that He has called us to walk in as His people. Lord, bless this Word to our hearts; give us the faith and the trust and the enablement to walk in it. Amen.