

This Worlds Passover – Pt. 2

Ron Weinland

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This past Sabbath we began a new series entitled: *This World's Passover* with this being *Part 2*. We need to have an overview back into our mind so that the importance of all that Christ was doing prior to that final Passover becomes more meaningful and more inspiring to us. So we're going to go back and have a bit of a review from the very beginning of that sermon toward the end, but I'm going to go through it quite a bit faster. This should have a greater impact upon us when we realize that this is just a short time now before Passover and all the things that Jesus Christ was going through, and everything God the Father was moulding and fashioning to prepare for that final day because *all these things*, in a very powerful way, as you back away from this a little bit and you begin to realize it and you begin to see it – that in a *great way* God was moulding and fashioning all the events that would come down to on the exact day; the betrayal that was to take place, everything that led to that; and finally the death of Jesus Christ as our Passover. And God moulded and fashioned those events.

He knows the reactions of people, He knows the timing and how human nature is going to respond. He knows us inside and out; yet we have choices. We have choices all along the way but He knows what carnal human nature will do; as much as He knew what Pharaoh was going to do when God began to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. He knew what his responses would be and He knew that every time there was a plague...and then He'd remove that plague – Pharaoh's heart would become harder, stronger against God, stronger against Moses and Aaron. And you'd think it'd be the opposite, but sometimes some people with human nature become harder: and we have seen that in a very big way, even in the scattered church, of things that have taken place – how that in many cases people have actually become harder and more resistant to God, more resistant to the truth. And that's a horrible thing because when you resist God we give up so many opportunities in life; because of our stubborn human nature, because of our self-will, because of our pride.

Passover is very much about that because Passover is very much about becoming unleavened. Leavening does what? The great lesson – the very thing God begins to work with with every one of us is awesome when you understand it in very simple terms for human nature, because if we can grasp and comprehend that, just like with Passover... Passover is not a High Day, but it's required before you can enter into a High Day. You must take Passover; you must accept Jesus Christ as your Passover before you're able to begin to come out of sin...which is what the 1st Day and all seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread picture. It pictures the process of coming out of sin, of that desire we have to come out of sin, and you can't start that journey until you receive your Passover. And the great lesson that we begin to receive at Passover and during the Days of Unleavened Bread is that we are to become unleavened and leavening puffs up. The great lesson about Lucifer; the great lesson about Pharaoh; the great lesson about Israel; the great lesson that God has given over and over again is that *sin puffs up!* It's pride! To sin, to resist God, to disobey God means that we're raising something up, like an obelisk, like idolatry, in other words, against God. We raise up our own thoughts and our own ideas and that we can do certain things contrary to what God says; which is idolatry! It's spiritual idolatry! It's adultery spiritually and we don't recognize then sometimes the magnitude of those things; but it all boils down to the simple thing of leaven, being leavened or unleavened, pride or humility – which will it be? And we choose; I choose humility – I know you choose and want humility; but that's not always our response in different situations and conditions in life.

So again here, we're going to pick up some of the story flow of this sermon now and go back and put everything in a chronological order once again.

We started out in Luke 17 where it describes the beginning of Christ's journey to Jerusalem for that final Passover as the world's Passover and it simply states in **Luke 17:11 – And it came to pass as He went to Jerusalem,** so that's the first indication now that He's moving in that direction for a purpose; **that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.** And we talked about the location where He was at and He even returns there a little bit later because it's not very far from Jerusalem. But He was prolonging some of the journey because of certain things that were to take place; some of the miracles we've been reading about. Instead He heads northeast towards Galilee through Samaria and begins to come down then on the other side of the Jordan River all the way down. Then He goes to Jericho, toward the bottom of the river where it goes into the Dead Sea where Jericho is, then He heads down just around the corner there to Bethany – and then to Jerusalem; Bethany being only 2 miles, 3¼ km away from Jerusalem; just a short walk. And so Jesus Christ was staying there going back and forth a great deal of the time, and on this particular occasion here at the very beginning of the story on this account we read where 10 lepers were healed in the beginning of the story of various miracles and only one returned to give thanks to God for what He had done.

And the next point we come to is where Martha and Mary...because their brother Lazarus was near unto death – sick; that they sent for Jesus Christ. They sent word to Jesus Christ about the need for Him and their desire for Lazarus to be healed and they wanted Him to come speedily to do exactly that. Then John 11, this is the account here in **John 11:6 – And when He had heard that he was sick, He continued two days longer in the same place where He was.** I find these stories awesome, incredible, inspiring...because of what He knew, because of the mind of God, His Father, that was communicating to Him continually, on a continual basis and He *knew* that He was to remain there; not to be excited about it, understanding there was something greater to be done here. He knew Lazarus was going to die. He knew that at this point in time. He knew it was God's intent that Lazarus would die and that He would be there to raise him up. That's awesome to understand that.

These aren't little stories we read and all of a sudden Jesus – He's kind of moved by the moment and decides what to do. These aren't little things that just take place like, "What am I going to do next." It's like when creation took place, in the sense of mankind being put on the earth, and once Adam and Eve sinned, it's like God scratching His head..."Now what are we going to do?" Because in our early stages, in our infant stages in the Church we kind of thought that way at one time, and yet that's not the truth. The reality is God had already preordained, predetermined that we had to have a Passover because He knew *exactly* what we would do as human beings. The first chance we got; when human nature gets involved and in the way – what do we choose? Self, selfishness – that's what we are! And that's exactly what happened with Adam and Eve. God knew that. Incredible!

And so in **John 11:6** it says here; **He stayed there two days longer in the same place where He was.** Again, in that location where He received word that Lazarus was sick, because Martha and Mary had sent someone to see Him, a servant perhaps, it doesn't say; to let Jesus know that Lazarus was sick and they needed Him. But Jesus stayed around two days longer wherever this location was. **Then after that He said to His disciples,** and so He lets them know now... **Let's go into Judea.** They understood fully well what He said, "Let's go up to Jerusalem." **Let's go unto Judea. And His disciples said unto Him, Master, lately the Jews have been seeking to stone you; and you want to go up there again?** It's kind of hard for them to understand. "Why would you want to go up there when they're out to do you in? They want to stone you!" They did continued their journey towards Jerusalem.

You might want to turn over to **Luke 18** – we'll read this together. As they continued their journey again and as they were travelling down on the other side of Jordan there were great multitudes, it says here, following them. You can imagine in different places along the way and people already anyway trying to come to see Him and all the things that had happened in the previous periods of time where there were different miracles and wonders performed, but especially now because it was starting to gain momentum. Things were happening faster. Things were speeding up. More miracles were starting to take place here; a part of God's purpose as He went on down toward Jerusalem. And multitudes were following Him and it says **He was healing many along the way**. That's what they were coming for. They wanted to be healed, or they wanted someone close to them to be healed and at a point, again, along the way Christ told His disciples about what was coming in Jerusalem.

So we read it here in **Luke 18:31 - Then He called the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we're going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written in the prophets, all the way through the Old Testament, over and over and over again, concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.** ...concerning our Passover. **For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully mistreated, and spit on:** so, Jesus tells us, "Don't be surprised when people don't love you. Don't be surprised when you're mistreated." He was mistreated mightily and He says, "What they've done to Me, they're going to do to you because that's just human nature." People – human nature of and by itself doesn't automatically embrace God – no matter what Traditional Christianity says, especially in the southern part of the United States:

"Oh we love Jesus! We love God!"

"Oh, then you keep the Sabbath day."

"No! That was done away with!!" Amazing! And they get mad and upset.

"Oh, you mean you quit observing Christmas and you quit observing Easter?"

"What do you mean we quit observing Easter?"

"Yes, that was brought in by the Catholic Church in 325 AD - they did away with Passover. Haven't you read it in the scriptures?"

They don't like that kind of thing. Amazing! They don't love you for it; they hate you in many cases for it. Some will tolerate you because they know you and they know you're a decent person, a kind person and so there's certain things they may tolerate, but they don't like what you believe. And some will just flat out let you know it.

And so He says; **all the things written in the prophets is going to be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, spitefully mistreated, and spit upon: And they shall scourge Him**, beat Him, so much so as it says in Isaiah that His visage, His very appearance is going to be so changed by the beating that's going to take place – that He's not going to be able to be recognized for who He is. Skin, flesh ripped off His body, if you understand what a cat-nine-tails are and the things they put on the end of pieces of leather and what it's used for and when it hits your back it rips the skin off, it tears, it cuts, it slices. And this is what they did to His face as well...they beat Him severely. Amazing! **And they shall scourge Him and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they didn't understand any of these things: and this saying was hidden from them, neither did they know of the things which were spoken.** It's like the time when Jesus Christ, after He was resurrected, was walking and two of the disciples were walking along and He was talking to them and they didn't recognize Him. It was like there was this veil – and yet He was there talking to them along the way, walking along the way with them and it's like whatever God did they just didn't know it was Him until

after He was gone. Then it talks about how they felt, “Didn’t it burn in our hearts...what He was saying?” Amazing!

And so if God’s intent is that we not be able to grasp, see and understand certain things, we’re not going to grasp, see and understand it until He gives it to us – especially that which is spiritual. So again, they didn’t even understand what He was saying, they didn’t understand what He was talking about – that this was about Him, that this is why He was going down toward Judea, down into Jerusalem to be killed, to die as our Passover.

Then we come to the portion of the journey over in **Mark 10** – where they had followed the Jordan River down to the area of Jericho and we had two more things of importance that happened in that particular region if you remember, **verse 46-52** that we read. It says: **And they came to Jericho: and He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, and blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat on the highway begging.** And then Jesus speaks to him and heals him. He says, **What is it you would like Me to do to you?** Well, what’s a blind man going to want? He’s going to want to be healed and that’s *exactly* what happened. And then he began to follow Christ as well along with the crowd that was there.

And then we have the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector and it says, **he was very rich**, a very rich individual who wanted to have a good view of Jesus. Little did he know what Jesus Christ was going to tell him, that He was going to come visit him and so forth. And he went and climbed up in the sycamore tree in **Luke 19:5 - And when Jesus came to the place**, at the sycamore tree and here Zacchaeus is up in it; **He looked up, and saw him, and said to him, Zacchaeus, quickly, come on down; for today I must abide in your house.** Well, this is all for a purpose; these things that are happening. It stirs things up here of what’s taking place here. He’s a tax collector and it just gives a little more to the Pharisees that were in the region and to different religious leaders that were seeing some of these things because they wanted to spy on Christ on a continual basis, see what was taking place and report back to Jerusalem.

And so He told Zacchaeus, **come on down quickly... And when they saw it, they all murmured**, these who murmur...not all the people; **...saying, He was going to be guest with a man who’s a sinner.** It’s like you put your hand over your mouth and ... (gasp)”Look at what He’s going to do now! ...because we wouldn’t do that; we Pharisees, we’re more righteous than that! We’re not going to go into someone’s house that is a known sinner. He’s a tax collector! He’s an evil man! We’re not going to associate with him!” ...and yet Christ did. You know why He so often did these things? Because these people, a lot of these individuals that He came in contact with...they were not haughty! They were not haughty individuals. They were down to earth people, every day people. And He could relate to them better than He could with these ‘hob-nobbers’, these people that had their nose stuck up in the air – these self-righteous individuals that condemn and criticize others in the world! That’s why I hate that kind of thing in society in the world – people that have respect to people of wealth or position. They’re some of the ones with the greatest problems on earth that have to be changed. They’re the ones who resist God the most! They’re the ones who have fought against the Church the most and prevented the Church from being able to do a job! ...those who have wealth and power and prestige in the world. They don’t want God! They don’t love God’s way of life at all!

Verse 7 - when they saw it, they murmured, saying, That He was going to be a guest of a sinner. And so Jesus then used this occasion to give the parable of the pounds. Parable of the pounds. Awesome! All along the way here more and more parables. It is incredible how many parables are recorded in scripture and we’re not even going to go through all of them in this series; that start being magnified

and growing in number and intensity as you go forward here all the way to His death. So much is written in scripture through these periods of time. The parable of the pounds, speaking about the Kingdom of God that was to come.

So again, Jesus Christ was focusing on and having others focus upon the very purpose of why He's getting ready to die. It's all about the Kingdom of God. It's all about the Family of God and what He's doing now so the Church can begin, so that the starting of a Church could begin whereby more and more people could begin to be reached, inspired and helped, converted and begin to be brought into God's Family, in embryo, until they could be born when Jesus Christ returned the second time; the second time then that we're looking forward to and what we're focused upon. But He always focused upon God's plan – that's the way we are. God's people - that's how we think...always looking farther ahead; looking forward to the time of the return of Jesus Christ; looking forward to the 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ on earth; looking forward to the 100 years beyond that when everyone who has never had a chance will finally have an opportunity to learn God's way of life when they're resurrected back into life a second time.

Then as they passed on from Jericho they were headed straight to Bethany where Lazarus was, where Mary and Martha lived; and again Bethany being only a couple miles from Jerusalem. And then we came to **John 11:11-16** – and it says; **And He said these things: and after that He said to them, Our friend Lazarus**, so He was speaking to them, teaching them and He said; **Our friend Lazarus sleeps**; so you remember the occasion here? He says, **but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep**. This had to seem a little odd. Let's go down to Bethany. I'm going to go down there; I'm going to raise Lazarus out of sleep. And their response is... **Lord, if he can sleep, then that's good for him**. You know, he's sick, let him have rest, let him sleep, this is good. Its like, "Why are you going down there to wake him up?" This is how they thought. They thought physically. **However Jesus was speaking of his death: but they thought that he was talking about his being rested in sleep. Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you may believe; nevertheless let us go down unto him**. So, in other words, what was taking place here – it wouldn't have been nearly as strong – the magnitude of it, the importance of it...it wouldn't have nearly been as great if He'd gone down there and Lazarus is sick and He healed him of whatever the sickness was. The far greater thing is that he's dead and been dead for four days and He resurrects him from the dead. Now *that* spreads quickly...that spreads quickly. That's exactly what He was getting ready to do just before He died as our Passover...to magnify Him, to magnify what He was doing, to magnify who He was.

And so as they drew closer to Bethany, again, we know the story how Martha heard that He was coming and went out to meet Him...and picking it up here then in **John 11:21** – and this is what Jesus told Martha: **Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know even now, whatsoever you will ask of God, God will give it to you. And Jesus said to her, Your brother shall rise again**. So she's limited in what she really believes here, whatever God gives to you you can do, you will do and you can do, but she still didn't understand here what was going to take place. He said, **Your brother shall rise again and Martha said unto Him, I know he'll rise again in the resurrection on the last day**. She had no concept that Jesus Christ could resurrect him from the dead right then and there. She was looking forward to another time...**and Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection**: Powerful words before He dies as our Passover, letting His disciples know, letting it be taught. **I am the resurrection**, it's through Me that human beings can be resurrected – no other way because of God's plan and purpose...**and the life. ...I am the resurrection, and the life: he who believes on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes Me shall never die**.

Speaking of the second death. So He's looking beyond that, how people are going to be able to have life in the God Family into eternity and He says, **Do you believe this? She said to him, Yes, Lord: I believe that You are the Christ;** she still didn't grasp what He was saying. Her response is, **Yes, Lord: I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who should come into the world.**

After this we then had the account where Martha went and got Mary and she went out to meet Jesus and they took Him to the grave of Lazarus and it's good to read this again then in **verse 39** when they came to the grave and **Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said to Him, Lord, by this time he's stinking: he has been dead for four days.** So she was concerned what this is going to be like if you remove the stone and this is not a pleasant thing and she didn't want to think about that and see this.

Then after He spoke to the Father, we have this occasion here in **verse 43** – He spoke to God, **And when He had spoken this,** in other words to the Father, **He cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he who was dead came forth.** Can you imagine standing there and seeing someone in this kind of situation coming forth and the way they'd wrapped him and the cloth and so forth and the thing that was over his head and even trying to walk? **And he came forth with the grave clothes wrapped around him and his face was bound about with a napkin. And Jesus told them, Loosen him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, who had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him.** Yeah, you wouldn't understand a whole lot of things, but man - you've got to believe this is of God. What an incredible thing! Here He's able to do these things. How great is He? A matter of being the Messiah. And so, again, because of this some then went to the Pharisees... here they go rushing down the road telling the Pharisees, letting them know what's happened lately. This is the latest thing...this is big news! You're going to go tell the Pharisees, now, you're one of the spies, the tattle-tales, one of the ones that's always trying to find fault with Christ, one who's always looking for some slip up, something that they can criticize and condemn.

You know, I was thinking about this today in preparing for some of this sermon and going through some of the things that are said later on and I think about people out there who torment themselves listening to me Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day for *no other purpose than to find something wrong! To find some fault so they can blah, blah, blah, blah, blah and tell people and they don't get it! They don't understand what's being said. Neither did people understand at this time what Christ was saying* – those who seek to find fault will always find fault – they'll always find something negative and wrong, there's something to twist and distort *just a little bit!* And that blows my mind about human nature and how much human beings will fight against God and the word of God and God's prophets and God's teachers. That's the way it is. So if they want to live in misery, I tell them: "Go ahead and live in misery – torment yourself! Have at it! I feel sorry for you; it's pathetic what you're doing and you're going to pay for it." Some try to mock and say, "I haven't paid for it yet. I'm still alive!" Yeah, just like Adam and Eve were told, "You sin," and the Hebrew says, "dying you shall die." And Satan comes along and says, "Oh you'll not surely die if you partake of that!" Because it doesn't happen immediately like it talks about in Hebrews because some things, punishment, doesn't happen immediately people can kind of say, "Oh, God's not around. God... you know, there's no God. God's not going to punish me!" Oh yes... everyone will be judged in God's time. Incredible!

So again here, when they went and told the Pharisees, they ran down the road as fast as their little feet could carry them and telling them, "You're not going to believe what's happened now. Someone who was dead was resurrected. He was dead for four days!" And so the chief priests and the Pharisees took council in how to deal with Christ. What are they going to do now because the more that these things

happen the more authority it takes from them, the more it takes people away because they're flawed and they can't stand it – that they're turning away and following Christ.

John 11:49 - And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said to them, You know nothing at all, Nor consider that it's expedient for us, so he was, in his heart and mind – his desire was; the answer is kill Christ! And yet what he said was prophetic; **that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.** Because see, their concern was that if something happens here, what's going to take place then is that the Romans are going to come in and destroy us, take away everything. They didn't understand here that this was a prophetic thing actually, He was dying for all. **And this he spoke not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but also He should gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.** So going off into the future of the things that were going to be accomplished through Christ – to the Jew and to the Gentile.

So it was from this point forward that they began to plot and to scheme how they would kill Christ. Again, understanding by all these events, God with absolute perfection in ways we can't even begin to comprehend was moulding and fashioning events that would lead to the *hour* that Christ would be betrayed; leading up to the exact timing when they would finally come and get Him; leading up to the exact timing of when they would kill Him. Incredible!

So we came to the point where it was less than a week before the Passover and it says in **John 12:1 – Then six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany,** again...because we know the story where He had left – He'd gone back up to that area of Ephraim again and then He came back down to Bethany. This was where He came back...**where Lazarus was, again, who had been dead, had been raised from the dead.** And it goes on to say in **John 12:2 – So there in Bethany,** or while there, in other words, **they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.** Very expensive, this stuff that was being used on Jesus Christ.

And now I'm going to add some more that we didn't talk about last Sabbath...to the timeframe of all of this. This was the Sabbath meal on Friday evening. It's very important to understand some of the timing here – its awesome. It's lost on the world because they think that He died on a Friday and had to be put in the grave and was resurrected then on Sunday morning – a day and a half instead of three days and three nights. This was a Sabbath meal on Friday evening. This was the *beginning of the 10th day of the 1st month!* Awesome...incredible when you understand that. What did we read about in Exodus 12 concerning the 10th day of the 1st month? That the lamb was to be set aside at that time for the Passover. This is the beginning of that day when Mary poured that expensive ointment on Christ.

We then read of Judas Iscariot's response and how it ate at him that this expensive ointment was used on Jesus. Again, everything being primed and ready of something that was going to begin to agitate and turn inside of Judas until he would finally betray Jesus Christ. And it was here that we had to end on this past Sabbath. And this has all built up to this 10th day of the month as He's coming down the Jordan and going through Jericho, comes down to Bethany; Lazarus is resurrected, He goes back up toward Ephraim, then He comes back now, or it talks about here before this – **then 6 days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was.** I want to get the timing in here so you don't misunderstand. He was there for 2 days, then it came to this point in time for this particular meal. So again here, this is just before the Passover period and other scriptures here and so forth from the timing

– it all comes together as to exactly what happened and when it happened and so often they are talking in a particular vein and then sometimes it jumps forward and sometimes it jumps back. But putting all four together it's crystal clear.

Anyway, again here, this happened on that particular Friday night. So what happened that Friday evening at the occasion of the Sabbath meal lead to two accounts that are recorded both in Matthew and Mark and we're only going to read the one here in **Mark 14:1**. So at this point here we're jumping ahead two days which is two days prior to Passover; in other words on the 12th day of the 1st month – then we're going to come back to the 10th day and fill in the blanks here –okay? Because the way Mark addresses this now, it's talking about a period of time. **After two days**, it says 'was the Passover' but it's **will be the Passover, and Unleavened Bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how that they might take Him by craft**, it's a word that means 'by trickery and deceit', **and put Him to death**. So their motivation, going a few days back before this obviously now, even from the time of Lazarus, was to put Him to death. **But they said, Not on the Feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people**. So again here, they didn't want to do it on the High Day, on a Holy Day and to go through these things because of how the Holy Day is to be kept and so forth and what the people's response would be. And so here they were automatically shoving it ahead a little bit faster. Passover. What an awesome thing they pushed it ahead another day because they didn't want to do it on the High Day so they've got to do it on Passover. How are they going to do it? How are they going to accomplish this before the High Day? They wanted to get rid of Him as quickly as they could and the quickest they could see it was the day before, or before that, but that's what worked out – isn't it. So again, they were pushing for their own timeframe and quickly so.

So in the next verse, we're actually going back in time to recount what happened two days before this. So this is on the 12th that this is stated, but what they're doing in the story flow here of Mark...he's going back now and telling what had happened; but for a reason because it's about Judas Iscariot now. It's important to understand what is being discussed here because it's about Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus Christ. That's why it's talking about what happens here two days ahead of time because this is when Judas gets to his point to where he's going to begin to betray Jesus Christ – and that's the focus then of Mark; where John's account is a little bit different.

So in **verse 3** it says, **And being in Bethany**, so it's talking about what had happened – past tense - **in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, which was very expensive, very costly, of great price; and she broke the box, and poured it on His head**. It goes on to say there then...**And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was...**and we know who the 'some' consisted of. It consisted of Judas Iscariot, but there were others as well because he started mouthing it – blah, blah, blah, and some others got stirred up by it. That's how those kinds of things happen. And he says, **why was this waste of ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been used/given to the poor and needy**. So we already read about this in the other verses there but it is the same account here of what's taking place; and it wasn't because he was concerned about the poor and needy by any measure. It says it's because he's a thief; **And they murmured against her. And Jesus said; Leave her alone; why are you troubling her? She has done a good work for Me. For you always have the poor and needy with you, and whenever you want you can do good to them: but you will not always have Me**. He wasn't going to be around much longer. **She has done that which she could: she has come beforehand to anoint My body for the burial**. And they didn't understand that. On that Friday night when this took place and these things were said, they didn't understand that. On the 10th day of separation of the Lamb, making it clear He's been separated – He is the lamb. He was separated

with the ointment. Christ made it very clear He is the one who is going to die as the Passover. That's what this is all about. Said, **Verily I say unto you, Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of as a memorial for her.**

So again, the reason that this account is inserted here in a story flow when it goes on two days later on the 12th day talking about it – again, is not because that's the timing of it, on the 12th day that this happened, but going back a previous two days, bringing that back into account here because it's getting ready to talk about Judas now. It's about Judas and what stirred him to do what he finally did.

Verse 10 - And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray Him unto them.

That's the whole point. Where did it start? It started two days earlier because of this ointment and it stirred him up and began to twist inside of him to a point where he decided; it ate him up and he went to betray Christ then. He went and began to plot and scheme himself with what he could do, with what he was going to do, with what he *could* do to betray Christ *for money*. **And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.** From this moment then, it's telling you, that he's going to begin seeking now what he can do as a spy, as a traitor, to betray Jesus Christ to them so they can kill Him; put Him to death. Amazing!

So let's return now to the story flow of the 10th day because there's more and it's inspiring, it's exciting, it's *awesome* – it truly is! When you understand that day, and what was taking place and what began after that Sabbath meal that went on into the night and then the next day – incredible! It was the weekly Sabbath preceding the Passover, starting obviously on Friday evening; and when Mary poured that expensive ointment on Him. Then on the Sabbath day there's more to follow.

Matthew 21:1 - And when they drew near to Jerusalem, and had come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, so here now they're leaving and they're going – heading toward Jerusalem. It's only a couple miles away. He said, **Go into the village next to you, and straightway you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loosen them, and bring them to Me. And if any man say anything unto you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell you the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King comes unto you, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they sat Him thereon.** What an incredible story! Here we have the anointing that takes place setting Him apart as the Passover lamb. He lets it be known that this is for His burial, His death...death precedes the burial...as the Passover lamb and then this great prophecy begins to be fulfilled of Him riding into Jerusalem now. He's going to go into Jerusalem...and it says **your King is coming to you**, and on what day? The day He's to be set apart; that others are to know 'He is your King' and this is why these things happened like this with such intensity and power on this particular day – because this day is such great importance in what God was going to reveal.

So **verse 8** it says, **And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, they were moved.** If we can understand this...*they were moved by God's spirit to do these things*. It was an awesome time because it was something that God was doing. He was announcing, "This is your King!" ...and there are some awesome things that are said here in the midst of all this. And so they **spread them in the way** along the path... **And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna, the son of David:** They knew the lineage. This is saying, "He is the Messiah! He's coming into Jerusalem!" They just didn't understand why. It's on the 10th day. He's

the lamb that'd be set apart. He's going to die for them and for the whole world. **Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?** "What are they doing?" Can you imagine standing back there? ...and we read previously in verses here how that many were coming into Jerusalem ahead of time because of the way the Holy Days fell that particular year, when Passover was going to be, and so a lot of them were coming in wanting to be there *for the Sabbath day* because of the purification and things they wanted to go through before the Passover itself and before the Feast day began. And so they were coming in before the Sabbath in order to be there. The city was filled with people from all over Judea, from all over the region, that were coming in. And some saying then, "Who is this man? Why this treatment? ...these people hollering as they are." It's hard for us sometimes when we read the story, but to think about it and what was taking place is awesome, inspiring. **And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.**

Mark adds a bit more. **Mark 1:11 – And Jesus entered in Jerusalem and into the temple.** So here's the account. It talks about Him going into Jerusalem, this procession, by the time they brought them back and so forth and He did these things, (some other accounts add some more things) but I want to add this point here to show something that takes place. He came to a point where He walked into the temple and when He had looked round about upon *all* things, (this becomes important later), He looked around and saw everything that was there, because of the timing of what was taking place here it says, **and when the eventide did come, He went back/into Bethany with the twelve.** So this day was about the procession, about the city seeing Him, going through the streets of Jerusalem walking in this way, people crying out as they did. This wasn't just a short stretch; this was a continual thing that was taking place as He was riding through there and people seeing Him. It was for the purpose of people seeing Him. What happens to the Passover lamb? People are to see it; they're to set it apart; families are to set it apart to make it special. This is the one that's going to die for you; this is the one we're going to kill on Passover night. Amazing!

So going on with Luke's account; and notice what he adds here because he adds more: **Luke 19 –** this is the account here now where they went to get the colt. **Verse 33 - And as they were loosening the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why are you loosening the colt?** And so it happened exactly as He said. And so He'd already told them what to tell them. **And they said, The Lord has need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when He came near, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives,** here they are coming... I think of the blessing of being able to be there and seeing it, where it was – it's a valley you go into before you go up toward the mount and as you're coming down from the east from what is now called East Jerusalem; up on the side of the hill is the mount of Olives and here they were coming from Bethany; they came down through that particular area – Christ waited in that area around the mount of Olives and then they came down and got to the bottom and then you start back up again on the other side of the valley and it's pretty steep through there – it's 2 miles. It's easy coming down, but it's harder going up. But here He is, by this time He's riding the colt the entire distance and as He goes through the streets of Jerusalem and so forth...and again here, what an incredible picture. Says... **and the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen;** all those multitudes that had been following Him – they were still with Him and they were there in Jerusalem and they were crying out and other people that weren't with Him – they were saying, "Who is this man?" People who'd come in for the Passover and so forth. And they were saying, **verse 38 - Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.**

And typical, **verse 39**, notice at one point here when they came across some Pharisees... **And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke your disciples!** Isn't that amazing the attitude here? "Correct your disciples! They shouldn't be saying this! They shouldn't be doing this! You know you're making a scene! This is a public scene! You're drawing attention to yourself – listen to what they're saying about You! Aren't you ashamed of this?" It's because they didn't believe who He was. Incredible! **And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that if they should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out.** Because this is from God! That's what He was telling them. "Stones are going to cry out if they don't do it." **And when He came near, He beheld the city, and wept over it,** remember the occasion there, different times He looked down upon Jerusalem as He's coming down upon the side of the mount of Olives there and sees all those things – because it's quite a view; **Saying, If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! but now they are hidden from your eyes.** So He was always looking forward, as we do. We don't have as far to look now, but at that time there it was a very moving thing to Him because of what He was getting ready to do; emotions that we can't even begin to grasp of what He was going through as a human being, moved by the spirit of God in a very powerful way in ways we can't even begin to imagine and grasp. And here He is knowing what He's getting ready to fulfill and seeing Jerusalem, knowing what's going to come to pass in Jerusalem, what they're going to have to suffer through in time and what it's going to take over the next 2,000 years before He can return again. Incredible!

Verse 43 - For the days shall come upon you, that our enemies shall cast a trench about you, encompass you, and keep you on every side, And shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you; and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you don't know the time of your visitation. And so things that were short range and things that were long range; some things that were physical and some things that were spiritual as you read later on; some things that had to do with Jerusalem itself and Judea – Jerusalem, physical Jerusalem and spiritual Jerusalem. It wasn't too much longer – around 40 years later when Jerusalem was encompassed with armies. It's the story about when many had to flee Jerusalem because of the destruction that was coming and we know the story of Masada and what took place in this fortress where some tried to protect themselves against the Romans and against the killings and the raping and everything else that were taking place that's written in history at that particular time period and why these people did not want to be captured toward the very end...and why they did what they did. And that's why the Jews are very moved by that event, of what took place in Jerusalem and how they were wiped out. Oh, the massive destruction that took place there is incredible and people taken into slavery... I don't know if you realize it, talk about different things that Jews at different times in history have been taken into slavery, captivity...they're the ones who helped build a coliseum in Rome, 100,000 Jews were taken captive to build the coliseum. Incredible! And the time span it took. So the Jews have suffered a lot at different time periods in history and these are the things that Jesus knew were going to come upon them at different times and knew what was going to happen to Jerusalem itself and how things were going to be destroyed and how the temple and different things around were going to be destroyed and stones pulled down. And we also understand what that means then spiritually - that Christ used that, of what is going to happen physically later on to teach about some things that were going to happen in a very powerful way spiritually to the Church.

And so again here, all these things that He knew were going to come to pass in time...and He wept because of the suffering that has to take place in human life before we can become a part of God's Family. All the suffering that human beings have to go through, all the suffering of 2,000 years of history. It was bad enough the first 4,000 years, but you look back on the past 2,000 years – billions of

people who've been killed; and so many of them in the name of different gods...not God, but ones they think is right. Whether it be traditional Christianity, even Judaism – but all the way through time people have killed one another. Think of the times of all the Moors that came up against Europe and all the battles and the crusades and all those who claim their going to 'get Jerusalem back' and all these people who were far from being righteous men. They stacked up wealth for themselves, they hoarded wealth until finally a Pope and someone else schemed to have them all killed one time there in France. I don't know if you know some of the stories of some of those things. A lot of awesome things have happened in history, sick perverted things and all people calling themselves Christian, or believing in Allah, or believing in God or whatever that might mean to them – killing each other. And Jesus Christ knew there was going to be incredible suffering through time until He returned – especially at the end-time.

And so again here; **they'll encompass you and keep you on every side and shall lay you even with the ground...your children...**yes, and so forth... so again, **you don't know the time of your visitation**, different things of when things are going to come upon you and so forth in time. Jesus Christ was looking ahead at those things that were going to come to pass and He was very moved by it and why He was going to have to suffer: that He was the Passover and that people didn't understand what He was getting ready to go through.

And finally, it's good that we read John's account as well: **John 12** – in the flow of the account it says, **(verse 12) - On the next day**, in other words, in the daytime portion of the 10th day; this is the 10th day again... so we're reading different accounts in different books... **many people who were come to the Feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord.** It's an awesome thing to understand here what they thought. When they were crying out about these things... do you know what was in their mind first and foremost? The prophecies about the Messiah have to do with a King that's coming, has to do with one who's anointed. Why? To take away the rule of mankind, in this case the Gentiles, the Romans, and to establish God's rule, to establish God's reign. They believed He was coming into Jerusalem at that time to indeed be the King, to take over the reins of government from the Romans by whatever means, by the power of God. And so they were excited because of all the prophecies, because of the oppression of the Romans, that now they were going to be liberated – *and here is their prophesied King!* That's what was in their mind.

And Jesus, when He had found a young ass sat thereupon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, your King comes, sitting on an ass's colt. First the disciples didn't understand these things: but when Jesus was glorified, they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him. So it all came together for them later on as they understood these things of what He was saying and why. **The people therefore who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead, bear record.** In other words – were witness of those events. I marvel sometimes at how that God has witnesses throughout time – 144,000: every one of them is a witness of events of what God has been doing on earth through time...from the time of Adam and Eve on...through time; those who are going to be resurrected... there are people that God has called and chosen and moulded and fashioned and prepared in advance. And those who are going to be resurrected are witness of the events of history. One day we're going to learn true history, not as it's been written and rewritten by different peoples of different times, but what is true and all these individuals who are witness of it. And I think of the end-times here of things that we have witnessed. I think of things we have been witnesses of that are most incredible – prophecies having to do with the end-time, prophecies having to do with what was going to happen to the Church...that there would be a great apostasy. How far out was that during Ephesus? Pergamus? Thyatira? Some of the different eras

of the Church in different time periods, of individuals who'd read those scriptures and think... "an apostasy?" That there's going to be a great falling away in the Church? It was just kind of foreign to the minds of those people when you read about Paul and different ones like Peter and James and John. I can't imagine being back there in those early stages. Well, I can...I say that facetiously because we did the same thing in Philadelphia. We had no idea what this great apostasy was going to be, this great falling away. We had some ideas about it, but we didn't know what it was, and yet... those of us who've been around for many years, we witnessed those things take place. An incredible event. And then all of us, all of us even now who are a part – we're witness of things that God is doing at the very end-time. It's an awesome thing! And one day you're going to have all kinds of people wanting to know, wanting to hear the stories, wanting to hear what happened: "What did you see?" You're a witness of these things that are coming to pass and that are going to transpire. What you get to share with them, because you see... their inspiration from receiving it firsthand...we're inspired when we read it out of this book. We're inspired when we go through the book of Acts and see what happened after the Day of Pentecost and all the things that took place in here, the stories that are written, the accounts of things that they witnessed. It's inspiring, it's moving...and so will it be in a short time when people know who you are and when you were called and how your mind was opened up and what you experienced and what you went through to get to where you are. Incredible.

Verse 18 - It says, **For this cause, the people also met Him, for that they had heard He had done this miracle.** Speaking of Lazarus being resurrected. And so again, God gave the timing of various things – the word that went around...someone raised from the dead. There were *many* witnesses of these events that took place. **The Pharisees therefore said one to another, We're getting nowhere! Behold, the world is going after Him.** That's what they saw. They were depressed, they weren't winning, they didn't know how they were going to kill Him. How are they going to get rid of this man that threatens their existence and their power and their influence in people's lives? He's going to take it all away. That's all they cared about. Amazing! Human nature – vile, sick, perverted human nature. Incredible! It's not going to be easy for them in time, in some of the judgement of things waiting for some – it's going to be kind of tough.

Just because people are resurrected in the future doesn't mean it's going to be easy; and there'll be some cases where people will *not* be resurrected. There are people who've already committed the unpardonable sin in history, through time. There are some people who are so vile in their human nature, so evil in their thinking that God automatically knows what they would do if He gave them His holy spirit. There are people who would never use His holy spirit so why give it to them? There's much we have to learn about some of these things. I've often wondered about some despots throughout history whose minds are so perverted, so gone, so filled with hatred and bitterness... Can they be healed? God knows who can be healed and who can't. So what's the point at the beginning of 100 years to resurrect *every individual* who's ever lived? There's not, because what awaits some of them, candidly, frankly, is death for all eternity.

I want to pick up the story again in **Mark 11** – if you remember reading **verse 11** there. Because of these events... this is what leads into the next day. In **verse 11** it says - **And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple:** so this was toward the end of all these events that had taken place, all His riding through and so forth and people rejoicing before Him that He is the King; and the very reason of how they were finally able to find fault to put Him to death. This was the only way, the only thing they could use; **and when He looked around about on all things,** so this is about something He saw in the temple...about what He saw within the temple and He doesn't take action on it until the following day. He saw what people were doing

Verse 12 - And on the morrow, so this is the next day, in other words the 11th day of the 1st month. This is on Sunday; **when they were coming from Bethany, He was hungry**: and so this is the first account of what we come across. So here they're coming back into Jerusalem again; they've been back and forth these past couple of days and it's talking about how He's coming from Bethany again, **He was hungry. And seeing afar off a fig tree with leaves, He came to it hoping that He might find fruit on it: but when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of its figs had not yet come. And Jesus responded and said unto it; From now on no man will eat fruit of you. And His disciples heard it.** Now this escapes most people, what some of this is all about, but the point is that the only true fruit in life comes through Jesus Christ, that's what this is really about. It's good to understand that in some of the teachings here of what Jesus Christ goes through and gives to them – these things that are written for others sake of accounts that took place.

Let's read what Jesus told His disciples on Passover night just as an example here. I purposely skipped through part of this on Passover night. Normally I read all of John 15 in the beginning of it, but I want to go back there today to read a part of this using an example here, in this case of a vine, but making the point clear of what these things foretell because everything that Christ was doing had to do with what He had to fulfill as our Passover and always forward looking of what was going to be accomplished, what had to be done of those things that were going to prepare for people coming into the Family of God and it's all about the Kingdom of God and so forth. **John 15** – and then we'll go back to the story flow here... We're jumping way ahead now because I want to bring in this matter of fruit because it has to do with Jesus Christ and that no man was ever going to have fruit from *that* tree. If He isn't going to have it, it's not going to come... so the point being here is that all fruit, in this case here, is produced and comes through Jesus Christ and by Him only. And that's the point of these things. **John 15:1** – He uses the example of a vine. **I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.** The vinedresser, in other words, the one who takes care of and prunes and nurtures and the like. But He says He is the vine... **Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away.** Those parts that don't produce are dead; I don't know how many of you've been around vineyards and so forth but even after they produce grapes they'll go through and trim back mightily so that the amount of what is able to be produced is affected. And so it's a part of our life; we understand that...that there are parts in our life that sometime you have to go through; and some things have to be cut out of our lives, as a part of our life, and to get rid of that which doesn't produce and that which resists the producing of fruit.

And so He talks about here, **Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes away**: and this can literally be by individuals as well. If we don't produce, if we don't yield to God's spirit, if we don't yield to God and seek to grow and produce fruit...because the point being is the only thing (when we're called), that will lead to not being able to produce fruit, is sin. And otherwise God's spirit and His purpose is to live within us: that's God's will and His purpose – that His spirit lives within us and He makes it very clear that wherever He sends His spirit it *always produces fruit*: so if God's spirit is there, we're going to grow - we can't help it. If we're utilizing God's spirit, not being cut off from the flow of God's spirit, it demands growth! It will be there automatically in our lives. And the only thing that causes problems, oftentimes we find out, is our stubbornness, is our resistance, is our sin and that's what has to change. But when the flow of God's spirit is there we will grow and it's exciting, it's inspiring. It's also depressing and a little frustrating when we don't grow – when we should be.

Every branch in Me that doesn't bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, see this is the pruning that I mentioned before here. You go through and you prune so more fruit can be produced – get rid of some of the parts there that are restricting growth or that are prohibiting or

holding back the growth that should be taking place in our life. And so God comes along and He helps to get rid of that. Sometimes we have to go through things to bring something to the surface to get rid of it – like the trials and the fire we go through. That's why I love those examples when silver and gold is refined and the impurities, it talks about, that come to the surface...when you heat it up to a certain temperature and some of the impurities come to the surface so you can see it and so you can skim it off the top. I think that's especially done in silver even more so. You know you can take it off the top, that which is impure, and so what's left then is purer, better – all the time growing. And so the same thing here, how that He says, **He purges it**, gets rid of those things that are impure in essence, **so that we can produce more fruit**.

Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. You remember the examples on Passover night about God's desire that His *word*, His *logos* dwell in us; that the word of God dwell in us, that the truth of God is what sanctifies us, sets us apart. And so the more the word of God dwells in us, in our mind and in our being as a part of our life the more that fruits are going to be produced indeed. And that's how we're *purified* and cleansed and made cleaner...is through God's word.

So He says, **you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.** The more we're in unity and oneness with that word the cleaner we become, the stronger we become, the more *at one with God* we become. **Abide in Me**, see, that's our part, that's our choice. Do we want to abide in God? **Abide in me**, He says... **and I in you.** So the desire first must be in our part. We must want to get rid of sin. We must *want* to repent of sin. We must want to conquer sin. We must want to do as the Days of Unleavened Bread show – to come out of Egypt, to continue out of Egypt all of our life, because coming out of Egypt is not a onetime event for us. It's a *life long* process of coming out of sin, of conquering sin. And God will give us the help and the power to do so. He'll continue to make the way clear to us so we can continue moving forward; but we get in the way so often and we cause problems. We resist that holy spirit and the power of God and we *don't* abide in God then sometimes. That's why I *hate sin!* That's why I love the blessing of repentance; that God has granted us the ability to repent of sin through our Passover so we can be forgiven, so we can continue forward. That's why every day of our life we need to be repenting before God, seeing what we are; because *I've known times past in the Church of God where people were not repenting every day* because they didn't see themselves! *They didn't see how vile their nature was.* They thought they were pretty good. Whenever you start thinking you're pretty good – you're pretty bad! Truly are! Whenever you start thinking things are going pretty well, and you're doing pretty good... stop and think again because the scriptures show exactly the opposite about us. Indeed, we must understand what our nature is like – how *vile* our nature is and when that shows it's ugly self as well...and repent of it.

So He says **Abide in Me, and I in you.** God's desire is to live in us. That's the desire of Jesus Christ and God the Father. *That's why He died!* What an awesome picture! To understand the very *purpose* of why He *died*. Yes, so we could be forgiven of sin, but to what end? So God the Father and Jesus Christ can dwell in us because *He will not dwell in sin*; and so we have to be cleansed of sin, and that comes through forgiveness. First, we have to repent, and then receive forgiveness. **Abide in Me, and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine;** I have seen the *ugliness* of it – witness of it in a very powerful way...what happened in Philadelphia and went on into Laodicea. I wasn't called until 1969 and I saw those things begin to develop in the Church of God; wars and rumours of wars and battles that started small as different ministers began to go astray in the beginning as Mr. Armstrong was accused of teaching the immortality of the soul. You think...duh, duh-duh...how *dumb* can you be? How spiritually blind? ...because he said that there is a spirit in man that lives in us, that's a part of our life whereby it gives us the ability to think and reason...*not God's spirit*...but a spirit essence

in the mind that makes us unique as human beings, that makes us different from the animal kingdom, that makes us different from geese. We were talking about this bird that flies down from Alaska, the Godwit^{i ii}, but it travels around 18,000 km? I can't remember how many days; 4, 5, 6 days, whatever it is... non-stop! Now, you think of the dumb ignorance of evolutionists. They just started flying and how long did it take where they could finally know how much fat to store up, or how much something to store up and *how on earth* could they fly that far without stopping? How many of them dropped into the ocean before they finally figured out how to do it? You know the stupidity of mankind; but you think of the awesomeness... they do it! Not because they think it up, not because they can read the stars at night... "Hey Joe, I think you're a little off course..." How dumb can that be? And all of a sudden, maybe who's the fastest, he's the best, he knows... "Johnny knows the way, let's follow him..." you know, up front there... Have to apologize for using the name Johnny there. ☺ Just talked to Johnny Harrell this morning here, *he* knows the way... anyway... When you're talking about different birds flying like that and you think, "How'd they know where to go and when to go?" Human beings are so *dumb* when it comes to God's way, when it comes to God's creation. We're so *willingly ignorant*, stupid, dumb when it comes to God – it's just our nature. We resist and fight against God so we've got to come up with some... "God didn't do all this..." So how did it happen? "Oh, it took millions of years to evolve! That's how it happened! It had to take millions and millions of years and slowly but surely these things developed in people, or beings or animals out here and they finally learned..." Geese...finally got the smarts and they knew how to fly south and where to fly and which way is south and when to go back north. I loathe the ignorance of mankind –willingly ignorant of God's ways. Human nature... it's an amazing thing, it truly is...how much we resist and fight against God and won't yield ourselves, don't give God the honour and the glory.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; yeah, individuals in the Church in times past – that's where I started going in that direction. People who began to rely upon themselves and their own ability to study the scriptures, their own ability to use a Strong's Concordance. They learned how to use a Strong's Concordance and then after a while they're spending hours in Strong's Concordance looking up these words in the Greek and Hebrew and all of a sudden they are becoming genius' spiritually and they find these things and they've got to share it with others...that disagrees with what Mr. Armstrong was giving in the Church and these different ideas they were coming up with and began to want to share some of this divisive stuff with others. Amazing!

I am the vine, you are the branches: He who abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: you can't help it. You will grow! You will mature! You will have spiritual insight! You'll draw closer to God! You'll have a spiritual maturity added onto the lack of your physical maturity that we have as human beings. Sometimes we just don't grow up. With God's spirit we can grow up, we can learn and understand things in the light of God's word and the relationships that we're to have as human beings and what's right and what's wrong. So He says **...abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing.** And just like that tree – if it doesn't come through Him, if it's not given to Him, it's not given to us – we can't have it. And the reality is if it's going to be there it's because it's in Christ and that's how we're going to receive it and we're going to produce fruit **if we abide in Him and He abides in us.** Incredible! **If any man abides not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;** if we refuse to repent, if we refuse to live the way God says to live... where does repentance come from? Comes from sins we know we've committed. What are the sins? Relationships. The first four are about relationship with God; the last six are about relationships with one another – with other human beings, with other people on the earth. So the first four there, we oftentimes deceive ourselves into thinking... "Well, we've got a good relationship with God." Because we don't see Him physically; we can't see Him anyway... but the point is – do we see Him spiritually?

And that basically comes through the last six commandments, because this is where the nuts and bolts are. Do we live this way of life the way God said we are to live this life toward one another? ...toward each other? Because this is the test, this is the trial in life. Do we live it toward one another? Because if we don't – we sin, and if we sin, we cut ourselves off from God: we don't abide in Christ and He doesn't abide in us! It's real simple. And especially in the Church...either we love one another or we don't and if we don't then we've got *big* problems and we cut ourselves off from the flow of God's spirit.

Verse 7 - If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you: what are those words? He tells us in a little bit, part of them, 'love your neighbour as yourself' and love those in the Church a lot more! ...because you can - see? ...One another. We are a Family and God brings us into a Family. He brings all kinds of people into a family and He says, "These are Mine. Will you love them? You may not understand; you may not comprehend where they're coming from all the time; you may not understand some of the things that go on in life...but do you love them? *Do you want to see them succeed and come through this as much as you do yourself?* Are you willing to sacrifice your life for them? Do you love them that much?" Reality is so often we just don't. And those are the things that have to be repented of.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. That's the only time God intervenes in our life – when we're at one with Him; when we're dwelling in God and Christ and they're dwelling in us. That means we're repenting and being forgiven of sin; because God's faithful to forgive us of sin whenever we repent – see?

Herein is My Father glorified, as we read on Passover night...we read these verses; **that you bear much fruit;** because that's God's will, that's His desire, it's His longing desire that we would yield to Him so we can be blessed. Doesn't a parent want to give to their children? Doesn't a parent want what's best for their children? How much more God Almighty to us? His desire and what He wants to give to us is of *Himself, is of His spirit and of His mind...because there is peace and power and might – life eternal,* if we understand what that means; and we will bear fruit. God wants us to bear fruit so that we're fulfilled and happy and have abundant and happy lives. Don't we want that for our children? ...for them to be successful and have happy and abundant lives? Absolutely! Well, God wants that many, many times more for us; but we resist, we fight and resist Him and what He says to do. We resist His word, like it says up here. **If you abide in Me My words abide in you.** Well, the test is: Do we live it? See, it's not a matter of just knowing what God says; it's not a matter of, as an example just knowing the 10 Commandments. Do you *live them?* That's what puts us to the test. Is His word in here? Are we living by it toward one another? Because if we're not then we're sinning and we're cutting God's spirit off from us and we can't produce fruit and we're working against God's will.

Verse 9 – As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you: continue you in My love/continue you in My Agape...comes from God through Jesus Christ. This kind of love you can't work up. It comes from God. And that word 'continue' is the same word 'to abide in Me and I in you'...to live in Me and I'll live in you...continue in Me and I'll continue in you. Because the choice is ours. Are we going to continue in Him? See, that's what it's about. And if we want to do that then we're going to do what we have to do to do that... repent, repent, repent, repent! Because of our Passover, thankfully we can repent and be forgiven and it's gone!

If you keep My commandments... IF, IF, IF, IF... what does that mean? Sin has to be repented of. We need our Passover desperately so we can be forgiven so we can continue to go forward. **If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My Agape;** because that's what God's law is. His love is about the law. Relationships. The bottom line is love, God's love, sacrificing love at that. That means you have to

sacrifice *your* desires, *your* wants, *your* feelings, *your* emotions, *your* temperament in order to give to other people... **even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain/abide in/live in/dwell in you**, same word. That's God's love, that's His desire for us. **I have spoken these things to you...** 'I AM GOING TO DIE for you so that this can be accomplished in your life. I am your Passover! I'm telling you these things this night because tomorrow afternoon I DIE for you.' That's what Jesus Christ was going through. He didn't say that *that* way, but that's what He was saying. I'm your Passover. That's how these things are made possible – that you can repent and be forgiven and remain in Me, continue in Me, abide in Me, live in Me...and I in you.

So I've spoken these things that My joy might abide in you. Joy! Joy, fullness of life, excitement of life comes through obedience, comes through God living in us, getting rid of the human nature...otherwise we're not happy, we're not fulfilled, we're not filled with joy. We get to a point where we become agitated toward other people and so forth. Things work us up and stir us up...and that's just wrong; that's sin. That's sin! It's the opposite of what God wants to give us. He didn't call us to give us agitation, to give us problems. He called us to give us peace and there's a way that the peace comes. **This is My commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you.** That's a tall order. *That* is a tall, tall order; something you cannot accomplish without God's help.

It must be accomplished, is only accomplished in exactly what it says here in **Ephesians 5:1-2... Be you therefore followers of God as dear children; And walk in agape...** Isn't that exactly what He's saying? That's *exactly* what He's saying back there in John on the night of... this is Passover night – okay? ...just before He gives Himself to be killed, to be tortured. He says, **And walk in love/walk in agape as Christ also has loved us** – well, how did He love us? ...**and has given Himself for an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.** Because that's what's pleasing to God. When we're willing to sacrifice *our* wants, *our* thoughts, *our* ideas, *our* judgements, *our*...whatever it might be for the sake of others...that we're willing to swallow our pride and our supposed hurt and so forth for the sake of someone else *and if we're not willing to do that we're not living God's way of life!* *That's the bottom line!* We need to get that picture into our minds.

Well...how *often* I cry out about these things and how *often* these things still get stirred up in the Church from area to area to area when people can't get along with one another, let alone with the world around them. We don't have much time left – okay? And I just speak things bluntly and plainly...and more as we get closer and closer: If you don't get along with your neighbour who is a part of the Body of Christ, the sin is yours. The sin is fully *yours!* Unless the individual has committed such heinous sin that they must be put out of the Body of Christ. If they're not put out of the Body of Christ then you have no other option but to have peace with them, to love them, to care for them, to nourish them, to want to see them come through *everything* as much as *you hope* that you're going to come through the next two years as well. And if you're not willing to do that, *you will not come through the next two years* – take it to the bank, because otherwise it would be a mockery to God.

So very powerful words that Jesus Christ gave us on Passover night; that's why He tells us to examine ourselves in 1st Corinthians before we take the Passover...that we're *right* with Him and that we're *right* with one another. So important.

John 15:12 - This is My commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. Love can only be given through human beings through sacrifice. You have to sacrifice yourself, your will, your wants, your desires, your pride...whatever it might be. **Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down**

his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatsoever I command you. See? Those are powerful words.

I want to add to this something else John said later on as he matured and grew spiritually in a far greater way and some of the most powerful words in scripture that God has given to us about these relationships and about relationships within the Body; and I marvel at them and the time from when John wrote here to the time that John wrote back *here* before the book of Revelation... some of the most *profound things* about relationships are written here in 1st John, truly are. Awesome and powerful and mighty. He just calls a spade a spade. **I John 4:20 - If a man say, I love God,** it's easy to say that, "I love God, I love the Church, I love the truth, I love this way of life," **and hate his brother,** this word hate means **'to refuse to love' your brother,** the way God says to, that's what this says; it's not a matter of the word of how we use hate today, it's a refusal to love the way God says to love, because over and over again He says, "Love your brother..." **...he is a liar:** Those are powerful words. Sin! What greater sin could be than this here...*what greater sin* could there be than this one right here? **...for he who loves not his brother whom he has seen, how...** how can he think, how can he believe in any fashion or form that **he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God love his brother also.** Otherwise it's false, its hypocrisy and it's a lie!

Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: if you believe and see those things in your life; **and everyone that loves Him that begat...** we believe that we love God, we say we love God will **love him also that's begotten of Him.** That's Family! How much do we love each other? That's what it comes down to. How much do we love each other? Isn't that a pretty good question? Are you willing to die for others? Think of someone in the Body that you get along with the least – that you maybe have difficulty getting along with your relationship with them... because you see God calls all people into His Church. So everybody that's listening everywhere around the world today, I want you to think about this; because you see, God has seen to it that *He has called into the Church people who are exactly the opposite of you, people that are going to be like sandpaper to you in personality!* ...up the opposite extreme in personality and behaviour and so forth...and they're there for a *purpose!* So *both* of you can learn how to love each other the way God says to love each other in a Family. Because normally in society, in the world, you would rub each other a little bit the wrong way like sandpaper and all that's coming off is sand and it's getting hot and it's causing things to get hotter! Amazing! And God says, "If they're Mine, I've called them, they're begotten of Me...How can you help but love them?" And see, that's where we're put to the test...and if we don't then we are a liar in our behaviour toward God and it's one of the greatest of sins we can live.

That's why I'd like to make a real strong plea to the Church today, that whatever come out of your mouth from this day forward – that you think about it... that if you say *anything* negative about your brother that you understand *you are cut off from the flow of God's spirit and God is not going to take it lightly.* Because the closer we get to the end, the stronger this must become in our life – okay? Otherwise we end up taking the Passover in a horrible way –exactly what we're going through in this sermon series. What was it all for? What was it all about? Do we grasp the sacrifice? And if we do, then if you're standing up for God's way of life... If someone comes to me and starts blabbing about someone else and starts talking about someone else I'm going to say, "Oh, wait a minute! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa...whoa...whoa... First of all, have you gone to them and talked about these things? Have you done what God commanded you? Then why do you have these feelings? What great sin have they committed toward you?" My point being is that most of the time when others in the Body... because I hear about these things everywhere I go as a whole, at different times in people's lives...whenever congregations meet together – that sometimes there's friction – okay? And if those

kinds of things happen we have to be of a particular mindset that if you ever hear anybody talking to you and badmouthing someone else in the Body...Have the guts, the *integrity, the fortitude, the spiritual conviction before your God to protect your brother!* ...and to say "Stop, I can't hear that...what you're doing to me, spreading this is **wrong**. No justification for it whatsoever and it must be stopped." I hope every one of us can do that because we love our brother; because we understand if they can't do that, they've cut themselves off from God and they're not going to come through this. See, I love you! ...And I will tell you, "This is wrong. This is sin and I don't want to see you cut off from God. I want to see you be able to repent."

Relationships are so important when it comes to our Passover. That's why He died...so that God could give us love toward one another and the only way that comes is by God the Father and Jesus Christ dwelling within us and if we refuse that love, to exercise that love, to live that love, that word toward one another...then what is all this about and was it all in vain? Was that night all in vain? Because this is what it's about. He said on that night, **If you keep My commandments you shall abide in My love even as I've kept My Father's commandments and abided in His love. These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be filled. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you.** Those are powerful words to live by.

Just say it plainly... there is no one in the Body...there is no one in the Church of God that I feel ill will toward. There is no one in the Body that I refuse to love. There is no one in the Body that I wouldn't suffer for individually. Can you say that before God? ...and if you can't, something's wrong with you spiritually. How far will you go to suffer for somebody else so they can come through this and be there when this is all said and done? How far would you go with that? Would you stand up for them enough to say, "Take my life...I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to betray God. I'm not going to speak ill about my brother." That's what it's about.

Let's get back to the story flow in Mark continuing the story as we were in the initial account of the fig tree being cursed and getting back into the flow here of what was taking place – the chronology. So again, this was on Sunday when the fig tree was cursed. (Mark 11:11) **And Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple and when He looked about on all things, and when the eventide was come He went back unto Bethany with the twelve. And on the morrow,** and it brings in here... When I mentioned He was going back to Bethany... **and on the morrow,** this is the 11th day. Because this all happened on the Sabbath...they took Him into the streets on the colt and so forth and they were crying out Hallelujah and Son of David and so forth – and then verse 11 is that He went and made these comments here. It says, **and when they were coming from Bethany, He was hungry: And seeing this fig tree afar off, this was the Sunday morning, having leaves, He came hoping He might find fruit on it: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves;** so He saw it in the distance and all He saw was the tree obviously with the leaves and He got closer and saw that there were no figs there so **the time of figs had not yet come. And Jesus responded and said unto it; From now on no man will eat fruit of you. And His disciples heard it.**

So, on the 10th day of the month, again, as the Sabbath was drawing to a close it states in verse 11 that His final act was looking around at the temple there, as I mentioned earlier, and this is important as we go along here. The next day He's coming through Bethany once again – what happens to the fig tree and so forth... and then continuing on in **verse 15 - And they came to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables**

of the money changers, He looked around and saw those things the night before. He saw some of those things taking place on the Sabbath but He didn't deal with it on the Sabbath; He waited because it was getting close to evening. He went ahead and went back to Bethany at the end of the day there; went back there and these are some of the things that took place and it says here then on this first day (Sunday) **He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them who sold doves; And He would not suffer/allow any man should carry any vessel through the temple.**

So again, this is the second time; if you understand some of the stories in the Bible – this is the second time this has happened. Sometimes we read things and we think they only happened once. No, it happened twice and as we go through this series, if we have time, we'll go back to that other original one, the first time it happened. And it says, **And He wouldn't allow any man to carry any of the vessels through the temple and He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer? But you have made it a den of thieves.** You know, amazing what took place by this time and what the Pharisees and the leaders were allowing to take place here and why Jesus Christ at this point in time had condemned the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and everyone else for their religious ideas and beliefs about God. They'd strayed so far away. That's why I marvel sometimes that there are people in the Church who would go back to Judaism to try to find out how you're supposed to worship God. You think... What? Give me a break! They went off base 2,000 years ago and you think they got any better in the past 2,000 years? On the contrary, they moved farther and farther away in their understanding of what was true. Their concept today of a Messiah, if you study and read what different ones teach today, is so drastically different from what it was 2,000 years... they've strayed so *far away*... it's amazing how they think today!

He says, **should not My house be called of all nations a house of prayer? But you have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him**, in other words He was a great threat to their position and authority, **because all the people were astonished at His doctrine.** They were moved by what He had to say...and just to let you know, God's spirit was involved in all this – that's why they were moved. Not to see the truth like we see the truth, but they were moved to grasp things to a point. **And when the evening was come, He went out of the city.**

Let's turn over to Matthew and look at the account here. **Matthew 21** – stated a little differently as to the chronology, but it's the same as Mark 11 if you understand how and why Matthew is addressing this as he is. So many accounts here, people get so confused when they go through some of these accounts and the chronology because you have to know the intent of what the author is saying and what he's leading up to and why he's speaking in the way that he is. Just like we did to the accounts of Judas and what led up to that particular day there. Some of those do get a little confusing but if you have the flow together it's really more inspiring, more exciting when you see what God is doing and how He's doing it. **Matthew 21:12 - And Jesus went into the temple of God, and again, this was after the fig tree is cursed...and still on that same day, Sunday the 11th...and cast out all them who sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the table of money changers, and the seats of them who sold doves, And He said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them.** So, there's more that went on this day. He's still healing people...blind and the lame. Here there are Pharisees around there seeing these things and they're just getting worse and worse just as Judas Iscariot was – twisted up inside...their resentment toward, their bitterness toward Christ in the things He was doing and saying. All of this God was using in a very powerful way to lead up to what had to take place.

And so He was healing them...**and when the chief priests and scribes saw the amazing things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David;** the children were getting involved... **they were sore displeased,** putting it lightly, mildly. In other words, 'highly agitated and angry' is what this means. You think... what a horrible spirit. Can you imagine? Here people are being healed, people are being helped, people who've been blind and lame for their life and all of a sudden they can see, or they're able to walk without problems...and Jesus performing all these incredible miracles in an escalating way more and more in a greater way continually here. And you'd think people would be excited and respond to that knowing there's only one way those things can be done and that's through God. Oh, that wasn't the case because they had *much* they thought that was getting taken away from them. Pride is such a putrid, sick thing. I read stories like this and it just makes you sick! But that's the way we are as human beings without God.

And so again, **the children were crying out Hosanna to the Son of David;** and so the priests and so forth **were highly displeased,** highly agitated and angry. **And he,** speaking of the chief priest, **said unto Him, Do you hear what they're saying?** So the chief priest is there and he's saying to Jesus... "Do you hear what the people are saying?" It's like... "Aren't you put off by this? ...they're lauding You, praising You and saying these things about You...shouldn't you shut them up?" ...like happened earlier here...**And Jesus said unto them, Yes; have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have perfected praise?** So again quoting Old Testament here. Obviously they didn't know those things, didn't piece them together. They didn't understand what was happening. **And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there.** So again, continually going back and forth between Jerusalem and Bethany first couple of days here in what was taking place.

At this point Matthew reflects back on the account of the fig tree earlier in that morning. So when you read this, it's not happening here, he's reflecting back on what happened in the morning because he's ending an account here for a purpose and what He's getting ready to talk about. And here he's reflecting back to the morning. It says, **Now in the morning,** in other words, 'but earlier that morning' is what's being said here; **as He returned into the city, He was hungry.** And so that's exactly what it's saying here and could more perfectly be translated, 'earlier in that morning'... **And when He saw a fig tree along the way, He came to it, and found on it nothing, but leaves only, and He said to it; Let no fruit grow on you from this point forward and forever. And at that time the fig tree began to wither away.** So it's as they were going into town that the fig tree began to wither. It wasn't something that happened instantaneously, but from that point they heard what He said, the disciples did, and so this process began to take place and this is why Matthew is explaining it in these terms... **And when the disciples saw it,** well, when did they see it? Well, you read in another account how it was the next morning when they came by it again; because they went back to Bethany and then they were going back into Jerusalem again and it was in the following morning that some of the comments were made.

And so it says, **and when the disciples saw it,** so if you know the chronology that follows in the morning of the 12th, which is a Monday morning as they were returning to Jerusalem. Other accounts make it very clear. It says, **they marvelled, saying, Look how quickly the fig tree is withered away!** Because now they could see it. Here it'd been all night and by the next morning, 24 hours later, when they were coming back into Jerusalem again from Bethany...now the leaves were withered away and they said, "Look how quickly this has happened," and **Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If you have faith, and don't doubt, you shall not only do that which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be removed, and cast into the sea; it shall be done.** Now this is incredible! And people miss what's being said here. So easy to miss fully what's being said here. And

He said, **And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.** So the point being is, Yes this took place, but what do you believe? What is the purpose behind it?

This is a little bit of what I've been trying to convey in recent time here about two witnesses and what happens in certain prophecy in Revelation; because the vast majority of those things don't happen until toward the end, just as in Christ's ministry here. In His period of His ministry, the things that happened on the last few days were immense indeed...and so it is in this age we live in right now. There are going to be things that are reserved to the end. Because I am who I know I am doesn't mean I can go out here and ask God, and tell God, or say... I wouldn't do it unless I know and I won't know until God lets me know; when it agrees with God and when it agrees with God's will. There's certain things you don't do in life unless you know its God's will and God's purpose. And so it was with Christ, so it is with all of us in what we pray about. You must know something is a matter of God's will and in agreement with God and then you can pray about it with boldness in faith. It's not a matter of just asking whimsically for God to do certain things, that if somehow you can work it up enough... I'm going to work up with this faith and I'm going to ask... "*MOUNTAIN BE MOVED!!... and cast into the sea!*" And all of a sudden you see this mountain take off... I won't tell you what you'd probably do if you did that. Your loins would be loosed as the expression is in the Old Testament. But see...who would do that? I can tell you who would do it: some nut case, some whacko, some weirdo. Unless you know it's from God and God's purpose... and how can you know that? If something is written in here and you know it and you know the timing of it and what the purpose is – yes. If you're at one with God; if there's a unity and a oneness with God here in your life, that He gives it to you in some sort of way – whatever way that He works with every one of us in life...then so be it. But belief is a matter of faith and how God works in your life and what He's doing with your life and what His will is. It doesn't mean you go and ask for certain things that aren't a part of His will.

That's why you can't go out and buy this lottery ticket and say, "Okay God...here it is. Here it is...210 million dollars – this will help the Church a lot! ☺ Think of what we can do with Google..." See, it's a little bit like Judas. You know the thinking is not right – see, and His intent wasn't really right – that really wasn't his heart. Because the 210 million dollars? It really isn't all about the Church! ...if we really understand our human nature. It's having the *power* of the 210 million dollars, the *power* to give a bunch of it to the Church, the *power* of how I'm going to be looked at. But sometimes we don't understand our own human nature in things like that, do we? And so human nature's a funny thing. When you're converted you can look and see how funny it is. ☺ ...how strange we are, how sometimes we are what our natures like. That's why we can laugh at it, because we know what we're like! We know how we think! We've done things like that in life. We've prayed about things like that in life – things we want and we desire God to give to us those desires. But unless it's God's purpose and God's will, you can't pray in that kind of faith.

We can petition God about things. We have a lot of things we can petition God about...and we pray, "if it be of Your will," knowing full well that most of the time it probably isn't, "but if I can have this petition of You this is what I really desire"...and especially if you're praying for somebody else more so – for their life – healing, and whatever. And even there sometimes, you know what oftentimes happens? I've seen all kinds of things in the Church. I've seen people healed of things immediately. I've seen things where it's been a little bit of a process of time, a few days. I've seen it where it's gone over several weeks. I've seen things where it's gone over a year or more. I've seen some things where God says, "No." Sometimes His answer's just simply, "No." ...because there's something else we learn from it, something else we gain from it, something else that's being moulded and fashioned within us; and how can you say what God's moulding and fashioning within you if it's His will? That's what Christ said,

“Father if there be any other way...but not My will, but Yours be done.” And that’s how we should pray: not my will, but Yours be done and if God doesn’t answer... to understand there’s something else in this.

As we were going through some of the things we’ve gone through of the last many years...it’s been a horrible fight; and yet it’s been a great fight...if you understand what I’m saying. Things that we’ve gone through from the time before the apostasy occurred and from that time forward... I’ve said it so many times; I am who I am because of what was moulded and fashioned through me with every one of those experiences – that as my prayer went up before God – that if it could be taken away be taken away at the time you’re going through it or to speed it up or to let us get through this quickly...and so often it wasn’t that way. And then you’re able to look back later and say, “Now, I understand. I wouldn’t have changed this, or I wouldn’t have changed that, I wouldn’t have responded in this way, I wouldn’t have this developed in my mind if I hadn’t of gone through these things.” And we’ve got to understand the moulding and fashioning God does in our lives. It’s an awesome and beautiful thing, it truly is. So sometimes you go through a, pardon me, but a ‘hell on earth’ – okay...that’s hard, that takes your mind to the point of the brink you feel sometimes, the stress, the pain, the suffering in your thinking. And then all of a sudden you get through it and you look back and you realize what it was all about. Then how much is that worth? ...God moulding and fashioning each one of us. It’s incredible what we go through.

Matthew 21:22 - And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

Let’s go back to **Mark 11**. Let’s look at the account of passing by the fig tree again here in the morning after it was cursed. Again, notice, remembering this was on Monday morning on the 12th. So if you go through the account of Mark here we come down to **verse 20 - And in the morning**, so again, this is Monday morning on the 12th – two days to go before the 14th; ...**as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up by the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance said unto Him, Master, behold, the fig tree which You cursed is withered away. And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be you removed and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe those things which He said shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he said.** So again, very powerful here, but it’s a matter of always understanding it has to be a matter of God’s will. And so many of these things you read about here, like what Christ said on the night of the Passover about praying certain things and God will give this to you – whatsoever you shall ask...you know what they were most often in the context of? The receiving of God’s spirit into your life; the being able to be forgiven of sin and have God dwell in you; the spiritual growth that God has a desire for us to have. What is greater in our life? What is the most important thing in our life? To have God intervene to take care of certain physical things in our life, or to grow as an embryo, to grow in the womb of the mother, to have maturity and growth in the Body? Which is greater?

Hope we understand it pales into insignificance the physical things around us in this world if we understand what we’ve been given and the opportunities that we have of being moulded and fashioned into the Godkind. That’s what God is giving us – incredible!

Verse 24 - Therefore I say unto you, whatever things you desire, when you pray, believing that you shall receive them and you shall have them. And when you stand praying, Oh...whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa... see what’s important here? See what’s more important here? See what’s greater here? Not the mountain! This is what’s important. It goes back to relationships over and over and over again here, things that Christ said – especially on Passover night – have to do with relationships in the Body of

Christ, in the Church of God. ...**And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any:** those are powerful words. In other words, that means you must be of a forgiving spirit all the time in your life and when you really grow and understand it spiritually even more so, you will come to understand you're never, ever, ever to hold anything against any. That's sin. You have *no right to forgive* anyone...in the sense of holding something against someone else. That's what God tells us. We have *no right* to hold anything against those whom God has called. We *have no right to JUDGE* those whom God has called in the sense of condemnation. Now to judge something that's wrong, to perhaps bring it to an individual's attention –we have that responsibility to go to our brother alone...or to take it to the ministry and say, "This individual is committing adultery and I've talked to them about it." Cause see, those things have happened in the Church of God – fornication – adultery – homosexuality... different things that people have done and thinking they're going to get by with it. Child molestation! It doesn't just happen in the Catholic Church! It happens in human life! But we don't do like the Catholic Church – okay? ...and cover it up! When things are that bad we get rid of it! We put it out of the Body! There's no excuse for that kind of thing and it's pretty tough to get back in when people go that far!

People have been forgiven of adultery, fornication, and are able to be in the Body. But the point being is we all have responsibility within the Body of what we do and how we do it. And even then... what is your heart and mind toward an individual who does those things? Yes, you're expedient in judgement that they shouldn't be a part of a fellowship with you in this particular case because the sin is so heinous that they must be removed from the Body – and then they must go through an incredible amount of repentance before they can come back into fellowship again. But if they're in the fellowship of the Body and they remain in the fellowship of the Body we have only one option – you can't hold anything against them because it's *God and GOD ALONE who has the RIGHT to forgive in the Church!* ...and Jesus Christ, and God the Father... We have no right to hold something against someone and then say, "Oh, I'll forgive you." Well, who are you?

I've known of people in God's Church that have gone and prayed before God and asked God for forgiveness; and other brethren won't forgive them...and I think how miserable, how mistaken, how perverted, how sick, how disgusting can that be? *That we're more righteous than God that we'll not forgive someone that GOD has forgiven through His Son Jesus Christ who died for us on Passover night?* I hope we get the intensity and the importance of this kind of thing, because I'll tell you what, not to forgive someone is a far greater sin...*is a far greater sin* than the sin the other persons committed – even adultery and fornication. Think about that one for a while. The unwillingness to forgive someone else in the Body of Christ and have that attitude and feeling for them is far worse. Just telling you... far greater grounds for being out of the Church of God than adultery and fornication – spiritually – if we get the picture truly.

Going on it says, **and when you stand praying; forgive if you have anything against any,** because... why did He say it that way? Because you don't have a *RIGHT to have anything AGAINST ANYONE!* That's what He's saying! *I'm dying for you!! ...so that you can be forgiven from My FATHER,* but not from one another. Shouldn't be there...**that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.** *That* is the order of things. *That* is the way it *works* in the Church of God. **But if you do not forgive,** because you hold something against someone else, **neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.** How bad is that? Makes the sacrifice of Christ of no effect, no purpose...we take it too lightly. What a horrible thing!

So anyway, again, over and over again here the teachings of Jesus Christ of things that lead up to the Passover... they're awesome! The parables, the things that have to do with the Church, our lives, there is so much that is so spiritual here in what we're discussing. It's truly profound.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1079641/Good-godwit-Bird-flies-6-000-miles-nonstop-days-set-new-record.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://earthsky.org/biodiversity/which-bird-migrates-the-farthest>