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Preparing for His Presence

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that's growing, that loves the Lord. And we're excited to be a part of something that I believe is God stirring up people in these last days. He's bringing about so much wisdom. He's bringing about so much revelation. But we have to make sure that we are responsible with that revelation, with that wisdom that God pours into us. And Over the years, I'll just give you kind of a short, concise testimony of where we came from. I kind of grew up in the church. It's all I remember. My mom was a worship leader. She played piano. And five of us kids, we

would be there at late night prayer meetings and whatnot. Things would get late. We'd just fall asleep on the pews, and she'd scoop us up and take us home. And that's all I remember. And I kind of grew up with that. I walked away from the Lord later on in my college days. I actually went to Christian college and walked away from the Lord, which is not really the process of doing things, but that's exactly what happened. I got involved with drugs. I got involved with alcohol, which I never touched in my life. And I started in Christian college. Folks, you can find it anywhere. It is everywhere. And if that's what your heart is looking for, you'll find it. And even though I was in this time of trying to figure out what the world was about, because I didn't know. I just wanted to see what the world was like. So I went after it. But there was this hollow feeling inside of me. I could not shake. I knew that God had a calling on my life. I knew that God had so much more for me. So he called me to Syracuse, I actually left the college in Rochester and went to work for \$7 an hour in a warehouse doing forklift operating with my brother. And he was going to a church, he had a rough past, he got into drugs, he ended up in jail and a men's program took him out when he got out of jail and it really changed his life. Now he's an assistant pastor at a large church in Syracuse, and he's married the pastor's daughter. Just a change in his life. He went from being a thief where nobody could trust him with anything to somebody that can be trusted with money, can be trusted with the keys to the church. He's just a totally turned-around person. I saw that in him, and I said, I need that. I want that because I felt so empty inside. So I just kind of put everything aside. I started to serve at that church, and I met my beautiful wife who was singing up here, Julie. And we ended up getting married. And we served in that church for about 12 or 13 years. We became children's pastors there. We loved the kids. We loved working with the kids. And it was an inner city church. It was very rough. I mean, this was a rough part of the neighborhood. But we enjoyed it. We loved it. We had like 100 kids in our class on a Friday night. And we just loved on them. And before we know it, my wife kind of got a revelation of just really questioning the Sabbath day. That was kind of the first thing. And she brought it to me, and I wanted to... Just bat it away, just like a lot of people do. Don't really want to read what the scriptures say. Just kind of say what I've heard over the years. And it didn't sit well with me. It didn't sit well with her. And long story short, we ended up starting our own fellowship in our home. Just a Bible study, trying to figure all this stuff out, as I'm sure a lot of you have kind of walked on this journey before. But a strange thing happened, and kind of coming back on point into what we're going to be talking about today, is when I came, I know it's kind of a crazy term, when I came to Torah, Revelation of Torah, the understanding of the feast days, the Shabbat, and all of that, I kind of had the sense that we had been deceived in a lot of areas in the church. And that was rough for me. I grew up in church. I knew a lot of pastors, my entire family's in ministry. My entire family is serving at some capacity in ministry. It was difficult for me, and I'm like, well, if I was lied to about the Sabbath day, then what about all this other stuff, the gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, all of these things, tithing, all these things. Are we deceived about those too? No. So what I did, I put that all on the shelf. I just said, you know what, I have to search it out for myself. I've got to see whether this stuff is real or not, or if I was possibly deceived in all of this along with everything else. And over a process of time, as we kind of grew in our faith, in our messianic faith, our Hebrew roots faith, whatever you want to call it, There was that emptiness and that nagging inside of me to pursue God's presence and to get back to flowing in the Spirit again. And I began to do that. I took that back off the shelf again, and I realized through study and through prayer, I understood that this was not something I was deceived in. This was not something that the church had kind of pulled one on me. But I knew it was something that

was missing inside of me. And not only that, but as I began to minister and see other congregations and how things were working, I began to see there was a lot of people there that had the same questions. And they're like, I don't know. Should I do this? Should I do that? Should I not do that? Should we flow in the Spirit? Or does things have to be really... controlled in the service, you know. And I've been to all services. I've been to traditional Torah services, messianic synagogues, true messianic synagogues. And I'm like, what's the proper way? And we tried to figure this thing out. But I have to tell you, one thing that I was missing when I came to Torah was I stopped pursuing God's presence. I stopped pursuing God's presence.

And that was something that made me a hard person It made me somebody that was judgmental. It made me arrogant. I pushed my family away. I burned a lot of bridges with my family that are all in ministry because I had a lot of knowledge they didn't have all of a sudden. I knew about Christmas. I knew about Easter. And I had to let them know about that.

But I did not pursue God's presence. I did not ask the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to minister through me in a way that they could receive it. And I pushed a lot of people away. So that's my journey in a short story, I guess. And the title of the message, Preparing for God's Presence. Are we preparing for God's presence? I think that we understand the idea of preparation a little bit more in the Messianic world, in the Hebrew words world. We understand what it means to prepare. But are we preparing for God's presence? And let's get started. So our first scripture here is Exodus chapter 25, verse 1 through 2. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart. He shall take my offering. And down to verse 8. And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. And look that thou make them after their pattern which was showed thee in the mount. The first thing I want to draw your attention to is kind of an interesting thing that God asks the people. He brings them out to the wilderness and he says, I want to dwell among them. Let them make me a tabernacle. Make me a sanctuary. Make me a place where I may dwell in the midst of them. I don't want to be just this guy up on the mountain. I want to be the God that is Emmanuel, God with us. God that walks among us, that is in us and through us. The desire of God's heart is to be in you, through you, around you, to be intimately a part of your life, not something you pick off the shelf on Saturday or Sunday morning. He wants to be intimately a part of your life. And the interesting part is it's something we have a responsibility. He says, let them make me a sanctuary. My question to you today is, are you making God a sanctuary? That he feels comfortable to come and dwell in you and to dwell in our midst. Are we doing the work? We just come and we folder our arms and we say, God, show up. God, do what you want to do. We read some scripture verses. We go back home. And God says, He didn't even invite me in. He didn't even prepare for my presence. I'm so glad that talking with Matt, his heart is to create an atmosphere so that God can come and dwell here, so that God can come and do a wonderful thing. That is unique. I don't know if you know that, but a lot of folks in the Hebrew roots world are not caring about God showing up. They care more about divisiveness. They care more about debating, care more about being right and proving other people wrong than to allow God to come and change us, for God to do the miraculous, for God to bring new souls into the kingdom. God needs to change us. And it starts with us realizing we have a role to play here. There's a duty that we have. We have to bring, we have to make a sanctuary, a place for God to dwell. Hebrews, we're talking about the pattern that was shown on the mount. Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews talks about this. This is in chapter 8, verse 1. Now of the things which we have

spoken, this is the sum. We have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have someone also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see saith he that thou make all things according to the pattern that to thee in the mount. So there was a pattern that God showed Moses when he created all these things. And you guys know this. Probably how many cycles of Torah portions have you been through? We talk about the articles of the tabernacle and all that, how that all points to Yeshua, and it's all fantastic and awesome things. We understand that. We know that. But yet when we come together, we don't even expect him to show up.

The tabernacle, without God's presence, is just a tent. Right? The temple without God's presence is just a pile of stones. It's God's presence that makes it unique. It's God's presence.

He says, where I put my name, that's where the power is. And it's not to diminish the importance of the temple and all that. I don't mean to do that. I'm just saying we have our priorities in the wrong ways. We're looking at the physical things and they are actually the shadow that point to the real, the actual, which is Yeshua, the high priest who wants to dwell in you. The pattern is in the heavens. Exodus 31.2 says, It's interesting because a lot of people think you weren't filled. Only kings and prophets and those were filled with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. How many have heard that? We have artisans here. They weren't priests. They weren't prophets. Ordinary people just like you and I. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Why? Because they had a job to do. God fills you with the Holy Spirit not to give you goosebumps and make you feel good about yourself. He fills you with the Holy Spirit because you have a job to do. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to what? Preach the gospel to the poor. To go and set the captives free. He gives us the anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit to get up and to be motivated, to have boldness, to have power to do God's work upon this earth. That's why he gives us the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah. He gives Bezalel and Aholiab, we'll talk about Aholiab in a second, he gives them the Holy Spirit. Why did they need the Holy Spirit? Because they weren't on the mountain. They weren't on the mountain, so how did they know the pattern? He showed Moses, but in order for an artist to know the details, the artist's work to copy, and they weren't on the mountain to see it, how were they going to get it? by the Holy Spirit. That's Holy Spirit download. Revelation from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is upon them. Therefore, they had the pattern. They could do what Moses saw in the mountain. That's why they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And it's interesting because if you take their name and you break it down, the first part of the name Bezalel is Saul, which means shade or shadow. And El, which is a short form of Elohim, God or mighty one. So quite literally, it means in the shadow or protection of God. What is the law, the feast and all these things? They are what? A shadow. That's exactly what they were building was a shadow. The shadow of who? God. And ohel means tent and av means father, father. So we have Bezalel that's making the shadow of God, and we have Aholihav that is making the Father's tent. There's something about names in the Bible. If you look at it, name is attached to your destiny. This is what they were building. It's actually what their destiny was. That's how they were named. Exodus 35, 20 says, Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses... And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him and brought the Lord's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. So they came, both men and

women, all were of a willing heart. Everybody brought something. Everybody brings something. This is not something that's just about the few that put the chairs up, that set up the sound system, that do the praise and worship, that do the teaching. The power is when everybody realizes I have a part in this. And you have a willing heart to say, let's build something so that God can show up and change this community, change this state, change this nation. I have to be honest with you, the Christians get it. Christians get this. They understand what it means to link arms, to come together, to serve. I don't know what gets lost in translation when we come to Hebrew roots, but we need to have a willing heart to come and serve, whether that's in the kids' room, whether that's cleaning afterwards when things are done so that it's not on Matt and Jenny and a few select people. We all come together, all having a willing heart to be a part of this. That's all part of it. Not only that, but we also have gifts to bring. We all want to partake of the teaching gift. We all want to partake of the praise and worship and the gifts that people bring. You're so gifted. You're so talented. So thank God for the gift. What about the gift in you? Have you thought about that? Have you asked God lately, what am I gifted in? Father, will you stir up the gifts of the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit inside of me? What am I gifted in? Paul says you have not because you ask not. And the one thing he said us not to be ignorant in is to not be ignorant about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. My brethren, I don't want you to be ignorant of this one thing, the gifts of the Spirit. Don't be ignorant of these things. Understand these things. And yet we come, we sit, we have a few people that operate in the gifts, whether that's teaching, whether that's prophetic, whatever that is, and the rest of us sit back. But God's presence shows up when all of us bring something. And that's not just men either. It says men and women. Women have gifts. Women have a part of this as well. I don't know what gets lost in translation with that, with Hebrew roots either. But men and women have an equal part in God's house. An equal part in ministering into the house of the Lord. Hallelujah. So they brought. They are of a willing heart. Exodus 35, 33 says, And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar and set up the screen of the gate of the court. And so Moses finished the work. Moses finished the work. Did Moses do all the work? No. He had the vision. And there were select others filled with the Holy Spirit that caught the vision. They did the artistry work. He set up elders. He did all this. When all the work was done, then, and only then, We skip to chapter 40. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting... and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting... because the cloud settled on it. And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys... whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle... the people of Israel... So God is not an author of confusion, but of order, peace, and peace. When we get our act together and we start to come here and we're prepared for God's presence, we're doing the physical things, we're doing the spiritual things, we're doing what we need to do, God shows up. God shows up. That's the pattern. It says the cloud came and filled it. Now, one thing that stuck out at me when I read this, and maybe it seems funny to you, maybe it doesn't. Moses was just up on the mountain speaking with God. There was fire on the mountain. Israel says, if we listen to that voice, we will die. The rocks were split. The Psalms talk about the calves giving birth at the voice of the Lord. The power that was upon that mountain, standing in the glory, the fire. They must have been amazing. Seeing the heavens rent and seeing the sapphire floors of heaven. And then when they build the tabernacle, God's glory fills the house and Moses can't even enter it. Does that seem funny to you? He was just on the mountain. Why can't he enter the tabernacle? And I think, I don't know if this is the answer, but this is just my guess, but that was a one-on-one experience between Moses and God upon that mountain. There is

something special. See, people say, well, I don't know why we have to come in congregational settings. Why can't we, I can do this at home. Can I have experienced God's presence at home? I can pray at home and you're absolutely right. You can have a mountaintop experience, but it does not compare to the corporate anointing. When people come together in unity and people start bringing the anointing oil and the fabrics and the giftings and the abilities, when they start coming together, there is a special cloud that comes that not even Moses could stand in. There's something unique that happens when we say, I want God to show up. You want God to show up. We begin to pray. The room begins to shake. Sound familiar? Acts, all in one accord. Would God have shown up if they were not in one accord? I don't know. I don't think so. They are together. They laid aside differences and they brought everything. They brought together the 120 that were in that room and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and with power. Also important, when the cloud comes, when God's presence starts to move in this atmosphere, don't get afraid of it and don't shut it down. I've seen this happen where pastors and leaders, all of a sudden God starts moving. People start getting filled with the Holy Spirit and they get nervous and shut things down. We're running a little too late or whatever the case may be. The fact of the matter is they waited for the cloud. When the cloud lifted, they moved. And it also says if it stayed for a month, they stayed for a month. If it was for a whole day, they stayed for the day. If it was a quick thing, they moved. Whatever the cloud did, they did. They followed the cloud. We don't get God to fit our pattern, so to speak, in the sense that go fit my schedule. We have to fit his schedule. I tell folks in my fellowship, we're throwing the clocks out. Throwing the clocks out. What do you got going on today? Today's the Shabbat. What do you have pressing on your schedule? We come here to worship God. If it takes three hours, four hours, five hours, however long it takes, we'll even feed you. We'll give you bagels and cream cheese if that's what it takes. We'll give you coffee. We'll revive you. But we're so hungry. We're passionate. We want God to show up. We want God to change us. We want God's anointing to be upon us. We need it. The thing is, I don't think we need it. We don't need God's presence anymore. We don't need God to show up anymore. Our bills are getting paid. We've got good health care. We don't need God to show up. We've got backup plans. You wonder why God moves in third world countries? Because they have no backup plan. They understand what desperation is. They understand what it means to cry out to God or they will die. God moves in that atmosphere. He doesn't move in complacency. He doesn't move in an atmosphere where we say, well, if they don't show up, that's fine. I've got back. I've got health care. You know, I can just pop some pills when I get home. I don't need your healing now. If you don't show up, that's okay. I got a backup plan.

God can't move in that. We wonder why. Where's the miracles? Where's the signs and wonders? But we go to Indonesia, we go to Africa, we go to these places. These people are crying out because they have no backup plan. God help us. We need your presence. In fact, I think we need it more than they do. Exodus 33, 15 says, and he said to him, if your presence, this is Moses. This is Moses. This is the guy that penned down the Torah. This is the guy that everybody looks up to. And this is the priorities that Moses had in his life. He says, if your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. Do you have that mindset? Many of us like to follow Moses, but Moses followed God's presence. Yeshua says, if you believed in Moses, you would have believed in me. If you're gonna follow Moses, you follow me. Follow God's presence. If your presence doesn't go, I'm not going. I'm going to stay. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I in your people? Is it not in your going with us so that we are distinct, I in your people, from every other people on the face of the earth? And my question to you today, and this is something that I think we get wrong, especially in the

Hebrew Roots Movement. We begin to wear tzitzit, which is not a bad thing. Not a bad thing at all. We're tali, we're the kippah, we're different things. This is the unique things. This is what makes us unique. We are peculiar people. And I'm telling you today, it is not these things that make us peculiar or unique. It's not our blood or what tribe we come from that makes us unique. It is the presence of God that makes us unique. Thank you. And if we understand that, we'd stop fighting about what tribe we are. Whether we're Israel, whether we're Jewish, or whatever the case may be, we are children of God. And His presence is what matters. His presence. That's what makes us distinct. When you go to work, is it your seat seat that causes people to fall down and worship the Lord? Or is it God's presence in your life? I see a lot of people wearing a seat seat and they're about the most miserable people. Grumpy. Talking about the end of the world. End of the world. End of the world. Repent. You got your bunker ready for the end of the world? Who in the world would want to follow that? But I have seen some people where the presence of God is upon them, not wearing tzitzit, not wearing tali, and I want to follow them. What's different about you? You have joy. There's something different about your countenance. It's the presence of God that makes you unique. And I guarantee that'll work much better. I'm not saying don't wear these things or the kip or any of that. I'm not saying that. But better be sure that the presence of God is upon you. Spend time with the Lord before you go to work in the morning. But when you're putting those seat seat on, cry out to the Lord, God, I need your presence. Without that, I can't keep your commandments. This string isn't going to cause me to keep your commandments or not break your commandments. It's your Holy Spirit that's going to cause me to do that. I need your presence. I need your presence. 1 Kings 7:51, we see the same thing. This is the building of the temple now. Solomon orchestrates the building of the temple. So the work, ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David, his father, had dedicated, even the silver and the gold and the vessels that he put among the treasure of the house of the Lord. And we can go through chapters and chapters talking about all the vessels being made, just like with the tabernacle. Why does the Bible go through so much detail? Because I believe that It's the things that we are doing throughout the week. It's the things that we're doing while we're not in this room together that cause it to be more dynamic when we come together. Doing the work. Chapters. The mundane things. What are we doing Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday? What are we doing on those days? Those are those chapters we like to skip over, right? But when the work was done, and after all that was done, then what happened? 1 Kings 8, 1-2 says, Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is in Zion. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. And it came to pass when the priests said, Do we want God to show up like that? Or does that make you nervous? Be honest. It's okay. If it makes you nervous, I don't know. I wouldn't know what to do. If God showed up and I couldn't stand up and I was falling down, I don't know what I would do. That makes me nervous. That's okay to be honest. Be honest about it. Many of us think, oh, the people falling down, that's a Pentecostal thing. You better open your Bible. I can show you lots of places where people, when God shows up, they fall down. Well, you know, they fall forward. They don't fall. It doesn't matter. I've seen front rows fall down and chairs falling backwards before. But we're so quick to criticize and say, well, that's not of God. It is not a Pentecostal thing. It's a biblical thing. It's biblical. When angels showed up, it says they fell as dead. Was it backwards, forwards,

sideways? It doesn't say they fell as a dead man, a dead person. And I don't care if God shows up, which way you fall down. I just want God to show up. Because when he shows up and his glory comes in such a dynamic fashion, you cannot leave the same person again. You can't. It changes you. So when God's presence, his true glorious presence, when it shows up, it's like Tupperware. It's like Tupperware when you put it through the washing machine. It'll never be the same again. It'll never be the same again. Try to get that lid on. Can't get that lid on. Ha ha. God's presence is that way. Not that it makes you worse, but it makes you better. Hallelujah. 2 Corinthians 7, 1-3. It says, They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good, his mercy endures forever. See, they listened to Michael W. Smith back then, if you know the song. And the priests waited on their offices, and the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord. God showed up. They began to worship with instruments falling on their face before the Lord. What do we do? We're so casual. We don't want to get messy. We don't want to get dirty. I almost want to say, let's come with sweatpants on so we don't have to worry about messing ourselves up. Get our work pants on and just fall on our faces before the Lord. God, we need you. We need your presence more now than ever before. We need it. It's not a New Testament thing. It's not a Pentecostal thing only. It is a biblical thing. It happened in the tabernacle. And he says, don't you know that you are a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit? God wants to fill you with that kind of dimension of glory. He wants to fill you in such a way that you are just overwhelmed with God's presence. Don't you want that? Don't you crave for that? I do. I know I do. From the moment I wake up, God, I need your presence. I need you. I want a greater dimension of your glory and your presence every moment of every day. I want to grow in you, not only in my knowledge of the word, but I want to grow in understanding. So when I pray for somebody, they recover quickly. I can see somebody get out of a wheelchair. I can see cancer leave so that we can confirm the covenant that God has made with us, not only with the wisdom of men's words, but with demonstration and with power. Our Torah portion this week, I snuck this in because we go through the Torah portions every week. I'm not sure if you guys do that or not, but sometimes we just do whatever the Lord leads us to do. We're not bound in it or anything, but I just thought this was kind of interesting. Our Torah portion talks about entering the land. This week, Devarim. We begin Deuteronomy. I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them. Yet... Verse 28. Verse 28. And verse 32, And even after that they said, Still, they would not go into the land. Yet, in spite of this word, you did not believe. And you know what their judgment was? To go back and wander. To go back. He said, I'll let the little ones go in. I'll let Caleb go in and Joshua go in. Because they have a different spirit than they did. Different spirit. They said, we are more than able to go in and overtake. We are more than able to go in. Why? Because they understood that the Lord was on their side. They understood what the presence of the Lord was all about. They understood that. And the judgment, if we don't press in, we get to a place, I believe, in a service. We get a place in our life where God says, I want you to go in and overtake. I want you to pray and intercede for somebody. He tells you by the Holy Spirit to go pray for somebody in the store. And you're like, can't do that. I'll pray for them at home, but I'm not going to go and pray for them. No, I need you to pray for that person. Anybody feel that tug? At different times, you're at a different place. And I've been there too. The Lord gave me vividly. There's going to be a boy with a red hat. He's going to have a tumor. You're going to go pray for him. And this was in a vision while I was praying. And I went exactly to the place where it was. And long story

short, he was there. I chickened out and went home. I've been there. Right there, the land was. Right there to go in and overtake the land. Didn't have the spirit in me to do it. We need God's presence. We need his boldness that when he tells us to do something, we're not shrinking back because we'll just go back home and we'll wander again. Wander to stay the same while the overcomers will go in and take the land. Acts, we get the same thing. We fast forward. I believe it's the same scenario. God says, I'm going to fill you with my Holy Spirit. Before this, he preps them. He says, you're going to be brought before kings. You're going to be brought before great men. It's going to be terrifying, but I'm going to be with you. And don't worry about the words that you're going to say. But in the very hour, I'm going to put the words in your mouth. That's what he told his disciples. And you're going to be portrayed. And you're all going to die. But I'm going to be with you. I'm going to be with you. Sounds similar?

I'm going to be with you. I'm going to fight for you. Go in and take the land. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me, for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. And when they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom, again, the kingdom of Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power. Yet ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Now I've read this a gazillion times. And one thing that stuck out at me as I was preparing this message, it's interesting what the disciples said. They was, okay, all right, you make your appointment. Go, Shavuot. I'm going to pour out the straw. I'm going to do this awesome thing. I'm going to empower you to do great things. And they're like, wait, wait, wait, wait. But when is the kingdom coming? When are you going to return? See, their focus was on the end. Their focus was on some, when are you going to come and you're going to take out these Romans and you're going to do all this stuff? And he stops them. It's like, it's not for you to know that. There's certain things that are locked up in God's times and seasons.

You might understand certain things about it, but he corrects them and he reshifts their attention to something. He says, this is what I want you to be focused on. When's your kingdom coming? When are you going to do this? Listen, did you just understand what I just told you? I'm going to fill you with my spirit. And you're going to have power. Greek word *dunamis*, miraculous power inside of you. Stop worrying about when the kingdom is coming. Stop worrying about that. It's going to happen eventually. But what are you doing now? We have to get a little bit of an attention shift, I think, in this movement. One of the signs of the times. Next prophecy conference. I'm not saying that's all bad. I'm just saying, are we doing the right things? That's our attention, the focus on the power that God has for us right now. Because that's what he shifted their attention. You shall be my witnesses, which is the Greek word for martyr. Takes away the glamour, I am God's witness. I'm sending you like sheep to the slaughter. But I'm going to give you my Holy Spirit. He's going to help you in it, through it. If you die, listen folks, I'm so tired of people trying to preserve their flesh. That is not God's plan for you. It's not about who makes it into the kingdom and preserves their flesh. Flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. You have to die to enter the kingdom of God. And whether that happens in a moment when he returns or whether you die before that makes no difference, but you have to be changed. So everything's about preserving our flesh. The reason I don't do this, the reason I've got bunkers, I've got guns, I've got water stored up, I've got all this stuff stored up so I can preserve my flesh, preserve my family. But who's going to

be out there preaching the truth? I think it's going to be the greatest harvest this world has ever seen because when tribulation comes and hard times come, people begin to cry out to God. Does it make sense that we would be the ones hidden or the ones that are out in the street? Guess what? If we die, we win. If we live, we win. He's rigged the match in our favor. It's time for us to stop worrying about our flesh and start worrying about what God thinks of us. And when he returns, will he find faith on the earth? How are we moving and operating in the gifts that God has given us? Or are we taking those talents, those gifts, and burying them? Martyrs. Hebrews 4, 1-11 says, Now, mostly we've used this to say, yes, there is a Sabbath day. This doesn't mean that the Sabbath day has been done away with. And I've gone through the Scriptures with those that say, well, this means that we don't have a Sabbath day anymore.

And I say, no, that's not what that means. And we go through it. But as we... debate with people to realize yes that the sabbath is a day it is friday sundown to saturday sundown it is not about the rest it's about the day but in the process of that we forget the whole purpose of it is for us to rest in yeshua and if we don't do that then all we did was observe a day let's go through it let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest So he's talking about Israel. Did Israel keep the Sabbath day? But he said that they did not enter it because of unbelief. And it says that you who believe enter into rest, correct? So what's the difference? It's not the Sabbath day that's the difference. It's believing in Yeshua that's the difference. Which you have believed enter into rest. He said, as I have sworn in my wrath that they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest on the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest, seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of what? Unbelief. They did not believe the promises of God. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time, as it said, Today, if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus, it's a mistranslation there, Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day? There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest... he also has ceased from his own works as God did from his. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man shall fall after the same example of unbelief. So the issue is we've got two Sabbath-keeping people. We've got believers that are Sabbath-keeping people, and we have those that had unbelief in them also keeping the Sabbath day. One was a blessing and a benefit to them. One was not. Which one are you going to be? It's not about keeping the Sabbath or not keeping the Sabbath. Because the two that are being compared are both Sabbath keepers. It's about entering into His rest. Do we make it about us? Do we make it about our rest? Or do we make it about Him? And make it about entering into His presence, believing His promises that He's going to do what He said He's going to do and show up Because I guarantee when God shows up in a meeting and God begins to heal and begin to break down and destroy the works of the devil, man, do you leave refreshed. Man, do you have rest in your soul. You do not leave the same person. But I have walked into Sabbath meetings where God didn't show up and I wasn't looking for the presence of God to show up and I left the same as I came. And I wasn't any more rested in my body, my soul. If I came miserable, I left miserable. If I came tired, I left tired. The difference, the change is Yeshua. The difference is His presence. The difference is His Spirit. That's what gives us rest to our souls. John 8, 56, 58. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw it and was glad. And Yeshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was... am he is the point he is the point of it all Leviticus 23 3 says six days you shall work shall work be done but the

seventh day is the sabbath of rest a holy convocation you shall do no work therein it is the sabbath of the lord and all your dwellings and my point today isn't talk about the sabbath commandments and all of that my point is are we doing the preparation that God wants us to We understand that six days you work. What's Friday all about? What do we call that day? Preparation day. We know this. When I was a Christian growing up, I had no idea that Friday was a preparation day. I had no idea that Saturday was the Sabbath day. I had no clue whatsoever. It never was taught. It never was mentioned. When I got the revelation of the Sabbath day, guess what? Friday became preparation day. You scurry around the house, you're trying to pick up, make sure the laundry's done, the dishes are done, throw your meal in the crock pot and all of that. I never owned a crock pot prior to observing the Sabbath day. Can I get an amen? Now we have like five. And they have mismatched lids because we leave them at service and other people take the lids and we're like, the lids doesn't fit. But We understand that there is a work that needs to be done throughout the week. What happens when we have a busy week? We didn't gas up our car. We didn't get our meal in the crock pot. Dishes are everywhere. Laundry's everywhere. It's tough to enter into rest, isn't it? Because you're staring at those dishes in the sink. And if you're like me, a little bit of an OCD person, I obsess over it. And I do not have rest because I'm staring at that whatever that is. Now we go through that. We can understand these are all symbols, by the way. These are all shadows. What is the substance? The substance is in the heavens. The substance is that Yeshua is our rest. He is the one that can then take our burdens from us. My yoke is easy. My burden is light. Come unto me. I will give you rest. Rest for your souls. Now, if we understand that we prepare for that, we prepare for the seventh day in a natural sense, how are we preparing in a spiritual sense? Does it make a difference? I think it does. Let's take a look at the word convocation. And I know it's been taught a thousand times. You've probably heard this a thousand times. But I might show you something a little different, maybe that you haven't seen before. Mikra. Everybody heard of Kedosh Mikra, the holy rehearsal. And it's about rehearsing. The feasts of the Lord are all convocations. The rehearsal's about something. And I agree, it is 100% true. Reading, a calling together, a public meeting, rehearsal, which means we've got to come together. The community needs to come together some way, whether that's in a house, whether that's in a building. Whatever the case, you get as many like-minded believers as possible together and you rehearse something. It's a special day. It's a special rehearsal. Now, the root word has a split. It has two different meanings. Kara. Kara has two different meanings. And the first meaning means to call out, to recite, to read, cry out, proclaim. What happens on the Sabbath day? You read Acts 15. Moses is read in every city. If you go into an observant Orthodox synagogue, they're reading the Torah portion out loud. You hear that. It's being read. It's being recited. So that happens on the rehearsals. To proclaim. To proclaim. It's Sabbath. It's Passover. It's Yom Teruah. Do you know what time it is? We're supposed to be proclaiming and preaching the seasons of the Lord. That's part of our duty. It's part of Korah is to let people know. If you've ever seen the commercial by, I think it's Geico, with the annoying camel that comes, hey, hey, hey, do you know what day it is? Do you know what day it is? Do you know what day it is? Hey, hey, and you're going through and it's hump day, Wednesday, and everybody's like, this is an annoying camel. But that's supposed to be us. Do you know what time it is? Do you know that tomorrow's that today's the Sabbath day. Do you understand what season we're in? We're to proclaim. It's supposed to be something that we preach. That's part of convocating. The other one means to meet or encounter. And that's the one I want to hone in on. Can we come together on Shabbat? Can we come together on Passover? Can we come together at these set times that God says,

these are my appointments that I've put on my calendar to meet you in a special and powerful way. And we come and we Leave the same way. We don't even look for an encounter. God wants to encounter you. He wants to have an encounter with you every day. But these are special times. These are times that God, part of the definition for convocate is to encounter. We encounter each other, but to encounter the King, to encounter the King of glory. Maybe this will give us a new definition for a commandment when we convocate. We don't just come together to say, hey, Susie and Joe, you look great today. I love your outfit. Hey, what did you bring for Oneg today? That's a casual encounter. But I want an encounter from God. The crockpots will wait. They're still simmering. Those suckers will cook all day long. I want God to show up. I want an encounter with him. That's part of convocating. Exodus... uh 25 8 we saw that let them make me a sanctuary that is the hebrew word asah to do fashion accomplish there's work to be done to enter into rest right we wash the dishes we do the the laundry there's work to be done to enter into that rest there's work to be done to make the sanctuary work to when it was built they had to take it down and put it back up again and take it down and put it back up again pick things things up and set them down uh And it means to do, to fashion. It's also used to observe the Sabbath day. It's the same word. Wherefore, this is Exodus 31, 16. Wherefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath through their generations for a perpetual covenant. Same word. To make a sanctuary means to observe the Sabbath. So when we come here, we are to fashion. We're doing all this work so that God, we have an encounter with God. Amen. Otherwise, dare I say, and let me be bold enough to say, we're not keeping the Shabbat. We're not keeping it. We can come and have a good time, shake each other's hands, give each other a hug, but if we're not looking for an encounter, if we haven't received what God has for us, rest for our souls, then let's do a repeat. Let's go back and do it over again because that's the whole purpose of the Shabbat. It's the whole purpose. How do we prepare? Cleaning on Friday to get the house ready. cooking meals in advance. Try to get all your chores done before sundown. Get your car gassed up. Make sure you have all your essentials purchased. Make a nice meal to welcome in the Shabbat. Some say kiddish blessings, the special blessings over the wine and the bread. Some don't, and that's okay. That's all right. Some light candles, some don't, but it's still a part of the preparation. Light candles. What else are we missing? I've known people going through the motions, going through the motions. We've been a part of it as a family, and it's great tradition. I'm not saying we shouldn't do that or stop doing that. What I'm saying is, can we be doing all this to prepare for the Shabbat? We go, we come home, and we're the same. We're not challenged. We're not reaching people, the lost. We have no desire to reach the lost. We're not praying anymore. We're not fasting anymore. We're still the same people. God is a God of change. He's a God of miracles. He's a God that wants to cause us to move and not stay still. Don't wait till Shabbat to start laboring. The labor has to already be done. The man gathering the sticks. Don't be the man gathering the sticks on the Sabbath day. What does that mean? Well, you don't want to get caught putting gas in your car because you didn't get gassed up before. Guess what? As a pastor of my messianic church, I am right there in town. There's been times, and I'm ashamed to say it, that I forgot to gas up my car and I didn't have enough gas to get there. So I'm literally huddled down on the other side of the car hoping and praying that my flock isn't driving by as I'm gassing up the car for Shabbat. I wasn't prepared. I wasn't prepared for the Shabbat. I should have been, but I wasn't. But that's the shadow. What is the substance? The substance is Yeshua. How are we being prepared for His presence? Are we praying during the week? I'm not talking about five minutes, ten minutes. I'm talking about praying an hour, two hours.

Praying, interceding for one another. Praying for one another. Praying for your pastors. Fasting. I've been challenged about fasting. Fasting and praying. I used to fast when I was in church. I used to fast a lot. And then I come to Torah, I stop fasting. Thought I had the answers. No desperation anymore. No crying out anymore. Little did I know that that fasting and prayer changed me. It made me who I am. Now prayer and fasting is a regular part of my diet because I want more of God. Do you want more of God? I want to challenge you with one simple thing. If there's one thing that you can take away from today is this. Start praying and fasting. I don't care if it's a meal a week, a day a week, whatever you can, just begin to start praying. Well, what is that all about? You abstain, whether it's from solid foods, water. Some do food and water. You can fast from technology. My daughter's pregnant, so we've been challenged about fasting. She's like, Dad, I can't fast, but she's put her phone down. Sometimes that's harder than a cheeseburg. We're glued to our phones. They're on it 24-7. She put it down for a period of time. She's fasting her phone and Facebook and all of that stuff. Fasting and praying. God will show up. I'm telling you, God will show up. If my people who are called by my name to get off their high horse, humble themselves and pray. Get on your knees. If you feel you're okay, all right. But pray for your community. Pray for your pastors. Pray for your neighbor. Pray for doors of opportunity to be opened up so you can share the gospel. Pray for miracles. Pray for healing. Pray that God will stir up the gifts of the Spirit inside of you. Pray that you become bold at work, at school. Pray that you don't compromise anymore. Pray that you don't have to fall every time you turn on the computer and wonder why you visit certain sites. Pray and fast. We do that throughout the week. We pray. We fast.

We read God's Word. We worship. Turn on the worship music. Shut the junk off. Shut the secular music off and start pumping in life-giving music, stuff that's anointed, stuff that causes you to be in God's presence and changes the atmosphere wherever you're at. Click it on at work. Change the atmosphere at work. Why are you listening to that? But God forbid you show that you are a believer. The work has to be done throughout the week. So when we come together, it's powerful. The work's already got to be done. So we get here and we're like, been fighting with my wife, fighting with my husband on the way here because we're late, fighting with the kids, yelling at the kids. We get here and then we're like singing a couple songs. And then we start to get in God's presence a little bit. And then before we know it, we're teaching. And then we go back home. Instead of doing the work throughout the week, praying, forgiving one another, casting your cares upon him so that when we come together...

It doesn't take four, five, six songs for us all of a sudden get into the Spirit and get the atmosphere changing. It's already here. It's already here because we've done the work. So we're starting to grab sticks on the Sabbath day. Okay, this is the first time I've talked to you, God, this week. Can you show up? Will He? Can He? Yes. Is it the pattern we see in Scripture?

No. When we do the work, the cloud comes. When we come together, the place will be shaken. We need a move of God, folks. We need a move of God like never before to change us, to break down walls, to soften us, to make us more like Yeshua. Not sure what happened with the clicker there. It's not advancing forward. We get stuck. I guess it got tired of waiting on me for the next point. Oh, there we go. As we prepare our homes for Shabbat, let us prepare our hearts for an encounter with the King. Start asking the Father how he can use you in the service. You have a part. How many of you have been asking, how can I be used? I'm not necessarily everybody flooding to Matthew to say what kind of, ask the Holy Spirit, how can you use me in the service? You have something to offer. See, our mindset has to change. We come to see what we can get out of it. This isn't a country club. Check out, I like this place. I like their worship. I like that they're done at a certain time. They have racquetball. They've got

the spa. I'm going to stick it out here. It's a good place. This is not a country club. You come saying, what can I give? How can I serve? Holy Spirit, why am I here? What do I have to offer? Is it prophecy? Is it encouragement? Is it something that you have placed inside of me that this fellowship needs? Cast your cares upon him each day so that you can be free to minister to others. Just as you work to prepare a meal in advance and you can smell it cooking in the crock pot, allow the presence of God to soak you and to put his sweet aroma of the anointing upon you. I'm going to skip through this. We know that your body's a temple, the Holy Ghost. Moses, this is a prophecy, by the way. When they said stop, the Holy Spirit fell down upon the elders and it says that they began to prophesy. And there were a couple that went out and through the camp and prophesied to everybody in the camp. And Joshua and them came and they said, we need to forbid them from doing that. Just stop. God's moving. Let's stop it. It happened back then too. Moses, this is a prophecy by the way. It says, Moses said unto him, Envious thou for my sake? Would God that all Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them. God wants a spirit on every single one of us. He wants us to prophesy. He wants us to be moving and acting in the gifts of the Spirit. He wants that for you. It's not meant to be just for a few people standing up front. It's meant to be for all of us. And Moses prophesied that. Joel also prophesied that. Acts 19, Paul, having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus, finding certain disciples. He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost, but He said unto them, unto what then were you baptized? And they said, unto John's baptism. And then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Messiah Yeshua. And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Messiah Yeshua. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and they prophesied. The power of the Holy Spirit. This is an example of a group of people. He says, since you've believed, they were believers. Have you been filled? Some people believe that when you believe, you receive the Holy Spirit. And I agree with that. There is an indwelling of the Holy Spirit. You become changed in that moment. The moment you become born again. You have a brand new heart, a brand new person on the inside that God has recreated in a moment. However, after that, he's saying, have you received the Holy Spirit? They said, we haven't even heard of the Holy Spirit. And I'm sad to say there are some congregations that are in that boat today. We don't, Holy Spirit, irrelevant. We have Torah, we have all this other stuff. We have our traditions. What do we need the Holy Spirit for? Paul's like, no, no, no, no. You're missing something. And he says, you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. You need to be baptized, and I'm here to tell you you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. How many times do you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit? It's continual. I do believe there's a special infilling that happens in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but after that, as often as you possibly can, get in God's presence and be filled with His Holy Spirit. Cry out for it, hunger it each and every day. Acts 4.23 talks about, this is after Pentecost, by the way, and I'm coming to a close, I promise. When they were released, the Holy Spirit already poured out. There's some believe that was it. He poured out His Spirit and that was it. This is the same people, by the way, the same disciples. They'd already been filled with the Holy Spirit. They already spoke with tongues. They already had all these evidences that came about there. And by the way, just to bring some balance to this, I do not believe that speaking in tongues is the only manifestation of the Holy Spirit that proves that the Holy Spirit is inside of you. You can have Holy Spirit love for people. You can forgive somebody that abused you. That's the Holy Spirit, my friend,

working on the inside of you. Holy Spirit forgiveness for people. Speaking in tongues is one evidence, not the only evidence. And some Pentecostals get that wrong. It is a evidence. When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chiefs and the elders had said to them. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. While you stretch out your hand to heal, signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant, Yeshua. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was what? Shaken. Pentecost had already happened, my friend. This is not a one-time event. They came together, they prayed, the place was shaken. They were filled with what? The Holy Spirit. I thought they were already filled. Got to be filled again and again and again and again and again. God, we need your presence. And they continued to speak the word of God with boldness. Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul. No one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power, the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah. And great grace was upon them all because of praying together and shaking and worshipping. wanting God's presence in their lives. Acts 10 38 and how God anointed Yeshua of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power. Even the Son of God needed to be filled. It says that he had the Spirit without measure. He was anointed with power because the Holy Spirit was upon him. And he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God was with him. 1 Corinthians 2.4, in my speech, this is Paul, in my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in what? Demonstration of the spirit and of power. It's not just about knowing things. Are we confirming the message with power, signs and wonders? Are we missing that part? Mark 16, 17 through 18, we all know it, but do we live it? These signs should follow after them that what? Believe. Believe. Oh, that's not what that says, is it? It says they will recover. They will. It may not happen immediately. You know that Yeshua, the Son of God, laid hands upon the blind man. He says, how do you see? He says, I see men as trees. And he had to lay hands on him again. That's the son of God that was given the Holy Spirit without measure guy, the guy that walked on water, the guy that calmed the winds and the waves. He had to pray for somebody twice. And yet we pray for somebody, nothing happens, and we're like, well, it must not be God's will. We don't have the tenacity. We don't have, I'll pray for you, I'll pray for you 20 times, 30 times, whatever it takes, because I know my God's a healer. It's time we stop making him a liar. He's not a healer anymore. He doesn't do miracles anymore. And we begin to fashion doctrines to prove that fact. The fact of the matter is we need to repent. We need God's presence. And we need him to work in us and through us. Stand with me this morning. Could I have Gideon to come tickle the ivories? This morning I want to challenge you. I want to challenge you. Are we going through the motions? Yes. Are we just doing the bare minimum? Are we preparing in the physical sense for Shabbat, but not preparing our hearts? We're not preparing. We're not praying. Maybe today we can make a commitment together to start to crave and start to prepare for God's presence. That's our jobs. That's our jobs. It's not an option, folks. Shalom.

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