

Due to the sermons oriented around Pentecost over this past weekend we had a bit of an interruption to the normal flow of the sermons and we were in a sermon series at that point in time with two parts already given. Today is going to be *Part 3* of the sermon series entitled: *The Body of Christ*.

We've been focusing on the deeper meaning of what it means to be 'in the Body of Christ' and how that state of being involves the kind of focus we have or the lack of it when it comes to walking in the spirit instead of the normal state of walking in the flesh. And we have that constant battle obviously but that's the focus here of what it means to truly walk in the spirit. To do that you have to be *in* the Body of Christ and to understand what that means, again, is the focus of this sermon here and how we live our lives and what focus we have.

We're going to begin in Ephesians 4 where we were reading, just to pick it up again, the flow of what's being discussed. **Ephesians 4:7 - But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.** Grace being something here that has very much to do with the gifts that God gives to us, what this is talking about and what we're discussing here. If you remember last time, we talked about in Part 2 some of the meaning of 'gifts' here, or at least we were getting into that; that people get bogged down, they get confused about what these gifts are and they begin to focus on something very physical as a whole rather than something spiritual which is our natural normal human nature.

But again, if we understand what the word 'grace' is here that's given by God, it's that which, obviously, as Mr. Armstrong used to talk about – undeserved favour, undeserved pardon...and then it goes farther than that, it goes deeper than that into that which is spiritual. It begins with the process of how God begins to draw us, to work with us, to help us to see and understand His way of life and the process of repentance that leads us into how to live life and the gifts and the blessings we have then of how to live life. And it's all a gift, it's all a blessing that God gives to us – that favour, that help, the inspiration, the patience that God has with us, the mercy He shows to us, the love He gives to us; those very things that are supposed to be in us in time as we grow. Actually grace is something that's to come from us as well toward others; and that's understanding what grace is. If you can understand grace and the process of what God does in our lives, it's not something we just receive from God; it's something that begins to live within us that others benefit from as well; patience, mercy, kindness, love, the kind of love that God shows us, that He gives to us is to be lived from us to them, to others.

But again, that comes from only being in the Body of Christ. You can't do it on your own; you have to have God's spirit and you have to grow in God's spirit in order to have that kind of a mind. And so this is what we're focusing upon here. So again, **But unto every one of us, every one of us... is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.** Something that is possible from Christ. We just went through a series that talked about the gift of His life, of what He suffered through, of what He gave to us and the truth and the way of life that God gave to us in a greater way, in a more powerful way through Christ.

I think of the series of sermons we had before Passover and Pentecost when we were talking about this *entire* process here; and it was a long series of sermons of discussing over and over again all the things that happened within about the last two weeks of the life of Christ while He was on this earth, and all the teaching that He gave to the Church, to us, to mankind – gifts, blessings that man didn't have before.

When you read through the Old Testament you're given much about the law, you're given much about what God was doing with mankind for 4,000 years, much about how God worked with different families and different people individually, specifically; but then when we came to a point in time 4,000 years after He'd put man on this earth, after mankind was placed here, and to understand then how God began to magnify that law, began to give understanding of the meaning and the purpose behind it that has to do with the intent and the mind and the heart and the spirit of something – it's a powerful thing. What an incredible gift that mankind was given; and those things that began to break down as Jesus Christ began to explain in the very beginning; that He didn't come to destroy the law or the prophets and the things that are written in the Bible; but to expound upon it, to *magnify* it for mankind; and that's what He did. He began to explain and magnify those things so that we could understand, with God's spirit, in a deeper way than what people did in the previous 4,000 years.

I am in awe sometimes when I think about that; individuals that God worked with in the first 4,000 years and they didn't have that knowledge that Jesus Christ gave, they didn't understand those things. They were judged according to what God *did* give to them. They were judged according to a way of life in its basic form that God gave to them of how to live toward others. They were judged according to *what they did* in response to God when God told them to do something; because that's a matter of faith. When God told Abraham to get up from the land of his family, of those you know, of that what you're familiar with and go to a land that I'm going to show to you... it says he obeyed, he did it, he went. Very simple. He just responded to God. And that's what God attributes to us and to them in those first 4,000 years, to individuals, a response, because of faith, of believing this is from God and believing what God says that that's what's best for us – and then doing it! Believing it and then doing it; and that's attributed to us for righteousness; because we're not righteous. No human being is righteous. There was only one who was righteous and He gave that gift to us of His life to be our Passover so we could be forgiven of sins.

So it's an incredible process here from beginning to end that God takes us through of all the understanding, of all the teaching; and we *should* be in awe then of what God began to give 2,000 years ago through Jesus Christ to all mankind. And *then* after Pentecost He began to magnify it even more because now Jesus Christ is in heaven on the right hand of His Father in power and glory and *all* power has been given to Him and He begins then to give to the Church – to the *Body of Christ*, the Church of God on the Day of Pentecost; greater understanding, greater power, greater insight and gifts. And this is what we're talking about, the gifts that God has poured out upon us. *So often* within the Church and within the world and the Protestant world especially, when they begin to zero in on gifts, when they start talking about the gifts of the holy spirit it becomes a matter of pride and *haughtiness*...because of what people think they have; they have certain gifts that are better than what others have.

And that's what happened to Paul in the early days when the people were given the ability of 'tongues', which is not the proper translation anyway – that's a sick perverted distortion of the Protestant world, of 'speaking in tongues' and that which is inspired by a demonic world that doesn't come from God at all. What God gave was that which was the ability of languages, to speak in other languages for the *purpose* of spreading the truth, God's truth, God's way of life. Just like what happened on Pentecost; they spoke with 'tongues' and other languages. That's what it means in 'tongues'. They just spoke in other languages; and really that was even a gift more, or a blessing more of hearing than it was of speaking because they really only spoke in one language at that moment but later on they did start speaking in other languages as well, with inspiration and people could hear them. But it was really more a gift of hearing because it gives *all those languages* that were listening to Peter, *all those people* from

all the different areas, all the Jews that came in at that time and it says, 'they each heard in their native language.' In other words, it was a perfect tongue. What they were hearing was something of a perfect tongue in their own language. Incredible! From all these different regions. It lists them in the book of Acts; all these different regions of where they were from. And so they were hearing something: obviously there would be mass confusion if all these different sounds were coming out of Peter in 20 some different languages there. Nobody would be able to decipher what was going on, it'd just be a noise; but they were able to hear in their own language.

But so often; it's an amazing thing what human beings do. They think they have a gift, people talk about gifts of healing...someone thinks that God works through them more than someone else, that a minister has a gift of healing above and beyond other ministers. And with human nature you know what happens? It begins to become a matter of pride. In the time of Paul; Paul finally came to a point in time where basically 'tongues' or speaking other languages was just something that wasn't done anymore; God didn't give that in the Church because people misused it as a matter of pride, of whose better than someone else... "I'm spiritually better than my brother (most of my brethren... I'm really better.)" So it's a horrible thing and it was a horrible thing in the Church of God. But those things have happened *in the Church of God* because we have human nature; and it's a constant battle fighting against self; and it's a matter of whether we yield ourselves to pride or to God's spirit in humility – night and day.

So again, **unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He said, He has ascended up on high, He led captivity captive; beautiful! ...and gave gifts unto men.** Simple! It's not about how much better we are or how much more we have than somebody else, it's about a process here of what Jesus Christ gave to us, the blessings we have *in the Church, in the Body of Christ* because of what He did; **He led captivity captive;** that which has held us captive He took captive through the process of the forgiveness of sin. You're in captivity, just like we give on Days of Unleavened Bread; Egypt – people were in slavery, they were in captivity until God brought them out of captivity and the same thing is true with sin. Sin holds us in captivity until we're blessed to be able to come to a point in time where we *want* to repent of it and then be forgiven of it and we're no longer captive to it. God gives us strength through that and then we have a relationship with God that we're not able to have otherwise.

So these verses, again, are very powerful in what they have to say here and they were at the very end of Part 2 of that sermon series and some of the focus we had at that particular time. It's amazing how people twist some of these things when you start reading about gifts in the Bible. I've heard ministers in the Church of God give sermons about these gifts, individuals, elders. I think of one in particular that even after the apostasy, an elder who's no longer with us because he got eaten up by these, he got eaten up by pride and toward the very beginning he got caught up into a point in time, probably after about a year, gave a sermon or maybe it was a split sermon at the time, I don't remember. At that time we would occasionally have two people give what we'd call split sermons – speak for around 45 minutes and someone else speak for another 45 minutes. And he got tangled up in these gifts and raised them up in importance and it was like... "What gift do you have? What special thing do you have from God?" And so people started looking for, well, what special things do I have? And sometimes then people began to focus on themselves and what they have and maybe they have more than one gift, maybe they have several gifts and they really have more than other brethren. That's not what God intends from all that...and that's after the apostasy, and after we were being put back on the right track if you will, being strengthened again, being brought back into a unity and a oneness with God, being *awakened* from what had happened to us and it still happened early on. We can look at those things sometimes and say, "How could that have been?" Especially some that are new sometimes, it's like,

“How could that happen in the Church of God?” It happens because you have human nature. And you’re not in the God Family until you’re in the God Family and you have to fight your nature all the time; it’s a continual battle of life. And if you don’t do that then you’re held captive because you’re in sin.

Let’s go over to **Luke 11** and see what this is speaking of. So often in scripture when it talks about ‘gift’; because the word ‘gift’ in verse 7 in Ephesians here when it says, ‘to the measure of the gift of Christ’ is indeed talking about the normal word for ‘gift’ in the Greek language, (we’re going to look at another one later here), but it’s just exactly what it means. But let’s notice how God uses it so often when He’s in this context, this type of context is being used because it’s unique to the context over and over and over again. **Luke 11:10 – And I say unto you ask and it shall be given to you**, and this word so often connected with the word and sometimes even used as the word for ‘gifts’ but **and it shall be given to you**; Ask for what? What is the context? Sometimes if we’re not careful we can read scriptures like this when it talks about ‘ask’. Some think that basically whatever your desire is God will give it to you; and so people ask for anything and everything in life – to win the lottery. This is not unheard of! Maybe some of you’ve had prayers like that because you think of what we could do for the Church! And that’s just human nature. And we might have some nice motives in *part* of that but sometimes there’s...that would be interesting too to have that much and what would we do with it and wouldn’t life be better? ...and you read stories about those people and their life isn’t better as a whole because it doesn’t help human nature so often.

And so the context over and over again has to do with a relationship with God, it has to do with the blessings that come from God through Jesus Christ to the Church; it has to do with the spirit of God. And this is what he’s talking about here. It has to do with what God has promised to give to us. He hasn’t promised to *give* to us *anything* that’s physical in this life. We have battles and we have trials. He hasn’t *promised* to give us a great job. He hasn’t *promised* to give us a brand new car every six months. He hasn’t *promised* to give us whatever it is that we seek, that we would like to have in life. That isn’t what God *promises* to give to us in this life. But He has promised us greater gifts, greater blessings than all those things combined.

So he says, **I say to you ask what you will and it shall be given to you**, so obviously it’s not talking about asking for anything you want to have; it’s a matter of what is God’s will. You ask according to God’s will. What is God’s will? To give you a billion dollars next year? Might be way too late by that time... We don’t know. ...**seek and you shall find**, seek what? What is it that God wants you to be focused on more than anything else? Your physical life? What you’re going to acquire in this physical life? Well, we have a unique perspective in the Church of God with that one because we know we’re at the end of a physical age, if you will, that’s getting ready to go into another one. So we understand things about putting all our money into stocks and bonds and euro’s and dollars and whatever else we might think is a safe haven, gold, silver, whatever it is. We scatter some things out in different areas in different baskets. Not to focus on those things as a matter of something we’re going to *retire* with later on, because we know better. But the times before us were not so – during Philadelphia and even into Laodicea, the early part of it, people were still looking long term into the future in what they could do to plan for their future. And you can become very focused upon that so much that you lose the focus that God *wants* you to have...the focus you should have because of the calling you have.

So again, he says, **I say to you ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you, for everyone who asks receives**. That’s a great promise! ...but you better know the context, you better know what it’s about so you’re asking for the right thing because it’s not

saying you can ask for anything you want to have in life and God's going to give it to you. That's not true. It's not even true when it comes to an illness. Some people believe or have had the belief at times that if a person, as an example, were to get cancer, that God's will for you is that you're going to be healed from that. And that *may not* be God's will in a person's life. I'm just using that as an example...that sometimes we get messed up with things and we begin to focus on the physical more.

*What if* by a person having something in their life – that because of that they're able to have a keener and a sharper focus in something else in their life? A spiritual relationship with God. *What if* some of the things we carry and we bear are a better example to the Church because we come back with such a positive response and because they see the spirit of God in us? ...in other words, by how we respond to the trial we're going through. And I'm just saying it doesn't matter what the trial is, but sometimes when it comes to illness and sickness and healing people get unbalanced in those areas or can become unbalanced. *What if* it's a great example to the Church of endurance, of sticking to it? I think of that when I think of some people, what they're going through and what they've gone through in times past. I think of what a spirit, what a mind, and it gives me encouragement. And you see someone else who's going through something? You think you have it bad? You think you have something that's difficult and you see someone else who's going through it and has gone through it for a long time? Kind of makes things a little bit different, doesn't it?

When I travel I try not to complain. Sometimes I catch myself complaining about something, and I'm catching it quicker and quicker all the time as I grow, and *I do* seriously think about Paul. Whenever I'm in a plane and I think something's uncomfortable I think about Paul. Where do I have the grounds to complain about anything? ...because of the life he lived and because of what he went through. What comes into my mind are some of these old ships and the way they were bobbing around in the Mediterranean; and I can guarantee you they didn't have the nice comfort zone and quality of air in the sense of heating and cooling that I have, and I'm sure that he didn't have the padded seats and the ability to recline on occasion when you're in the hold of a ship and you're being tossed around. And I sure haven't had to worry yet, and hope it doesn't happen, have a plane crash. Paul was in the Mediterranean bobbing around for a day and more... amazing what he went through.

And so sometimes we're able to look at others and what *they* carry and what they have in their life and it can give you encouragement that your problem really isn't that big of a problem and that what you're doing is making a big mistake by focusing upon "Woe is me! ... and why would God let this...why would God make this happen to me? Why do I have to suffer? Why would *God do this to me?*" You better get a hold of that kind of an attitude quick if that ever happens in your life. That's dangerous. You can't think that way! ...because it's not God that is doing it to you. There are things in life God just lets us experience; that's the process whereby we can mature and become stronger and better. Truly, it makes us stronger; some of the trials we go through, the fire of life is what makes us stronger! If you had everything you wanted and things were going smoothly for you, you wouldn't be here as a whole and you'd probably leave in time; and that's the way it's happened in the Church through the ages. When things go too well in people's lives, things are going smoothly, in what they think anyway, it's easy to lose sight of what you have to be focused upon – because of human nature.

**For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, shall he give him a scorpion?** And what is the context of all this? Food. He didn't say oxen, something to plough the earth with, a barn, or whatever. It's in the context of some food here. He uses examples of food. Bread? Meat? ...and so forth. Our

food is different with God – spiritual; it’s spiritual; the bread of life, the waters of life, the living waters. We think of those things, or we *should* think of those things. And that’s the context of what it’s discussing here, that which we can receive from God. And it shows God’s desire to give to us far more those things that give us life and nourishment day by day, *spiritually*, that’s far more important than that which is physical. And so that’s the context here.

**If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children:** ‘good gifts’ – *gifts*, food, *good gifts*, sustenance, to work hard to provide for your family so that they can eat. It talks about in scripture, Paul says, ‘if one doesn’t provide for his family he’s worse than an infidel’, means ‘a non-believer’; because our desire should be to put food on the table for our children. That should be a natural desire that everyone has so that they don’t go without. How much greater is God’s toward us, and if we ask is He going to give it to us, if we seek after it, the spirit of life, the blessings of life; is He going to give it to you? Oh, God wants to, He *desires* with great desire to give us more and more and more; but that depends upon our response to what He offers us, to our being grateful and thankful and to our *using* profitably what He gives to us, not squandering it selfishly. Just like grace; if we’re on the receiving end of being forgiven and God forgives us of different sins on a continuing basis and we won’t forgive someone else of the smallest little things in life that continually happen and we hold it against them... How long is God going to keep giving us that kind of grace? Because see, that happens, doesn’t it? The example of the individual, the parables that are in scripture, the parables of someone who goes to an individual, he’s forgiven *great debt*, and then this individual goes to his servant who just owes him a little bit, to someone who owes him just a small amount and he won’t forgive it and he makes it harder for the individual...<sup>1</sup> And sometimes we’re that way! We’re unforgiving! Not only that, we make it harder on someone else because they’re not giving us what we think we should be receiving from it! That’s spiritual to understand, and God wants us to understand.

**If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit...** over and over again in the scriptures it’s about God’s spirit and the *gifts* of life He wants to give to us and that is of Him, the spirit. He wants to give of Himself to us. **How much more shall the heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them who ask Him?** So again, unique how it’s used over and over again. It’s a great focus to have when you’re going through scripture and when you’re in prayer and asking things of God. Now, is it wrong to ask about certain things about a job and different things you’re going through financially in your life; or whatever it might be? No. Those are petitions we place before God, ‘but nevertheless not my will but Your will be done.’ See, that’s how we pray to God. “If we can receive that help and that favour from You; if You’ll guide us to what we should do or what we shouldn’t do...” But sometimes we think that God has every moment of our life planned out. No, He uses the moments in life to mould and fashion us, but we make the choices. God lets us make the choices. It’s like a job; you might have lost your job and suppose you have three jobs out there and it’s like, “Three job offers – which one do I take?” It’s like God wants a specific one for you and the other two he doesn’t want you to take... so, “God show me.” Or if you’re thinking about moving somewhere and if you should or shouldn’t – whatever it might be... We go through these things in life, but it’s just a matter of choices and you make the choice and then you ask God to bless you in the choice, “Please help me along the way. Please help me in this. Help me to grow and learn what I can learn through this choice of what I have made.” That’s how God works with us. Sometimes we almost become superstitious in life and it’s not that way. And that’s normal, that’s natural, that’s just the way we are. We’ve all done those things in a part of our growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 18:23-35

Let's turn over to **John 3**. Notice the uniqueness of what God said about Jesus Christ here and then we'll go on from that. **John 3:34 - For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God has not given the spirit by measure** in other words *unto Him* as it has in italics there. But again here, it's showing that, speaking of Jesus Christ whom God has sent into the world – that God didn't give the spirit by measure to Him. I don't understand that fully. We understand that at varying levels in the Church of what it means not to be given the spirit by measure and the mind and the life of Christ as He walked on this earth as a physical human being; but yet His father being God Almighty and the *spirit* that was without measure, as He talked about toward the end of His life when He talked about how He could call legions of angels if He wanted. But that wasn't the purpose; He knew that wasn't the purpose and that He didn't need to do that, that there was something else that He had to go through – that mind and that power that was in Him and the *determination* that was there. And when Satan came along and He'd fasted the length of time He did and things that other human beings would have faltered at immediately. Because we read through that and we don't grasp what really took place; we don't understand the circumstances and the things surrounding it and the power that was there. We read a little story like that, a little clip of a story about what Jesus Christ went through and think, "I wouldn't have done that; I wouldn't have said... something, I don't know what I would have said, but I wouldn't have done those things either." Yes, you would have! We are no match for that being and the way he tempts human beings and mankind with various things; and when he offers more power human beings don't resist. So we don't know the whole story; it's not all written there and we wouldn't grasp it anyway, we really wouldn't, the magnitude of what took place there, the battle that was there. So again, sometimes that's dangerous – we read through a little story and it's just a little story, a nice little story flow to us and we don't realize the *battle* that was going on there.

But anyway, again, the spirit that was given to Him without measure; powerful! It works differently with us. And so when it talks about, **but unto every one of us is given gifts/grace according to the measure**. See, there's a measure that we have of the gift of Christ...when we read that back in Ephesians 4:7. So it was without measure to Jesus Christ, but it is with measure to us. So by the time we're called, some of us at the earliest ages of 17-18-19, usually the earliest is 18-19 for baptism; by that point in time there we are already set. We are so set in our ways. You know, a teenager becomes *set* in their ways very early, that's the way we are. I was set before 13, but at 13 I was set in my course and it wasn't a good course, but I was set. And by the time I was called, God had to humble me a great deal for me to be called, otherwise I wouldn't have listened. I'd have thought, "That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard of." I knew my attitude and my spirit; and so God had to humble me to bring me to that point in time. And so every one of us, we're well set. So if God calls us at 25, at 35-45-55, we are just that much more set and it's a battle, it's hard because we're undoing a lifetime of something that's deeply set in us, like concrete is; and only God can break that in us – truly; and help us to come out of that, and make changes in our life. But He can and He does, by the power of His spirit because it has to do with the mind and the way that we think.

As we go through this process then, we grow and we receive greater measure through time because of that growth. There's only so much we can receive, just like someone who is one year old, two years old, three years old – there's a different amount you can receive that is a matter of the mind at those different ages. It's a matter of building and growing and learning to use language and then learning to read and learning to write; and that's a process you go through. We do the same thing... those are a *type* of something that happens to us in a lifelong, lifetime of spiritual growth; it truly does...it takes a lifetime because it's a *constant building process* and there is no difference. One is spiritual, one is physical; but very much alike in the process we go through on a spiritual plane. It's just the way it is, it is a reality.

Let's turn over to **I Corinthians 10**. I want to read some things here, make sure I don't miss anything in my thoughts here in some of the things to be given in this sermon.

These things are about God's spirit that is measured out to us, truly is; it's a very powerful thing. God desires to give us more, as I mentioned, so that we can give more. That's what this way of life is about – gives us more so we can give more. A way of life that works through us to the benefit of others. Right now the Church is being prepared in a very great way to give more to this world in a very short order and God's going to use this *small Body*. It's amazing! You go back and see what God has done in time and the way He works through human beings – the small things that happen that are so great in magnitude. Immediate story that comes to my mind? Esther. Mordecai. What an awesome thing that happened to the entire nation there, to an entire people as a result of all this, of the Jewish people who were about to be destroyed; and another people as it were who were destroyed, in part, because of their desire to destroy. Amazing things that God has done through time; small things that He has made great, that He has made mighty. Why? To show that it was God who did it and not man; otherwise mankind, human beings, we take it to ourselves and we fail to see God in it.

So again here, so much that has to do with what we're going through and focusing upon has to do with a process of maturing *in* the Body of Christ, what it means to be in the Body of Christ, to receive these gifts, these blessings of life and the growth process that we go through, as I talked about – first starting with repentance. That's a gift! The ability you have to repent! What an awesome gift that God has given. It's not given to the world to repent yet. And so we have the gift of Christ that's given to us that we can repent because of what He did in suffering for us and asking God to forgive us of all of our sins. And that's where it begins; it's just a beginning then to take us into the Days of Unleavened Bread. Passover, then the Days of Unleavened Bread – we start coming out of sin then, we repent and God gives us help to come out of sin then, to begin seeing what causes the problems we have. It's us. We're the cause of our own sins. Somebody else doesn't cause you to sin. You make the choices, I make the choices, we're the ones at fault. And so that's why we talk about, or I've talked about, we've focused upon in this series of sermons here as well the importance of focusing upon self – that this is the only power of anything you have to change. You can't change others. You can spend a lifetime trying, people do, they try to change their mate until they die, or they try to change their children, or their grandparents, or their parents, or whatever... people are constantly trying. They want others to be different so that their lives are happier and better and more peaceful. If you would do this, or you do that, or others would do this and that, my life would be so much better. No it wouldn't. You'd just be selfishly pampered and taken care of if everything else went around you smoothly, but you wouldn't be growing, you wouldn't be overcoming, you wouldn't be learning a thing. And so it starts with repentance; the blessing, the gift that God gives to us in and through Jesus Christ...and on and on it goes...the process of coming out of sin, the process of receiving God's spirit and the gifts and the blessings of that.

Let's notice how Paul describes some of these things here in a story flow that we're going to be going through because it takes us up through the Passover season, if you will. And what is awesome in all this is to understand the context of what Paul is describing here. It has so much to do with how you live toward every other person; it's how you think about others, in the Body of Christ especially, and in the world. It's how we treat others; it's how we think about others. It's an incredible thing that which is shown here.

**I Corinthians 10:1 - Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, of how our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized/immersed unto Moses in The Body of Christ – Pt. 3**



**the cloud and in the sea; And that all did eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink:** now they didn't know that. They didn't grasp what they were being given. The time that they were in the wilderness, all that God did through Moses to them, that came through Moses to them – they didn't grasp what was being given to them; the food of life, the bread of life. Even when the 10 Commandments were given, they didn't grasp the magnitude of that. It was like, "Stop that old harsh voice, that thundering..." because they had fear...and then later on it reveals that it wasn't that as much as it was the fact that they just didn't want to do it and they didn't want that to be over their lives, that something was going to be expected of them or that they had to live by certain laws. It was the law, it was what God said, it was God's way that they hated. They didn't want it; but they had it to drink of, they just didn't know what they had: the word of life, logos, the mind of God. That's what they had opportunity to begin to receive of. In one respect they did and in another way we understand that they didn't because they weren't given the holy spirit; but they had those words that are life.

**...for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.** And so the things to be fulfilled, that which would come in time that would give everything that was given to them then has to do with Jesus Christ, the logos, the word of God made flesh. And again, it is Christ that followed in time to fill in the entirety of the picture. That's why it's such a beautiful picture, even about the law when it was given on Pentecost. God gave the 10 Commandments on the Day of Pentecost and then on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. He gave the holy spirit to show why Israel wasn't able to live that way of life, because they were lacking something, they were incomplete. You can't keep the law on your own. You can't do it by your own willpower, by your own mind. You have to have God's spirit, you have to have the mind of God in you. You have to be *in* the Body of Christ and *remain* in the Body of Christ and *continue* in the Body of Christ; *abide* in the Body of Christ.

Let's go on to **verse 5 - But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.** Different ones died at different times because of rebellion, and different plagues that came along, and they would respond for a little while, just like Pharaoh responded for a short order and then went right back to the way He was. So did the Israelites; they did the same thing; same human nature, just a different circumstance and a different life that they had. And so, many died, thousands, tens of thousands in some of the plagues. I think of the one with the serpent wrapped around the pole, because of the way they were living and the things they were doing and what God did at that time. Didn't change them too much. And so when it finally came down to it, which we read last week when Joshua finally came into the Promised Land, we finally came to a point in time where all those who were older – was it 20 years and up that went through the wilderness for 40 years? 60 and above at that point in time – they died – they weren't allowed to go into the Promised Land; except for Joshua and Caleb. The rest of them died. And so none of them even got to cross over; only the younger, the ones who grew up through that period of time, who were born in that period of time, and those who were under 20 that came out at that time were able to enter in. So it says **God was not well pleased.**

**Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.** You don't get by with sin. **Neither be you idolaters, as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.** And we scratch our head and we think... "Moses is gone for a little while and he's not coming back right away and so something happened to Moses. Let's make us a god, the god that brought us out of Egypt, that we can worship and have a feast." And so they gave their gold and they made this molten image of something and they're going to call that the god that took them out of Egypt. I think, "How dumb! How crazy can you get?" And yet if we'd been there we'd have done the same things. Human nature under those circumstances, coming

out of Egypt would have done the same thing. Why? Because they all did it, we know. That's the testimony, that's the witness of what we would have done.

So God says, "Don't be like them. Don't commit idolatry." Idolatry has to do with raising up an idol. You know what raising up an idol is all about? Something you raise up above God. You raise something up and you make that more important than listening to God. Every time you sin it is idolatry because you have raised up something more important than what God says is a way to live. Every time you sin you've committed idolatry, spiritual idolatry because you've fooled around with something else that God says, "Don't mess with... don't fool with... it'll take you away from Me." And God doesn't want us to be taken away from Him. Just like in a marriage; people don't want someone else to do something that's wrong, to do something that would take them away where they would be unfaithful. God doesn't want us to be unfaithful! He wants us to have a right and a rich meaningful relationship with us. That's what His whole Family is about, isn't it? And so we go through things in life to learn that. God says, "Don't be this way." So we read this story about the Israelites and think, "I'd never be an idolater." And yet the moment you leave here today and go out here and sin, you say something or do something that's wrong, that is sin you have to repent of – you've committed idolatry. God said don't do that! But we do.

**Neither be you idolaters, as were some of them; as is written, The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.** We just don't see it as being this bad. We think, "Well, I wouldn't rise up and do the things they did." But it's just as bad. That's why God calls, (and I love the way it's stated in the Bible) if we fail to love someone, if you know how to love someone and you fail, you refuse to do it...you know what God calls it? *Murder!* Murder; killing someone. He calls it hate. 'You *hate* then your brother...' and we say, "Oh no, I don't hate anybody." But if we refuse to be forgiving to someone, if we refuse to do the things that God says to do, if we refuse to show mercy to someone, if we refuse to do the things we know we should be doing toward someone else, God says to him (to understand the spirit of it) it's the same as the spirit of murder because *in time* in the right environment, whatever, that's what leads to murder. So God calls it what it is. But we don't think things are that bad sometimes; but they are to God! And when we come into greater unity and oneness with God what a beautiful thing when we see things the way God has given to them and the more you see those things the more you *hate* the evil, the more you *hate* the *smallest infraction*, the *smallest of things* that are wrong and bad in life. And the more you hate them, the more you'll cease to trip up and fall in those areas.

**Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them also committed, and twenty three thousand fell in one day.** That's what He's saying. "Don't do it." Just talked about how we can commit *spiritual* fornication – by sin. **Neither let us tempt Christ**, and some people even commit the real thing physically, have done so over and over in God's Church. And some God has had mercy through forgiveness in time; *many* others are gone. *Ministers* have done it in God's Church! Sick! Sad! Pathetic! **Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted**, Who did they tempt? God - Yahweh Elohim. So it's telling us, 'don't tempt Christ.' ...misuse what is given to us through the *gift* of Christ, the *gifts* that are given to us through Christ...**as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents.**

**Neither murmur as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.** See, when I read this... I've heard so much *murmuring* in my lifetime to where God has helped me to learn to hate it and loathe it. I heard so much murmuring against Mr. Armstrong in the years that I was in the Church. When I was baptized in 1969 it didn't take long at all before I started hearing people murmur; people who thought they could say things about decisions that he was making. But God gave me a gift, which was a gift and a blessing, otherwise I would have fallen in the same type of trap; helped me to see that

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this is God's servant and this is how it works, whatever God gives to him, it works through him to us. He has to make the choices and decisions and we make the choices then to follow him as he follows Christ. And that's how life is. But to murmur, to be in disagreement about something, to think that somehow God is working through me or whatever person is murmuring, more than Mr. Armstrong, is the height of spiritual insanity! It really is! When I would hear people talk I would think, "How can you think this?" and I had to learn through that process. To say something about God's anointed, God's servant, God's apostle at the end-time? People that would criticize him for how he used finances... that's a good one – because why? Oh, because we're so close to the finances that we give; but we give it to God. It's the mind. But some people thought it was *their money* and how Mr. Armstrong was using their money. No, it was never their money, *it never was!*

And there are a lot of people out there to this day who sometimes; because a lot of them hate us because they recognize the same thing that's in us because there's a spirit there, because of where the truth is; and they loathe, because they think about that money that was *their money they gave to Mr. Armstrong* and how Mr. Armstrong misused it. When Mr. Armstrong built a great auditorium dedicated to the glory and the honour of God there were people who complained and murmured and griped about that because extra monies were asked to be sent in for building this to the glory of God. It tests a person. Are you going to murmur and complain? Or are you going to say, "Thank you, and I want to give to that. I *want* the opportunity because God's apostle has said that this is to the glory of the great God." And we had a choice to make. Isn't that amazing? Simple things, little things like that sometimes.

And yet I also think of right behind it then the change of timing from Trumpets to Pentecost. There was murmuring in God's Church at that time, and I think of that and it's brought up every once in a while. You know why? Because *God wants it brought up* because He wants us to *never forget* what we did at this age as well and how blessed we are and how *merciful* God has been to us, how *merciful* God was to give us the sermon early on that was *going* to be given on Trumpets. And if it'd been given on Trumpets, all the Church would not have been there. But God had mercy upon us so we could learn from that, about murmuring and complaining and judging things before it's time. And that's a great lesson never to be forgotten, it truly is...a powerful thing. And so God says, **don't murmur as some of them murmured**. Don't do the things that so often we do as human beings by human nature.

**So neither murmur as some of them also murmured and were destroyed by the destroyer.** Because it's human nature, how we judge things and how we judge what's being done and how it's being done. We don't have that right.

**Verse 11 - Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:** in other words as an example. The word is 'as a pattern of things', of human nature, of what human nature is like; **and they are written for our admonition**, not for theirs, it's long over... it's written for ours, the Church. This was written for the Church from Paul, through Paul...**and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages/the world are come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands; take heed lest he fall.** I love that! I love that verse! I think of times past. I think of how that meant more to me at a younger age when I was younger and learning some great lessons to that. That's a great motivator right there – when you think you're getting to the point where you're doing pretty good... **think you stand?** That's when God says, **take heed**. If we're one year old – you're one year old. If you're two years old – you're just two years old. If you're three – you're three. And you can't be expected to be as old as your brother and sister who's twelve and thirteen, or seventeen and eighteen, or thirty and thirty-one. It's just the way it is. So we can't come to a point in time where we think we stand because that's a

dangerous spiritual state to be in. We have much to grow in all of our life; all the way until it's over, until it'd done. It's a fight.

**Verse 13 – There hasn't been any temptation happened you but such as is common to man:** What happened to the Israelites happens to us. The battles they had with human nature, we have. It's just on a different plane. Theirs was manifested in a greater way physically and we shake our head and say, "How could they do that?" ...not understanding that we do the same things on a spiritual plane, the same attitude of mind, but in a little more refined way perhaps and not as *bad as* sometimes, but sometimes it is just as bad as what they did.

**...but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able;** in other words, capable. Some people have misread this verse and have stumbled. It's like God said, His promise to us is that He's not going to put any more on us than what we can bear and therefore... anyway, this is what God is saying. This is what God is saying through Paul; There **hasn't been any temptation taken/happen you but such as common to others as well, to mankind: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are capable of;** notice what it says in the rest of it...doesn't mean you're not going to go through some severe trials, even trial to your death in life. It doesn't mean that; and it doesn't mean that if you do to that point that you're able to... it has to do with your choices and your decisions and your response to what God is doing in your life. That's what it boils down to, because... notice the rest of the context. This is just as much as the thing about gifts. We have to read the entire story here to understand the entire context of what's being said. You can't take a portion of something out of context and misread it.

**...but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear/endure it. Therefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.** God has made a way for us to escape; that's what He's telling us. There is *nothing* out here that the Israelites went through, or that human beings are capable of doing that God hasn't given us a way to escape it, to come out of it, to come out of spiritual Egypt. He has, through the process first of all by what? By being brought to a point where we see sin. It's a conviction of sin. And then we're able to be forgiven by repentance, through the process of repentance we're able to repent before God. There is a way to escape captivity. 'Jesus Christ led captivity captive.' This is *exactly* what this is talking about. This is *exactly* what Paul is writing to the Church... that there is *nothing* that human beings haven't gone through in life that God hasn't given us the way to escape it; the pulls, the temptations, the things we normally do because of human nature and the response of human nature.

God's blessed us to escape all that, to endure, to come out of those things, to change, to receive help. Not only will you be forgiven; but to receive help to change – even in our thinking, that our minds can be healed so we actually think differently so that through time we come to a point in time where we would never even be tempted in certain areas. It's just not a temptation. There's some things in life you grow in that are never a temptation; and there are some things in life that God allows, that are certain things there that you have to fight till you're dead. There are certain things when it comes to how you respond to people and what you say... that's one of the biggest ones right there. How we respond to something when someone does something to us that we don't like. It's so easy to strike back. That's why it says Jesus Christ never reviled back, He never struck back, He never fought back.

**Therefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.** You have the choice to flee from spiritual idolatry, to flee from sin, to flee pride, to embrace humility. We have the choices to make, we have the power available to us; God will give us the strength, He'll give us the favour. But we have to make the choices

first of all whether we're going to repent so we can be forgiven, so we can receive the extra help, the portion, the strength, the might, the power of mind and spirit that God will give to us then as we continue to pray for help to think differently.

**Verse 15 - I speak as to wise men; judge you what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion,** and again, I hate the word 'communion' because of how the Protestant world has used it; it's perverted, it's distorted because they do something... they *blaspheme* the Passover by taking communion *every week* and on a Sunday at that. It wouldn't matter what day of the week they took it on, but it just makes it a little bit worse. It's the word for 'fellowship'; and Passover is only to be done once a year when you take the bread and the wine, the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. You do that once a year on Passover. We understand that; that's clear to us. Satan has so fouled this world up. So it says, **The cup of blessing which we bless,** What cup of blessing? The Passover! The cup that you take on Passover; the context of time that Paul is addressing here is the approach of Passover and how they approached Passover and what God wanted the Church to grasp at that point in time. And now? It is the same; fellowship; fellowship with God and fellowship with one another *in the Body of Christ*. It's beautiful.

**The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship,** that's what this word means, **of the blood of Christ?** We partake in it? How? We do every day of our life that we go before God and say, "Father forgive me; forgive me." You're doing so through the blood of Christ; that you can have a relationship, a fellowship with God and *stay* in that fellowship, to continue in, to abide in, that same word that's translated in different ways in English. It's the same Greek word; to abide in, to remain in, to continue in, to live in, to dwell in...same word that's used so often that is the same Greek word. God wants us to be in that, continually abiding in that relationship of Him living in us as we are able to live in Him *IN* the Body of Christ. You have to be *in* the Body of Christ, dwelling *in* God to grow, to conquer, to overcome.

**The bread which we break,** it's talking about Passover again, **is it not the fellowship of the Body of Christ?** It's about the Body of Christ, very much so in remembering back, as much as the blood is and what we think about. But what does it lead to? It's all in one great picture here: the Body of Christ, the Church of God. That's why Jesus Christ died; to have a Body we call the Body of Christ, the Church of God. He died for that. He didn't die just to forgive us of sin, because if we are just forgiven of sin and there's no more – what's the point? The point is change...and that's *in* the Body of Christ. He died so that God the Father could dwell in us and Jesus Christ could dwell in us and we can dwell in them on a spiritual plane – to be in the Body of Christ. And we're able now to have a fellowship in the body of Christ that's very unique with God the Father and Jesus Christ and with everyone else who is a part of that Body. And I'll tell you what... there is nothing more spiritual to understand than this. There is nothing greater to understand in life than to understand that fellowship; that it's of the spirit. It's a spiritual relationship. It's of the mind. It's how you think. It's how you think toward everyone.

That's why I want to pause there and read a scripture that is so powerful, so beautiful, so meaningful if we could only embrace it and grasp it even greater to the depth of it's being of what it means. It would change so many things that so often have happened in the Church of God, that continue to happen in the Church of God, that I *know* have happened this past week in the Church of God, that I know have happened *many times since we took the Passover* and had the bread and had the wine – that things have happened in our relationships with one another within the Body that aren't right. If it's with one other member that's not right – then there's sin. What a horrible thing! Little things I started hearing about *immediately* after Passover that were happening between people. I think... "Would to God that we could drink in and receive quickly, powerfully, mightily the full understanding of the Passover we just

took so that those things never happen. That the impression of that; that the power of that could hit us in a greater way.” But we have to grow...and thank God for the gifts that He gives to us with one of them being repentance. We grow...and God wants us to grow, mightily so.

**I John 4:19 - We love Him**, speaking of God, **because He first loved us**. We understand that, but the world doesn't. The Protestant world, especially in the Bible belt, in the South of the United States... people use religious sounding phrases all the time, “I love Jesus Christ. Do you love Christ? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal saviour? Do you love Him?” ...and talking about loving Jesus Christ and so forth and they think they love God, they think they love Jesus Christ. Don't talk about the Sabbath with them because they don't like it. Don't talk about the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Sabbath because you'll quickly find out how much they love Christ and love God. So it shows they don't understand; it shows every one of us, if we can understand and learn from it, that we as human beings have *never loved Christ!* That's a *tough* thing for people in the South, in the Bible belt, to come to and acknowledge in their lives so often. They have to come to a point in time where they can acknowledge they have *never* loved God and they have *never* loved Jesus Christ. Oh, they have loved Christmas and Easter and the trinity and they've loved Sunday services and all the things that go with it. They have loved their religion; but when it comes to the truth, when it comes to the Passover, Unleavened Bread, the Holy Days... they don't love it! They don't know that's the mind of God. That comes from God. It reveals the love God has for mankind of a plan of salvation over 7,100 years – to eventually come into His Family. Tell people they're not going to heaven. They get upset with you because they *know* some of their loved ones are up there looking down on them. And they can't help it. They don't understand. But the bottom line is they *definitely* do not love God and they *definitely* do not love Jesus Christ.

**We love Him because He first loved us**. He has to call us. We learn that. You learn that God first began to call you. You have members of your family that He didn't call; because you tried to share this with them and you found out they don't love what you love. They get upset about it because they don't love it so much. Says ‘the carnal mind is *enmity*,’ that means an enemy, ‘to God; is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.’<sup>2</sup> Amazing! Whew! **If any man say, I love God, and hate his brother**, and that word means, as we've talked about in different sermons, ‘refuse to love’. Showing a comparison here. **If any man say, I love God, and love less his brother**, which is what it's about on a plane that we understand we should love God first obviously here. There are some words without context that are just tough unless you know the spirit of it, that are hard to translate into other languages. The Bible is obviously it; the books that I've written – people have found out when they go in and try to put it into a different language you can't just go in and translate it word for word. You've got to go by the thought, the spiritual intent of a phrase or a sentence of what's being said. You've got to understand the spirit of it so you can speak back, (skipped to speaking in languages), give back in that language the thought. What is the thought and the intent of what's being said; not word for word because it can mean totally different things in other languages.

**If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother he is a liar**: refuses to love his brother, fails to love his brother – this is more the thrust of what's being said here. “I love God...” and yet there's someone we don't along with. There's someone else in the Body that we have problems with, we have difficulties with... **If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother/refuses to love his brother**, something is there, some refusal to forgive, whatever it might be... **he is a liar**: I love God's word and how He says things. He doesn't beat around the bush. You know where He stands. We know where God stands. We know where Christ stands. We know what the word of God says. And its plainly spoken... that's why I love the

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:7

title that Mr. Armstrong gave to the magazine that went out to the world for decades, 'THE PLAIN TRUTH' and some in the Church, some that were over different departments, some of the evangelists and different ones – they wanted to change some of the wording and images that was used in 'The Plain Truth' magazine so it'd be more appealing to the Protestant world. "Let's use some of their terms that they use in their churches so that maybe the truth will get through to them easier. Let's talk a little bit on their level." Think: how dumb is that one? Because when a person's drawn to the truth it's plain and they see it. If you use Protestant terms, you know what that does? It keeps the mind clouded and confused and they don't see as clearly what is true. There was a power that was working there long, long ago in the Church; always has been through time.

**If a man say, I love God, and refuses to love his brother, he is a liar: and he who loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?** God is saying, "Just within the environment of the fellowship of the Church of God; how on earth can there ever be a conflict? How on EARTH can we ever have conflict?" ...and yet we all have conflict, we have battles to fight there because we have our human nature to fight. There's nothing that's not happened to others that doesn't happen to us...and that happens to us. We have the same human nature. And so God just asks a basic question here through John... **How can we say we love God and yet we refuse to love our brother whom we have seen?** We haven't seen God.

**And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God loves his brother also.** So God says, "If you love Me, you better love your brother also, not refuse to love, otherwise it's hypocrisy, it's a lie."

**I John 5:1 - Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah is born/begotten of God:** if we understand what all that means. If we understand, as an example, Passover and when Passover is to be kept and all the truths and everything that Jesus Christ fulfilled – which you can't understand unless you're in the Body of Christ... **Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ/Messiah is begotten of God/born of God; and every one that believes Him that begat believes Him also that's begotten of Him.** It's just telling us that if we believe certain things about God and what He's doing in and through Jesus Christ and the life that He has and what was given to Him as the Son of God; we understand within the Church if someone's begotten of God... Do we love them? How can we help but love them? If they're begotten of God, how can we but love them? That's why it goes on to say here...

**By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.** So it just goes on and on here again about relationships and about loving one another and how we love each other. So how can we help but love someone else who is begotten of God? And yet we all fail in it. There's not a person here that hasn't failed in that. And if you don't think that way then that's when it goes back to the verse we read earlier about 'he who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall,' because there's something we're not seeing there spiritually on a spiritual plane. It's a battle, something you have to fight and refine and become stronger in your relationship with God.

So going back here to **I Corinthians 10:16 - I speak as to wise men, judge you what I say: The cup of blessing which we bless,** again, talking about the special fellowship we have with the blood of Christ and what He went through and what He sacrificed in His life for us and His blood spilling out so we can have this special relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. But also here, when we talk about **The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the Body of Christ?** The suffering He went through in how He was broken in His life through the physical things He suffered. It's to teach us something on a spiritual plane.

**Verse 17 - For we being many are one bread, 'we being many are one bread', and one Body:** we *are* the Body of Christ. The Church of God is the Body of Christ. We're many, we compose, we make up an entire Body. That's why He died – to give us that Body. ...**for we are all partakers of that one bread.** Isn't it an amazing thing here how that we receive, like in the Sabbath service, or I think of the Feast of Tabernacles especially, when there's a longer period of time and day by day by day we're out of the world, we're away from the world and we're able to spend more time with each other. There's a limited amount of time you can spend together in many cases on the Sabbath, depending on the amount of travel and so forth but when you're with someone in the same area for 8 days, 9 days... it's unique. So there is that which we receive every day that God gives us in a fellowship with Him because of His inspiration and the sermons that are prepared for us that He gives us and nurtures us and we have this unique fellowship with Him through the sermons we receive. And then we have that unique fellowship of being away from the world and that peace of mind and that uniqueness of time we're experiencing in prayers that we have with God that are more meaningful. And then we have a unique fellowship with each other. We're able to share in some of those things and not just a physical relationship, but there are times because of the inspiration we receiving, that we speak about different things we're hearing and learning and we share a little bit of that as well as just getting to know each other, getting to understand each other, understanding that we're all unique and we come from different backgrounds; so we learn to have mercy on each other as much as God has had mercy on each one of us. And God knows our backgrounds and none of them were pretty, none of them were 'great'. Human beings and the life we have is not great. It's without God. And then when God calls us all of a sudden our minds and our lives begin to change. And so sometimes as we learn from each other we come to understand each other better, different things that are unique to each one of us, weaknesses or faults we have...and we learn to love each other for the potential, for what is there, for what God is giving and the attitude of mind of a desire to be together, of a desire to share, of a desire to love each other, of a desire to be forgiving. And this is a unique experience we have in the Church of God that others in the world haven't ever experienced – because God's in this, God's spirit is in this fellowship and it's awesome! It's something you can't explain; it's something you live by experience and you grow stronger in it.

And so that's what it's talking about here; a unique fellowship that God wants us to have in the Body, in the Church; of how we think toward each other, of how we feel about each other. I've said it many a time...There's not a one of you that I don't love. Some of you I don't know very well, but it doesn't take very long in talking to you – I know you're God's. I know God has called you for a purpose, to be moulded and fashioned, to be changed. No prejudices, no putting into a little box anywhere...just acceptance as we do of one another – with *eager* anticipation, I might add, because we love to be able to see each other. We love to have, like this today, of a group of people that are able to come together from different backgrounds and different places and the struggles that people go through in order to accomplish that and to do that. And then that sharing that you have with one another in all of this in the Church at this time. What a unique thing to share at the end of the age, to realize what we live through right now and to think we're in a time called 'the tribulation' and yet we're able to meet here in peace today. And yet we see the world being shaken fiercely so.

I'll tell you what, I was thinking on the drive here today because we were talking about some of the things happening in some of the news I read today and different things happening in the world...and I thought about some of the things written in the book and about the Thunders and so forth and how that as the storm get's closer and closer the Thundering just get's greater and greater... but it's like the world's deaf to it because it's coming in slowly. And what happens? You just get used to it, you get accustomed to it. And they don't understand what's happening all around them; but I am at a point in time where I feel like the Thunders are right here because the storm is all over. It's everywhere now.



There were times when there was one here and one over there, but now it's like we're in the storm in a very powerful way and it's getting ready to explode very powerfully on this earth. We don't have much time. I hope we're able to have this Feast of Tabernacles and another one next year – selfishly so. What a blessing that would be if we were able to do that! That's why I've thrown it out there... is it possible? Mathematically, it is possible. I hope in some ways it doesn't happen that way and in other ways I hope it does. I'm conflicted.

But I love being able to have this still, as the world has to learn the lesson of humility in a very powerful way. They're about ready to lose everything. What do you do? I hate to get into some sermons because I know they're coming... What do you do in Germany? What do you do in France? What do you do with the euro? You can't get out. Some have threatened to, *big words*, “We're going to LEAVE the union! We're going to drop the euro!” Riiiiight... and how are you going to do that one? How are you going to go back to the franc, or the mark, or whatever it is...how are you going to pull that one off? They can't...and they know it. I am dumbfounded right now with what we're seeing in the world. Spain has now lost their 'AAA credit rating', and it's just going to be a continuing domino effect. And of course the United States just loves to blame Europe now; and if we can't blame Europe we're going to blame China. It's the Chinese! That is really a dumb one there! The Chinese?! Because they're not controlling their currency as well... And I think of how much they have of ours? It's an insane world we live in, but it's all coming together here and very rapidly so...in every area, of every facet, of everything that's going on out there. It's awesome, it really is!

Because of where we are in time, yes, we get to share that. What an awesome thing! Can't share it with others. You *wish you could* share it with your family, you wish you could tell them; but you know you can't until they're able to have great evidence of things around them just shaking the tar out of them and humbling them. And that sharpens the hearing. And people are going to be sharpened at a point in time where they're going to be sharpened in their hearing; where they will listen, where they will want to listen. They're going to want to know what's going on. “Why is this happening?” And what you have is the only thing that is the *plain truth*, the simple, sound, plain truth – and it's powerful. The very thing that's forcing 10 nations to finally come together and then regret that they ever did and what they did. That's what it says. They finally are forced...feel like they're forced into doing something. They do it and then they regret it. Iron and clay...loosely mixed together. We live in a most awesome time just to watch some of this stuff taking place around us, we truly do.

And we have a unique fellowship in all this, in the Church, by the truth, by being called, by that which God is doing at this specific moment in time – we're able to share in these things. There's never been an age or a time like this. This is unique in all time, just as Philadelphia was unique in their time. It was a marvellous time – Mr. Armstrong... think of the time he lived in and what he saw develop. He talks about in his autobiography of things he saw, differences in technology, differences in communication, leading all up to *this time*. Putting things back in order, restoring truth to the Church, and seeing the changes in technology that made so many things possible. Mr. Armstrong *saw* these things that made what his job become possible – to do what he was able to do. He knew that! He lived through it. Communication, travel... and now... I think about when he's resurrected and he sees what I had available to me. He'll probably have to control himself not to chew me out, because he had a zeal and a drive that I don't have in the same way. I have a zeal and a drive but wow, that guy was highly motivated...and God stirred that spirit up within him. He was a particular man chosen for the job to do what he had to do in his age. And I think of what he did and some of the things he's written about and if he saw that you can write a book on a computer and you can format it on your own; you can do it all yourself and you can get it published... how easy it all is. He had entire *departments* that had to help in

doing these things because the technology wasn't there. And here today you can bring it all together on a computer. What an awesome thing, the changes in the age we live in.

So we're able to share in all these things that are unique to us. Everything we have right now we're able to share in and we have a very unique fellowship that binds us together that you can't explain to others and you can't give to others. I hope we treasure that. I hope you're growing and you're treasuring the fellowship you have with one another...in your immediate family within the Church and within those that are close to you within the Church and those who are far away within the Church and wherever. It's important that we be close together in whatever means we have with each other...with what is allowed. Some things aren't good though, like Facebook... anyway, another story.

So it says, **For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.** The bread of life that comes from God through Jesus Christ to us; we're able to eat of it, and we're able to have it as well in a fellowship that is unique to us.

**Verse 18 – Now look at Israel after the flesh...** He goes through talking about some of the offerings, some of the things they did when they partook of the altar that was unique to Israel. Then he talks about that which the Gentiles do and that their fellowship is with demons. He explains that Israel was able to have a unique fellowship and that which they were able to partake of of the altar and then he explains some of those things on a spiritual plane for the Church.

**I Corinthians 10:24** – So again, he dealt with them on some very physical things concerning the world in which they lived in and teaching them on a very basic plane about the Israelites and so forth and what happened to them and to the Gentiles. It gets into a point in time where he begins to get into some specific matters having to do with the Church at Corinth. These are the conclusions that he builds up to.

**Verse 24 – Let no man seek his own,** and it has to do with 'interests'; **seek his own interests;** especially when it's talking about relationships, because that's more the context of what's being discussed here – fellowship. That's what he's talking about, fellowship in the Body of Christ, fellowship that we're able to have with one another and he's saying, be careful now, don't be selfish and seeking only your *own* interests. That's what it means here when he uses the word 'own', 'your own', 'seek his own'; has to do with interests; being selfishly motivated above and beyond that of thinking about others and caring for others.

**...but every man another's,** in other words, if we think about others interests, in a giving way. I think of the example I gave before the Feast last year about individuals and sometimes we're all different and if someone is by themselves – don't let anyone be by themselves in the Body. Try to go around and fellowship, try to go around and bring people into the fellowship and talk to them and be there for them and don't just think about your own fellowship, in other words. See, that's what we're talking about. We're talking about thinking of others, bring others into it as well; and then go on to another. Don't just be selfish and be around someone that you're easily able to chum with or be with. Sometimes the Feast of Tabernacles in the past became that way. It was like a vacation, just their own family, a selfish vacation for a family. They'd go off and do their own things – Disneyland... and it's not wrong to go to Disneyland; but if it's just selfish reasons – What about others in the Church? How about taking some others, how about organizing something with a few others. And that's what it's talking about; and not just always those that are the closest to you, those that you get along with the best. Spread out! Consider the Body. It's what it's talking about here. Don't just seek your own interests, because if it's with those that you're only interested in, and only interested in getting to know better ... What about others in the body? Are we not equally as interested, or should we not grow in that? And so that's what

he's telling them – branch out, think greater, think about the entire Body. And that's what it's talking about here and how we think and what we do and how we do it.

**But every man another's**, in other words, it says *wealth* here, but it's that same...it's in italics and it's not even in the Greek language; but it's an interest in – it's about relationships here. So often it's about what we want out of a relationship and not what we're willing to *give* in a relationship and fellowship. That's what it's talking about – fellowship.

**Verse 32 – Don't give offence**, in other words don't do something that will offend; be careful of what you say and how you say it. Sometimes things just blurt out of people's mouths, not thinking about the sensitivities maybe of what someone's being called out of or their family situation or something that's unique to them or something you know about and sometimes people don't think about those things – they just let things blurt out and... no, we want to think about *them*, their sensitivities. We don't want to do something that might be offensive to someone, something that might hurt someone by something we say – whatever that might be. So don't give offence. This is even more broadening for what he gives here, but he says, **neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God**: so we shouldn't be that way to anyone around us. We should be careful of what we say, that we're not going to hurt someone; at work, the home or where ever it is – that you don't do something and say something that's going to hurt their feelings or offend them because of something you know about them or whatever it might be. It doesn't really matter; it's just a matter of being sensitive to other people, to their needs, not just to your own; not seeking your own interests but the interests of others. What's a matter of giving and helping them? How can you? What can you say? What can you guard against saying that might hurt? And especially here it says, **nor to the Church of God: Even as I please**; and this means seeking to please, to be pleasing. We should be seeking to be pleasing to others as a whole in the world around us and people you come into contact with in a store and so forth.

**Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit**, in other words, not seeking my own benefit or my own interest. So Paul is saying this is what we should do; **but that of many, that they may be saved**. So even with the truth, with his way of life, and what he was teaching and so forth, and what his commission was especially; to understand how he was working and going into the Gentile world and dealing with them and what his job was and the gospel going out and speaking about the things of Christ and the Church of God and so forth that was unique to that age. See, by the time Mr. Armstrong came along the focus was *totally different* from Peter, Paul and the early apostles. By that time the name was all over but it was perverted and distorted and it was a matter of cleaning things up and leading people to the truth of those things.

**I Corinthians 12:1** - the same flow here, says **Now concerning spiritual**, and the word *gifts*, there is not even in the Greek language but it's in the context here of some things. So it's really talking about that which is spiritual that comes from God, that indeed it is a gift. **Brethren, I would not have you ignorant**.

**Verse 4 - Now there are differences of gifts**, and this is not the word 'gifts' as we have discussed, but a specific word having to do with 'grace given to us'. It's unique. There are certain things that are used that, as I mentioned earlier, that are gifts and even there it was in the context of God's spirit; what we have that's given through Jesus Christ and so forth. This one here is just a little bit different and it's used in a few places here. But it's a word that is specifically having to do with 'grace that's given to us as favour undeserved, as forgiveness that's undeserved, as patience extended to us undeserved' – going on and on – 'God's love that's undeserved', and so again here, **Now there are differences of gifts**, things that you receive from God that you can give to others as well because the gifts that God gives to us,

what God gives to us is intended that it be given to others as well, not just something we selfishly receive. But it's the same spirit. That's what he's saying. There are differences here, there are different needs, there are different occasions – even how God's spirit is used. There's a time for everything, like in Ecclesiastes (3:1-8); there's a time to be merciful, and there's a time not to give mercy. We have to ask God for help to do those things wisely. There's a time to be patient; there's a time to not be patient. But there can be if it's a matter of doing something quickly. There are different times for doing various things here that God gives and He gives His help of His spirit in order to address those things because of a problem or a difficulty or a circumstance here where you need help; it's where you need the help of God's spirit in order to do it, in order to live it. There are times to forgive where you need God's help; to put something away, to realize you don't have the right to hold something against someone else; instead you hope and pray, especially for someone in the Church, to give them every benefit, that you hope they come to repentance, that you pray for them because you see something that's hurting them. If something has been said directly to you, that you give them time.

We must be patient with each other and we must give time to one another. It's not our job to go around and correct everything that we see, that we think needs to be correcting; not even in the Church of God. Give people time for growth. We all belong to God. We all belong to Christ, we're His servants...every one of us; and God gives us time to grow, to change and you may know something of a brother... You don't have to go and correct every little facet of their life. Or a sister... it's not our job to tweak everyone's life. If we could see our self clearly in the mirror we have too much to tweak in ourselves. And that's what God wants us to focus upon.

**And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord;** there are different ways that things are administered. I think back to the time of Mr. Armstrong. I think back to the time of the apostles and so forth and the way things had to be administered in a different manner. **And there are differences of operations,** because of different times perhaps, or different things that God is doing in the Church even. I think of differences of operation we have now because of all the elders that God has added and why; and things we're being trained for and prepared for – because there's a need, there's a certain need that's going to be a difference...something different than what has ever really happened; and God is preparing us for some of those things. **Differences of operations;** that's why we have to change as God shows us there's a need to do something differently. We must change to be able to do that, to accomplish it. So we can't go by a pattern of something in the past because there's no pattern exactly like it. So there are differences in operations and the way God performs or does things at different times because of the need – that are unique and specific. **And there are differences of operations but it is the same God who works all in all.** That's what we look to, we look to God to lead, guide, direct, inspire us – each one of us in our relationships with one another; whether it be in the administration in the Church, the ministry to the Church, or things we do amongst ourselves in relationships – period.

**Verse 7 - But the manifestation/the revealing of the spirit is given to everyone to profit withal.** We're all to profit, that's why God gives us His spirit in different ways to us, because of a fellowship and because of the Body and how we work together and so forth. **For to one is given a spirit of the word or of wisdom;** receiving of the giving of the benefit to others, for the purpose of that. I mention this at times... a good way of knowing sometimes out here in the world of when to speak and when not to speak to someone is if someone asks a question. Sometimes they may ask a question because they know you're a little different or something about the Sabbath they know of and they ask you a question about it. And human nature is one of wanting to unload the whole truckload. The reality is we should answer that question; and if it fuels another one – fine. You can know through experience in time when someone is... there's something else going on up here where they're being drawn or not. And if they're

not being drawn then there's no point of pushing anything, of giving more. And that's something we learn through time. But God is training us in that, in the Body; I've talked to different ones and people are learning that more and more...new people. That's good, because that's going to come in very valuable later on; some of it to such great value as to your protection. Not all people who ask questions have good motives in mind, nor really want to know the truth; but want to find out something to use against you. So God says we're to be 'as wise as serpents and harmless as doves.' And so we learn through time what that means, because we're going into a different time period, a different age of things that are going to take place in the world around us and so we have to be careful how we think, how we talk, what we do.

**And to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit;** and so the point being is – in everything you do you should always look to God. When you come into a fellowship like this I hope we're learning to pray that in your fellowship God bless you and inspire you in things you talk about and things you say to others – that you guard your lips not to offend someone or say something that would hurt or be offensive; that we're able to do those things that would be moving and inspiring to one another, that we be able to enjoy one another's fellowship in a greater way and to see each other as the Family we are. Ask God to bless you in the things you speak. There are things I pray about when I'm being asked questions. On the way here today I asked God for some help at different times because I want what God is going to give, not what I'm going to give. I don't want to give what I would normally give, what I would give by my human nature. I want to look to God and ask God for help and inspiration to be able to speak the right words, to be able to say the right kinds of things. And that's the way we should all be toward one another in everything we do. That's what it's talking about here and that has to do with the gifts of God's spirit because we ask, because we seek, because we desire for the right reasons, especially in a fellowship within the Body – to give to the Body because we're not just wanting to focus on ourselves and our interest, but the interests of others because we're thinking about others and their needs. And you don't know others' needs but God does. That's an awesome thing! You don't know others' needs, but God always does and He gives help.

**...to another the working of miracles.** See, people read this one here and think... "Oh, people in the Church are going to be doing miracles or healings..." and some of the stuff it talks about here. It's just like the word before here...

**...to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit;** no, it's the gifts *for* healing. It's the way you look at... it's understanding what it's saying here, what is being given; and if we understand what healing is all about – it's about the mind first and foremost. It's not about *physical* things. If God gives healing to someone it's because God has granted it. I've seen all kinds of things in God's Church. I've seen immediate healings of some awesome things. I've seen things that have happened over a few days time. And you know what? In every one of those situations people have learned through them. I've seen things where God never intervenes at all because that's what's best. God does the healing when He chooses to. It's not any human being. In the Church we just do what we're supposed to do and whether God grants a specific thing at a certain time – that's another matter. But so often in some of these things here, like **the gift of healing by the same spirit;** if you're blessed to help someone by what you say, that helps them in their life – not even knowing sometimes. There are things... I don't even want to get into it, I don't have time here; but I've seen this within the Church of God of things that people haven't even known sometimes what they have done or said that has encouraged someone else because someone else has come to me and told me, "You know, so and so told me this, what happened to them, and that helped me to deal with my problem. It helped me to see something I hadn't seen before in myself..." ...or in a certain circumstance, or relationship... See, if God's spirit is working within

the Church it's for the purpose of all of us benefiting and He gives us help at different times. Sometimes we don't even know it, of something that's helped someone else. The only time you're ever going to know it is if someone else has said something...many things that go unspoken... and people learn from it because God's doing it – the self, the same... all **the same spirit... by the same spirit**. We're not to look to ourselves as having something greater than someone else. It's just that we yield ourselves to God, and the more that God can do in our lives because we yield ourselves to Him, the more that God will do in the Body; and it's a beautiful thing, it's a fellowship that is powerful.

**...To another the working of miracles;** in other words, things that God has done in one's life, intervention for the purpose of encouraging someone else, things that have happened to people, stories that have been told in the Church of God. I think of different ones. I think of one time close to where we now live – a tornado that came through the Cincinnati area; came through the Cincinnati airport, lifted up a jet engine and threw it – huge jet engine sitting out there in a neighbourhood; in someone's yard. ...Tall as I am, ripped it off of a plane; different things that were thrown all over the place. Tornado came right through the airport area, came right down to the back yard... One fellow with family in the Church, his father was a deacon, his mother was a deaconess I believe in the Church – servants in the Church for many, many year... it came so fast. He knew it was a bad storm but he just got out of his car from coming home from work and he didn't have time to get in the house and so he got on the one side of the house that happened to be the side blocking the strongest of winds and he knelt down on his hands and his knees. And the mud, and everything that was so powerful that came up out of the yard there and things that were being blown on – you could see the imprint of him on the side of the house and he stayed there. It came right down to their house, I mean their back yard, destroyed the house behind – flattened it – moved around just in a clump of trees on the other side of their house – went through there. I mean it made a square. Went around them, came down around their house, went right around in a square form here to the other side of the street and wiped out the other house.

Matter of fact, kind of a funny story with that one there – there was a guy on the toilet and it took him with the toilet out in the yard. He lived; but he was on the toilet and it took him and the toilet and threw it out in the back yard. Humbling occasion. But anyway...awesome things that have happened – *miracles* of things where God has intervened! And that story... I'll never forget it. I could sit up and tell you story after story like that. Miracles that God has done in other people's lives. He's not talking about giving someone the gift of miracles – that they're going to go out and perform miracles! But that's sometimes how human nature takes it. I've seen people in the Church, and ministers and different ones give sermons like that – like these are the gifts you should desire to have in your life. Be careful...some things that happen to you as an example, for encouragement – they're not fun things to go through.

I could tell you other stories about car wrecks, things that have happened that are awesome that God has intervened. I think of that same family. I think of the *same* family, they had a car wreck, the husband and wife (the deacon and deaconess there), they had a car wreck and she was messed up badly. She was cut all over her body, her face, everything...she was a mess; and traffic was starting to stop and some guy got out and came up and started working over her as though he knew exactly what to do, like he was a medic of some sort, started working on her and by the time the the ambulance had come this guy was gone; and the people with the ambulance looked at her and said, "Who did this?" And they saw things. They said, "The work... it's like you had to have a plastic surgeon work on you to do what was done." It was so fine and so minute and so detailed; and the person was gone. Well, I have no doubt of who it was that came by there and helped her at a time of need; and it inspired the Church because they hear the story of something that took place. A miracle that was done through them to benefit the Church, to give encouragement. And again, I think of these things over and over again.

I think of things that have happened when people...whew! Especially driving automobiles and things that have happened where God intervened – things that are impossible to have happened and yet they happened, they take place where people survive and not a scratch is there; and there's no answer but that God intervened. And these stories have flown through the Church of God over the decades that I've been in the Church, of people that I've known, that they've happened to. Incredible things. That which I saw with my own eyes of the guys imprint on the side of the house due to a tornado that went by; because we lived there at the time in that area.

So this is what it's talking about – there are many gifts that God has given to benefit the Church, and many different ways through the power of His spirit but it is still the self-same spirit as it's talking about here. This is what's being discussed; to benefit the Body, to give encouragement and admonition and healing – to the Body, to the Church over and over again. So it's not about something we receive selfishly so to be used by some special gift that *I have over others in the Church*; because that's how it's been used in times past by too many people. And people have been hurt by that because it's a matter of pride then. If something happens in your life that benefits others... it's a matter of being humbled by it, not being filled with pride for it.

So again, it's a matter of a relationship with God here and where we are spiritually in our lives. So again ...to **another the working of miracles; to another prophecy**; inspired speaking. Not every single time that you talk but there are times that you'll be so moved and motivate by things you're discussing, that are happening in the world or in the sermon, or whatever; and yet you don't push those things because they don't happen all the time; but they happen at times in our life and we thank God for it. A special fellowship of something we're able to share with each other. I think of different times when we get with a group of people and we're able to discuss some of these things and I think of some we had over in The Netherlands on the way over here, listening to some of the stories in different people's lives and so forth and inspiring things that have happened that are just a matter of God's spirit because God's spirit did it. One that had me laughing my head off of something that God did with an individual that... well, I don't want to go there, I don't want to... because... anyway. But awesome! To give inspiration to the Church. It can happen by no other way but by God's spirit. And so that's what it's discussing here.

... to **another different kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues**: I think of, even over there, not everyone can understand English over there so Mieke, as an example, Gijs, Willem and different ones over there have worked very hard at getting the book translated into Dutch. That was a hard process, but they learned something through this process and something that God worked with them in and that's being able to translate more quickly something out of English into Dutch with the spirit of it, not just by words, but by the thought and the intent of what's being given there. And so now God is using that in a great way over there to help some of the brethren because when I'm speaking or when something has been given, it can be typed out quickly for some of the brethren there to be able to read on their computer when they're reading it, or whatever, and they're able to receive things in the sermon that they otherwise would have a hard time hearing because they don't understand English as well.

I'll give you another example. I think of Willem and different ones over there in the beginning when we first started, they first started hearing some of the sermons. They couldn't understand me because basically they didn't understand English; and he prayed about it... [fingers snap, snap, snap] and all of a sudden he could hear me, and hear my sermons, knew the words that I was speaking. Amazing! Could listen to other people speaking in English and didn't understand them, but was able to hear that. That's what it's talking about.

So God *gives* different things at different times. For what purpose? Especially that...for the purpose of people to learn; others that can learn on the Sabbath then and so forth; as it talks about here. So God gives those things. It's a matter of His spirit though, and it's inspiring...and to see that when it happens. **But in all these work the selfsame spirit, dividing**, which means in the Greek, 'distributing by measure', that's what that word means, **distributing by measure**; it's by measure... **to every man individually as He will**. And so God blesses us, Jesus Christ... and He gives those things to us in measure to help and edify the Church and to build the Church. It's an awesome thing that we live through.

**Verse 12 – For as the Body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body: so also is Christ.** So again, it's talking about the Church of God, it's talking about the Body of Christ, being in the Body of Christ. **For by one spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentile, whether we be bond or free**; and whether it be a man or a woman, **and all have been all made to drink into one spirit**. Awesome! Beautiful! All about Passover! All about taking of the Passover and understanding what it means to take of and have fellowship as we partake of that cup of wine, or small amount of wine, and eat of that piece of unleavened bread. **For the Body is not one member, but many.**

I don't have time to go through all that is here, but it goes all the way through, talking about different parts of the Body and how we think about each other, how we think about one another within the Body, how we treat one another within the Body and recognize our need for each other in the Body; that we are a spiritual Body. And God shows that in a very powerful way.

I want to go back to a part we skipped earlier. The flow of the books... man divided the books into chapters and so forth, but Paul is going through a flow here about the Passover period, as we started out with chapter 10, and chapter 11 it talks about these things. In **I Corinthians 11:23 - And I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance for Me. And in the same manner also He took the cup, and after He had supped, saying, This is the cup of the new testament in My blood: this do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.** So we do the same thing every Passover period. Paul made it very clear here the Passover service is something we're to have within the Church and it goes on talking about some of these things through here and talks about how we are to examine ourselves before we partake of the Passover, and make *sure* that we're doing things the way God says to do – especially within the Body, within the Church. And so again, those things that are explained here.

**Verse 27 - Wherefore whosoever shall eat of this bread, and drink of this cup of the Lord, in an unworthy manner**, it uses the word **unworthily**, but no one's worthy, it means 'in an unworthy manner' **shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord**. Awesome what it says here; that we have to be so careful about our relationships and how we treat one another, how we think about one another, how we're living life as to whether or not God is, whether or not Christ is really in us and we're really in the Body of Christ. Because if we're sinning and we have sin in our life that we haven't repented of then *we're not in the Body of Christ!* There are *thousands of people who have deceived themselves*, to the time I've been in God's Church, hundreds of them I know personally, who were not in the Body of Christ at certain stages of their life because of sin. Sin puts you out of the Body of Christ and you can only experience *these things we're discussing now*, a right fellowship, God's spirit and power in your life, when you're *in the Body of Christ*. And that means we have to be repenting of sin and indeed examining ourselves.



That's why it says in **Verse 28 – But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.** We have to be careful of taking the Passover, we have to be careful that we are indeed repenting on a regular basis. It's because we want to be *in* the Body of Christ, we know the value, the power. **For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.** The fellowship, the Body of Christ... yes, not understanding and discerning what He did and why He did it, but it's for the purpose of why He did it: it's for His Body, the Church of God, the Body of Christ. And we must value that with all of our being. That's what we have to examine ourselves in, as to whether or not Jesus Christ is living in us because these things are about relationships. **For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** It's not talking about something physical here as much as it is that which is spiritual. Weak – it doesn't mean weak physically. We all, through time, you go through life... there are people who get weak physically by things that have happened in our past; and God lets us experience that. As I get older, I get a little weaker.

As I mentioned last Sabbath, I am so glad I'm not going to live until 120 like that Jewish individual said that he hoped that I could live to 120, that I be so blessed to enjoy life that long. I don't want to! I have *no desire* to! If time were to go on, I don't want to see 100. Now, if I was 99 I might feel different; but you understand what I mean. I'm not that anxious to experience what it's like to get older because I know it's hard. This getting older is not for weaklings as one individual mentioned one time. You have to be strong to get older, strong in here. We get aches and pains, sometimes we lose our minds. Sometimes we don't have a mind and that's a horrible thing to live through. I'd hate to have to live through that or have any of my family have to experience that with me. I'd rather die and be resurrected later on! I don't want them to have to go through the agony of dealing with someone that can't think, or that their mind doesn't work right anymore, that has to be taken care of... those things happen... someone that get's Alzheimer's and isn't is uncontrollable? I've known of people in the Church who've had to deal with some horrible battles in life and those are tough things to live through – they really are.

**...so many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** And I think of what happened to the Church. The whole *Church* fell asleep because it didn't grasp this; the whole *Church* was spewed out of God's mouth because it didn't grasp this. Awesome to understand what we lived through in the Church.

And so jumping on down to chapter 12 you can read through some of those things yourself and again, talking about the Body and how that, as it says in **I Corinthians 12:21 – the eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of you...** and so forth. That's an awesome and a beautiful thing to understand. We need each other. The way God has filled the Body, given to the Body, it's all for a purpose. We're all here for a purpose and by design and *we need each other* in this Body, whether we grasp that or not. God is very concerned then about how we *treat* each other in the Body; how we talk to each other and think about each other within the Body. These things are so important in our spiritual growth and development in our life and so he goes on and talks about some of these things.

He also talks about how God has structured the Church with apostles... are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers or workers of miracles? In other words, do things happen through their lives? No, God does different things in different ones of us in different ways, but we're all in the Body in different things supporting the Body. We all are able to help and support the Body, as it talks about in Ephesians 4 if you read the whole chapter. Go back and read it.

But notice, after discussing all these things; **1 Corinthians 13:1** - so what if we had the ability to speak in *all* different languages the truth of God? **Although I speak with the languages of men and of angels, and don't have agape**, God's love. So you have to be in the Body of Christ to have that because you have to have God's spirit; and you have to be in the Body of Christ in order to receive of God's spirit living in you and continuing in you in order to have that kind of love. You can't have it on the outside of the Body. You can't live God's love outside the Body. That's why it talks about what led into Laodicea eventually was 'because the love of many (agape) waxed cold.' It disappeared because of sin.

And as it says, **If I don't have charity/don't have God's love/agape, I will have become as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.** Maybe just a dainty little noise here or a big, big noise – it's still noise and it doesn't mean a whole lot. **And although I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge;** what an awesome thing, if you had all knowledge. Anyone could ask you about anything in the Bible, written in the Bible and you had all this knowledge there and you're just like the computer and can rattle it right back. I'm asked things at different times and I'm like, "I don't know, I have to go look it up. I have to go study it. I don't remember." We were having a conversation this morning and I couldn't remember where some of the stories were... was it in Genesis, or somewhere else. I had no idea; **and have all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and I don't have charity/agape, I am nothing.** What's the greatest thing that God can do in your life; work through your life...? That's this, it's what it's talking about because of the previous chapter.

**Verse 31 - But desire earnestly the best gifts: and yet I will show you a more excellent way.** It's what He's doing. This is a most excellent way. Its agape, God's love; of how it lives in our life and through us to the benefit of others, how we think, how we treat each other. **And although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned; and don't have agape, it doesn't profit me anything.**

So again, what a powerful thing to understand what it means to be in the Body of Christ, to grasp how important it is that we have each other, that God has given us each other, and to treasure each other. I hope you all grow in that, everywhere, everyone that's listening today. I hope you can ask God to help you to grow in a desire of spirit and mind to treasure each other, to get away from the things where we normally do by human nature to judge each other, to find little faults in one another, to talk about some of those things amongst ourselves and with others because in a perverted way it somehow kind of lifts us up and we're able to look down upon others. That is just a distortion of the human mind. I really hate it. It really is a sickness of the human mind and the human spirit. For human beings to live that way, it's a perverted way of feeling better about ones self. And the reality is, understand that that's not right; understand that that's not of God's spirit. And when God's spirit is there, it's just a matter of this is good, this is God's spirit and God receives the credit, the honour, the glory and we're just thankful to share in it.

How thankful are you to *share in* God? Because the more you yield yourself to God and let God live through you – that's what we're sharing; in God. It's not us, it's not me, it's God. The glory is God's. We as human beings try to take that to ourselves.

So again, ask God for help to learn to value each other more so that we don't say the wrong thing, a hard thing to others or judge one another; even whether it's misjudging or not. We just shouldn't live that way; but to truly embrace each other, to love each other in the Body of Christ as we love God.

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