

We just completed a series of sermons about those things that Jesus Christ did, especially all that He taught and fulfilled in the last couple of weeks before His death *as our Passover*. Hopefully it's quite obvious to all of us that there's a very strong connection between Passover and Pentecost which we'll be observing in only a couple of weeks. It seems incredible that it's going to be *that soon*. Jesus Christ is our wave sheaf offering from which the count to Pentecost is always made. He was accepted as the wave sheaf by His Father and our Father after His resurrection. This is very much about the establishment of the Church and the firstfruits of God's plan which we'll focus more upon on the Pentecost weekend. In the sermon we've just covered it was mentioned that at one point Jesus Christ told Mary, "Don't touch Me. I have not yet ascended to My Father." And that was picturing then His being accepted by God the Father as our wave sheaf and He did that before He then returned on the same day, again revealing Himself to different ones and telling them at that time that they could touch Him; making it very clear here that He fulfilled the fullness of, obviously, the Passover services and the things that were done then on Passover day. He fulfilled all those things about Passover, then after His resurrection fulfilled the wave sheaf offering and the things that are pictured in the wave sheaf. Again, all exciting the way God has revealed things in His Holy Days and in the Sabbath and the great plan that's revealed through the Holy Days. It's all so inspiring and exciting.

But again, that great connection between the Passover period and Pentecost that Jesus Christ just continues to fulfill. And then this period of time, right now, that leads up to Pentecost is very much about the Church and we're going to continue then as we have covered over the past few weeks. Jesus gave much instruction concerning the future of His Body, speaking about the Body of Christ which is the Church and He covered much material that we went through, so much of that we covered in the past series of sermons but we're going to continue to focus on some of that kind of instruction as we approach Pentecost and as we continue past Pentecost. Now on Pentecost, certainly we're going to focus in on the meaning of that period of time, but in this sermon here and in the one to follow we're going to begin doing some things as we continue to follow up on some of what Jesus Christ gave in the instruction that He was giving toward the end of His life. And we're going to continue on a similar course as we continue on through many sermons throughout the summer months.

So, we *are very* lacking, and God's *Church* has been very lacking in understanding the depth of importance of these matters that should be more fully revealed in our lives as a result of our response from a deeper conviction of living such things far more fully than we really do. In other words, speaking of *those* things that Jesus Christ gave instruction on during the last couple of weeks of His life. For so much of it, as we focused upon, *He* was deeply focused upon the Church, the Body, that which He was making possible, the establishment of the Church that began on Pentecost. And so much of that instruction was, obviously then, to the Church and it was about how we are to live our lives and the very focus of so much of what He had to say we have not done really well in God's Church in understanding and living to the depth we really should. And so again, I want to repeat what I just mentioned here a moment ago...

We *are* very lacking, and God's Church *has been* very lacking, in understanding the depth of *importance* in *these* matters; those things that Jesus Christ taught so powerfully so in the last couple of weeks of His life, that should be more fully revealed in our lives because of what we have learned, because of what we see, because of what we grasp as a result of our response from a deeper conviction of living such

things far more fully than we really do. Because we don't live them as fully as we ought to. It is a growing thing, we do strive and we do seek to make change and progress in our life, but we haven't done really well at that. And I marvel at that *this* particular year as I have mentioned, I marvel that so soon after Passover I was hearing in different areas *problems* brother to brother. Sometimes within just people's own families let alone just brother to brother within the Church, but brother to brother spiritually within families and certainly those are the areas that sometimes things flare up because that's where most of our time is spent. If we spent that kind of time with others in the Church there'd be a lot more difficulties and problems we would have to address concerning our behaviour and our response and our attitude toward one another. But we need to get the big picture of what Jesus Christ did for us, of what He made possible for us, of all the suffering He went through to make possible our being able to have *a very unique fellowship in the Church, in the Body of Christ*. And as I have mentioned; we haven't done really *well* in our *history* in these matters, we truly haven't.

Now, I think back as I consider some of these things we're going to go through in this sermon; I think about the history of when God, even on then, Pentecost...we can even go back to Passover. When God took the children of Israel out of Egypt He began a process of working with a very carnal nation, to deliver them from captivity, to deliver them from that which pictures or is that which helps us to grasp an analogy that God gave with Egypt of sin, of taking us out of captivity and using that which is very physical to teach us something awesomely spiritual. And so you can't help but think about those physical things that took place leading up to Pentecost when God gave the 10 Commandments. And so there is that strong connection between Passover and coming out of Egypt, coming out of sin and being led to the ways, the truths, the law of God that was given on Pentecost; and that's what we have been able to go through in our lives, but on a spiritual plane. But as I think about the Israelites and how *lacking* they were because they *didn't* have God's spirit; because on the Day of Pentecost, again, that which is pictured in that time period, God gave His law to Israel, but He gave the holy spirit to the Church so that we *could*, with God's help, begin to live as we ought to live toward one another. The Israelites weren't able to do that fully. Certainly the code, the guideline, the direction, the law was given there of how people should live but they didn't grasp the spirit of it; they didn't understand the importance of those things that were given on a spiritual plane.

And so what they were given was just a very carnal, physical, to them, law of do's and don'ts, of things that should regulate basic human life; things having to do with not lying to one another, not lying to others, not bearing false witness in other words, not murdering, not killing, not taking human life. Those are very basic physical things for physical, carnal minded people, but the deeper things, especially of not to kill and not to murder goes much deeper than that. It goes to how we *treat* each other, that by treating someone in a wrong way we can be guilty of the spirit of murder and it's something that's very difficult for the carnal mind, it seems, to really grasp in its greatest reality. Because quite candidly, on a spiritual plane, there's been a lot of *murder* since Passover! There's been a lot of *that attitude* reflected in people's lives and I guess this has hit me in a stronger way this year than perhaps other years gone by because of where we are in time, because of the magnitude of everything that God is giving to us and helping us to understand and see and as we are getting ready to be thrust into, blessed to go into a new age, a new world with one government, with one way of life and how people can begin to live on this earth finally, city by city, country by country, truly learning to love each other, learning to express conduct that reflects an attitude of care and concern for fellow man, because that's not very much in the world today obviously.

It's a sickening society and world we see of incredible selfishness and so we look forward to that time; but it's in the Church, it starts in the Church because Israelites couldn't live this way of life, they weren't

able to understand the spirit, they couldn't change their mind in the sense of their mind being transformed, being made new, where a very transformation in the way one thinks is able to take place. They didn't have that. *We* have been *given* that. *We have* the ability and *we do* through time make change, but so often we don't make the *kind* of change that's really necessary or desirable or far more needful. *We have far greater* need of making *far greater* change because we're still wrapped up in and very much around a very carnal world and sometimes because that world has such an impact upon us, not being an excuse, because nothing that happens around us is *ever* an excuse for not obeying God. We only have ourselves to blame for our own sin and yet the impact of the world around us because of music, because of TV, because of society, because of selfishness, because of the kind of communication we're able to have today, it kind of accelerates, it kind of adds to fuel to a fire that already exists in a human mind because we are so selfish.

So how have you responded to one another? How have your relationships been to others? Mine isn't what I want it to be. I want to grow more, I want to conquer more, and I want to make a concentrated effort in some of those things. I seek to do that and I believe that God is leading us through these series of sermons to begin doing that far more in our lives, to make a far greater concentrated effort to conquer, to overcome, to *live* by God's law, *spiritually*. And so that which was given physical... not to commit adultery – that which can be of a spiritual part in a human's mind and how people think about each other, that which can even have to do with that which is far beyond that which is physical, which has to do with our relationship with God and that we don't commit spiritual adultery in what we mess around with as far as that which is of a *Protestant* nature, of a *Protestant* mind of watering down God's way of life as the Protestant world has done; but instead seeking to live it in spirit and in truth with greater zeal and greater desire.

Some situations since Passover, some of us should be deeply *abhorred* of what's come out of our minds toward other brethren, toward sister, toward brother, toward mother, toward father, toward children, toward son and toward daughter, or son-in-law, or daughter-in-law, or mother-in-law and father-in-law; all the relationships that exist in human life – let alone just brother to brother, because we are brethren within the Church. We have a relationship that is unique and we often talk about that which we're able to see and to experience and to understand when we come into services for the first time and we begin to meet brethren; it's an awkward situation, and yet we begin to learn very quickly on that there's something unique about this relationship that's not like anything we've ever fully experienced. Because the closest of relationships we've ever experienced in human life, generally, most generally *should*, as a whole, revolve around human family, human family, our own families and then within marriage and the family that begins then from the very beginning of a husband and wife, and eventually perhaps a mother and a father, and those kinds of relationships that continue on in life and we have an experience there, but not like with the Church. There's something *unique* that binds us together. We learn that it's something that comes from God; it's through the power of His spirit, something that is given to us in a very great way.

And so again, how pleased are you with your life and some of the agitation you've experienced *since you took PASSOVER*, since you washed someone else's feet, since you took the bread and took the wine and were able to go through a service that reflects *sacrifice* in order to love others, to learn from our elder brother, our high priest Jesus Christ and what He went through; a willingness to suffer even to death in order to give love, in order to love us, in order to give us more. But so often in our lives we get caught up in that which is physical because of *embarrassment* to us or to our family, to us individually in our own life, or to just some agitation that someone else causes us where we become agitated at someone else because they're not doing something the way *we think* they should be doing it, and so we

lash out at them, or just because we're inconvenienced and we say something to someone else, or we lack respect to one another. And I see incredible lack of respect sometimes to the ministry in the Church; things have happened to others because people lack respect to God's ministry, let alone just respect to one another sometimes. And so we need to take a deep hard look at our own life and see what we're truly living and see how closely we're seeking to live our lives in a way that honour God and honour Jesus Christ and bring honour to the Church.

But again, there's so many situations that have happened since Passover, leading up to Pentecost, that reflect attitudes of jealousy, attitudes of envy, sometimes people that are jealous of others... perhaps because of ordination, jealous perhaps because of what someone has... *has* as a job, *has* as a matter of finances, ... how we sometimes base jealousy upon various things in our life because we don't have what they have and we desire and lust after, if we only understood our own minds, the same things; and so we find fault with others. There are probably some out there that find fault with me being in Hawaii. I don't know, but knowing human nature, I'm sure that that probably exists. I think of people who had attitudes toward Mr. Armstrong in what he did and how he did it, and things of quality that Mr. Armstrong taught that people found fault with because it costs more than something of lesser quality and *they would never do that*. Oh bull! They'd do *exactly* the same thing if they had the ability, the finances or whatever to do it, and so some would find fault with that too because.... well, I don't want to even get into some of those things. I could give a sermon on some of that subject matter.

But we really need to take a *deep look* into our own lives individually because our natural inclination is to look into the lives of others and how they can be 'better', and how they can live their lives in a 'better way', because we have already *attained something in our minds*...and so we tend to look down upon others who aren't quite where we are, or who do not quite have the kind of understanding or insight that we have in various matters. And so human nature can be so ugly sometimes and so quick to judge someone else because they're just not doing what *we think they should* be doing; and we don't realize by that kind of thinking how sick and perverted and atrocious we are for thinking that way, that that in itself is sin. But we don't get it because we're so filled with ourselves.

So this is going to be kind of a tough sermon in some ways for some to receive but it shouldn't be. We should be thankful to God that in His love and in His kindness and His mercy He's helping us to see ourselves, helping us to see our nature in a greater way so we can be so abhorred by it that we can become more deeply convicted that *God is right* and that we *want* what He has to offer us.

I think of things in my life, some things that I've had to conquer and overcome; there are times where I've come to see so clearly, so powerfully, that I so loathe it and hate it that I'm thankful to God that He's revealed it. Was it fun to go through? Was it easy to go through? No, because it's not *easy* to sacrifice human nature. It isn't *easy* to say, "No," to self because self likes to be told, "Yes! Yes! What I want, what I think... that's what I... that's what would make..." Hope we can see that, hope we can understand some of this. I haven't even started into scriptures yet, it's quite an introduction, but I hope it's an introduction that we can grasp and comprehend. I hope that it's an introduction that we can see ourselves more clearly. I hope that it's an introduction to where we can see "*I need to change*." So we can see *ourselves* and how *we make others unhappy*, how we add, not *to* the welfare, not *to* the joy, not *to* the happiness and fullness of someone else's life, but where it is that we can change in order *to* be able to add to the joy and the happiness of others lives because of how we're able to bring ourselves into subjection to God's law and God's ways of judgement, mercy and faith in spirit and in truth.

Again, *we haven't done really well* in that in the Church through time because it takes a lifetime sometimes to *grow to comprehend*, to understand our own human nature. But we're at such a unique point in time because we don't have a long time now, thankfully, we're getting really, really close now to being just *2 years away* from the return of Jesus Christ, who will once again *stand* upon the Mount of Olives. What an incredible thing to know and to understand, that finally that which we just went through a series of sermons in, when so many became so disillusioned because they *thought*, they *believed* that He was coming as their Messiah, that Jesus was coming *then* as their Messiah; and they were so disillusioned when *that part* of His task wasn't yet being fulfilled, that it was intended to be fulfilled 2,000 years later; but that first He had to come as our Passover. Awesome to understand, to see God's plan unveiled.

And so we're going to take a deep look at ourselves in this series. I imagine this is definitely going to be two parts now because I've gone quite a while just in the introduction here today; that this will probably be two sermons and that with this then we're going to continue on in the summer as we look at other sermons that are going to be very closely related. A lot of examining of ourselves so that we can be better prepared for the return of our Elder Brother, for the coming of our Messiah, and so that the Church can become stronger in understanding. God is giving us more, blessing us to see more; but now the task before us is to work on ourselves in a greater way than we ever have, to bring ourselves into greater subjection because time *is* short and because there's a great task and a great responsibility upon every individual who's been called; not to lift you up with pride and haughtiness about the task before you and the job that is going to be yours more and more as you are looked upon and seen as someone who... I'm not speaking of the 144,000, I'm speaking of all of you who have the opportunity of living on into a new age – AND to the 144,000 who are being given this opportunity as well, to search *your* life more deeply as well, to live a better life and a better example to those who are new within the Church. And for those of you who are new, to understand that God has given you an incredible opportunity to be the first in a new age. There are going to be first fruits and there are going to be those who are *first*. You have the head start, you have the beginning of those things that are being moulded and fashioned within you and there are going to be *many* people who are going to enjoy and love the opportunity of speaking with you and talking to you and picking your brain for all that you have learned and for all that you have experienced just in *your* last 2-3 years. Awesome!

So once we get into this new series of sermons that we're going to be going into we're going to be branching out from a very specific set of scriptures over a period of many weeks as we go through a series of sermons that will be tied into a very concise set of instruction given in the book of Philippians. We aren't going to start there today, but after Pentecost at some point here we are going to begin going to a particular area of scripture in Philippians and branching out from there. There's much to be covered of things we need to examine in our lives, of things we need to see in our lives. We have the opportunity of inspecting self, of looking deep into our own lives and being able to make change in a way that we haven't been able to do in times past because God is giving this *help* and opportunity to do this. It's up to you to grab a hold of this now and to *respond*; *TO RESPOND* in a very positive way.

As I mentioned twice now in reading this statement, we have been *very lacking* in God's Church in understanding the depth of the importance of such matters that we're going to cover and have been covering in the past series of sermons here, that should be more fully revealed in our lives as a result of our response from a deeper conviction of what we see, of what we grasp. And that greater response then should be reflected in our lives by what we live; but we have been *lacking* in those areas and God is offering us an opportunity to make great growth spiritually. But that means some big change in a very

fast way has to take place in our life. And each one of us, each one of us needs to work *hard*, needs to work *zealously on self* in changing.

So again, before we go into that area of Philippians, we're going to take a very sobering look at ourselves in our truer state in this sermon entitled; *The Body of Christ*. It sums it all up in a very powerful way if we can grasp it; and to the degree that we grasp will affect how we'll begin to make greater change.

Let's turn over to the book of Romans. I marvel sometimes how we're able to go through various kinds of scripture... sometimes we read it many times, but we can go into an area of scripture and because of a certain focus God brings out more. He brings out things we haven't seen before, or to the same degree, or with the same purpose, or the same focus; and it's exciting, it's inspiring. I'll just tell you a little story here. When we were through with this last series, as so often happens, I haven't known where we were going next. Now I know where we're going to go in a couple of weeks because its Pentecost weekend and we're going to be *focusing* upon things, very much so, about Pentecost. I knew that. But in this particular series right now that we're getting ready to go into, I didn't know what it was going to be about nor what might be able to be covered through the summer. That was very far off in my mind...and so I asked God for help: again, so often being at the Red Sea, not knowing where to go, what to give, because it's not mine to give. Its God's to give. It's Jesus Christ's to give to His Church, to the Body and it must come from Him. And so I asked, as I always do, for that help to know where we can go and what direction we're to go, what is to be taught: and I was dumbfounded. Not only have I been blessed, I've always been excited when a series has been given, but I was dumbfounded when all of a sudden *this* was given and very clear where it was to go; and not only that but where many of the sermons throughout the summer are going to go because as we go through some of those things in Philippians it's not going to be a single series, it's going to be a multiple of series of sermons that are going to come, it's going to come from the same area of scripture in the book of Philippians because we're going to branch out from various areas of focus from that area of scripture, because there's much there that we need in our lives in order to change and grow and conquer and overcome that God is giving us the opportunity to do and it's not going to be fun in many respects in our life. We have to understand – this is a very *positive* and a *very good* and a *very blessed* thing that God is giving us; to see ourselves more clearly, our nature, our attitude. Not someone else's! But our own, so we can see what needs to be changed, so we can learn to *abhor* that which is wrong within us and change and grow and conquer and overcome in a very powerful way and *so much* of it is summed up in having understanding of what it means, 'The Body of Christ.'

So let's start today here in scripture in **Romans 7:1 – Don't you know, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?** So it's entering into a very specific area of life. All of us, while we're alive, we're under a law. There are things we're to live by, to conduct our lives by; and it isn't over until we're dead. And it goes on to give an analogy here. It says, **For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law of her husband as long as he lives;** so, it's using the example of marriage here and the order of government that we have talked about in times past and speaking specifically about that structure of marriage and how that there is an order of things within that government. We've also gone into and talked about how that government is so often administered in a very *poor* way by husbands, *in the world*, by men; and then the response so often of women has not been good as well when they understand what that order is in their life. And so there is that battle that both have had through time and things that both must see in themselves; and when we follow and draw closer to God, in the way God says to do things, the more awesome it becomes; just like the structure of the Church. The structure and order of God's Family is a beautiful thing: God the Father, Jesus Christ and then the structure that will follow underneath that. Never a threat, always

done out of love, agape, God's love, for the best, whatever is the best for others of life; done in a *perfect* way. We as human beings don't administer government in a perfect way. We do to the degree we're yielding to God and when human nature comes into it then and gets in the way, then it kind of all goes to pot.

So it says here, **For the woman who has a husband is bound to the law of her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband is dead, she is loosed**, in other words, **she's unbound/released to the law of her husband**. In other words, to that order that God has given as a matter of government. **So then if while her husband lives, she becomes married to another man, she shall be called an adulterer**: King James says, 'an adulteress', same thing – an adulterer. And the same thing applies to the man if he marries to another woman; but that's not the point. It's giving a point here about law that we need to understand in the analogy here. This is not going through and talking about this specific relationship, because women commit adultery in life and men commit adultery in life – it takes two to commit adultery. Well, today it's so perverted though that it's not necessarily the same. But anyway when it's talking about something very physical like this. And so this is just giving the example then of a situation of someone else here.

Let's pick it up here, just follow it as it says it here: **So then if while her husband lives, she becomes married to another man, she shall be called an adulterer; but if her husband dies**, and the same thing. It's talking about certain kinds of divorce here. Now there is divorce that God allows within the Church. There is that which human beings are able to be a part of. It wasn't intended to ever be that way but because of the hardness of the heart of human beings, because of the sin of mankind and so forth there are various things where marriages do come to an end and people, in *some* cases, people are free then to remarry. That's a totally different matter, not what we're discussing here in the context. It's just making a very simple analogy here of something and not trying to get into other areas here of subject matter: so this is a very focused thing. Sometimes people become unfocused because they go off in tangents in other ways.

In this particular case it says: **but if her husband dies she is free from that law**; in other words, that which God intended from the beginning, which in right situations in life, in the conditions that are there; if someone just desires to be with someone else, desires to be married to someone else, God says that's adultery. ...**so that she is not an adulterer**, in other words, if a husband dies, and the same thing is true in reverse, but that's not the point of the scriptures here because my fear in reading something like this is that people get off track and don't understand the primary focus of why this analogy is being given by Paul. See, people go off in a different direction because the reality is the balance in this is; if a man *or* a woman – either one, goes out to be married to someone else and if it's not something that's permitted by God, which should be more rare in essence, but if it's not, then each individual is an adulterer, if they do so against law, against God. But here it's giving the example of a situation of order in the law and how government works. So it says, **but if her husband dies she is free from that law; so that she is not an adulterer even though she becomes married to another man**. In other words, she's free then to marry; but then she'll be under another order as far as order and governments concerned.

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law...so the only analogy that Paul is really using here... he's not really going into the subject matter of discussing divorce or when divorce is allowed, when it *can* take place and someone is free to marry someone else – that isn't the thrust of this, that's a very complicated and horrible situation sometimes to have to go through, but that's not the subject matter here.

The subject matter is talking about a certain order of things and it's using this analogy then to come to **verse 4: Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the Body of Christ;** What law? What is it talking about? Well, it explains it here. **You have become dead to the law, through the Body of Christ;** that you should be married to another, even to Him who has been raised from the dead, so that we should now bring forth fruit unto God. So again here, it's going through and talking about a situation of human beings, especially of mankind and that transition of time from the Old Testament into the New Testament of any kind of a relationship that people were able to have in times past *with* God on this earth; that there was law over mankind and the reality is that individuals were not able to live by that law because of human nature, they sinned and sin required the death penalty and the main focus of that law is that requirement then of death.

And they're showing now in this particular matter that because of something that we do at baptism, we're able to bury the old self, that we're now free (kind of a unique way of expressing some of these things), now we can be married to another by a new life that is given to us. And this is kind of what's being covered here in verse 4. So let's go into this a little farther: **Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the Body of Christ; that you should be married to another,** speaking of a relationship here then to Jesus Christ and to that law, that way of life which comes through Him to us, **even to Him who has been raised from the dead, so that we should now bring forth fruit unto God.**

Verse 5 - For when we were in the flesh, the actions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring about fruit that led to death. So it's showing here how this works in our life. Before we're called into the Church, because of our lives, because of that law we were under, because of sin, all that awaited us was death. And that's what it's saying. **So when we were in the flesh,** in other words, without God's spirit, without baptism, without the laying on of hands, **the actions of sins which were by the law,** in other words, there is that that is shown to be sin and because of our human nature the actions that resulted because of our disobedience to the law, it says, **did work in our members to bring about fruit that led to death.** Because we sin, human beings sin, we sin day by day. Now, we understand it on a spiritual plane and the best the world, as a whole, can understand it is on a physical plane, the Jews as an example, the law is very physical to them. But the reality is that all have sinned and all are guilty of the penalty, in other words, guilty of the sin – breaking the law, and the penalty then associated with that is death. And so it says here that's what happened in our life, just the action of sin in our life that was there. If we're **by the law,** in other words because the law is there, it reveals that we have sin and human beings have sin and because of that then it requires death. All those actions, the fruit of that led to death. That's what it says in verse 5.

But now we have been delivered from the law, not from *how we should live our lives,* but from the penalty because of sin, because of not being able to live the law- that's what it's talking about. **But now we have been delivered from the law,** in other words, the penalty of the law, **that being dead,** When do we die? When that old man goes down into the watery grave: and we're to come up out of that water then to walk in newness of life, to be a *new man*. That's what the scriptures talk about, that's what Paul is revealing here; **that being dead...**

Let's start again in **verse 6 – But now we have been delivered from the law,** in other words the penalty of the law, **that being dead in which we were held;** So, we couldn't do anything about it – the penalty was death, eternal death unless God did something in our life to negate that, to take that away from us; that penalty because of our sins; **that we should now serve in newness of spirit,** something has happened then when we come into the Church. We're able to go under the watery grave and we're

able to be immersed under water and come up, put the old self to death and come up to walk in newness of life. That's what it's talking about, **here now to serve in newness of spirit**, because now we're immersed in the spirit of God and through the power of God's spirit to walk in a new way of life; **and not in the oldness of the letter**. Because the reality was, before we could only understand things by the reality of the letter, in other words the letter of the law. We didn't grasp the spirit of it, we couldn't see the spirit of it, we couldn't *live* the spirit of it let alone the physical part in a relationship with God, or a relationship with others; bearing false witness, of lying - just that one alone does people in. And because of that then the death penalty that was there. But now we're to **serve in newness of the spirit**, of God's spirit living in us.

What can be said then? Is the law sin? No, it's not a problem with the law...**God forbid. No, because I would have not known sin, but for the law:** so the problem isn't the law, that's what Paul is explaining here. He says, **because I would not have known lust except that the law said, you shall not covet.** And so we learn that we covet. Human beings *covet* and it's just by our very nature, our human nature that we break that, that law that says we're *not* to covet. So we wouldn't know that it's wrong, that it's a sin if God didn't show us that we're hurting ourselves, that it's a wrong way of life, that it hurts relationships. And so God reveals it to us through His law.

Romans 7:12 - Therefore the law, as he goes on to explain various things and he says, **therefore the law is holy, the commandments are holy, and just, and good.** So, the world likes to say, the Protestant world likes to say that the Commandments aren't good, that they've been done away with. Well, why do away with something that's good, that's *holy*, that's *just* and right? And so it makes it very clear that the law isn't the problem, our human nature is the problem.

Verse 14 – For we know that the law is spiritual: well, we do in the Church. The world doesn't get it. When it says we're not to take God's name in vain, the most that the world can see as a whole is that they shouldn't curse using God's name; and then they don't even do that. They don't give 'R' ratings on shows because people have cursed and used God's name in vain, on the contrary, that can be in a 'PG' or even a 'G' now a days where someone swears using God's name or the name of Christ. But oh, there is that word that has such a bad connotation that sometimes there are 'R' ratings given just for that, that starts with an 'f', 4 letter word, the *hypocrisy* of mankind to make some kind of a slang sexual term be more repulsive by our standard of *justice*, by our standard of righteousness, than it is to take our very Creator's name in vain. What a sick, sick, perverted, disgusting world this is. But we come to understand the spirit of that...that if we don't live within the Church the way we should live toward one another, that if we don't live God's way of life, if we're not seeking to conquer and overcome that we can take God's name in vain, the name 'The Church of God' that we bear in our lives, that we carry. We carry God's name, The *Church* of God, the called out ones of God, we belong to God and the Body of Christ...and we bear Christ's name and God's name and we're not to take that name in vain then by how we live, by sin and so forth, by bringing *shame* to that name.

So again here it says, ...**the law is spiritual:** but the world doesn't understand that the law is spiritual. It says not to kill. We understand that means you're not to fail to love someone else, not just not to hate, but even if we fail to love someone else in the way God says to do it then we've committed hatred, murder, in our heart toward someone else. If we fail to love someone else when God says how we're supposed to respond to someone else, how we're to treat someone else...if we don't do it that way, then we're murderers! And there's a lot of murder and hatred we need to get out of our hearts. I'm really *tired* of hearing, *frustrated* at hearing sometimes how some aren't getting along, how some husbands treat their wives, of how some wives treat their husbands, of how different relatives treat

each other; not even just members in the Body, but just within families sometimes. Of how people can't get along and how they treat each other – and its murder! Why can't we wake up to that and understand how serious, how severe that is? ...and how *sick* that is before God? And taking God's name in vain! And taking lightly the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and *Passover* when we took the wine and took the bread; we partook of those things...the bread and the wine. What did it mean... when we turn right around the next day and we treat our relative in a bad way, or a mate in a bad way, speak a cross thing to them? So we have a lot of nature to focus on and ask God to help us to change, to really learn to love each other more.

Verse 14 – For we know that the law is spiritual, but Paul said, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Because of our carnal human nature, we're selfish by nature, and that just produces sin! And it's that which we have to bring into subjection, into control; because we *don't* control it like we need to, or should day by day. And that's why we have to repent so often. But I fear that there are a lot of people who don't *repent as much as they should because they don't even see what they're doing* in how they talk to or treat others; sometimes in their own families, let alone other brethren within the Church. This phrase here, **But I am carnal, sold under sin.** That word 'sold' carries the meaning in Greek as to be 'sold for a price as into slavery'. When we sin, we're actually selling ourselves into slavery. Going on in the Greek meaning; 'Reflecting of the master to whom one is sold as a slave' – a slave to sin. And you know who has the power over that? That's why it's so *dangerous* not to repent because then we give ourselves to another being if we're not careful, giving him greater control and ability to sway us or move us in a wrong direction, to have influence in our life. That's why we should want to *repent quickly*, so that he can have no power in our lives to sway us, to hurt us. And that all goes back to a personal relationship that each one of us has with God. But again, this word 'sold'. One definition is given as, 'entirely under the control of the love of sinning'. What a sick thing! If we're not careful, when we sin and we sell ourselves, 'sold unto sin', **carnal, sold under sin.**

And so only God can bring us out of that, only through Jesus Christ can we be brought out of that kind of captivity, that kind of slavery. And that's what it is of coming out of sin, coming out of Egypt. It's a continual process. But sometimes we don't realize how easy it is to slip back into slavery, to want to go back to Egypt, to *love it*, to *desire it* because of our human nature. It's almost as though we *enjoy* getting on to someone else's case and speaking down about them or at them or to them in a selfish manner, in a wrong manner...that we get some kind of perverted pleasure and enjoyment out of that because we know what's better for their lives, because we're their judge and we judge righteous judgement. How sick can we be sometimes as human beings and don't realize that we're... it's really self we should be looking at and seeking to change, not someone else. Too much of our time so often is spent on wanting to change other people's lives, influence other people's lives, to make other people's lives better so that when it's all said and done ours is better because we've been able to have an impact on changing other people's lives; not our own, but other people's. That's just a wrong way of thinking.

So dropping on down even a few more verses, verses we know very well here, finally Paul works to this point in **verse 24** where he says - **O wretched man that I am!** How many of you can truly say that to yourselves? How often do you say that to yourself? How often are you able to see the ugliness of your human nature and say that to God and understand what a great blessing it is then that we can be freed from that, that we can be forgiven of that, the price that was paid so that we can get on our knees and say, "Father, forgive me for I have sinned. I've sinned again!" And to sometimes get a real big dose of it and say, "Oh wretched man," "Oh wretched woman..." whomever you are, "...that I am." Because we truly, genuinely feel that way because we truly, genuinely see our human nature and because of that we're crying out to God then to change and the more we see that and have that response to things we

do in our life, and we can see how *ugly* it is the way we mistreat others or judge others, or try to change their life but not our own...when we can really see those things the more change we can make, because that sticks in our mind and we ask God, "Help us to not forget it. Help us to see that so we can see how *ugly* that is!" And so that we don't repeat it, so we learn to treat others, people we know and people we *don't* know – to treat them with respect rather than being demanding and selfish...because I see those things when I do it and I loathe it and I have to go back and repent. But it helps me the more I can see how ugly it is to not repeat it and to get a hold of it. And the longer I can hold onto that the happier I am because then the better my life is towards others, the better I treat others and think toward others; because it has to do with our thinking.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? We have to see what we are, we have to see how we hurt others, we have to see what we do that's wrong before we'll want to change; otherwise we'll just keep doing it carefree, being unhappy, being miserable at times because we're making other people's lives unhappy and miserable and we're unhappy because we *choose* to be so. You *choose* to be unhappy. You *choose* to let others influence your life to where it affects you and makes you unhappy. I *choose*, I seek to choose not to let what others do to me or say to me or about me bother me...how they live their life. I've got my plate already full dealing with my own nature – I truly do...and you do too if you just grasp and understand it. You've got your plate full. Don't be so quick to want to change someone else's life, to make their life *different*. By how you treat them is going to have a *far* greater affect on helping them to change than sometimes the things we say and do to them that just cut and cause the people to have a wrong response, to look down upon us, to be upset with us, to have a wrong response to us because we made their day a little harder. If you make someone else's day a little harder they're not going to be fondly attracted to you by any measure, it's going to cause *them* to have problems then with us, or with you, or whatever.

So we need to see ourselves in order to change and that is the problem so often – we don't see ourselves for how sick some of the things are that we do. I look at different situations that have popped up since Passover in people's lives and I am abhorred with different situations and how things are said to others and what sometimes is done when we just need to be, if we'd just be as *hard* on ourselves, as severe on ourselves we could make *great change*...greater change. If we could be as severe and as hard on ourselves to change, to repent, to loathe what we see and to embrace God's law, to embrace the *right* way of treating one another we'd be much happier, we'd be much more fulfilled, our lives would be much more exciting, much more inspiring and moving. There's something you can feel in a relationship with God. There's something you can sense when things are right, when things are better, when you know that you're bringing self into subjection to the law, when you have greater control of your thinking and your thoughts towards others – and there is just that which is automatic as a result of obedience; a blessing, a reward, favour, a closeness.

It's like the Feast of Tabernacles. Sometimes we have some of our most inspiring moments of life during the Feast of Tabernacles when we're fed eight days straight in a row and we're so very focused upon God day by day by day; we're away from our jobs, our routines and we're able to be focused like that. It's such an incredibly rewarding experience, it truly is. And because of that there is that which we automatically sense, that we feel that just lifts us up, that helps us to be positive and have that sense of a closer relationship with God, a closeness, a thankfulness, all that which is just something you have to experience. You can't *give* that to someone. It's not something you can *tell* someone fully about and that they can grasp it, until they've experienced it. A lot of you have only experienced four days. When you experience eight days, if you're able to do it this year, *please* strive to do it. Because of finances and so forth it's going to be very difficult for some but if you will sacrifice in order to try to be able to have

that experience *then* you'll understand more fully what I'm talking about. Because you can't really grasp what is there in eight days that you've just have had a little bit of a taste of with the four days we've been able to experience in the last couple of years. Hopefully we're able to have that this year. I hope and pray that you're able to have that experience *before* things begin to happen, that you're still able to have that experience perhaps one last time of eight days, an eight day experience of the Feast before Jesus Christ returns. What an awesome thing!

And so there is that which you can experience in life, moments of life when you're able to bring self into greater subjection and treat people better, treat them right, and there's an automatic reward in what you're able to sense because of God's spirit in your mind that doesn't come in any other way. That peace. I think of what Jesus Christ said in **John 14** later on there when He says, **Peace I give to you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives...** it's a unique expression because the world can't give peace. The way man tries to get peace is just the wrong way, it's selfishly motivated, but that which comes from Christ is through giving, it's through love and there's a peace that enters into your mind, into your being that is a matter of God's love that is just a matter of law and obedience and reward. There are blessings that are just a reward of doing things right, of a closeness with God, that it's just a matter of doing things right. And sometimes your life isn't as *joyful*, as *happy*, as *fulfilling*, as much at *peace* as it *needs* to be and *should* be because of what you're living. You're not living as you should fully in how you think about others. And if you can change that and turn that around and bring that into subjection, there's going to be a greater peace and happiness and fulfillment and fullness in your life and in your relationships with others because you're going to look at relationships in a different way. What a blessing when you can begin to look at relationships in a right, proper way. Not of how you're changing someone else or bringing about change or getting on to someone to change something in their life....that somehow that will make your life better. Not that at all. But when you see the potential of what God can give and mould and fashion in someone else's life, and how that by a positive affect from your life of how you treat them, of how you deal with them in righteous judgement, in righteous *mercy*; judgement, *mercy* and faith, living God's way because you understand it and understand how change comes about: that you're not the one to control someone else's life. That you're not the one to *meddle* in someone else's life, that you're not the one that get's so consumed with someone else's life... if they would just do this or do that. No, what you need to do is do this or do that – *change yourself!* That's what we need to focus upon.

So again here, **O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God...** if we really see that then we're more thankful. What a blessing to have a greater thankfulness in life. When you have a greater gratitude and thankfulness to God because you really see something like this, it strengthens that relationship; it's what I was just talking about. There's a peace and a fullness in life, a joy in life that comes through a gratitude that we're able to have toward God. When you're able to see the mercy, the patience, the love of God and you're able to repent of sin and put it away from you and not carry it around; because you can't carry that with you. It is what it is. You are who you are; but you can *change!* You don't have to stay that way! I'm happy about that for you, I'm happy about that for me. I'm glad you don't have to be the same old cantankerous person (just kidding there a little bit), but we *are*. I'm thankful I don't have to be the same old cantankerous kind of individual of human life, because when you see your human nature it is sick, it is cantankerous, it is not pretty, not by any measure – stirs up and riles up and causes problems, sin does, in how we think wrong toward others. That's what *repent* means, it means 'to think differently', yield yourself to God, do it God's way; and then there's a peace we're able to have. And then you're able to have that thankfulness, like Paul was saying here, **I thank God that it is through Jesus Christ our Lord.** And so we're able to have a greater thankfulness and a greater peace with God and a greater joy of what He's doing in our lives and in the

The Body of Christ – Pt. 1

lives of others because in God's time and God's way... Others don't belong to us; others in the Church, even in your own family. No one *belongs* to you.

Something that I learned very early on, and as I went through life with our children – that I have them for a while, but they are not mine. They're mine to work with, to mould and fashion, but they're God's children and they're in His hands. The more we yield ourselves to God the more opportunity that's given to them to stay the course, to seek to live God's way, to reflect that in their lives, the greater they're going to be blessed. But in time children go out on their own and they are *fully* God's and we don't even have that influence then as fully as we did before in guiding and directing certain things in life because they're adults and certainly we can have some influence and things in people's lives even as parents still, but even there, there's a great pulling back because it's not the same. And sometimes parents have a hard time pulling back and pulling away and knowing when to say something and when not to say something. You have to have God's help in that. And the same thing within the Church in relationships. There's a time to say something and there's a time to shut-up, to keep your mouth shut and not say anything and more often *that* than the other, candidly, because so often when we say something it's not because it came from God, it came out of us and if it ever comes out of us...if it comes out of you, if it comes out of us individually, it's not going to be motivated properly. It *must* come from God to produce fruit and results in people's lives and that's a unique kind of relationship with God.

So again, he says, **I thank God that it's through our Lord Jesus Christ...** and so that gratitude and that thankfulness and the uniqueness of a relationship we're able to have with God that brings about a peace, that brings about a joy and a fullness – even towards others and how we think. Think about someone you have difficulty with and in your relationship toward them at times...so much of that has to do with your own thinking toward them because if you're able to accept them as God has accepted you with all your flaws, with all your shortcomings, with all your rotten selfishness, what is it He sees? Is He out there just to be on our case to change us, or does He work with us with patience, with kindness, with mercy...and through that process then, rejoices in us. God does! He rejoices in us in the changes that are able to be made, in the conquering here and there that takes place; and the more we yield ourselves to that process the more joy God has in His Family; just as you do and can have in your own children in life from time to time, the more selfishness that's not in the picture, the greater joy you can have in their life. And how much more then on a spiritual plane in a relationship with God that God has toward us? And how much more should we have then toward one another if we see each other on a spiritual plane?

I think of different ones; I see problems in people's lives, but I have problems in my life. I have my own things I have to fight and conquer and overcome. But as I look at different people in the Church...sure, I see things that can cause you difficulties and problems because of the way you are, because of what makes you different and things that you've learned through your life that make you who you are and I don't focus on the bad part. I see it from time to time, I wish it weren't there, just as much as I wish mine weren't there, but that doesn't affect my relationship. On the contrary, it's enhanced because I know who you are. You're God's. You're begotten of God's spirit. You're able to make change – you *are* making change as you yield yourself to God in growth and conquering and overcoming; and you're my brother, or my sister spiritually on a spiritual plane and I rejoice in that – that we're able to be a family. I truly do! I rejoice in that! And that which is negative, that which may be a fault, I don't focus on that. I hope that you're able to conquer and overcome some of those things that bring you some unhappiness in your life because that's what it does, your problems, your hang-ups cause (just as much as mine do me) unhappiness in your life. But what is it we focus upon? Do we focus upon what God is doing? Because God is focusing on our life; He focuses on what He's making and what it's leading to.

And there's a difference then in how we think about each other and what we see; and it starts in the mind, and God is helping us to change so much of that, of what we see and how we think. I see different ones with different faults. I could go down a list right now if I wanted to and look in different areas. I see your weaknesses, but I also see the strengths. I also see the things that God is working with to change, to mould, to fashion and what He's building, and what the potential is; and I'm happy about that. I'm thankful for that. I'm willing to step aside or step back and give time to let you bump your head against the wall every once in a while. I don't have to be there to tell you, "Don't do this... don't do that..." to keep you from butting up your own head against the wall, or hurting someone else, or you're being hurt by your hurting someone else or you're being hurt by another brother. I'm not a referee, I don't have to get in there and police things.

Sometimes I have to help others to resolve a situation so it doesn't go too far though. Some things have boundaries, but as a whole we step aside and we love each other and we want to see each other, if our mind is right, to conquer the battle, to overcome the battle, to be able to be blessed, to be able to be happier. I don't want to see people unhappy. I want to see them happy and fulfilled with peace and joy; and so often then that comes as a result of how we respond to what we hear and what we change by our yielding to God and how we're able to see things in our own life and the battles we fight then. And it's that potential that I rejoice in in other people's lives, I truly do. I choose to see *that*. I don't *choose* to focus upon the negative. I don't *choose*...because then I'll become unhappy, and I'll become unhappy with you if I do that and I don't want to be unhappy with you! Because then my thinking would be wrong. Do you see that? Do you see that when you do that that it's you that's sinning by what you choose to focus upon? I choose to focus upon what God is moulding and fashioning. I choose to focus upon that you're my brother, you're my sister and I love you. You're my family – I love you. That's the way we should think about each other – Family! And you're supposed to love Family, you're supposed to see the good, you're supposed to focus upon that which is right and that which is being moulded and fashioned that God is doing because we belong to God.

You're not to judge others, you're not the master, you're not the keeper of others in the Church...not even you elders and different ministers. Everyone belongs to God. You're to administer certain things, but you better do it God's way. And husbands, in families, you're to do it, administer it, God's way, ministering God's way within the family. You have a greater responsibility in that than most of you even come *close* to understanding, but that you'll come to understand in time, in the Millennium when you have more time to see self and see those things because you can't receive that overnight. That which I have worked upon since 1969 I can't give to any of you. I wish I could! If it were that easy then God could just give it to every one of us and we wouldn't have to go through this human life; but that's the point of human life, that we have to go through it to grow in the experiences, to learn to *yield by choice* to God because we want *God* and we don't want what we see that is a result of our selfish human nature. Sadly some people still want that in life. They choose that. They don't choose God's way, they don't see the beauty and the joy and the fullness of that life. They see the joy in selfishness and the changing of others in order to make their lives better.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. We have this dilemma in our bodies, in our lives; and so it's what you choose to focus upon, it's the choices you make. *You have the power of choice* – that is in your realm of responsibility. What you choose, what you choose to think upon – that's your responsibility. If you choose and make the wrong choices you'll be breaking God's law. If you choose to judge others, if you choose to focus upon changing others rather than changing yourself and judging yourself the way you should use judgement. If you would use the same judgement, even to a greater degree, in yourself than you do with others then you would be way

out ahead! ...and you would make *great growth*! But see, those are choices and only you can make the choice of what you do in your life as to how you respond to God's spirit and God's word and God's way. And so yes, we have this battle that goes on within us, the struggle that's within us; but it's the choices we make along the way day by day that determine our course and our journey.

Going on in the flow in **Romans 8:1** – the flow just continues, man added the chapters and the verses, but the flow of what Paul is saying continues on. **Now there is therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus**, in other words, who are *in* the Body of Christ, the Church! Something some people in times past have not grasped or comprehended fully is that when they sin they put themselves *out* of that, *out* of the Church, *out* of the Body until they repent. They stop the flow of that spirit. That's why we must repent speedily when we have sinned. That's why we must bring sin and wrong attitudes and wrong feelings into subjection quickly and repent of the wrong deeds and rectify, make them right where we can, sometimes by simply *an apology* on our part; because just asking for the forgiveness is not enough. Some situations; how you've treated someone else, perhaps in a store, or perhaps on the highway, or perhaps at whatever it might be... in the job, or in a business or whatever, you said something; you can't change that, you can't rectify, you can't make that right because the damage has been done when you've said it: you may not see them again, whatever. But those that are close to you, those that you can change and make right, then it's your responsibility, or you haven't fulfilled your role, your responsibility in repentance yet. Repentance, yes, is toward God, but if you haven't sought to make things right with the person you have hurt, because you've had to repent of it, then you haven't fulfilled your repentance, you haven't really repented in other words before God and the sin is still there. So it isn't just enough to go and say, "God, I'm sorry I've sinned. I said so and so to a certain person and I hurt their feelings and I pray You forgive me." And then you think you're going to walk away from that and you're okay? No! You've got work to do, you haven't repented yet, the result of the sin is still out there, the result of the hurt and the damage is still out there and the responsibility that God shows is not just a matter of repentance. Repentance sometimes requires actions of works that are magnified in our life by what we say to someone else, by simply saying, "I'm sorry, I was wrong." Something as simple and basic as that perhaps.

Going on...**So there is therefore no condemnation**, in other words, you're right; if you're in the Body, you've repented of sin and you've done those things that God says you should do in life, whatever is a result of certain sin, then there is no condemnation, you don't have to carry it with you any longer, you're free. That is such an awesome thing with God, you don't have to carry it around. Sometimes people carry things around because they're looking to self and their own willpower to do things rather than the mercy and the grace and just the release, the relieving through the total forgiveness that God gives of sin. It's gone! It's not there anymore! So there is no condemnation **to them who are in the Body of Christ, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit**. So if you do the things that are right because you're walking after the spirit, because you're responding to God, rejecting the flesh, rejecting selfishness, rejecting jealousy, rejecting envy, rejecting the wrong way of doing something – but walking in, following after the right way of doing it, like I just mentioned, to repent, to make certain things sometimes right by something as simple as an, "I'm sorry, I was wrong." By an apology. Sometimes that's all it takes to make some things right, but you've got a responsibility to make them right. Repentance means you're going to change your behaviour. If you've done something wrong to hurt someone else then you're committed, you're convicted of not doing it again to them, of hurting them again by saying something or doing something toward them in a wrong way, you're convicted not to do that again. And so that's part of repentance; it has to do with a conviction and when that's there because you're walking after the spirit, you'll be blessed, you'll be forgiven, you'll have a peace and a joy of life that's far richer in your relationship with God.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the Body of Christ. There's a law there of the spirit, of God's spirit – whether it's in us or not, whether we cut ourselves off from the flow of it or not. And so if it's in us then there's no condemnation and we're blessed. And as it goes on to say here, this **law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin**, free of the death penalty, because when you sin then that is what's over your head until you're forgiven, **free from the law of sin**, free of being sold in bondage to sin, in other words, as it says, **and death**. So, we're either in captivity or we're not, we're being held 'captive to sin, sold under sin' as he said earlier or not.

Verse 3 - For what the law could not do, in other words it couldn't accomplish, **in that it was weak through the flesh**, it wasn't the law, but the law couldn't accomplish it. Giving of the 10 Commandments didn't accomplish change in human nature, didn't change human beings. Human beings didn't respond properly. The Protestant world, the world around us...it can't change by those who claim to be the most religious, because they strive to live by a certain code of conduct that they believe has come from God, even of the most basic of things in the last six Commandments...well, they don't have the Sabbath one in there anyway as a whole, but the rest of them; not to kill someone, or not to commit adultery. If only the United States...if people would obey *that* one, what a much better world this society would be, there's so much adultery out there. Half of marriages end in divorce because of adulterers. That's what's in their minds and their hearts. So many things that happen that way, people are tired, they don't want this certain person to live with them anymore, they want someone else. What a sick world! So the law itself doesn't change people; just because the law is there. The spirit is what changes us because we yield to, we make choices to yield ourselves, to walk after the spirit. Those are choices. It's a choice, just as it was when you were first called. You had a *choice* to respond to God; you had a *choice* whether or not you wanted to start obeying the Sabbath and the Holy Days and to tithe; those most basic things that try everyone...that so many don't choose and aren't able to come into the Body.

If all the people who've come in contact with us over just the last few years...if all of them would have made the right choices; they believed, but they didn't make the right choices concerning the Sabbath, or concerning the Holy Days, or concerning tithing, because something else was more important to them, their finances, their family and what they thought they were going to be able to provide, not understanding how much more they were going to be able to provide by obedience to God, by what God would give in blessings in life through the struggle through time; far greater riches. But people can't see that, they can't understand that because the mind is so carnal and so many make the wrong choices. But choices don't stop then; they continue on day by day by day in your life. The choices you make and how you think about others and how you respond to others determine whether or not you're in the Body of Christ, whether or not you're in condemnation or not or whether you're free, or whether you're in bondage. Until you repent you're in bondage to sin, sold under sin, given yourself to a master. You're not the master then of your own life. You're only in control of your life when you're responding to God and you're dwelling in God and God in you and in the Church and in the Body of Christ because you've been forgiven of sin, because you're free from it, because you're walking after the spirit, because you *want* the spirit, you're *seeking* the spirit to remain, to abide, to live in, to dwell in you constantly, continually.

For what the law could not accomplish/could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, by reason of, that word 'weak *through*' means 'on account of or by reason of' **in that it was by reason of the flesh/because of account of the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for**, in other words, 'due to', or **because of sin, condemned sin in the flesh**: it's was the only way it could be

The Body of Christ – Pt. 1

dealt with – through Jesus Christ. And so He condemned it, He lived a righteous and perfect life, the perfect Passover for us in our life so that we could be freed from sin.

Verse 4 - That the righteousness of the law, in other words, contained in the law. The law is righteous, just and good, it's beautiful, holy, but it can't be a part of us without God's spirit to enable it, to give it the power in our life to live, **that the good of the law**, to be in us, to live in us, to be manifested in our lives, **might be fulfilled in us**, when we're *in* the Body, in the Body of Christ, when God is in us and we are in God through the power of the holy spirit. But the moment that we sin, the moment we make the *wrong* choice and yield to carnal human nature is the very moment we cut ourselves off from that flow and are not in the Body and we're in condemnation. We're *condemned* in that moment until we're able to repent. There are some people in God's Church who are not with us today because they didn't repent and they went through the motions year after year after year because they wouldn't seek to change self, they wouldn't repent of sin and how they were acting and living in their lives; but they stayed in the Church for years, ten, fifteen, twenty years in some cases, fully asleep, fully cut off from the flow of God's spirit, having to wait to a time of resurrection later on when they'll be awakened. In some cases some people were awakened out of some of those things. We have people who've come along that God has called who've been asleep for a long, long time, who went to sleep back in the 80's, perhaps back in the 70's. I knew a gentleman that went to sleep in the mid-70's, whose no longer with us, he died in the faith, but he'd gone to sleep clear back in the 70's and thankfully he didn't have to wait until the Great White Throne. He had an opportunity to be awakened as I've been awakened; wasn't asleep as long, for a short period, but whether it's short or long, asleep is asleep, out of the Body is out of the Body, cut off is cut off unless or until God has mercy on us and awakens us. And so sometimes people don't realize they can go through the motions of religion for years and be cut off from the flow of God's spirit until they repent, until they start walking after the spirit *every day of their life*, seeking to change. That is what walking in the spirit is. It has to do with self, changing self, conquering self, overcoming, yielding to God, yielding to God's power and spirit in our life.

So again here, continuing on...**For what the law could not accomplish in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and because of sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law (verse 4)**, in other words, contained in the law, **might be fulfilled in us**, in our lives, **who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit**. That's such a beautiful verse *if we see it! ...if we grasp it!* Sometimes we read things and we don't grasp, we don't see, or we see in limited way, perhaps through a glass, like looking through sunglasses in a dark building. It's a whole lot better to take them off when you get inside. But sometimes we see that way, we see in different stages. But this is an awesomely beautiful verse, it truly is. **For they who are after the flesh do mind**; and that word there, 'do mind', means 'to think on, to be motivated by, to focus upon, to seek...' In other words, 'seeking one's interest's' because it has to do with how we think.

They that are after the flesh do think upon... it's talking about selfishness here, **the things of the flesh**; in other words, consumed with the physical, physically focused and there's just too much of that. There's been too much of that since Passover! ...**but they who are after the spirit**, if you're walking after the spirit, if that's what your choice is, if that's what you want – *think upon*, in other words, **the things of the spirit**. So how much do you think upon, are focused upon, seeking as *your* interest, the things of the spirit? How much is God and God's way occupying your mind and your thinking? In your relationships with others, on the job, as you're driving to and from work, or driving down the highway, or walking down a sidewalk, or talking to people in a business...whatever it might be, wherever you come in contact with people – what is it that's coming out of *your* mind, from *your* thoughts? Is it one of walking in the spirit? ...of seeing God, of what God is doing on this earth in a plan and where people are in that;

so many of them who just don't have what you have, the opportunity you have? They're going through a routine of life blindfolded, in the dark, and they don't have what you have yet. Boy, that can create a great deal of mercy and compassion in people's lives for people if you realize how blessed you are, how rich you are in understanding how blind, how captive they are; so that you can have some compassion and mercy upon them in their ignorance, in their foolishness.

Verse 6 - For to be carnally, in other words, *physically* minded, **is death**; Its not life, it's not in the Church, it's not being in the Body of Christ. We can go through the motions and think we're there, but if we're not walking after the spirit, if we're carnally minded and we're just letting things flow out of us by our own *selfish* emotions, by our own antagonized self because of certain characteristics that are in our life... sometimes we just have things we've inherited that are *traits* of thinking, of emotions and certain things that affect us, that have come down generation to generation to generation that are unique to us that must be conquered and overcome, let alone just our own selfishness. But sometimes our own selfishness has certain things that we've inherited that make us unique, certain traits, certain characteristics, certain qualities that aren't pretty, that aren't nice...of selfishness. See, people have selfishness that's manifested in different ways. There's a lot of different ways of selfishness being manifested, but it manifests itself. Some have to do with various things of our background, some have to do with things of our nature, of things that are inherited... almost like a culture or society. You know, there are things in culture and certain societies that are a matter of differences of human nature, of the way it's manifested because of the way different people tend to think and the order of their thinking, the process of their thinking. Sometimes those things are done because of the environment, because of what people have experienced when they've grown up but a lot of it's just... you know, we are what we are, we are who we are. You can't blame your parents, you can't blame your great grandparents, you can't place blame going back to Noah or Adam and Eve, you just have to accept your own responsibility because it's just that we all have a uniqueness in our nature, uniqueness of qualities that *can* be strengths. But so often the things that can be strengths are our greatest weaknesses. If you can come to understand what some of your greatest strengths are, you'll come to understand they're probably your greatest weaknesses; that lead to your greatest weaknesses in life; but they *can* be your greatest strength as well with God's spirit, with God's help. It's an awesome thing to understand; qualities and characteristics of life and what make us what we are, things that make what we are, it truly is an incredible thing, the human mind, the human life and what kind of selfishness that we might have. But we all have them – every person out here, I don't care who you are, you have selfishness heaped up in your mind in an awesome way, that only God can reveal to you what is yours.

..for they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh...but they that are of the spirit the things of the spirit, is God and God's plan in the picture? Is where we are in time in the picture? You know what? Just that alone...if you see God's plan, if you see where we are in time – 2 years left to go, 2 years and a couple weeks – if you look at that time period and you're motivated by everything you do...that alone can gear, motivate a lot of your decisions you make in life – just because of the time of where you are in God's plan! ...because of what you see and what God is going to bring about and what's coming about on this earth and where you are in time and how much time you have left to work on these things and so forth. It can have so much to do if you're motivated by things of the spirit, of the mind, of God's plan and God's purpose and the timing of God's plan and purpose of where we are.

Verse 6 – For to be carnally/physically minded is death; because its sin, it's selfish, it's just filled with selfishness. I just hate selfishness because it leads people to react in wrong ways towards others; it's just a sick perverted thing. **...but to be spiritually minded is life and peace**. It produces abundant life, joyful life, and peace. That's what it means by 'life', **to be spiritually minded is life**, a lot of people just

don't live life the way God intended it to be lived. To live it selfishly is not life, it's death, even though you're alive. It just brings about pain and suffering and sorrow and anguish and frustration and you've chosen to be frustrated and in anguish and not at peace and generally you see it as being someone else's fault – that's how we think sometimes. But God's way, when we're focused and motivated and walking after the spirit and the things of God... there's a peace that exists there just because it's a result of obedience and of a law that exists of blessings that are going to be there; just as much as there are cursings by doing the wrong thing. There is that which is a matter of peace and blessings and fullness of life and joy of life that make life richer and enjoyable. It's to be experienced; that you can only know it by the experience of it.

So again, **For to be carnally/physically minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** In other words what it produces in your life, what *you're able to experience* that has to do with God's ways of resolving matters of life, of living, and when it's done God's way what a beautiful thing; when it fits into God's plan and purpose, agreeing with His will. When we think in that way: what is it that agrees with God's will in this matter, it's a matter of the timing... all these things that you've taken because it so encompasses your life that this is how you think. Ask God for help to think more that way – truly!

Let's turn over to the book of Ephesians now, **Ephesians 1**. We're going to be spending some time here in Ephesians. It's an awesome book, it truly is! I've gone through different things in Ephesians in times past but in this series we are going to with a unique focus that we have right now. It truly is unique, it's awesomely inspiring, it's exciting to be able to go through this, to see the things that Paul is covering here that God is giving to us now at this particular time with the kind of focus we have about the Body of Christ and what it means to be *in* the Body, to *remain* in the Body, to have God's spirit remain in us and continue in us because when we sin it's just not there – and that's why we're unhappy and unfulfilled sometimes in our life and frustrated in our lives because we're making wrong choices; we're not *choosing* to walk after the spirit, we're choosing to walk after selfishness. That's perverted! It really is a perverted *sick* way to live life and that's what God is freeing us from – to come out of the perverted sick way of living life and to come out of the *hole* of that, the slavery of that; and it is a slavery that we *choose* to put ourselves under as human beings when we yield ourselves, when we make choices to walk after the flesh, in other words, to walk after what is selfish and selfish in our lives.

Ephesians 1:17 - That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: So again, this is so encompassing here in what it's talking about and what Paul is going to be covering throughout the book of Ephesians here, but it's that desire because of our calling and because of God the Father and what He's given to be accomplished in and through His Son Jesus Christ *to* us, what they give to us that is revealed in the mind through... Things are revealed in our mind Sabbath by Sabbath. We're able to see things a little more clearly if we're yielding ourselves and praying about what we hear and trying to apply it in our lives and praying about that. We're actually having more and more *revealed* about God and of Jesus Christ and that which is spiritual and it's a matter of growth spiritually, a spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* that's being given to us that we slowly grow in. It takes time, but it's progress and it's time and it's an awesome thing that's given to us **in the knowledge of Him;** because 'in the knowledge of Him' and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and God the Father and what God has given in and through Jesus Christ...it encompasses so much; things we're talking about through this series here of what He's given to us and why.

Verse 18 – So that the eyes of your understanding are being enlightened; and that's what's happening in this series if we yield ourselves to it. There's more that is being enlightened in our minds that God is

The Body of Christ – Pt. 1

blessing us to see, that you are going to be given the ability to see about yourself that's not pretty, that's not nice. But what is nice and what is pretty and what is beautiful is what He's offering to give to us through the power of His spirit to make the change so that we *become* more like God, more God-like in our life, in our relationships and there's a *fullness* of life and an abundance and a joy of life and a peace of life that can only come through the experience of it all. And so this is a part of our understanding, **being enlightened**, of understanding these principles and truths of life and how to live them and how to become more like God in our relationships with one another ...**that you may know what is the hope of His calling**, in other words, that with which we grow in with understanding and knowledge, of this calling that we've been given. And what did I mention earlier that comes as a result of our calling? A choice! *Choosing* whether or not we *want* what God is giving us, and then just continuing longer into that process from baptism and hands being laid on – choices day after day, moment after moment of what we're choosing. Are we choosing God or choosing ourselves, choosing selfishness, choosing our own human response? Those are choices every moment of every day and every time we choose the right we're acknowledging that God is right and we are wrong, we're acknowledging, we're becoming more deeply convicted that God is right and that our way is wrong. It becomes more a part of our mind and a part of our thinking. We're becoming more *at one* in unity with God. It is an awesome thing! The more that you can get rid of self the more you're becoming at one with God and the ways of God.

Going on... **so that the eyes of your understanding are being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling**, and that's something you can know more about now, that *hope* that you're able to see, that you're able to latch onto if you choose to do so, to draw closer *to Him*, **and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**, 'in the saints'... in us! That which is *in us* that can become stronger and better. We can have better relationships with each other, more enjoyable relationships with the more we see each other in a way that God wants us to see each other – as a spiritual Family. The more you do this the more fulfilled you're going to be in your life, the more rewarding your life is going to be able to experience, the feelings of what's true, not something that's made up or that's artificial or fake.

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe; the power that can work in our life...that we don't have to stay the same, that we can change. That's why that hope is beautiful. This is a *good thing* that God is giving to us; the ability to see ourselves, to see the *ugliness* of our human nature. I am *thankful* when I can see the filthiness, the ugliness of my human nature because that means I can make some positive strides and changes to do better, to treat others better, to be happier when treating them better. You just feel better! You're going to enjoy life more when you can treat other people in a better way, in a kinder way. There's something in power and life that's there, it's a blessing, it's a reward of life, a fullness of life so that you can enjoy life in a greater way and it's the selfishness that gets in the way. It's our human nature that prevents that from being greater!

And so again, being able to know these things **and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe;** you have to believe these things first. Do you believe it? Do you believe this, what is being given to you? And if you do, then you're going to respond and you're going to change. ...**according to**, in other words, **in accordance with the working of His mighty power**, that's what I'm thankful of, I rejoice in that – **His mighty power** that can be more active in my life. I *want* that. I *desire* that. I ask for God's spirit in that and you should, we all should day by day to want more of His life, His spirit within us so that we can experience those things because they're right and just and it's in unity with Him, because we're in agreement with Him, not in agreement with selfishness and with Satan's way of pride and that which is *so ugly*.

Verse 20 - Which He worked out through Christ, He worked *in* Christ, through Christ, in other words to be given to us in what we've just pictured through the Passover period and through His resurrection and through that life that's able to live within us in a very powerful way now through the forgiveness of sin, through the power of His life living and dwelling within us so that we can conquer and overcome. It says, **when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come:** That is going to be accomplished in and through Jesus Christ; that power we're able to have in our lives, *in* the Body of Christ, and that life in us. You want to be *in* the Body of Christ; not just because you're going through the motions of it, not just because you're listening to the sermons, not just because you tithe, not just because you attend the Holy Days; but because you *live* this day by day, because you're *IN* the Body of Christ; not just on those occasions when you're in services. Just to be in services doesn't *mean* you're in the Body of Christ! And we need to understand that! **...not only in this world but also in that which is to come...**

Verse 22 - And has put all things under His feet, and has given Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the Body of Christ, the Church of God. He is the head. We are able to be a part of that, of that fullness of life being in the Body of Christ; **and the fullness of Him who fills all in all.** Think about that verse! **...which is His Body**, it is the Church of God, the Body of Christ that we're able to be a part of, to be *in* **...and the fullness of Him who fills all in all.** The fullness of God that's able to fill our lives by being *in* the Body of Christ.

Let's continue on in the next chapter: **Ephesians 2:1 - And you who were dead in trespasses and sins...** again, going through the same things we covered in Romans. Sin, living selfishly means we're dead, we don't have that life within us, we're not experiencing the reward and the blessings of walking in the spirit by being in the Body of Christ. So when we sin we take ourselves *out* of that Body and we have death over us again.

Verse 2 – Because that in times past you walked according to the course of this world, so we're not to walk that way anymore, but we see we still do from time to time in our lives and that's what we're to fight and conquer... **according to the prince of the power of the air, in the spirit that is even now working in the children of disobedience:** so that's the way we were; now we're different, we're to be different. We have God's spirit now that we're to yield ourselves and *walk* in that spirit to conquer and *fight* that *wrong* nature, because we're able to see that wrong nature. And that's the battle! And you're got to keep fighting it; you don't give up in it and you don't become discouraged in it. You take hope in it and excitement in it that you don't have to stay the same way, unhappy or unfulfilled or frustrated or angry or whatever it is, because those things come from selfishness and by being held captive because of making wrong choices. And the more you yield yourself then to repent and do things the right way the more you're blessed and have that sense of joy and happiness and abundant life – truly!

Because that in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, in the spirit that is even now working in the children of disobedience: just like it is in the world. **Among whom also we all had our conversation/conduct in times past**, that's what the word conversation means, it's just so often it does come out in conversation, but it's our entire conduct, the way we act, the way we think. How we think is what comes out of us in our relationship with others. **...in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;** in other words, in our thinking, just trying to please self. And sometimes by jumping all over someone, by saying something rude to someone else... we don't think we're being rude, we think we're making their life better by giving them great correction and guidance and direction and a chewing out or a piece of our mind, or

The Body of Christ – Pt. 1

whatever it is. That conversation, that conduct...**in the lusts of the flesh**, it's *our* flesh, it's *our* lust, **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, in other words in our thinking because we think that's what's going to make us be happier, be at peace – by changing somebody else. No! You've got to change yourself! That's what's going to make you happier... **and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love where with He has loved us... and we're to love others with that love; and when we can become more like that our lives just continue to keep making greater changes in a *good* way, in a rewarding way. **But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love where with He has loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us...** Do we have sin? Does the person you want to change have sins? Yes! Just as much as you do! But nevertheless, in that state, **God... has quickened us, made us alive along with Christ**, by the power of His holy spirit, through the power of mercy and it says, **(by grace you are saved;)** and grace is not to be something we just receive, it's to live through us to the benefit of others as well. How are you treating others and is it through selfishness or Godliness?

And has raised us together, and has made us to sit together in heavenly, in other words having to do with the purpose of God. We're going to stop there today and come back to it next week because I want to explain some of that just a little bit. There's *so much* that's being given here that we can grow in, that we can come to understand in a deeper and a greater way.

~~~end