

Brethren Helping Brethren Rest In Christ

Joshua 1:12-18

Following the conquest of Canaan, the Israelite tribes were allotted tribal territories. Moses allotted territories on land east of the Jordan to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and a portion of Manasseh, which they had requested. We read in Numbers 32:5, “Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.”

We read in Joshua chapter 1:12-15 that the Lord commanded the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and a portion of Manasseh to go over the Jordan River and help the remaining tribes secure their allotted territories by driving out the inhabitants of the land.

“And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.”

The three tribes, Reuben, Gad, and the ½ Tribe of Manasseh were commanded by God to go and help their brethren enter into their rest in the land. I believe the message for them is the same message for us today. The title of my message is, “Brethren Helping Brethren Rest In Christ.” I would like to answer the question, “How do we help brethren rest in Christ?”

1. The first way is by reminding our brethren of their position in Christ.

We read in verse 13, “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.”

Reuben, Gad, and the ½ Tribe of Manasseh were in possession of their allotted territories before the other tribes. They had already entered into and enjoyed their rest. They were getting settled and established in their new land and borders. Before they were too cozy and comfortable in their land, the Lord reminded them of their duty and responsibility to their brethren. There was a danger and temptation for Reuben, Gad, and ½ Tribe of Manasseh, and that was to neglect their brethren. They enjoyed rest in the land but their brethren did not. What an illustration of how brethren can help brethren enter into their rest in Christ.

An important aspect of our sanctification as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ is knowing who we are in Christ, and what Christ has accomplished for us on the Cross. When we understand our standing and position in Christ we will grow in our assurance and confidence in the Lord, and we will be able to help others enter into their rest in Christ.

How can we expect to help our brethren rest in Christ if we are not resting in Christ? We have to ask ourselves an important question, “What does it mean to rest in Christ?”

We read in Matthew 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Resting in Christ means ceasing from your own good works in order to be acceptable before God, and trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ as the only way for salvation.

We read in Hebrews 4:10, “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

Resting in Christ is knowing who we are in Christ. Christ's death and resurrection (triumph over satan and death) provides justification for believers before God. His righteousness becomes ours, and his death becomes an offering to God in our place, to pay for all of our sins. Thus justification is by faith alone - not through good deeds - and is a gift from God through Christ.

Romans 4:25 “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Romans 3:22-25 “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;”

How can we help brethren rest in Christ if we don't know and enjoy rest in Christ ourselves? The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh illustrate for us Brethren helping Brethren rest in Christ.

There are times when believers lack assurance, are full of doubts, and sink into spiritual depression. It is in these dark times when brethren can come along side the struggling brother or sister and help and comfort them by reminding them of their rest in Christ.

Therefore, if we are not resting in Christ and living in the reality of our position in Christ how can we effectively minister to those who are fighting to enter into their rest in Christ?

Are you resting in Christ? Maybe you are here today and you are lost, and still in your sins. Your life is restless. Look to Christ! He washes the vilest sinner in His precious blood, and makes them clean.

The first way we can help our brethren rest in Christ is by knowing our position in Christ.

2. The second way is by fighting alongside our brethren.

“We read in verse 14 “but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;”

Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh enjoyed rest but they were commanded by God to fight alongside of their brethren. There were giants and enemies in the land that needed to be defeated and destroyed. Final victory required total effort. It called for great sacrifice from all the tribes, especially from Reuben, Gad, and the ½ Tribe of Manasseh.

We read in verse 14, “Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan.”

The Lord commanded the men to leave their wives, children, and livelihoods, and go and fight alongside their brethren. What a test of faith! What an act of sacrifice! Who would look after their families? Who would provide for them and protect them? The men had to trust in the Lord and believe that the Lord would be the shepherd and defender of their families while they were away at war.

We read in Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

The reasonable service for Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh was to cross the Jordan and fight alongside their brethren. The Lord would take care of His people.

Just as the tribes faced clear and present dangers in removing the inhabitants from the land, so too we face obstacles and barriers to our rest in Christ.

We fight against the obstacle of our own unbelief. There are times when we don't believe the promises of Christ. We don't live by faith. Our faith falters and wavers and we find the simplest and easiest spiritual exercise is too hard to do.

We can relate to the words in Mark 9:24, "...with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

We read in Hebrews 4:11, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Unbelief resists and opposes us. It attacks our rest in Christ.

We also fight against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Unbelief and spiritual wickedness are two giants we constantly fight against in the Christian Life. Imagine if we entered into the battle alone, with no support, no brethren fighting by our side. Defeat would be certain. There is strength in numbers. Christ does not leave His people alone to be defeated. He helps us. He sends brethren to support us.

We read in 2 Samuel 23:8-23 about the mighty men of David and how they fought hard and courageous for their king, “These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lift up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil. And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of

the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory. And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three. Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the first three.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men. He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three. And David set him over his guard.”

Brethren fighting alongside brethren help brethren rest in Christ.

3. The third way we can help brethren rest in Christ is by encouraging them.

How encouraging it must have been for the tribes of Israel when they saw the men of Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh crossing the Jordan with their armies and standing united with their brethren. Truly it was one of the greatest moments in the history of Israel. Israel standing united and preparing to fight in the name of Jehovah. What an encouraging picture!

How this picture should encourage us as the children of God to rest in Christ.

We read in Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Do you encourage or discourage those that around you? Is your tendency to tear down and criticize or is it to build up and exhort? It takes long to build up but so quickly to knock down.

Are you a Titus who came and encourage the Apostle Paul in Macedonia? We read in 2 Corinthians 7:4-6, “Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.”

Are you a Barnabas, whose name means the son of consolation? We read in Acts 4:36-37 “And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

We read later in Acts 11:22-24 “Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.”

Brethren Helping Brethren Rest in Christ is the message from Joshua 1:12-18. We help brethren rest in Christ by knowing our position in Christ; by fighting alongside our brethren; and by encouraging one another in Christ. Maybe you are here today and you don't know what it is to rest in Christ from sin, from the world, and from the devil. Look to Jesus, who died on the cross, and made an atonement for sin. Maybe you are here today and you are a believer

but you are not resting in Christ. You are under attack from unbelief and spiritual wickedness. You feel weary in your soul. I encourage you to rest in Christ and in His finished work on the cross.

Let us pray.