

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Six : Christ as Our Sabbath Rest, Typified by the Good Land of Canaan

I. Overview:

God rested on the seventh day because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority with His dominion was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy. When there is a situation on earth in which man expresses God and represents God, that situation is a Sabbath rest to God. Christ is rest to the saints in three stages. Toil refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the toil of struggling to be successful in any work; whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.

The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is for our souls. The Lord's yoke is the Father's will, and His burden is the work of carrying out the Father's will; such a yoke is easy and such a burden is light. The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath as a perpetual covenant. We need to see the following divine principle—God first supplies us with enjoyment, and then we work together with Him. The writer of the book of Hebrews advised the Hebrew believers not to stagger in the wandering of their soul but to press on into their spirit to partake of and to enjoy the heavenly Christ.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the Sabbath rest.

The first time that the Bible mentions the Sabbath is after the creation of man. God saw everything that He had made and said, "Very good". When He said, "Very good," it meant that He was satisfied. At the end of the sixth day, seeing man in His image to express Him and committed with His authority to represent Him, God was satisfied and said, "Very good."

B. Explain that man, being created, was not for God's work, but entered into His rest.

When man came out of God's creating hand, he immediately entered the seventh day. The seventh day was to God the day of rest. God's seventh day was man's first day. This means that God had prepared everything for man's enjoyment. After man was created, he didn't join in God's work; he entered into God's rest. Don't think that you must do something.

Day 2 —

A. State what the Sabbath rest in three stages is.

We are now in the church life, the growing Sabbath that is leading us into the harvest Sabbath of the millennial kingdom. The ultimate Sabbath rest will be the New Jerusalem. There will be a new earth, and upon that new earth there will be a city built up with transformed people as the living materials.

B. Expound why God called that land the rest.

The land was a rest because the temple could be built there. There, with the temple, God could have His expression and representation. When God is expressed and represented, there is satisfaction for both God and man, and that is the real rest. The Sabbath rest in Hebrews 4:9, as typified by the good land of Canaan, is Christ as our rest.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the toil mentioned in Matthew 11:28.

The Lord seemed to be saying, "...All of you religious people and all of you worldly people who are toiling and are burdened, come to Me, and I will give you rest." What a gracious word! The toil refers not only to the toil of striving to keep the commandments of the law and religious regulations but also to the toil of struggling to be successful in any work. Whoever toils thus is always heavily burdened.

B. Expound to take the Lord's yoke being to take the will of the Father.

To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father. It is not to be regulated or controlled by any obligations of the law or religion or to be enslaved by any work but to be constrained by the will of the Father. The Lord lived such a life, caring for nothing but the will of His Father. He submitted Himself fully to the Father's will. Hence, He asks us to learn from Him.

Day 4 —

A. State man being God's refreshment and rest.

God was refreshed with man. He created him in His own image with a spirit so that man could have fellowship with Him. Man, therefore, was God's refreshment. When God saw the man created by Him, He could rest and be refreshed. Man was like a refreshing drink to quench God's thirst and satisfy Him. When God ended His work and began to rest, He had man as His companion.

B. Expound there being a divine principle in God's work.

It is a divine principle that God does not ask us to work until we have had enjoyment. God first supplies us with enjoyment. If we do not know how to have enjoyment with God and how to enjoy God Himself, we shall not know how to work with Him. We shall not know how to be one with God in His divine work.

Day 5 —

A. Explain that man is a tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body.

According to the Bible, man is a tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body. In Hebrews 4:12 mentioned the joints and marrow, which are parts of the body, and the soul and spirit. With the Israelites there were three places: (1) Egypt, from which they were delivered; (2) the wilderness, in which they wandered; and (3) Canaan, into which they entered. Their history in these three places signifies the three stages of their participation in God's full salvation.

B. Expound what the three stages the New Testament believers experienced is.

In the first stage we receive Christ and are redeemed and delivered from the world. In the second stage we become wanderers in following the Lord; our wandering always takes place in our soul. In the third stage we partake of and enjoy Christ in a full way; this is experienced in our spirit.

Day 6 —

A. Explain whenever we turn to our spirit, we touch the throne of grace.

Undoubtedly, the throne mentioned in Hebrews 4:16 is the throne of God, which is in heaven. How can we come to the throne of God and the Lamb, Christ, in heaven while we still live on earth? The secret is our spirit, referred to in Hebrews 4:12. The very Christ who is sitting on the throne in heaven is also now in us, that is, in our spirit, where Christ is the ladder that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth.

B. Expound whenever we read the Bible, the word of God must be living.

Whenever we read the Bible, it must be living, energizing, and sharp enough to divide and discern all the things within us...Every word in the Bible must be the living and operative word of God. How do we know that we have touched the word of God and not just the printed matter? We know it when the word we have touched is living, energizing, and dividing our soul from our spirit. This is an important principle.

III. Conclusion:

God's Word is operative; when it shines upon you, your outer man is removed. It is not that you heard God's word then will do it slowly. It is not the light of God that enables you to see and then makes you take away what you have seen. It is not that seeing is one step, but getting rid of it is another. The shining is the removal. The illumination and the removal are simultaneous. As soon as the light shines on the flesh, it dies. Even the flesh of man cannot survive when exposed to the light. When man meets this light, he does not have to be humble to fall down completely. Under this shining, all of his flesh has withered. Brothers and sisters, this is the effect. God's Word is living and operative. It is not that God has spoken the word and you have to wait for it to take effect. It is that the word takes effect on you. The Word of God can discern what is in our hearts, and it can discern what is the intention in our thoughts.