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On this week's Chosen and Cherished Podcast, we talked about self reliance vs. Spirit reliance. We got to see an example of the dichotomy between self reliance and Spirit reliance, and how they measure up to each other. Spoiler alert... Spirit reliance is far better. If you'd like to listen to the episode, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Genesis 11:1-9

The Lord has really been working on my heart lately, teaching me how much I need to rely on Him rather than myself. I make up rules for myself that are veiled as rules to be a better follower of God. But how ridiculous is that!!! Make up my own self made rules to follow God better? That doesn't even make sense! And yet, it's so easy to do!!! I see in Genesis 11:1-9 how defiant self reliance is. I see a good God who understands how destructive it is... and who even protects us from ourselves when we ignore Him. He's so merciful and patient.

Any reliance on self, even when the rationale is that I'm doing it for the Lord IS defiance against Him. It IS about making a name for MYSELF... not giving glory to the LORD.

Genesis 11:1 says from the Hebrew transliteration, "ALL the earth had ONE language and ONE speech." Is that what God, our Creator and Lord wanted? I think the answer to that is yes. He wanted us to be one in language, one in spirit... but not if that meant being divided from Him. And that's what was happening. They were one with each other, but not with their Creator... as I will soon see.

God said to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply AND FILL THE EARTH." And at the great reset after the flood, God told Noah and his family several times, "Be fruitful and multiply AND FILL THE EARTH." But Noah's descendants didn't listen. They migrated from the east together and found a wide space between the mountains and settled there in Shinar. They decided to live there as ONE people... to ignore God's command to fill the

earth. Being ONE was not the problem. Ignoring God's command to fill the earth was.

I can see through their example how defiance against God starts out in stages. It's so often a drift from God rather than a single conscious decision to rebel. It takes rationalization and justification... but it doesn't change the truth.

If a child among them had asked, "Mama, why are we not filling the earth as God told us to do?", Mama might have answered, "Oh, well, honey, we're being fruitful and multiplying. We just don't see the need to fill the earth. It's not that we don't want to obey God. We just don't think that part is necessary."

But sin against God doesn't just settle in one place. It always migrates to the next level... lawlessness leads to more lawlessness (Romans 6:19). So... the people settled together in ONE place. Then they just thought, "You know what we should do? We should make bricks so that they're like stone... and asphalt to hold the bricks together. Wouldn't that be cool?" Next step in rebellion against God. "Well, it's silly just to use these bricks to build houses. WE SHOULD BUILD A TOWER!!! It will reach all the way to heaven, and WE'LL MAKE A NAME FOR OURSELVES." Everybody say, "That's a bad plan." What was their reason for building this tower and making a name for themselves? "If we don't we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." We will be forced to obey God and rely on Him.

Whoa. They were saying, "We will build this tower so high that God will see that we don't need Him. We will be our own gods, and He will not be able to make us fill the earth." Yikes. How well did that turn out? Uhhh... it didn't. No matter how big I think I am, God is exponentially bigger.

Vs. 5 says, "Then the LORD Yahweh CAME DOWN..." He came down. No matter how high they built that tower, God still had to come DOWN from the heavens to see it. They were deluded. They thought they could outsmart God. I could point a finger at them, but how often have I done the same thing?

God came down and looked at the tower they built, which had nothing of the majesty and splendor of the throne of God in heaven. God said, "Behold... check it out... these are ONE people with ONE language. Now they will be able to do whatever they put their minds to."

I used to be so confused by verse 6. Was God saying we COULD be self sufficient? Was He saying that we COULD do anything? I think the answer has to be yes and no. Yes, as image bearers of God who have been given authority over the land and created creatures, we can do a lot. BUT if I notice, in the very next verse, God had the power to stop their plan dead in its tracks. They would never be able to match the power of God.

But what WOULD have happened if God had allowed them to continue as they were? They would have become more and more self reliant... and more and more defiant... which would only lead to their destruction. God did not stop their plan because He was AFRAID of them. He stopped their plan because He LOVED them. He was PROTECTING them.

I doubt very seriously that the people saw what came next as God's protection, but it was. God decided to confuse their language... cuz then they wouldn't be able to understand each other. God said, "Let US go DOWN there and confuse their language."

First of all, who is US? That's the Trinity... Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who are in complete unity and ONENESS with each other. God wants us to be ONE, but not in our own self reliant bodies. He wants us to be ONE with HIM!!!

Second, God came down. This is the second time it says this. Let me never think I can ascend higher than God!!!

God powerfully, wisely, and mercifully did with the people what He had commanded them to do... Be fruitful and multiply and FILL THE EARTH.

The tower they were so confident they could build was never finished. It was abandoned... just a big pile of bricks. That's what self reliance becomes. That's what seeking glory for myself becomes... wasted effort. God wants so much more for me. He wants me to be one with Him!

It is not cruelty or fear that causes God to confuse my self reliant plans. It is His mercy. Where are true joy, peace, hope, and love found? Only in Him. When I separate myself from oneness with Him, I separate myself from true joy, lasting peace, eternal hope, and steadfast love.

O Lord, please forgive me for how ready I am to make a name for myself, for how easy it is for me to try to rely on myself. Thank You for protecting me from myself. I see here, though, that You allowed their construction to go on for a long time before You stopped it. You are so patient, always giving us a chance to repent. I praise You that You also step in and let us feel the weight of our rebellion so that we can learn from it... and so that we can learn to rely on You completely.

O Lord, please give me the strength and courage and humility to follow You wherever You lead. Help me not to step in front of You and think I know best. Help me to "Trust You with all my heart, and not lean on my own understanding. In all my ways, please help me to acknowledge You, and You will make straight my paths. Help me to stop being wise in my own eyes; help me to worship You, and turn away from evil. This is where true healing to my flesh and refreshment to my bones" comes from (Proverbs 3:5-8). Amen.