

Hello brethren! It is the Feast of Tabernacles 2013, and how exciting and how awesome and what a blessing it is to be here again this year. And if we have had the help and the financial ability to do so we have come together in obedience to God at one of the locations where God has chosen to place His name. And as we know, we are commanded to be here, so let's notice that command, brethren.

Turn with me if you will to Leviticus 23. Leviticus 23 and we're going to read verses 33 through 36, and I'm going to be reading this from the New International Version. **Leviticus 23** beginning in **verse 33** under the heading, 'The Festival of Tabernacles' – **The Eternal said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Eternal's Festival of Tabernacles begins and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present food offerings to the Eternal, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the Eternal. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.**

Well, this word 'sacred' that is used in this scripture of the NIV is defined this way: 'Sacred' means 'to set apart by solemn religious ceremony, to be made holy, set apart to religious use, consecrated, not profane or common; as in a sacred place, a sacred assembly, or a sacred service.'

And brethren, that is what we are doing here at the Feast of Tabernacles. We are observing a sacred assembly, a sacred time that is called this Feast of Tabernacles, as we all know.

So let's look at another scripture that gives further details concerning our command to come before God. Please turn with me to Deuteronomy 14...Deuteronomy 14 and we're going to read verses 22 through 26. **Verse 22 of Deuteronomy 14, says, You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed that the field brings forth year by year, and you shall eat before the Eternal your God in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of your corn, of your wine, of your oil, and the firstlings of your herds and your flocks that you may learn to fear the Eternal your God always. And if the way be too long for you so that you are not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from you, which the Eternal your God shall choose to set His name there, when the Eternal your God has blessed you, then shall you turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and you shall go unto the place which the Eternal your God shall choose. And you shall bestow that money for whatsoever your soul,** and the King James says, 'lusts after' – we know it's about what your **soul desires, for oxen, for sheep, for strong... (I'm sorry), for wine, for strong drink, or for whatsoever your soul desires: and you shall eat there before the Eternal your God and you shall rejoice, you and your household.**

Well, brethren, there are two aspects in this set of scriptures right here that we want to take a look at today. Two aspects of this command that are important and vital in our learning, in our growth in this way of life...and the first one is found here, that says, 'we are to learn to fear the Eternal our God', and secondly it says that, 'we are to rejoice'. So these are two commands, brethren, that are given to us during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. And at first glance this may seem a bit contradictory; can we rejoice while in fear? And because there are these two commands that are given in scripture it is showing that we are to *rejoice* in fear. And brethren, this will be the title of the sermon this morning, *Rejoice in Fear*.

So I ask, *who* are we to fear? *How* are we to fear? And how are we to rejoice before our God here at the Feast of Tabernacles? So let's examine this a little more closely this morning.

The purpose of this sermon is to show how fearing the Eternal *allows* us to rejoice before Him at the Feast. To begin this process let's examine the word 'fear' just a little closely, a little more closely.

Turn with me, if you will, to **Proverbs 9...Proverbs 9** and we're going to read **verse 10**. **Verse 10** of **chapter 9** says, **The fear of the Eternal is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**

Let's go now to Deuteronomy 10...Deuteronomy 10; we're going to read verses 12 and 13.

Deuteronomy 10:12 – And now, Israel, what does the Eternal your God require of you, but to fear the Eternal your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Eternal your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul, to keep the commandments of the Eternal and His statutes, which I command you this day for your good? Yes, brethren, these commandments God has given us are *for our good*, and yes, we all know that.

Let's go to **Deuteronomy 5...Deuteronomy 5** and we're going to read **verse 29...5:29** says, **O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever.** So let's *have* that kind of heart, brethren, a heart in us that would fear our Eternal God.

Proverbs, let's go to Proverbs, back to Proverbs 2 and we're going to pick up verses 1 through 5.

Proverbs 2:1 says, **My son, if you will receive My words, and hide My commandments with you; so that you incline your ear unto wisdom and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry after knowledge and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, then...then shall you understand the fear of the Eternal and find the knowledge of God.** So brethren, let's strive here this morning to better understand the fear of the Eternal. Let's strive to grow in our understanding of what it means to fear our God.

The dictionary definition of 'fear' has it this way, it says that, 'fear is a painful emotion or passion excited by the expectation of evil or the apprehension of impending danger. It is apprehension, anxiety, solicitude, alarm, or dread.' But the second definition of fear says this, says, 'to have a reverential awe of, to be solicitous to avoid the displeasure of,' and brethren, we're going to take a little, just a short look at each of these two definitions and each of these two words and how it's used and we're going to see how they both apply to what we are covering here this morning.

So first let's look at this word 'fear' as in 'to be afraid of'. So I ask again, brethren, Who are we to fear or to be afraid of?

Let's turn to Deuteronomy 5. **Deuteronomy 5** and let's begin in verse 22 and we're going to read through verse 28. So, **verse 22** says, **These words the Eternal spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more.** And we'll be reminded that here in Deuteronomy 5 this is where we find the 10 Commandments being given from Mount Sinai. You know, God thundered down from the mountain, He had called them all together to hear His words, and then this is... this is Moses speaking immediately after this account and this is what he is saying. Says, **And He wrote them in two tables of stone and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, when you heard the voice out of the midst of the**

darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire), that you came near unto Me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders; and you said, Behold, the Eternal our God has showed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God does talk with men and he lives. Now, therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Eternal our God anymore than we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire as we have and lived? Go you, it's what they're saying now, "Moses, you go," and hear all that the Eternal our God shall say; and speak you unto us all that the Eternal our God shall speak unto you and we will hear it and we will do it. And the Eternal heard the voice of your words, when you spoke unto me, and the Eternal said to me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto you, they have well said all that they have spoken. Well, yes, brethren, they were in *fear* that day of what they saw, of what they experienced, of that which they had gone through that day. They were truly afraid, brethren, of their God.

Let's turn now to Luke 4.... I'm sorry, Luke 12. Luke 12, we're going to read verses 4 and 5. **Luke 12**, beginning in **verse 4** says, **And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear Him, which after has killed has power to cast into hell; yes, I say unto you, fear Him.** So yes, brethren, we certainly should *fear* to go against our God, we should *fear* to cut ourselves off from the flow of God's spirit within us. We should *fear* to disobey our Creator, because He has the power of life and death.

So now let's take a look at the second definition of fear, and that definition is 'to have a reverential awe of, to be solicitous, to avoid the displeasure of.' Let's turn to Deuteronomy 14... actually, you don't have to turn there, I'm just going to read this scripture and I want to read it in the New International Version. **Deuteronomy 14:23**, just going to pick this one scripture up that says, **Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and of your flocks in the presence of the Eternal your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His name, so that you may learn to revere the Eternal your God always.** So as a matter of reverence, brethren, and this definition of...the definition for 'revere' is 'to show devoted deferential honour to, or to regard, of worthy of great honour'. And brethren, I know that we all do, we all see our God as worthy of great honour, we recognize that our God is the Creator of all things and we desire to have a devoted deferential honour to our God and to pay attention to all that He says.

Let's go to Deuteronomy 4...Deuteronomy 4 and we're going to read verses 1 through 10. And again, I'm going to be reading this in the New International Version. **Deuteronomy 4:1** says, **Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you.** And brethren, we know that we are the Israel of God, and so when we see these kinds of addresses, if you will, in the Old Testament, when it is addressed to Israel we can think about the Church and think that we are the Israel of God and we should pay close attention to what is being said here. And he is about to teach them, so if we take that, if we desire to have understanding and grow in wisdom, we will accept this as teaching to us as well. It says, **Hear, now Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Eternal, the God of your fathers, is giving you.** And brethren, we know, we stand right here at the edge of time, we stand at a precipice looking over to a new age. We stand at the time, brethren, that looks into that age which the Feast of Tabernacles represents and pictures, that new millennial age under the rulership of our God through Jesus Christ and the 144,000. So yes, brethren, this truly does apply to us.

Says ...**follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Eternal, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Eternal your God that I give you. You saw with your own eyes what the Eternal did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, but all of you who held fast to the Eternal your God are still alive today.** And brethren, we are here because we are alive today spiritually. There are some who did not continue to follow and they are not with us now. But thankfully God has continued to work with each one of us and we are able to be alive today and to be here at this Feast of Tabernacles.

Continuing on in **verse 5** it says, **See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Eternal my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it.** And we think, "Millennium," brethren.

Verse 6 - Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Eternal our God is near us whenever we pray to Him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. And brethren, how many times have we heard Ron and the evangelists say, "*Remember your calling!*" How many times have we gone back and looked at the history of the Church, particularly over the last three eras of the Church, and we've picked up a lot of history to *remind* us of what the Church has been through, what God has brought us through, of how we have come to where we are today. We are certainly to remember these things.

Going on, says, **Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the Eternal your God at Horeb, when He said to me, "Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."** So brethren, do we believe that these laws are truly *righteous* decrees, that they are from a *righteous* and Almighty God who has our best interest at heart, who loves us and is leading us in a way that brings about good things. And brethren, I know that we do and I know that that's why we're here, these are just reminders of these things.

Let's go now to Psalm 33. Psalm 33 and we're going to read verse 8. **Psalm 33:8** says, **Let all the earth fear the Eternal; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.** And so, brethren, that is what we are to do, and especially here at the Feast of Tabernacles, we stand in awe of our Creator.

So now, brethren, with this little bit of better understanding of this term for 'fear' let's go back to Deuteronomy 14 and we're going to look at this command to rejoice, *with* that understanding of the fear of the Eternal in mind, and we are going to see *how* we rejoice in fear.

Deuteronomy 14 and verse 22...we'll pick up here in **verse 22**. Says, **You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed that the field brings forth year by year.** And I know that Ron has gone over this a number of times and has explained that this is talking about tithing in general. This whole section here in Deuteronomy 14 is about tithing, and this specifically in verse 22 is about 1st Tithe, and we all understand that, but I'm going to read from the Church website on the FAQ under the heading of 'Tithing' or '1st Tithe' and it states this:

"A tithe is that which involves a person's obedience to God in giving God His tithe (10 percent) of income. This is a tithe of one's net income (after taxes). Tithing is not required for those who are [either] full-time students, receiving government assistance, receiving insurance disability, receiving unemployment, etc.

Taxes are not in our control, but belong to the government to which we are all subject. We have no power over that portion of our income that is taken as taxes, and Jesus Christ said to give to Caesar what is Caesar's. We are responsible for what is under our control and management. God's tithes are sent to God's true Church."

And brethren, as we know, this is how God funds the work of His ministry and of His Church. Now, in ancient times, in Ancient Israel, this tithing system was given to provide for the Levitical priesthood because they had no inheritance in the land; God didn't divide up the land... or *when* He divided up the land He did not give them a portion of land. God said, "I am your inheritance," and then He set up the tithing system that all the other tribes gave 10% to the Levites for the work of doing the work of the service of the temple.

So anyway, and we know that this is obviously a matter of our relationship with God. Do we *fear* God? Do we stand in *awe* of our God who gives us everything, who *owns* everything, has provided everything? And He simply asks that we give Him 10% in return. It belongs to Him and how we manage it is very important, brethren. Are we going to obey God in this matter?

So let's go on in verse 23...**verse 23 of Deuteronomy 14 says, and you shall eat before the Eternal your God;** now, here is a tithe, here is a section that talks about something that we are able to eat before or in the presence of our God, **in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of your corn, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; that you may learn to fear the Eternal your God.** And as we know, brethren, this is talking about a 2nd Tithe, because as I just mentioned *this* is a tithe that we can eat of in the place that God has chosen to place His name there.

And it's interesting that this word for 'before' is a word that means 'to in the presence of', so we know, brethren, that when we are here at the Feast that we do all that we do in the presence of our God.

Again, I'd also like to read from the Church website under the Topic's section of 'Tithing, 2nd Explained' here, it says;

"The second tithe is an additional tithe of one's net income and is saved by the individual each year for use in joyously observing God's Holy Days."

And that's what we're doing here, brethren, joyously observing one of God's seven annual Holy Days.

"Instruction concerning this tithe is found in Deuteronomy 14:22-26. This 2nd tithe is used primarily to keep the Feast of Tabernacles which is outlined in Leviticus 23, but it can also be used to come together in fellowship during the Passover season as well as during Pentecost.

The Feast of Tabernacles is an annual festival during which the whole church has typically come together in specific, appointed locations where large numbers of members have been able to worship and rejoice before God during this period of time.

In the Feast of 2008, primarily due to the growth of the Church by nearly 300% over the preceding eight months, the traditional observation was changed. Our inability to adequately organize a large Feast observance, as we had traditionally done in the past, led to the need to improvise while keeping obedience to God as our first objective. Many new people did not have the financial ability to attend a larger organized Feast due to the fact that they, as new members shortly prior to the feast, had not kept 2nd tithe for the entire previous year. Therefore, the Feast was organized in a new manner. Half of the Feast was observed in the homes of members and the other half in regional areas located closer to members than was traditionally done in the past. The reduced travel, with reduced funds, enabled people to better stretch their available finances to observe part of the Feast with other members.

During half of the Feast, members and families remained in their own areas. They observed the Feast in a similar manner as they might observe the weekly Sabbath from their homes if they were unable to gather with a local congregation on the Sabbath. In this manner, they were able to listen to the sermons given on each day of the Feast just as they would be able to listen on a weekly Sabbath.

During the other half of the Feast, most members were able to come together in fellowship with others in regional areas located closer to them (rather than larger, more distant locations as in the past). This overall change in the traditional observation of the Feast enabled a larger number to come together to rejoice before God in the Feast of Tabernacles, although in scattered locations.

This change also enabled many long time members to share larger portions of their normal 2nd tithe with others whom God is calling into the millennial reign of Jesus Christ that is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles itself. For three months after the Feast of 2008, all members sent in a portion of their 2nd tithe in order to continue helping in the calling of new people into the new millennial period that is now coming.

Beginning in February of 2009, all members have been asked to stop sending in any portion of their 2nd tithe in order to keep it for the observance of any of God's annual holy days that some or most may yet have the ability to observe."

And here we are again, brethren, in 2013 observing one of those Holy Days.

".... God has not revealed the specific timing or exact location for the actual fulfillment of the destruction that will result from the blowing of the Second, Third and Fourth Trumpets."

And we're still waiting on that, and God has given us further understanding, deepened our understanding of that very subject. And it says...

"How future events affect the ability to observe holy days is not now known, so we will seek to be as wisely prepared as we can be for any eventuality."

Let's go on to...let's go back to **verse 23**, says, **And you shall eat before the Eternal your God in the place which He shall choose to place His name there.** And brethren, as we all know, we understand that the Church of God is the Temple of God, it is the dwelling place of God, it is where He chooses to dwell. So wherever we may be, brethren, whether it's at one of the sponsored locations or whether we are at home by ourselves because we were unable to travel this year due to age or health or financial reasons or whatever it is, God is in us and we are able to worship Him, to rejoice before Him at the Feast of Tabernacles wherever we are. And we should truly rejoice in that fact, that God is in us. It is *His* holy spirit living and dwelling in us that allows us to be able to understand and to grow in our knowledge and of the wisdom of our God. So we know that God chooses to dwell in each one of us and we can rejoice in that fact alone.

Let's go on now in this verse here; it says **...which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of your corn, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks, that you may learn to fear or to revere, as we've seen, the Eternal your God always.**

Verse 24 – And if the way be too long for you so that you are not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from you which the Eternal your God should choose to set His name there, when the Eternal your God has blessed you. And brethren, when we faithfully keep our 2nd Tithe and do it just as God commands it truly is a blessing to us. What a blessing it is, brethren, to be able to come before the Great God and worship Him and rejoice before Him. And in this way, when we are blessed through our 2nd Tithe, God provides a way for us to rejoice before Him, or in His presence. It is obedience to or the fear of, if you will, of our God that provides or allows us to rejoice before Him here at the Feast of Tabernacles, for that is the intended purpose of our 2nd Tithe.

Let's go on in **verse 25**, says, **Then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand, and you shall go to the place which the Eternal your God shall choose,** and brethren, that is why we are here. Wherever you are, that is why we are here, but we're here at one of those sponsored locations and not off in Las Vegas or Reno, Nevada or London, England, or Rome, or you know, some other exciting destination just simply because we have the extra money and we can listen in on the internet and we can pick up the sermons day by day, which we know is the most important part, but there is great reason why God says to come *together* to rejoice before Him, and so *this* is where we come. So that's why, you know, if we have the health and we have set aside our 2nd Tithe, we have the finances available and we have the ability to do so, then we are to go to one of those sponsored locations and not somewhere else of our own choosing. We are to do things exactly as God has said.

Going on in **verse 26**, says, **And you shall bestow that money for whatsoever your soul desires, for oxen, for sheep, for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever your soul desires: and you shall eat there before the Eternal your God and you shall rejoice, you and your household.** And so, brethren, here...here is the rejoicing. This is where, you know, we get into this aspect of *how* we are to rejoice before our God. We've been speaking of the fear aspect, now we're going to speak a little bit more about the rejoicing aspect.

You know, God has provided some truly wonderful places to place His name, and do we rejoice in that simple fact alone? You know, there are eleven sponsored Feast sites. There is one in Cincinnati, and I know that if you're from this area or from these areas, you may not find them exciting, but for those

that are not from these areas, we can find those as pretty exotic or pretty exciting or very interesting places to go and to see new things and to meet new people, you know, it's exciting. So there is one in Cincinnati, there is one in Hawaii – and who wouldn't want to go there – there is one in New Zealand, one in the UK, in England, one in the Netherlands, I'm not even going to try to pronounce the name of the place where that one is. There is one down in Florida, one up in Oregon, here in California, one in Ontario, Canada, one in Queensland of Australia, and then Missouri. So those are the eleven sponsored locations where God has chosen to place His name, and they are exciting places if you've never been there before.

You know, brethren, we can choose to go to any one of those locations if we are able, if we, you know, have been blessed to have the finances to do so, and that, you know, provides some interesting travel opportunities. I know that the times that I've been able to travel throughout my life, the majority of those opportunities have come because of the Feast, because I have, you know, obeyed God and set aside my 2nd Tithe year by year and have been able to go to one of these locations where God has chosen to place His name.

You know, also at the Feast, brethren, we can try new things. We have a little bit of extra money over the course of that...over these eight days that allows us to go out to eat at some unique and interesting restaurants. We can try something new, some different type of food that we've never had before, or if you like wine you can spend a little extra money on a nicer bottle of wine or try some new kind of wine that you've not done before, hadn't had before. Or if you're a beer drinker and you like different kinds of beers, then, you know, try something new. I know that wherever I am I usually try to, you know, find out what is a local, what is the local beer, or what is maybe something from a microbrewery in that area, just to try something new and different at the Feast. Because this isn't common, this isn't ordinary, what we're doing, brethren; we have come to rejoice before our God and this is an opportunity when we have a little extra money to do some fun and interesting and new things.

So I encourage all of us, brethren, try something new at the Feast if you have that opportunity, instead of just ordering the same old thing you've always had. Find out what is the local flavour and try something along that line, particularly, like, if you're in Hawaii or in England or Australia, or New Zealand or something, try something from that, you know, from that native region. Experience, broaden your horizons, learn something new.

You know, we also have opportunity to try fun things, you know, by golfing or going miniature golfing with a group or going out with a group to drive the little go-carts or play laser-tag or go bowling...or whatever your heart desires, brethren. And of course, we understand that one of the things that we should desire is family. We should desire *relationships*. And being here at the Feast of Tabernacles, obviously allows us the opportunity to spend more time together with brethren, particularly for those who live in scattered areas, in far flung areas that don't have opportunity to meet together with a group each week. The Feast of Tabernacles provides for that, it provides the opportunity to spend extra time with brethren in a concentrated opportunity, a concentrated time over that eight days, nine days, ten days, depending on if you show up early and stay late. But it is opportunity to just sit and fellowship and get to know brethren from different areas and different places...and what a tremendous blessing that is, brethren.

So yes, we are to truly enjoy what God has blessed us with and to rejoice before Him.

How we spend the 2nd Tithe, the money that is God's that He gives to us to manage, it is under our control, it helps us to learn to be good stewards. Now, that's a sermon in itself, brethren, and I'm not going to go into all that, and we're not going to turn to these scriptures, but I'm going to give you a couple of scriptures that you can look up later on this concept of being a good steward. So just jot these down and you can go look them up later. This is **Luke 12:42-48**, and then again in **Luke 16:1-12**, and that is just about stewardship and how we are to be stewards of what God provides for us.

So let's go back to **verse 26...verse 26**, right at the very end of that, the last part of the scripture here, it says, **Whatever your soul desires: you shall eat there before or in the presence of the Eternal your God and you shall rejoice, you and your household**. Again, like I said, it's about family, it's about making this a special time for our families and for those that may be there at the Feast without their physical family. We should remember everyone; it is all inclusive.

You know, I remember as a kid... and of course, many of you who know me know that I've been in the church pretty much all my life; my mother was called into the Church back in the late 60's, and we went to the Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas, pretty much every year throughout my childhood. And, you know, I have grown in my love of the Feast of Tabernacles, my desire to be at the Feast of Tabernacles, and I know that I owe a lot of that to my parents because they did a lot to make the Feast of Tabernacles special. I can remember that from the time I was very young mom and dad would...they would do special things leading up to the Feast that really helped to build our anticipation and that expectation of going to the Feast.

And we always camped every year out at Big Sandy, and I don't know, a week or so before the Feast Dad would bring home a little pop-up camper trailer that we would use and it would sit in the drive-way. And of course we knew it was building towards the Feast and we'd begin to get out the camping equipment and begin packing the camper and getting ready for the Feast, and it was just such an exciting time for all of us. And they, that was something that they chose to do. They chose to make it fun, they chose to make it special for us.

I can also remember as a kid at the Feast being able to put the offering in the basket; that was always exciting for me and it gave me a sense of belonging, of participating and being a part of the group.

So we should make this a very happy, festive, joyous occasion for our entire families, brethren. So let's look for ways to make it special for our families. And then also, brethren, we know that we are to remember others around us, not just be selfish and looking out for our own families, but let's look out for others who may be there, like I said, without their physical families. It still rings very clear in my mind, you know, Ron saying a few years ago and then it's been mentioned pretty much every year, that we are to, you know, says, "Don't let any part of the family not be part of the family!" So let's look for opportunities to invite others to go with us, whether it's out to dinner or out to some activity, to make sure that others are able to enjoy the Feast together with us.

So now, brethren, let's be reminded of the seriousness of doing things exactly as God commands. Turn with me, if you will, to Deuteronomy 12...**Deuteronomy 12**, and were going to begin in **verse 1**. And we're going to read quite a bit of Deuteronomy here, Deuteronomy 12, and we're going to look a little more closely at these scriptures. Says, **These are the statutes and judgments, which you shall observe to do in the land which the Eternal God of your fathers gives you to possess it**, and we know, brethren, that...like I said earlier, we stand at that precipice in time looking over into that new age when we are

going to be blessed to live into the new millennial reign under the rulership of Jesus Christ and the 144,000. So that's the 'land' that we are going over to possess.

And it says in **verse 2 - You shall utterly destroy all the places where in the nations which you shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the high hills, and under every green tree: and you shall overthrow their altars and break their pillars and burn their groves with fire; and you shall cut down the graven images of their gods and destroy the names of them out of that place. You shall not do so unto the Eternal your God.** And how exciting that's going to be, brethren, as we know... like Ron has said, he's really looking forward to destroying some of those ornate buildings in the city centers over in Europe. And you know, every false religion, every false practice, every false way is going to be destroyed and brought to nothing. We're going to come to a time when there is only one way of living, there is only one truth that is going to be allowed to be taught, and that is going to be God's way. How exciting that is going to be!

Verse 5 – But unto the place which the Eternal your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall you seek, and there you shall come: So brethren, we know that even when we get over into that new age we are going to continue to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, we are going to continue to come to the place where God chooses to place His name. So this doesn't stop, brethren, it goes on over, and what an opportunity it's going to be that... or it is, that we have to practice this now. We have a head start, brethren, of learning this way of life, of incorporating this into our very being.

Verse 5, again, But unto the place which the Eternal your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall you seek, and there you shall come. And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, and your tithes, it is talking about our 2nd Tithe, brethren, when we come before Him at the Feast, **and your heave offerings of your hands and your vows, and your freewill offerings,** yes, we're also commanded to bring an offering during the Feast of Tabernacles, and we know, on the seven annual Holy Days, **and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks. And there you shall eat before or in the presence of the Eternal your God, and you shall rejoice in all that you have put your hand to, you and your households, wherein the Eternal your God has blessed you.**

Verse 8 it says, **And you shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.** That's right, brethren, there is only going to be one way of life when we get into that new age. And for us today there *should* only be one way of life. We should incorporate this into our very minds, into our very lives, into our very being.

Verse 9 says, **For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Eternal your God gives you.** No, we're not there yet, brethren, and it's not just simply...this is *not* simply talking about living into the Millennium, because brethren, we know it's *not enough* to just live into the new age, it's *not enough* just to get over into the Millennium, because we know that the true inheritance, *the rest* that God is giving us, ultimately, is about being in His Family, it is about being a part of the Kingdom of God, changed from mortal to immortal, from physical to spiritual...and that is the true inheritance.

So brethren, we can live on over into that new age but if we don't have this way of life deeply embedded in our very beings we could still lose out. We have to learn to *love* the law of God. We have to learn to *love* our God with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, and all of our being...and I don't know about for you but for me the Feast of Tabernacles really helps in that process. It really helps

me to have a greater appreciation, a deeper awe and respect and reverence for my God. For *how awesome* is the God that *provides* a way for us to come to the Feast every year, and *provides* a Feast of Tabernacles for us to observe year by year. Now, *that* is a God that I can worship. *That* is a God that I can respect and truly appreciate and love. And I know that we all do, brethren, and that's why we are here.

Let's go on in **verse 10**. Says that, **But when you go over Jordan and dwell in the land which the Eternal your God gives you to inherit**, and let's think Millennium, brethren, because we are right at that precipice of time, **and when He gives you rest from all your enemies round about so that you dwell in safety**; and yes, brethren, I know we all look forward to the time that this pictures, when Satan and the demons will be locked away, they will be bound and put away so that they can no longer influence us or influence mankind or influence the affairs of mankind, and we're going to be living under the laws and rules of God Himself, under the rulership of Jesus Christ...and we will *dwell in safety*.

Says **there... Then there shall be a place which the Eternal your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there**; and we know where that is, brethren, that *is* in the Family of God. But also this is talking physically and it is talking about those opportunities to worship before God on the Holy Days, and specifically here at the Feast of Tabernacles. Says, and **Then there shall be a place which the Eternal your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; there you shall bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which you vow unto the Eternal. And you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God, you, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he has no part nor inheritance with you**. Yes, brethren, it is an all inclusive command, to rejoice together with the Body of Christ, with the Family that God has provided with us. How *awesome* is that? How *wonderful* is that, that God *commands* us to rejoice, to have a great time, to really enjoy the fellowship together with our families, both physical and spiritual, at the Feast of Tabernacles. Yeah, it's an exciting time!

Verse 13, says, **Take heed to yourself that you offer not your burnt offering in every place that you see**: says don't just go off and do this in any way that you choose; there is a way to do it, is what He's saying.

Verse 14 - But in the place which the Eternal shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. And yes, brethren, that is why we are here. That's why we're here at one of these eleven sponsored Feast sites, or why we are you know, in a, perhaps in a small local area if we were not able to travel to the Feast this year, but knowing that God is in us and we're still able to rejoice before God in that...in that situation wherever we find ourselves.

Verse 15 – Notwithstanding, you may kill and eat flesh in all your gates, whatsoever your soul desires after, according to the blessing of the Eternal your God which He has given you: and this is talking about just enjoying the blessings that God provides for us year round, when we have... you know, when we made a profit in our work during the course of that year, He's saying, "Look, this isn't the *only* time you can rejoice and do good things or eat good things, you know? I've provided for you all year round," is what He's saying there.

Dropping down to **verse 17**, says, **You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your corn, or of your wine, or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herds or of your flock, nor any of your vows which you vow, nor the freewill offerings, or heave offering of your hand, but you must eat them before or in the**

presence of your God in the place which the Eternal shall choose to place His name there. And so, brethren, that is what we're doing here, that is why we have come here to one of these eleven sponsored locations, to do just what God has commanded us.

Going on... **But you must eat them before the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal your God shall choose, you and your son and your daughter and your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your gates, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God in all that you put your hand to.** So we know, again, brethren, it's an all inclusive command.

Verse 19 – Take heed to yourselves that you forsake not the Levite as long as you live upon the earth.

Verse 20 - When the Eternal your God shall enlarge your borders, and brethren, we know as we go over into that new age, into the Millennium, our borders are going to be greatly enlarged, and it's going to encompass the whole earth eventually, as we understand... **as He has promised you, going on, and you shall say, I will eat flesh, because my soul longs to eat flesh; you may eat flesh, whatsoever your soul desires.**

Verse 21 – now this is an interesting scripture here, brethren, because it speaks to those that are not able to travel to the Feast for whatever reason. It says, **If the place which the Eternal your God has chosen to put His name there be too far from you,** you know, just, if you're not able to travel because of health or because of age or perhaps it's financial reasons this year, whatever the reason is God makes a way for that, He provides for that because He loves each and every one of us, brethren, and sometimes there is reason we through the things we go through – for our good, for our learning and for our growth. Says, **but if that place be too far from you then you shall kill of your herd and of your flock, which the Eternal has given you, as I have commanded you, and you shall eat in within your gates whatsoever your soul desires.** So again, He's providing a way for those that are not able to travel to the Feast, brethren. And so we should make every effort if we're in that situation to rejoice before Him, make every opportunity... you know, take every opportunity to go out and do something special, if you are able, if that opportunity provides itself, brethren. Rejoice before your Creator wherever you are, because as we know, God is *in* each and every one of us.

Let's drop down to **verse 26...verse 26,** says, **Only your holy things which you have,** and what are the holy things that we have, brethren? Well, we know that the only reason anything is holy is because God's presence is in it, and we know, brethren, that the holy things that we have are our 2nd Tithes; it is holy to God, it is set apart for holy use and purpose. It is not ours! Our 2nd Tithe, brethren, doesn't belong to us. And I know that we know that and I know that that's why we're here, we bring that 2nd Tithe and we use it for its intended purpose and this is just a reminder as we're going through this this year.

So brethren, there are things that are acceptable and there are things that are unacceptable use for our 2nd Tithe, and I'm not going to go through a list and I'm not going to explain those things necessarily here today, but if you have any questions as to what you feel may be acceptable or unacceptable, I would encourage you to discuss it with your elder or with one of the elders. You know, *ask* if you're unsure, find out how God wants us to use that money that He has provided for us to be able to attend the Feast. If you're not sure what to do with it or if it's acceptable to use it in the way that you have determined to do so, ask someone; the elders will help you to learn that process.

Now, there is one occurrence that may come up every so often for brethren, and that's if God has blessed us far more than what we can use at that Feast of Tabernacles, and sometimes we have some left over and we call that 'excess 2nd Tithe' and what we have traditionally done, there is two things that we have traditionally done with our excess 2nd Tithe, and I checked on this and it's the same today. First, we can hang onto that extra money and set it aside for use at next year's Feast, particularly if we've always wanted to travel to a more distance location – perhaps we've always wanted to go to Hawaii or we've really wanted to go to Australia or New Zealand or one of those Feast sites that is just a little too expensive for us to travel to – then God says you can hang onto that and use it at next year's Feast. But if we're not planning on something like that then the general rule is we turn that money into the Church to be used at next year's Feast in providing a way for other brethren to be able to go to the Feast. It goes into a 2nd Tithe Fund and it helps to provide for the rental of halls and things like that for us to be able to observe the Feast. So that's the two things that we can do with our excess 2nd Tithe if we are so blessed to have extra in any given year.

So let's go to **verse 28**, brethren, as we begin to wrap this up. **Verse 28** says, **Observe and hear all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you forever, when you do that which is good and right in the sight of the Eternal your God.** Yes, brethren, God has our best interests at heart. He has given us these righteous decrees that are holy and just and good, and He has commanded us to come before Him at the Feast, He has commanded us to fear Him, He has commanded us to rejoice in His presence.

So brethren, in conclusion, as we prepare to enter into a new age and we look over into that new world, let's be reminded that God commands us to remember to do that which is right in His sight. We are to fear, to stand in awe of so great a God that gives such awesome laws and provides in every possible way for us. And we are to rejoice before or in His presence each year at His Feast of Tabernacles.

So let's turn one final time to Deuteronomy 14...Deuteronomy 14, and we're just going to pick up two scriptures here very quickly. **Deuteronomy 14:23**, says, **And you shall eat before or in the presence of the Eternal your God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there**, and that's where we are today, brethren. Wherever we may be we're in the place which God has chosen to place His name.

And you shall eat the tithe of your corn and of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; that you may learn to fear, or to revere the Eternal your God always.

And let's drop down to **verse 26** – **And you shall bestow that money for whatsoever your soul desires; to rejoice, brethren, obviously – for oxen or for sheep or for wine or for strong drink, or for whatsoever your soul desires, and you shall eat before/in the presence of the Eternal your God and you shall rejoice, you and your household.**

So yes, brethren, while these two things, fearing God and rejoicing, may at first glance seem contradictory, faithfully keeping and handling our 2nd Tithe and faithfully and properly keeping the Feast of Tabernacles helps us to learn to fear our God; and fearing God *allows us*, brethren, to rejoice before Him. And so this, this is how we rejoice in fear.

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