

Hello, everyone. I truly hope that you are enjoying God's beautiful Sabbath.

The purpose of this split-sermon is to shine the spotlight on some of the most incredible blessings that we, as God's people, have the opportunity to enjoy at this time. We need to ask ourselves, "When was the last time that we made a genuine effort to focus on just a few of those countless blessings that God has poured out upon us?" It's so easy to simply allow the day-to-day cares of this world to get in the way and prevent us from doing so. Those cares can cause us to lose our focus. The title of this split-sermon is *Blessed Beyond Measure*.

During the course of this split-sermon we will take a closer look at just how blessed we truly are, ways that we simply take for granted. We will begin to prepare ourselves for what God promises to give to those that will yield and submit themselves more fully to His molding and fashioning during this special "Year of Dedication." We will also come to realize just how important it is to take this very special time period seriously. If there isn't a level of fear during this year, guaranteed at the end of it there will be.

The title for this split-sermon was inspired by the post written by God's end-time apostle entitled, "Year of Dedication," so, obviously, that is where this split-sermon needs to start. At this point, the first two paragraphs of that post will be quoted.

"We are now past the fall holy day season for 2014, and we are already planning ahead for next year's Feast of Tabernacles. However, I am highly sobered as we begin making these preparations, since I know that this next Feast may well be the last we are able to keep together in this age at sponsored sites around the world. That is just how serious and perilous these times are for us and for the world."

"On the other hand, I am also very positively moved concerning what lies ahead for the Church in this following year. For all who work for and yield themselves to what God is offering us, this coming year will be one of tremendous blessings and growth. But it will require work and dedication on your part, for this next year is to be a 'Year of Dedication.'" End of quote.

In the months leading up to the fall Holy Day season, God's people prayed for God's inspiration *and* protection to be upon His two end-time witnesses, His two end-time prophets. Clearly, as we look back, those prayers have been heard and answered powerfully so. Incredible inspiration being given through the posts written by God's end-time apostle is truly astounding. It honestly feels as though we are being moved to a whole new level of preparation and transformation, as God, through His Son, by the power of His holy spirit, strengthens His people for the amazing opportunities to serve Him in the time that leads up to the very return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The first set of scriptures that we will turn to are located in Matthew. Turn to Matthew 9:27. **Matthew 9:27—When Jesus departed from there two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to Him, Yes, Lord. And He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith let it be to you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, See that no one knows it. But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all their country.** We need to always keep in the forefront of our minds that before our calling we were blind, spiritually blind that is, completely incapable of seeing God's truth until He had mercy on us. We were held in bondage to Satan's system like everyone else who has ever lived in this world, except, of course, for Jesus Christ. The ability "to have eyes to 'see'" is truly a profound blessing, brethren, and it's only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

Please turn to **Matthew 11:25**, where we read the following: **At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father: and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly (that is "humble") in heart: and you will find rest for your souls (that is "your lives"). For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.** The phenomenal peace of mind that we are able to enjoy, even in this present evil age that is at its end, is just another one of the countless blessings that we can, if we are not careful, simply overlook and take for granted.

We've all had this most amazing experience, brethren, when the fog begins to be lifted for us by God Almighty on a spiritual plane. Let's take a moment to review some of the incredible knowledge and truth that God has given us "the eyes to 'see'" to this point in time.

We have been given the knowledge that the very first thing that God had created was His plan for His family, Elohim. So great is His desire for that family that He *willingly* sacrificed peace for millions, and quite possibly billions of years. We are able to read of the account in Genesis of the beautiful Garden of Eden that He created for Adam and Eve to dwell in with an incredible variety of plants and animals that He brought into existence. We have a vivid account of the plagues that He poured out upon the Egyptians with all the death and destruction that followed as God delivered His people, the Israelites, from physical bondage. *Think* about all the battles He waged through the armies of Ancient Israel against their enemies. The account of Gideon's army should stand out in our mind as a prime example of just one of those battles. All of these accounts have been recorded for our benefit, to give us courage and strength, spiritually speaking. God our Father wants us to know with *absolute certainty* that He will protect, provide for, and fight the battles for His people, for His begotten children, those that have the incredible potential to become a part of His holy, royal family at some point in the future in God's perfect timing.

*We are so blessed* to be able to see the phenomenal effort that our heavenly Father has, is, and will continue to put forth for His plan, for His family. The ultimate display of God's love for His future family

was shown to us when He allowed His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be the sacrifice for the sins of mankind. God knew from the very beginning, while He formulated His plan for His family, that a Savior would be required, one that willingly laid down His life (His perfectly lived life) in order to pay for the sins of mankind, otherwise no one besides Jesus Christ could ever be added to God's family.

Knowing all of this, brethren, we need to be ever so thankful, to be oh, so grateful for the phenomenal invitation we have been given to become a part of that family. With all the billions of people that have ever lived and died on the earth over the past 6,000 years, so very, very few have yet to receive their invitation to begin the process, the journey to be brought into that family. *That alone* should remind us of just how precious that invitation (our calling) truly is. Until our eyes (our minds) are opened, we could not see God's truth, we could not hear it, and we *certainly* could not speak it.

As we have grown during the time of our calling, we have grown in our appreciation of the *necessity* of being in absolute unity, in absolute agreement with God.

Turn to **Amos 3:3** where the following question is asked: **Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?** For those in God's Church, unless God's holy spirit is actively dwelling in the lives of those two, the answer is no, definitely not. It is impossible. The longer the journey has been, the deeper the appreciation of this one blessing alone should be, for true unity is only possible by the power of God's holy spirit actively dwelling in the lives of God's people.

Over in **Matthew 12:25** we read, **But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.** Rest assured, brethren, only those which are being brought into complete and total unity with God and Jesus Christ will become a part of Elohim.

One more set of scriptures that we will turn to at this moment, that focus in on the absolute importance of being in agreement (in unity) is located in 1 Corinthians 1:10. **1 Corinthians 1:10—Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.** To make it *abundantly clear* to His Church in the months leading up to this very special "Year of Dedication," God has inspired His end-time apostle to write a 14-part series on "True Fellowship." The very fact that there are 14 posts covering that subject should not be lost on us, brethren, especially when we stop to consider that it was inspired to be written during this time of the final measuring of the temple.

Throughout the entirety of that series of posts on true fellowship, we were shown the absolute necessity of placing God Almighty first and foremost in importance in our lives. Our relationship with our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, must far exceed any and all other relationships in our lives. If we fail to do so we are actually guilty of spiritual idolatry. We clearly cannot be in true fellowship, as a result of such actions, until we have repented. We need to examine our lives to make certain that we are placing God first as a constant and ongoing. He needs to be a part of our lives daily, where each and every

thought, word, and action is brought under the spiritual microscope and viewed from every direction as we strive to determine our motivation and intent in each and every situation.

Jesus Christ was *clearly* showing His disciples this very approach we need to have in all of our relationships, in the book of Luke. Please turn to **Luke 14:26—If any come to Me and does not hate, that is "to love less by comparison," his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and yes, even his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.**

Once we have been placed into the Body of Christ by our heavenly Father, the battle to keep our priorities straight will be a part of our lives from that point forward, until we have clearly demonstrated that our mind has become set, until we have proven in the way we live our lives before God Almighty, that yes, indeed, we are keeping the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment described in Matthew 22:35. **Matthew 22:35—And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** Which is why the greatest blessing that anyone could ever, ever receive in their life is the gift of God's holy spirit. For as we know, it is impossible to love Him without it, since no one could ever have the ability to be brought into unity with God unless they were given the most precious gift that anyone could ever receive. Once it has been received, the spiritual floodgates begin to be opened.

For anyone that has ever had the opportunity to go to Niagara Falls, there is a very unique experience that awaits you. There is a boat located about a mile below the Niagara Falls on the Niagara River called "The Maid of the Mist." It offers a very special experience to its passengers. Its journey will take you right below the falls, so close in fact that you feel as though the sheer volume of water coming over those falls is going to capsize the boat. You can *literally feel* the *power* of all that water raging down from a height of close to 300 feet. Guaranteed, you will be absolutely *drenched* in the process. And yes, there are raincoats provided which reduce, to a certain extent, the drenching you will experience.

The picture being painted by this analogy is one that is described in Malachi 3:10. **Malachi 3:10 states, Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.** Can we picture ourselves on that boat at the bottom of Niagara Falls? Spiritually speaking, that's what we are experiencing, brethren. It's like we are down at the bottom of those Falls with a tiny little umbrella held over our heads as God continually pours out more and more blessings upon His people as He is able to bring us into ever greater unity with Him, His plan, His way of life.

Which leads us to the following questions that we need to be asking ourselves at this time, those questions that need to be answered during this measuring, during this time of measuring. First: Are we in agreement, in the process of being brought into total unity with God the Father, Jesus Christ, and *everything* we are being taught through His end-time apostle? And second: Do we cherish, do we treasure

what we are being offered at this time, at this, the pinnacle of all human history? Do we still possess that unquenchable appetite for everything that God is placing before us?

Which leads into the next incredible blessing to be focused upon during the course of this split-sermon: Can we still remember when we were so filled with excitement for what we were learning that we simply felt compelled to share it with our loved ones? Of course, it became quite obvious that it was *not* up to us who God would call at this time.

As we continue forward in the process of being called, a powerful separation begins to take place, when *major* life altering decisions have to be made and continued to be made. A powerful example of what each of us experiences is recorded in what took place in the life of Abram. Please turn to Genesis 12:1; that's **Genesis 12:1**, where we read the following: **Now the Eternal said to Abram, Get out of your country, from your kindred, and from your father's house, to a land I will show you: I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him that curses you: and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.** Each and every one of God's people has had to live this very same thing, to experience to various degrees that separation during the time of their calling, to forsake what they knew, to break out of their comfort zone, placing their lives in God's hands.

Another example that we are going to take a look at is the account recorded in the book of Job. It can help you realize the very important point. Starting in verse 13 of chapter 1. **Job 1:13—Now, there was a day when His sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brothers house. And a messenger came to Job and said, The oxen were plowing, the donkey's feeding beside them when the Sabeans raided them and took them away. Indeed, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking another also came and said, A fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone am escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking, another also came and said, the Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking another also came and said, Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house and it fell on the young men, and they are dead. And I alone have escaped to tell you.** Now, we have just read an extreme example of what took place in Job's life at the start of his calling. During the process of his conversion the response of Job, as a result of the series of calamities that had just befallen him, is so incredibly beautiful.

**Verse 20—And Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshipped.** Listen closely to the next verse. **Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the Eternal. In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.** Job was able to clearly see that everything he had been blessed to enjoy and experience in his life came from God.

The last chapter in the book of Job records the phenomenal transformation that God Almighty was able to bring about in Job's way of thinking. **Job 42:1—Then Job answered the Eternal and said, I know that You can do everything, that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak. You said, I will question you, and you shall answer Me. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You. Therefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

Dropping down to verse 12 we read, **Now the Eternal blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters.**

**Verse 15—In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them an inheritance amongst their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.**

So how does the account of Job's life relate to ours today, brethren? Well, Jesus Christ clearly shows us how in the book of Luke, in Luke 18:24. **Luke 18:24.** This is the point where Jesus had just counselled with a rich, young ruler. **When Jesus saw that he, the rich, young ruler became very sorrowful, He said, How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needles eye than a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. And those who heard it said, Who, then, can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. And Peter said, See, we have left all and followed You. We need to focus our attention on what Christ said next in His response to Peter. He said to them, Surely I say to you, there is no one that has left house or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God which shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come, everlasting life.** There you have it. It doesn't matter what it is that we have had to leave behind during the course of our journey. As the examples of Abram and Job clearly show, it doesn't matter what it is we feel that we have had to give up, what we feel that we have had to forsake. What we had wasn't ours to begin with!

We need to be extremely careful not to waste precious time and energy looking back when we need to be looking forward. No one wants to be turned into a pillar of salt like Lot's wife was. That danger still exists to this very day. "How so?" you might ask. Well, let's consider it from the following point of view. We just read what Christ said in response to Peter's statement. Let me read it to you once more: "Assuredly I say to you, there is *no one* that has left house or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come, everlasting life."

We have been given the opportunity to experience at this time, brethren, the wonderful relationships that can be developed with God's begotten children, those that He has extended that personal invitation to, to enter into an intimate, ongoing relationship with Him at this time, people that have been given

"the eyes to 'see,'" just like we have been, those that are being brought into ever greater unity with *Him* through His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That *is* the second major part of what God inspired to be addressed in the series of posts on true fellowship. The ability to be able to have a conversation with someone else that believes the same things you do, that has that same precious gift actively working in their lives is a rare, rare opportunity at this present time. Do we truly appreciate this precious opportunity that we have been given? This wonderful blessing that we have the opportunity to experience at this time? Do we cherish that, brethren, or do we find ourselves looking backward, longing for those things we left behind? If we are allowing ourselves to entertain such thoughts, do we realize that we are actually insulting the Great God of the universe, when we permit those thoughts and attitudes to exist in our lives? It's as if we're saying to Him, "I'd rather have what I had back there. I'd rather return to the land of Egypt than to embrace what You have given to me at this time in my life, or what you are offering me in the future." This is no small thing!

One of the ways to quickly tell if we are engaged in our minds in such an activity is if we find ourselves crying, "Woe is me!" You know, those pity-parties that we've been told about on more than one occasion, where we allow ourselves to mentally, and sometimes verbally sit around and moan and complain about how hard our life is, how much we've had to sacrifice, we've had to suffer through, that it's more than we expected to have to go through. One more way that can be helpful in determining whether or not this is something that we need to acknowledge and address at this time in our lives, the question we need to ask ourselves: How much time do we spend talking with the brethren? Or how much time do we spend with them when we are able to get together in person? There are so many ways to keep in touch with one another these days. Are we truly excited to be around God's people whenever the opportunity to do so comes around?

Or, of even greater importance in all this, is how do we treat them? When we take a close look at a set of scriptures recorded in Philippians we find a beautiful description of how our approach needs to be. **Philippians 1:3—I thank God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He that has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much both in my chains and in the defence, the confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and in all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.**

Again in Romans, the need is addressed. **Romans 12:10—actually, let's begin in verse 9—Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good, that which is of God. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love; in honor giving preference to one another; Not lagging in diligence; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation;**

continuing steadfast in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless those that persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep, being of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

Over in the very next chapter we find the following...Romans 13:8—Owe no one anything except to love one another. For he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor, therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. It has been made *abundantly* clear to us, brethren, that only those with God's holy spirit are capable of receiving His love at this time. It should go without saying that it is of *extreme* importance that we be very careful to treat God's people with honor and respect, that we see God and Jesus Christ in each and every one of His begotten children. This is how we are to be known.

Greater detail of how we are to behave towards fellow members of the Body is given in the book of 1 Corinthians. Over in 1 Corinthians 13:1—This is a perfect way of determining whether or not we are allowing God the Father and Jesus Christ to live their lives in and through us to the benefit of others. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long, and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in God's truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails: but whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know just as I am known. And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Do we *have* the same love and outgoing concern for each other? For each and every member of the Body? That's what we need to ask ourselves. That's what we need to clearly demonstrate in the way we treat one another and the time we invest in developing relationships with God's people.

So now the next question that needs to be answered is this: How do we begin to prepare our minds to receive what God promises to give to those that will yield themselves more fully to His molding and fashioning? As always, God supplies us with *everything* we need *exactly* when we need it. Part of the instructions that were given in the post entitled, "Year of Dedication," will be quoted at this point.

"In the following year, there will be an intensified focus on the sacrifices and work that will follow. This is only beginning to be addressed in this post, then far more thoroughly in the series that is to follow. The first thing we are to individually focus upon right now, for those who can physically do so without jeopardizing their health in any manner, is that each of us is to set aside at least one day each month to fast before God."

"It must be said that for those who are able to participate in such fasting that no one compare their fasting to that of others. It is to be done exactly as Christ spoke when he stated that one's fasting should not be made obvious to others. It is a private matter between each individual and God. It is to be done just like our prayer life that is to be 'in private' with God our Father."

Dropping down to the start of the next paragraph: "This fasting needs to be taken soberly and seriously, as it is about much needed humility on everyone's part to live this following year in a faithful, zealous, and truthful manner."

Reading the final two paragraphs in this section of the post: "The timing and purpose for the prophetic fulfillment of this year that is now before us was planned, designed, and then written in prophecy long ago. This coming year is exceedingly important to the final preparation of God's people for Christ's coming and of the spiritual condition the Church is to be in at that time."

"Individuals will either eagerly embrace the work and changes that we are going to be directed to focus upon, or they will resist. Most will embrace all this and be blessed beyond measure. However, as the sword that cuts both ways, some few will resist and suffer accordingly. It is all a matter of free choice and greater acceptance of personal responsibility." End of quote.

Clearly, brethren, it is God that is going to prepare our minds in this "Year of Dedication." Our part is to yield to that process. Whether or not He is able to accomplish that greater transformation depends on the degree to which we choose to submit, to yield. The choice is ours! That's the key. We *always* have a choice. God will not force us to choose His way.

God has been revealing to His Church in ever greater detail as mankind's self-rule draws to its end, what truly matters in life, what it's all about: our relationship with Him, with His Son, and His begotten children. This is what is of the utmost importance to God Almighty. It had better be what is of utmost importance to us.

One final quote from the post entitled, "Year of Dedication," found directly under the sub-title of "Satan's Diminished Power." "Indeed, the vast majority of God's Church will be zealous in setting aside this following year for greater dedication to God – far greater dedication for change and transformation. One should deeply fear to do otherwise, for if one does not fear now, once this year is past, they will." End of quote.

In conclusion, we've focused the spotlight on two of the greatest blessings that we have the opportunity to experience in life: Developing a close, intimate relationship with our heavenly Father as He brings us into ever greater unity with Him, and the enjoyment of the *beautiful* relationships that are possible with His begotten children, the number of which is about to be dramatically increased over the next few years. Both are only possible if we *cherish* the greatest gift that *anyone* could ever receive, that anyone could ever be given—God's holy spirit.

We've been reminded of the need to take seriously that which matters during this "Year of Dedication." Just remember, "It's not where you are; it's who you're with." Truly, we are blessed beyond measure!□