

Welcome, everybody. In the past sermon series we looked at the areas where we think differently than the world. We looked at the reasons why we think differently because we have started to change our thinking. This changing of the way we think, or a person thinks, must be powered by God's holy spirit to be able to change from natural thinking to God's thinking, and *then* the potential is that they, at some point, will enter Elohim (be changed to spirit).

Now, we're looking at changing the sermon title, but basically the content or the theme will not really change, that everyone must think differently. Well, we're going to start here with the change of a sermon title, and the sermon title will be, *To Think Differently*, and this will be *Part 1*.

The purpose of this new sermon series is to explore what it really means to think differently. Now, we have been called by God the Father to come to think differently. We have been called to move from pride, from the natural way of thinking, to godly thinking, which is to be motivated by humility. The way we change this thinking is through the gift of God's holy spirit, and then that is based on genuine spiritual repentance - not just a physical repentance, but a spiritual repentance. Now, physical repentance is possible, because to repent means to think differently. It means to change, change direction. So repentance is to think differently. We must have our thinking transformed. We must have our thinking changed.

Now, you may hear different sounds in the recordings at different times as we go through various sermons, and right now you might hear a rooster crowing. Well, where I am, living in a country town, a small rural town, there are lots of sounds. So no matter what day I do a recording, whether it's in the morning or whether it's in the afternoon - for example now, this sermon's being recorded on an afternoon, on a Sabbath afternoon - well, there's various sounds, so you may be able to work out the various sounds. Now, often you might hear a "beep, beep, beep, beep," well, that happens to be a Wednesday when the rubbish truck comes. It drives down the street, and rather than do a turn on the street and come back up, it actually drives down the street one way, and then it reverses all the way back up to our house. So often we'll hear the "beep, beep, beep," in the middle of a sermon. Often I do try to stop and then record from that point once it's gone. Well, another time you might hear the sound of a train. We live about 200 meters from the train track and about 300 meters from a level crossing. You often hear the sound of a train giving the signal that it's coming to the crossing, which happens to be about 500 meters from the level crossing. But, of course, we're only 200 meters from the train track so we'll hear the sound of the train giving the warning that it's coming to the crossing. *Then*, depending on the size of the train, normally the length of the train here is between forty and sixty carriages and it'll go on for two or three minutes, the sound of the train. And that happens during the night, but it also happens during the day sometimes in the morning, but also sometimes in an afternoon. So I try to work around the trains as well where possible. It doesn't always work. Another sound could be the sparrows,

because there's lots of sparrows in this area and we have hundreds of sparrows either in the trees near us or they actually get into the gutters themselves. So after the rain, when there's water in the gutter, the next day or within the next four or five days the sparrow actually get in the gutters and they pick out what's in the gutters, whether it's parts of leaves or drinking the water. And sometimes there can be five or fifteen sparrows in the gutters, and they make a lot of noise. So you may even pick that up in the various sermons that are given. Well, the other one is, of course, is the wind, where we often have very strong southwesterly winds here, and sometimes they can blow quite a gale. That can be in the morning, the afternoon, or even at night, but you may hear the sound of wind in the background. It might be rare, but you could hear it. The main one is roosters. So various times in the morning, from the time the sun comes up, which can vary from around quarter-to-five onwards, as we go into winter it's getting now after seven o'clockish. Well, if I'm doing a recording, sometimes I'll start around that time in the morning, well, the roosters are all there crowing and carrying on, and then, like today, it's after lunch and now, guess what, the roosters are still crowing. And often at night-time we'll get an odd sound of a rooster crowing. So I try to avoid that. I apologize for the rooster crowing in the sermons. I have tried, where possible, to avoid it, but the reality is where I live it's actually *impossible* to get rid of the roosters crowing.

If you'd like to turn to **Romans 12:1—I beseech you, therefore, brethren**, so this is a plea, a request that is being made, which is or an urgent request. "I beseech you," which is rather urgent. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren," which is talking to the Church. So this is Paul writing to the Romans and He's got an urgent request to them, or an urgent requirement for them. **...by the mercies of God**, well, we have the mercies of God because we have had mercy shown to us by God the Father. So He has already shown us this mercy, **that you yield** (you present) **your bodies a living sacrifice**, so this is the requirement, that we yield to God's holy spirit, that we offer our selfishness up. We get rid of our selfishness. And this is a living sacrifice. We're alive and we choose to sacrifice our desires, these lusts, and the pride that we have, that we set ourselves aside as holy. So now we're getting rid of self, we're taking on the thinking of God, we're sacrificing our selfish desires, and now we are going to present or yield ourselves to God's holy spirit. And by this, by yielding and by taking on the righteousness, the thinking of God, we then become holy. We become holy because we have God living and dwelling in us, God's thinking living and dwelling in us. Because as we understand, only God is holy. Only things that God is involved with or that God declares as holy, where His presence is, it becomes holy. Here Paul is writing to the Romans and saying, "I'm urging you, brethren, that because of the mercy that God has shown towards us with a calling that we yield our bodies, we yield our lives, our thinking as a living sacrifice," because we're alive and we are to give up our desires. We're to have this attitude towards God which is one of giving and yielding to benefit others. **...holy, acceptable to God**, because we're yielding to God and we're denying ourselves, which is acceptable to God, **which is your reasonable** (logical) **service**.

Continuing on in **verse 2—Do not be conformed...** Now, this word "conformed" means that we are no longer fashioning our mind. So, **do not be conformed**, don't fashion our minds, **to this world**. Don't be conformed to their way of thinking. We understand the natural carnal mind's way of thinking. It is all based on selfishness. This world's thinking is all based on selfishness. Even if it appears to be (so-called)

"good," it is still based on human reasoning, and therefore, we've been asked by God (through Paul) that we don't blend into, we don't conform, we do not fashion our minds, our thinking to this world, the world of selfishness. ...**but**, so what's the opposite? What's the requirement that God has for us? ...**but be transformed**. Now, we understand this word is "metamorphosis," or "changed," **be transformed**... How? ... **by the renewing of your minds**, so we have to change our minds, have our minds renewed. Now, that word "renewed," or "the renewing," is "renovated, complete change for the better." So if we look at an old house, by renewing it or renovating it we change the old to make it new; we update it. We change it. So this is that transformation. It's going to be a renewing, a renovating, a cleaning out of the old to take on something new, a complete change for the better. Now, what is that better? The thinking of God! So how are we going to change? "By the renewing of your minds," the renewing of the way we think, a change in our intent. And that is the key, the change in our intent. Because human intent, no matter what we can say about it all the way or we think about it, all human intent has a motivation hidden behind it that is selfish. There's a gain to the mind. Now, whether it's something physical or whether it's just simply based on pride, which most of the carnal minds outcomes are driven by pride, getting something back to stroke the ego, to improve the image. So we have to now get rid of this pride, this intent that is within us. So we have to have this transformation, this renewing, this renovating of our intent. The intent has to change.

And the outcome of the change is? ...**that you may prove** (that you may try it out, that you may try this new way of thinking) **what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God**. So we are to *try*, to test out this new way of thinking. This new way of living life, we are now practice it. So the purpose of life is to take on a new way of thinking.

1 Peter 3:8—This is now Peter writing to the Church. **Finally, all of you be of one mind**, the requirement of members of the Body of Christ is to take on the same thinking as Jesus Christ, which is the same thinking as God the Father, which is this one mind. And this one mind has one way of thinking, which is one spirit. There's only one spirit. And we understand in scripture there is one faith. So we are to be of one mind. Now, this one way of thinking (this one mind) will create unity, it will create peace. Now, because of this one way of thinking, which is powered by God's holy spirit. Continuing on... **having compassion**, now, this compassion **for one another; love as brothers, be tender-hearted, courteous**, which is part of being humble, which is a way of thinking.

Now, this whole area that we're looking at is about a way of thinking. "Having compassion," is a way of thinking. If we're compassionate towards others. So we're to have compassion for one another. We are to love one another, which is to have God's thinking towards one another, which means we won't have pride, we won't be considering ourselves "better" than others, we won't be lifting ourselves up or pulling others down because we love one another. The reason we love one another is because we understand God's way of thinking, we understand every single person's incredible human potential; therefore, we have this desire towards one another, which is the best for one another. What is the best for one another? That a person repent and come into unity, one way of thinking with God. Therefore, a person should be of one mind. So we desire this one way of thinking. We desire people continue to repent, continue to overcome

their selfishness, and take on right thinking. We desire for people to think differently, therefore, we love one another, we love everybody, because we desire godly thinking within that person.

...**be tender-hearted, be courteous**, which is this friendly attitude based on God's holy spirit. Now, to have this we have to have humility. We have to have concern for our brother and it's all based on a humble attitude that we have. We are the person that has to take on this humility. We have to have this desire towards others, and it is based on this humble spirit.

Verse 9—not returning evil for evil. Well, if we did that, that's the natural carnal mind at work, because the natural carnal mind desires to get even. It desires to get even, to justify, to defend self. Now, if we don't retaliate, if we don't respond "evil with evil" - evils going to be done to us. We understand that. We know it. It's a guarantee because the world is based on selfishness. It's based on evil. Therefore, when evil happens to us, if injustice happens to us, if ridicule (no matter what it is), if it's coming from man and man's motives (which is evil in intent even though they may not know it), we do not have the right, we do not have the mindset to return evil for evil. Because if we have the natural carnal mind, we *will* return evil for evil. We'll justify. We will want to get even at any cost. But if we have God's thinking, we have this one mind, this right attitude, the right intent, we will *not* be wanting, we will *not* be desiring to return evil for evil. In other words, we don't desire to get even.

...**or reviling for reviling.** So no matter what happens to us, if somebody reviles us because we are what we are, what God is making us with this change of thinking that's going on, we should not retaliate. We should not revile back. Now, there's a guarantee in life being part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God—PKG, at this time there is going to be reviling, there is going to be evil intent towards us. *That* is all *natural!* We should expect it! Jesus Christ suffered. Jesus Christ was reviled. Therefore, because we are disciples of Jesus Christ, we follow Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ lived His life, we follow Paul, we follow Peter, therefore, we follow God's lead within a person's life as God places someone over a Church environment. Peter, the chief apostle to Israel, but also Paul who was the chief apostle to the gentiles, well, we follow them because they are led by God's holy spirit, and the writings that they have done have been inspired by Jesus Christ from God the Father. They are inspired in the way they have written things. They are telling us here that we are not to return evil for evil or reviling for reviling.

So when we are spoken of as being evil, if we're put down - now we have been through a sermon where we covered that, that if we are reviled for our own stupidity, well, we deserve it because of our human stupidity. But if we are reviled because of righteousness, if we're reviled for the thinking of God, by following God, by living God's way of life or implementing it into our lives (it's going to come, we're going to be reviled), well, we are not to revile back because we are of the same mind as Jesus Christ who did not revile. Because we understand where it's coming from. We understand why there's reviling. We understand it, brethren. We know "the natural carnal mind is hostile against God, not subject to the law of God, and indeed cannot be," therefore, we're going to be reviled. We're going to be put down. And the key to this is we don't desire to get even. We know why they're saying it. We understand why they're doing it. Because that's all they can do.

Now, if we live in an environment where the reviling is not taking place and the person we are with, if we are blessed that they do not look down on us in that way, that is a great blessing from God. But mankind will not understand - the majority won't - and therefore, we're going to be put down, we're going to be mocked.

Continuing on in **verse 9—but on the contrary, blessing**, so what we're to do is not revile, but blessing. We are to be positive about life. We're to retaliate with blessings, to be positive back to them, **knowing that you are called to this**. We understand our calling. We've been called to take evil. We've been called to take reviling. And how do we handle it? With blessing. With a positive outlook about life, which is, we build them up. So even though they pull us down, we don't go in and try to defend self or justify self. We do things to support them. We overcome evil with good. Now, we have to use judgement and we have to use balance in these things. That's what God's spirit's about. It's about knowing that we are called to this, **that you may inherit a blessing**. Well, where does that come from? Blessings cannot come from another human. They come from God the Father *through* other humans, but it all comes, it all generates, it all is initiated by God the Father. We implement God's thinking, God will bless us. He will prosper us spiritually. God prospers us spiritually with more of this one mind, more of this one way of thinking. It's an exciting experience to go through in life. And when we're first called we don't see that this is a blessing, that being reviled, being put down, suffering for righteousness' sake, we're called to it, that this is one of the greatest blessings that any human can go through. And we're going through it, brethren, and we're going to continue to go through it right up until the end, till the return of Jesus Christ. Well, during this time we can inherit a blessing because of the fact that we are implementing this one mind, this change of thinking towards others. Therefore, God says that God will look after us on a spiritual level.

Verse 10—For, He who would love life, which is God's way of life, **and sees good days**, because we're not retaliating and we're not reviling back, **let him refrain his tongue from evil**. So if we desire to have a good life, if we *love* life, if we love God's way of being, we will refrain, we will *control* our tongue, which all starts within the mind. We will not put anybody down in any way. We will not belittle them within our own thinking, yet alone say it within words.

So if we have this one mind, the mind of God, the mind of Jesus Christ, righteous thinking, we will refrain, we will control our tongue. And it all starts with controlling the way we think, taking on this righteousness. Well if we seek peace we do it by controlling or refraining our thinking, controlling our tongue. **And his lips from speaking guile**, which is deceit. Now, what happens normally is that when a person is reviled, the natural way is to retaliate, the natural way is to try to get even. Now, we do that by belittling or pulling the other person down. How is it done? Through guile, which is deceit, which is connected to *gossip*. Or we're doing it behind the other person's back. We wouldn't do it to their face. Because it's like stealth, we're doing it quietly and we're doing it when the other person can't hear it. Our pride will be hurt. Our feelings will be hurt. These natural things that we have (which are all based on pride) will be hurt. They'll be affected. So what do we do? Well, we don't deal with it there on the spot. We may not say anything, but deep down we're still thinking evil towards them. Yet, we're not thinking a blessing in any way. We're thinking about getting even some other way. So what will we do? Normally, we

will go to willing ears. We'll go to another person and we'll belittle the person that was reviling us because it's all based on pride. So by saying nothing, well, that doesn't mean anything if deep down within our intent we intend to get even later. And how do we get even later? By this deceit. By this guile. By this stealth. By this *gossip*. By this pulling down of another person in *any way* we can. Well, that's the same as retaliating. We're just doing it later. We're not doing it there on the spot, we're just doing it later on. So what we're being told here by God is that we are to learn to control or refrain our tongue from evil, "and his lips from speaking guile," from deceit. We're to control it. It's all done by the power of God's holy spirit, because we know, we understand our calling. We *know* we've been called to think differently, to take on the mind of God.

Verse 11—Let him turn away from evil and do good, so we're to reject sin. We're to *reject* trying to get even. We're to reject gossip, reject belittling another person to make ourselves feel good by defending the self, and we're to turn away from trying to get even in any way, by retaliation of *any type*, and to do good. Well, what's the "doing good?" The "doing good" is going back to this other verse where it's talking about a blessing, by lifting the person up, by dwelling on the positive.

Now, one of the ways we can do good is by *not* retaliating, by not mentioning it to another person to try to get somebody else alongside. Just simply say nothing, take our issues to God, and be forgiving as God forgives, knowing they do not know what they do (as Jesus Christ said). So "let him turn away from evil, from getting even, from retaliating, from gossiping, "and to do good," by saying nothing at all but laying it before God and saying to God that we understand why that person is the way they are. And then when we see them again we do good for them, we look at the *positive* of what has happened, and we have the thinking of God towards them knowing they are potential begotten sons of God - potential family members! That's who they really are! At this point they don't know it, but *we do!* Therefore, with this knowledge of *who* they really are - potential sons of God, potential family members in Elohim - we should not be retaliating, we should not be lowering ourselves to the pride of life and the lusts of the flesh, but we should turn away from sin and to think differently, which is this doing good.

Let him seek peace, well, this is how we do it. We seek peace by not retaliating, **and pursue it**. We're to build others up, we're not to pull them down. Now, there *is* a time to address an issue when there is a wrong, but it's *how* we go about it. We have to follow what God's word is about this seeking peace and pursuing peace and not retaliating. But there is a time to address particular issues and not to let them go unresolved or not to address them if there is open sin involved, or there is sin involved. We need to be careful how we handle it. And there have been sermons about how we handle, how we address these matters within the Body of Christ, the Church of God.

Verse 12—For the eyes of the LORD, "the eyes of the Eternal," **are on the righteous**. Who are the righteous? Those that are commandment keepers, those that are living faith, those that are seeking peace and pursuing it, those that are taking on righteousness. They *are* the righteous! They *are* the ones that think like God, that are taking on and yielding to God's holy spirit. *They* are the righteous. They're being called to take on the mind of God. They've been called to repent, to think differently. They then become righteous because they're taking on righteousness, they're taking on the very thinking of God.

So God is aware of us, brethren. God is aware of us because He is the one that is transforming our thinking. He is the one who has granted us the gift of repentance so that we *can* think differently, so we can move from natural thinking to godly thinking. So God's eyes are on us. In other words, He is aware of us. God is fully aware of every component of our life - every single component of our life. **And His ears are open to their prayers.** So God is aware of us and He is waiting to hear from us. God is open to us. Now, when it says, "His ears are open to their prayers," it's talking about the way we respond to situations. And what is it? It's about turning to God and tabling these issues, these matters to God, and then God will give us His spirit to be able to think correctly, to think righteousness in every situation.

And then it continues on in **verse 12—But... But the face**, in other words, the way God thinks towards a person - **But the face of the Eternal is against those who do** (who practice) **evil**. Because God does not support someone who *practices* and who chooses sin. So how we think towards others is so important, brethren. We can think righteousness, we can think the right way towards others because we *know* about our own human nature. We know that when we're reviled we're not to revile back, because we think differently. We think differently! We know God's plan! We know God's purpose for mankind! We know about all humans, the way they are and their potential. Therefore, no matter what environment we find ourselves in, we should seek peace with others and we should do that because we're taking on the very thinking of God. And we understand that if we choose to retaliate that God can't be for us. God cannot support us retaliating or defending ourselves because this is all based on *pride*, and God is not *for* pride, God is *against* pride. God is humility. So we are to be humble. We're to take these things because we know who we are, and therefore, we can think righteousness and we can practice righteousness towards others in the body, out of the body, at any time. And we're to table these matters before God and God will give us the correct thinking towards others. We'll have *right* thinking towards others. And that right thinking towards others is love towards others.

Verse 13—And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? If we become followers of righteousness, if we follow God, well, what can harm us? Well, nothing, really, because we are God's. We belong to God. We are a purchased possession. So "who is he who will harm you?" Well, nobody can on a spiritual level. Yes, there can be physical harm in the sense of suffering and pain and sorrow and with regards to death, but if we become followers of God on a spiritual level, "If you become followers of what is good," righteousness (only God is good), so if we're followers of God, nothing can harm us because we belong to God. So on a spiritual level *nothing* can harm us, brethren, because we're followers of *righteousness*, we're followers of God, we're followers of what is good, and only God is good. So if we're practicing righteousness, well, what can harm us? Absolutely nothing on a spiritual level. Yes, there may be some physical harm that may come to us, but we're still in God's hands. And even though that harm comes to us on a physical level, God still knows about it and it's still for our good, because *everything*, "*everything* works to the good of those who love God and who keep His commandments," those that are taking on the mind of God, those who are repentant, who are striving to think *differently!* Well, nothing can happen to us without God's knowledge. *Nothing* could happen to us without God's knowledge. And we're *striving* to take on this thinking of God. We desire God's holy spirit so we can take

on, so we can yield to God's holy spirit. Well, God knows everything about us and He knows *exactly* what will happen to us.

Verse 14—But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, because we're taking on the very mind of God, the thinking of God, and we're yielding to God's holy spirit, ***you are blessed***. So if we suffer because we're taking on the mind of God, we are *blessed*! We are so fortunate to be suffering for righteousness' sake. What a marvelous scripture, I find this. "But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are blessed*!" Brethren, we are blessed! Now, if we suffer for righteousness' sake, it can be on a physical level where we're mocked or we're ridiculed or we're reviled, but we can look at this also, if we should suffer by giving up on ourselves, by getting rid of self, by denying ourselves - because denying our self, our selfishness, *is* suffering. So we're to give up our selfishness. But even if we should suffer, give up on ourselves, sacrifice our self for righteousness - because we want to take on the mind of God - for righteousness' sake. So we're denying ourselves, we're denying our pride, we're denying the lusts and the desires that are within us, these human things that happen, the selfishness, our personal opinions, all of these things. If we are to suffer by denying them, by putting them to death because of the righteousness that God will place in our thinking (His holy spirit), we are blessed. We are blessed above *all humans*, brethren, if we are suffering for righteousness' sake. We are blessed! We are called and we've been called to take on the mind of God, this one way of thinking, this righteousness.

Now, if we're denying self, if we're putting self to death, we are blessed to be able to do it. Mankind, of and by himself, cannot suffer for righteousness' sake. Absolutely impossible. Mankind cannot take on the thinking of God. And even if he took on a component of God's thinking, it's still done for selfish reasons. His intent is not a godly intent. His motive is not a godly motive. It's all based on selfishness. But we're being called to suffer for righteousness' sake, to take on the very thinking of God, therefore, we are blessed! We are blessed above *all humans* that exist today. Their time will come. And one day *they* will be blessed as well because they're going to be able to suffer for righteousness' sake. Now, this is an enormous blessing, that one day during the Millennium, or during the Hundred-years, mankind will be given the opportunity (the potential) to suffer for righteousness' sake, and they will be blessed because of it. And they *are* blessed because of this potential. What an incredible human potential we have and what a blessing it is to have started this suffering, this denying of our own selfishness, denying the pride of life, denying the lust or the desires of the flesh, and the lusts and the desires of the eyes. This is a great opportunity for us, brethren, to suffer for righteousness' sake because we desire to take on righteousness, God's thinking *in us*.

Continuing on in **verse 14—And do not be afraid of their threats, or be troubled**. So we're not to worry about people that threaten us because we are set apart for holy use and purpose. We are suffering because God has called us to suffer for His sake, to take on His thinking, and we shouldn't be afraid. We should not fear any threat or any trouble that may come to us because we're taking on this mind of God because we're different. And as we went through the previous sermon series, we think *differently*. We're Sabbath-keepers. We honor God through honoring the 10 Commandments. Our motive and intent is to put God first at any cost, even if it costs us family, if it costs us friends, if it costs us our employment, if it

costs us whatever it is that we could give up on a physical level. It's going to cost us our life, and that's a wonderful blessing. Being called is costing us our life! And by that, I'm saying, it's costing us our *physical* life in the sense of our human nature being put to death. We're going to die by putting to death our nature. Our nature, our selfishness is going to be put to death! This is an incredible plan that God has, absolutely marvelous and motivating. Because we can deny self, we can put it to death, powered by God's holy spirit, and therefore, we shouldn't be afraid of *anything* - *anything* that man can do, because *they* can do *nothing* to us. Yes, they might destroy the body. Yes, they may cause us to *suffer* on a physical level, but it's all worth it on a spiritual level because this is what we have been called to. So we're not to be afraid of their threats or we're not to be *troubled*. We're not to worry about it, take it into the mind and think, "Oh, what about this?" and, "Oh, what about that?" No. Set it before God. Place it before God in prayer. And God has said here before that He knows everything about us, and that no harm can come to us. Only spiritual good can come to us if we're yielding to righteousness, if we're yielding to this one mind, the thinking of God.

Verse 15—But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, "set aside God (Yahweh Elohim) in our thinking, in our inner intent," that we're going to put God *first*. So we have been set aside for holy use and purpose. We're set apart by God (because we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us), we're set apart as holy, and all God's ways are holy. God is first in every single thing in our life. Now, if He's not, which means we're putting something else before God, we're putting our selfishness before God. Because idolatry is simply putting something before God. Now, it can be anything. People think of idolatry as idols, having idols to idol worship. Well, we have idols in our life, and those idols are self. Self is the biggest idol that any human can have. Selfishness, pride, the natural carnal mind *is* the biggest idol that we worship. We put self first. It's not about statues and it's not about other idols that people may put up. They put up their work as an idol, the stock exchange as an idol. Well, they're some of the things that we can see, but the one thing that people can't see, the one thing that mankind cannot see is their own selfishness is the biggest idol. Because what does mankind put first? Self!

Now, we, brethren, in the Church, do the same, but God has set us aside as holy because He lives and dwells in us. We are the temple of God's holy spirit. This is the dwelling place where God dwells, *in our minds*, His thinking in us. "But sanctify the LORD God in your hearts," put God aside as first. We put God as first in every single thing we do in our thinking, because we have to think differently. The world thinks of self. It doesn't think differently. We've been called out to think differently, to repent of that way of thinking, to get rid of self, and to put God as holy, put Him as first in our thinking.

...and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Now, *this* is a great scripture also, brethren. Very exciting! Because we put God first in everything we do, therefore, we're Sabbath-keepers, we pay tithe (1st and 2nd), we give Holy Day offerings, we keep the Holy Days, we keep the spirit of the law, we think differently. We think differently. We think differently about death. We think differently about the hope that is in us, which is the hope of a resurrection. Mankind doesn't. We think differently about faith. We think differently about the Church. We think differently about so many things, which is a great glory to us because God is

changing the way we think, and therefore, that is the glory that is in us - it's God's thinking in us - because of and by ourselves there is no glory *in* us. It's only God's spirit in us that gives us any level of glory. And then one day we'll be changed to spirit and then we'll have the thinking of God, God's thinking in us forever, and to be spirit where we can never die.

Well, what is the reason that we think differently now? Well, we should always be ready, always willing to give a defence, which is, if people revile us and the opportunity is there, if they're humble enough to hear the answer, we could give it. But we don't give any answer if they're not ready to hear, because it's all a waste of time. It's like spitting in the wind (as they say), which it will blow back over your face. So there's no point spitting because it's going to blow all over you. So don't spit into the wind. But we should be ready in our minds to give a defence to everyone who *asks* you (who asks us) a reason. So we have to be asked, "Well, why are you so positive?" "Why are you a Sabbath-keeper?" "Why are you paying tithes?" We should be able to give these basic answers about the hope that lies within us. But it's only to everyone (or anybody) who asks us a reason for the hope that is in you. Now, this hope is this change of thinking. This is that thinking differently. Because they're not going to ask us if they agree with us, they're going to ask us because they don't agree, or they ask us because we're different, because we *are* Sabbath-keepers, and because we're Commandment-keepers, because we're monitoring our attitudes, because we don't revile when reviled and we don't return evil with evil. We don't try to get even. And we know our calling. We're controlling our tongue. We're controlling our thinking. We're doing good to those that do evil to us. We're seeking peace and we're *pursuing* peace with others. That's the way we are. Now, someone may ask, "Well, you do all those things! *Why* are you doing those things?" Well, it's all about the hope that is in us. This *hope* of a resurrection. This *hope* of the transformation of the way we think, from selfishness to the mind of God. And if that is completed within us to a level according to God's will and purpose, there is a hope, and it's a hope of entering Elohim. Incredible plan that God has for mankind!

And how would we do it, brethren? Well, we're not going to do it in pride because that would be sin. We're not going to do it with vanity or selfishness connected to it. In other words, "I'm better than you. Let me tell you. Let me tell you why I have this hope and you don't have it! Because I was called and you weren't!" Well, that's all vanity. That's all *pride*. That's *wrong* thinking! So how will we do it? ...**with meekness**, which is with humility because we know who we really are. We're no better than any other human. We're no better than the human that has asked us this question, about the hope that lies within us. No, we do it with meekness, with humility, because we *know* we're no better and we know who we really are! Deep down we still have a lot of selfishness, we still have wrong motives, we still have pride, we still have lusts that go on within our thinking, and we know it! Therefore, we're going to answer with great humility because it's only by the mercies of God, by God's great love towards us that we were called to transform our thinking now, to take on the mind of God now. We did *nothing, absolutely nothing* to earn it. Absolutely nothing to *earn* it. We don't even deserve it! But God in His great love and mercy has called us now to transform the way we think, to not be conformed to the world, not be invited into the way of the world's thinking, but to think differently, to repent, to change now. Therefore, we will answer the person with great humility, with no pride whatsoever, and **fear**. We will fear, and we will

be fearing to answer wrongly, we'll be fearing to answer *in pride*. That's why we'll be fearful. We'll be fearful - not because God's going to punish us, not because of blessings and cursing's - we're going to fear because we don't want to do it in sin. We want to do it the way God has outlined it in His word. We want to do it with humility and fear because we fear to sin. Because if we answer wrongly, if we lift ourselves up and we start to answer with any level of *pride*, we will have sinned, and it's just a vanity because we'll have lifted ourselves up in our thinking and it'll come across as, "Well, we're better!" We're just better than they are. No, brethren, every time we give and answer we've been set aside by God as separate. We're set aside as separate because God is doing a work *in* us. God is working in our thinking! And we should always be ready to give an answer based on humility and fearing to give a wrong answer based on any level of selfishness, based on any level of pride.

Continuing on, **verse 16—having a good conscience, that when they defame you**, which is when they put you down, when they belittle you, when they revile you, they call you a religious nut, you're just part of a cult, you're part of the Church of God—PKG, you're Sabbath-keepers, you give all this money to the Church, you even give offerings, you give tithes, you keep these special Feast days. When they speak evil of us, "when they defame you," when they defame you and me, **as evildoers...** They think we're evil doers! We're weird. We're different. We think differently. Well, this is good. This is good news! We think differently.

Now, if we think the same as the world and we're not thinking differently than the world, we have a big problem within our spirit. We have a big problem, brethren. Because if we're thinking like the world about the death penalty, if we think like the world about sex before marriage and we agree with it, if we agree and we think like the world that two women can live together in a sexual relationship and two men can live together in a sexual relationship, all of these things, all the sexual perversions that go on, if we agree that pornography, freedom of speech is okay, we've got a serious spiritual problem. If we really believe in conspiracy theories and not base our lives on the word of God, we have a big spiritual problem! We really do, only we just don't see it.

If they call us evil doers *because* we're living the truth, we're living God's righteousness in our life, we're implementing the change of our thinking in our life, **those who revile your good conduct**, because of the way we're living and we're not retaliating, we're not speaking evil of others, we're not gossiping, when they speak against us "as evil doers, those who revile your good conduct," because they're going to put us down because of who we are, **in Christ**, because it has to be "in Christ," as we went through a previous sermon series about being dead in Christ and those that are alive in Christ can be changed because they're "in Christ," because they've taken on the mind of God, the thinking of Jesus Christ, **may be ashamed**. So at some point in time they're going to realize that when we were reviled we didn't revile back. Why? Because we had a change of thinking. Because *we* have our conduct, the way we think, the way we speak, the way we live *in Christ*, so we agree with God. We've taken on the very thinking of Jesus Christ, which is the thinking of God. We are in a state of *repentance*! We're in a state of thinking differently. That one day, when they come to see it on a spiritual level, they will be ashamed.

Verse 17—For *it is better*, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. It is about suffering for righteousness' sake. It's not about suffering because of our own stupidity, because of the natural carnal mind's decisions. We have to suffer for righteousness *if* it is God's will. Now, it is God's will for some people to suffer more for righteousness' sake because of their role, or because of what God is doing in their life. So it is better if it is the will of God (Yahweh Elohim) that we suffer for doing good. If we suffer for taking on the thinking of God. If we suffer because we're Sabbath-keepers. If we suffer because we're Holy Day-keepers. If we suffer because we're keeping the 10 Commandments in spirit and truth. If we suffer because of this in our life - we can't get the work we want. If we suffer because we travel and there is no clean food to eat, it's all just garbage, well, we're suffering on a physical level. If we suffer in this life, in any shape or form because we're taking on something that is spiritual, the mind of God, this doing good, which comes from God's holy spirit, and we're rejecting evil in our life because of the way we live, well, if we suffer for good it is better to suffer for good than it is to suffer for evil because of the sin in our life.

Now, we will suffer, brethren, because of evil, because we make wrong choices on a spiritual level *in our life*. That is *natural!* That is what happens in all of our lives because we *do* have selfishness. And our life, our battle is to change the way we think, to get rid of the selfishness, to take on the very mind of God.

So, **verse 17**, again, **For *it is better***, this is good, **if it is the will of God**, if it is God's purpose in our life, **to suffer for doing good**, for taking on the mind of God and living righteousness, **than for doing evil**. So, yes, we will suffer if we do evil, because there's a penalty, "the wages of sin," there will be a penalty that is paid. There's physical penalties, there's spiritual penalties that are going to be applied to our life. Well, we are to suffer for doing good, for living the truth, taking on the very mind, the very thinking of God. Therefore, we will suffer to a degree. Some suffer more than others according to God's will.

The plan is to go back to Matthew 5 at some point. Whether or not we get there this particular sermon, I'm not sure. But we will continue in **Hebrews 12:1**. This, of course, is Paul writing to the Hebrews. **Therefore, we**, talking about members of the Body of Christ. **Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, it's talking about those that died in the faith because Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter and it goes through those that are witnesses of the way of life, witnesses of God. They've provided the evidence of the change of thinking. So going back to Hebrews 12:1—**Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight...** It's referring to the things that slow us down, that bog us down. Something that slows us down, what is that? Well, it's sin. The things that slow us down is sin, because it slows down the change of thinking that needs to take place.

Well, we've had all of this witness, all of this evidence of all of those people, we are surrounded by these people in the sense in God's word, have gone before us, therefore, because they have achieved righteousness and they are chosen (because that's what the evidence is based on God's word), "let us lay aside," so let's get rid of "every weight," which is our opinions and those things that weigh us down, which is a way of thinking. Those things that have the wrong thinking, the natural carnal mind, **and sin**, because it's a way of thinking, selfishness, **which so easily ensnares us**, and **let us run with endurance**,

so we have to run with endurance. Now, when you look at an endurance race it's normally a long distance. It's not a short sprint. It's not about that. It's not about a short race and it's all over. We are to now get rid of these things, these sins and our opinions and the way of thinking that ensnares us, that traps us, and we are to "run with endurance," because this is going to take time. We're going to have to fight our selfishness the whole of our life once we are called. Now, those that aren't called are not fighting their selfishness and they're not enduring to the end. They're not in a race against themselves. Whereas, we're in a race against ourselves.

So let us, brethren, run with endurance. Let's fight against our selfishness, **the race**, which is the fight against ourselves is the race, **that is set before us**. Now, God has called us into this race, this race that we have to endure to the end. Now people give up. I've seen many-a-people, and I'm sure you have too, brethren, where people have gone back to the things that have weighed them down and the sin, because of their opinions or their views or their natural carnal mind views of things, and the sin, the sin that they have given into, which is that pride and the desires that they have. Because that sin snared them again that they no longer run with endurance, because they've given up the fight. Whereas, we have to continue to fight against our thinking, our natural thinking, the things that oppose God's way of thinking.

So, "let us," brethren, "run with endurance the race," this race of fighting against ourselves, "that is set before us." That's what our calling is all about. That's what life's about for someone that has been called into a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. It started with a calling. It started with repentance, this seeing of what we have to change, the seeing of the need to think differently. And we get excited by this calling, this beginning to see things, this thinking differently. We start to think differently about the Sabbath. We start to think differently about who we really are and what sin is, because God shows us sin through the law, the intent. "Ah!" We start to see we are selfish. Well, God has set this before us. Then we get baptized because we want our sins to that point in time to be forgiven, but we also desire to have God's holy spirit, which is His righteousness live and dwell in us! Well, that's what's been set before us, this race, this fight against self. And the gift of repentance is part of God's great mercy to us. Because once we have received God's holy spirit we then know, we then see that we are contrary to God's way of thinking, we're contrary to righteousness. We see selfishness within us. We see our pride, we see our desires, and therefore, this race, this endurance that has been set before us - well, we now see it. We know this is going to take time because we always go back to our natural mind. We always respond, we retaliate, we do all those things. We *do* think evil for evil. We *like* to give evil. We like to get even. That's natural. Well, we have to be patient in this fight against self. We have to endure to the end, the end of our life, whenever that may be. We are on this race, this race of fighting against self that God has set before us.

Verse 2. What are we doing? ...**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith**, because we look to what Jesus Christ has achieved. Jesus Christ has achieved life for us. Because of His death, the Passover sacrifice, sin can be covered. This is fantastic for *us*! Well, He is "the author and finisher of our faith," because we now have faith, we believe God, we believe what Jesus Christ has done and we *live* it. We *live* our faith. ...**who for the joy that was set before Him, before Jesus Christ, endured the stake,**

despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. So He's been placed in authority in Elohim. Now, He had this joy because of what God has promised, the joy of becoming Elohim. So we can have the joy, brethren, even though we're going to suffer. We should now have the faith of what Jesus Christ has delivered for us, which is salvation. We can be saved through Jesus Christ. Well, we should endure the suffering just as Jesus Christ has endured suffering, "and despising the shame," the shame of the mocking and the ridicule. Now, Jesus Christ was staked to a pole, which was no light thing by any means. We have to despise the thinking that is *naturally* in us. We have to now take on the thinking of God. And we will, at some time, inherit what Jesus Christ has inherited. And that is to enter Elohim. Now, we have to do all of this within the bounds of God's way of thinking, which is all done within humility. So we're to take on any ridicule, any mocking, and we're to take on the (so-called) ridicule and reviling, and we're to take it on in the sense of thinking the way God thinks about the matter.

Verse 3—For consider Him (Jesus Christ) who endured such hostility, so He remained under this hostility, **from sinners.** He didn't revile back. He didn't try to get even. Well, we've been called to suffer. He was created to suffer for all mankind. He didn't deserve any of it. We often deserve the ridicule because of the stupidity of our human nature. Jesus Christ didn't deserve any of it. But we should **consider Jesus Christ, who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, let you become weary and discouraged in your life.** So, brethren, we should stand back and consider what Jesus Christ did for us, and therefore, when we consider that we shouldn't become discouraged, we shouldn't become weary within our life - which is to have this pity-party, woe is me, you know, "It's all too hard and I can't overcome, and it's all just too hard. These people don't like me. My family's turned against me. My friends have turned against me. I just can't get a job that I want." We can quit in the mind, brethren, and that's a problem. We can quit in the mind. And it doesn't take long if we give up on fighting against ourselves, we become in a drift. We become Laodicean in our attitude, which is, well, we think we've got it all. We've been called. We have all this truth - 57 truths - and there's more truths within those truths themselves. There's so much God has given. There's so much God has given in the posts. But it is about this suffering hostility from those that despise and hate us because we think differently. And it's a glory to us, brethren, that we think differently. The glory all goes to God. But God's thinking in us *is* the glory. Now, because of all of these things, because of what's happened to God's Church and the persecution that has been placed on God's Church and God's leadership, well, we're not to become weary and discouraged in our life. Actual fact, it's the opposite because becoming weary and discouraged is inward thinking. It's *selfishness!* It's *self-pity.* We're quitting in the mind! Well, this is going to be hard. This is going to be hard to the very end, the end of our life. It's going to be very hard because we can *never* give up the battle. We can *never* become weary. We can *never* become discouraged because we start to think inwardly. We can't have this pity-party, "Woe is me. I've got bad health." "Woe is me. I don't have any money." "Woe is me. I can't get a job." "Woe is me. My family's turned against me." "Woe is me. My wife/ my husband don't understand. They're making life difficult for me." Well, what we've read before, we should rejoice for righteousness' sake. We should *suffer* for righteousness' sake, and we should rejoice in it! Now, it's hard. It's a hard concept for the natural carnal mind to even begin, when suffering, to rejoice. How's that possible? It's *only* possible if we're thinking differently, if we're taking on the very

mind of God and we're suffering for righteousness' sake. We can rejoice. We can rejoice because what is happening in our life - a transformation of the way we think. We are repenting. We're thinking differently.

So when we go before God in prayer and we admit before God that we have thought wrongly, and we've even acted wrongly, or spoken wrongly, or let our eyes dominate our thinking, our minds, or the desires that live in us in our thinking, that we fulfill them, or the pride of life has lifted itself up where we defend the self, we justify the self or we lift ourselves up as an idol before God - our own selfishness because of our own *pride* - we sin against God, which is all to do with pride.

If we do those things and we go before God and we repent, we tell God we don't want to be this way, we don't want to *think* this way (even though it's natural, it's in us), we reject it, we want to be transformed, we don't want to be conformed to man's way of thinking (to selfishness). We don't want to be conformed to this world. We want to be transformed. We want our minds changed. We want to think differently. That's repentance. Admitting before God that we are wrong *is* repentance. Desiring to change, desiring to think like God *is* repentance. Now, God has made a way clear for us, brethren, so that we can go before Him *in* repentance. We can go before Him at any time we choose, to admit what we are, the way we think, to admit we don't want to *be* this way, that we have made a mistake, that we have missed the mark and we have sinned against God - because that's who we sin against. We sin against God. Therefore, when we do that what we're really saying is we want to think differently, we *desire* to think like God, we desire His righteousness, we desire more of His thinking, more of His holy spirit living and dwelling in us. We *want* to be the temple of the Living God. We *want* God's thinking all for the purpose of being at peace. Because that's what it's about, being at peace. The natural carnal mind cannot be at peace because it's selfish. It's only humility, it's only righteousness, it's only God's thinking that brings peace, that *creates* peace.

Now, when you back over what we had read before and we looked at 1 Peter 3, that's what it's saying. It's saying, well, we don't retaliate, we don't revile, because we're at peace. We *have* the mind of God; we think like God. We are at peace with others. We're at peace with ourselves. We're at peace with God because we *think* like God. So when we have this one mind and we think exactly like God, we *are* in peace. We are in a peaceful state of mind. Our thinking is peace, peace to others, peace within our own life because we agree with God. So we can only have peace of mind if we agree, if we are in unity with God's way of thinking.

Now, Jesus Christ suffered this hostility of those that were against Him, that were warring against Him, but He was always at peace because He knew His purpose in life. He knew what was happening. He *knew* what it was like. He didn't become weary. He didn't become discouraged. He didn't give up. He didn't hold a pity-party. He was actually at peace within His mind.

Verse 4—You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. Now, this puts it all back into perspective. Brethren, we have *not* strived against sin to the point of shedding blood. We have *not* done

that. We have not resisted sin to the point where we would shed our own blood, sweat blood. It never has happened. Because the natural carnal mind of pride just won't do it.

Verse 5—And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, because we're begotten sons of God. We are potential *sons* of God. Well, we're now begotten with God's holy spirit, which enables us to be called sons of God, begotten sons of God because we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us.

So what does God say? **My son, do not despise the chastening of the Eternal.** Let's not lightly esteem the chastening (the correction) that must come to us. So when we are corrected because of our errors, because of the sin that is in our life - in other words this correction is the changing of the way we think. "My son," God's son, begotten sons of God, members of the Body of Christ who have God's holy spirit, who are fighting the fight, who are not looking inwardly, we're not weary, we're not discouraged, we're not having a pity-party because of self, because of suffering. We have sin (we admit it), well, when we're corrected because of it through the change of thinking, because correction is a change of thinking. We have to have our thinking changed. That's our life. Our life is one of thinking differently. Now, we're going to suffer. We *have* to suffer. To have our thinking corrected, to have our selfishness corrected, we have to suffer, because self (because of pride) does not like to be corrected. Well, we're going to be corrected because we're begotten sons of God. "My son," talking to us, brethren, "do not despise," do not esteem lightly, don't just take it as just a simple thing. We shouldn't despise it, we shouldn't esteem it lightly, "the chastening," which is the correction, "from the LORD," from Yahweh Elohim, the creator of the universe who desires to give us righteousness, who desires to give us *Elohim*! It's a gift from God! Therefore, to inherit what God is going to give us, to be begotten sons of God, to be heirs of the promise (which is life in Elohim) we should not despise, we shouldn't take it lightly the chastening/correction that God is going to give us. How will God give it to us? Through a correction of the way we think, through sermons where we hear things, through when we read God's word. When we are directly corrected by God we shouldn't take it lightly because God is doing this because He loves us. So we should not despise any reproof or any correction that comes from God because God's desire is to transform the way we think, to think differently than we do by nature.

Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked, which is "corrected" by Him (by God). We shouldn't be discouraged. We shouldn't become weary or discouraged or hold this pity-party, "Oh, I'm suffering! This is all too hard." No, we should be thankful to God because He desires to transform us. He desires to *give us* eternal life (life-everlasting) in Elohim. What an incredible gift! Therefore, what suffering could be measured against this? None! *What* suffering? *What* reviling? *What* putting down? *What* evil that would be thrown against us can be compared to what God desires to give us? So why would we become discouraged? Pity. *Self-pity* is the only reason. So the natural carnal mind will dominate our thinking rather than God's thinking dominating our thinking. That's why we would become discouraged and we will give up because it's all too hard. In other words, the pity-party has started.

Verse 6—For whom the LORD loves, which God loves us. God's called us because He loves us. He desires us to take on His thinking because He loves us because He wants to give us *Elohim*! He wants to give us

life-everlasting! So **Whom**, which is us, **the Eternal** (Yahweh Elohim) **loves**, **He (God) chastens**, He corrects. But He always does it *in love*! He always does it because He loves us. He is *transforming* the way we think. He is molding and fashioning our minds. Our bodies are nothing. The way we look, our height, our hair, our clothing, the color we are, no matter what we are, big, small, as a human it makes no difference. It makes a difference in the world because it's carnal, it's selfish, it's inward. That's why it makes a difference. It has prejudices and biases based on height, color, race, everything, eye-color, height, whatever. There's bias. There's racism. There's all sorts of things because it's all coming from the natural carnal mind. But that's not the thinking of God. That is not righteousness. "For whom the Eternal loves," which is us, brethren, "He (God) chastens." He corrects us because He loves us. He is molding and fashioning our thinking. It's our minds that are important. It's about the transformation of the way we think. Now, we're being trained like a small child, which has to be corrected. If we leave a child to itself, what will happen? If a child was completely left to itself it will harm itself and possibly die. Well, we're the same. If we're left to ourselves we harm ourselves, like the world, without knowing it, are harming themselves. They don't know they're harming themselves. They don't know that they're riddled with sin. They don't know they're destroying their own thinking. And if left to themselves, *they will die*. Without God's intervention into their life they'll never be given the opportunity for *true* life because the mind will just go more and more perverted. It will end up on a path where it *cannot* be saved because it's set in its thinking.

But God loves us, therefore, He is training us (as a child) and we'll be corrected, just like a husband or a wife, mother and father would correct their children. They have to, to change the way they think, to think the right way, to think to the standards that the family may have. Well, we are the same. To enter Elohim, to enter God's family, we have to be corrected. We have to have our thinking trained like a child, to think differently, to think like our parent. God the Father is our Father and the Church is the mother of us all. God the Father is our Father; we're *begotten* sons of God, and the Church, the mother of us all. So God will correct us through the Church. God will correct us directly in our thinking by reading the Bible. But God uses the Church - Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church - through an apostle to correct His children, begotten sons of God, and He will transform our thinking powered by God's holy spirit. What an incredible plan God has, that He is transforming our thinking. Now, what does He do? "For whom the LORD loves," which is us, "He chastens," He corrects, **and scourges every son whom He receives**. So we're going to have to have this molding and fashioning, this correction take place in our life to change the way we think.

Verse 7—If you endure, which is remain under the chastening - because not everybody remains under the correction. Some people are corrected and they don't like it and go off and have a pity-party. They go *inward*. They think, "Oh, I'm being corrected!" by God, by the ministry, by an elder within God's Church (who has been given that authority to do it), but when that happens, the secret to it all is to remain under the chastening, remain under the correction. And that remaining under is to think differently - not to take it personal. It's done for the person's good, their *spiritual* good. So to remain under the spirit of the law, to see the way we really are, is the key to this. And the moment we rise up in pride to defend self or believe the chastening or the correction is unjust and unfounded, we've got problems. No, we

have to remain under the authority of God's holy spirit in our life and the authority of God's holy spirit in the Church.

Verse 7, again, **If you endure**, which is to remain under **the chastening, God deals with you** (with us) **as with sons** (begotten sons of God who need correcting), **for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?** Well, if a father, because of his own laziness, because he doesn't really love his children, he won't correct them. Now, a moment a father or a mother does not chasten their own children, they don't really love the child. They might say they do, but they don't. Because if they're not corrected, the child will harm himself or itself. If the parent loves the child they will discipline themselves, they'll discipline their own selfishness (if they have God's holy spirit), and they will correct or chasten and bring up the child the way they should be brought up, which is with the thinking of God. A person, two people within God's Church, will bring up their children *under* God's government, under the authority of God, which is God's thinking in a person's mind. So they will implement correction for the child because the child left to themselves is going to be completely selfish. Whereas, if they are corrected and chastened *in love*, because that's the *best* thing for them, that's the best thing that can happen with any child, with any children within a marriage— correction— Godly thinking being introduced into the mind of a marriage.

If we take any correction personally, and if we just then take it, we will then try to defend self because we don't want to take that correction because of pride. Well, brethren, we have to think differently. We have to repent. We have to change the way we think.

Now, a converting person, a person who is on the path of salvation, who is transforming the way they think to be thinking like God by repentance, yielding to God's holy spirit, remaining under the chastening, remaining under the government of God, remaining under God's thinking within their own life and within the Church (which is this "remaining under"), they are on the path of salvation. They are on the path of transforming. They are not conforming to man's thinking, to the ways of the world; they are transforming their thinking to think like God. Now, *that* is repentance. A person changing their thinking is on the path of repentance, which is the path of salvation. The purpose of life, we understand, is about a life of correction. It's about having our minds changed, the way we think changed.

But if you are without chastening, for which all have become partakers, because we are partakers of this correction. If we're not partakers of it, **then you are illegitimate and not sons**. If our thinking is not being changed - because with this correction, with this chastening our thinking is going to be changed, we'll be thinking differently. So everyone has to be corrected. *But* if this change of thinking's not taking place, if this correction is *not* taking place, if the transformation of our minds is not taking place, if we're not being repentant and we're not taking on righteousness, we don't have God's holy spirit. Then we are "illegitimate and we are not begotten sons of God." What a terrifying thing to hear! To not be a begotten son of God is a fearful thing. We're only begotten sons of God if we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us and *if* we are transforming the way we think. If we aren't repenting of what we are, what God gives us to see within our nature - the pride that we have, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes, God gives us the sight to see them on a spiritual level, and if we're repenting, if we are changing the way we think about these matters, we are now begotten sons of God because God's holy

spirit is what is enabling it. It's God's holy spirit that's enabling this transformation of the mind. But if we're not being corrected, if our thinking isn't changing, we are *not* begotten sons of God, because we're not changing the way we think. We're not thinking differently.

Verse 9—Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and it's based on their own ideas and their own thinking. My mother and father corrected me based on what they thought as right or what they saw as being right in their own eyes, their views. My father was an atheist. He corrected me now and again. My mother, being a catholic, corrected me often. She was the one who gave out the punishment. Well, now those things I see clearly, that this scripture clearly says that we have human fathers (or mothers) who corrected us based on their own ideas. Because to be a catholic, you have to be corrected based on what the Catholic Church taught, which was Sunday worship. So I got corrected if I didn't want to go to church on Sunday. Well, it's based on human reasoning, on human thinking. ...and we **paid them respect**. We respected that authority within our family, as we should, until we are an age where God calls us or we would be considered an adult where we have our own minds to be able to live our own life. But while we are in that family environment we are under that authority and we respected that authority. Whether it was right or wrong, we still respected it based on fear - fear of being punished, generally.

Continuing on in **verse 9—Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?** So that's the question. Human family's corrected us and we respected them. They were our mother and a father, or they were our authority, or they were our boss, for example. Well, we respected that authority. We feared to go against it. Well, how much more should we be in subjection to God the Father, to God the Father, *His* authority in our life, *His* holy spirit living and dwelling in us transforming the way we think? Well, if we do, which we should, because we should *fear* God, we should *fear* to sin, we should learn to live God's way of life, and if we learn to live God's way of life and live, as this scripture says. So, because God is the creator, "that we should be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?" Well, yes. We shouldn't be using our own authority in our life or the authority of others. We should be transforming our thinking by yielding to God the Father, the creator of the universe, the creator of all things, who gives life - physical life, but more importantly, gives spirit life. And He gives us spirit life by God living and dwelling in us, by transforming our thinking now, but in the end, a change, a change to spirit. He gives *true* life. Isn't this exciting to understand!

Verse 10—For they, the parents, indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them. It was based on their own thinking, which was what is happening all around the world today. Muslims are corrected based on the Muslim religion. Hindu's based on the Hindu religion. Catholics based on the Catholic religion. But it's based on their own selfishness, what they want within their family. It's based on their own ideas coming from the natural carnal mind. ...but **He (God) corrects us for our own profit**, for our own benefit. So God chastens us, God corrects us, not based on selfishness and pride. God corrects us based on love, the spirit of a matter. So God loves us. He desires that we transform our thinking, powered by His holy spirit, and He does it to benefit us, to profit us, **that we may be partakers of His holiness**, that we may share in His character.

So, why are we corrected by God? So that we can take on the very mind of God, the same thinking as God. And that's the key of life. To understand this, brethren, is an *incredible benefit*. It's an *incredible* blessing that we understand repentance. We understand that we need to be transformed. We understand that we need to be partakers of His holiness, to share in His thinking. So why are we corrected? To take on the thinking of God, to have the same mind as God, and then at some point in time to be changed to spirit.

Verse 11—Now, no chastening (no correcting, no training) **seems to be joyful for the present**, no, it's difficult, it's painful because self is being affected, **but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained/exercised by it.** So we can have this peace of mind because we're taking on the thinking of God. And, yes, God's thinking yields peace. And the "fruit of righteousness," what's the "fruit of righteousness?" God's thinking! "...to those who have been trained (or are being exercised) by it." Brethren, we are being exercised/trained in the thinking of God. We are being *trained* in the thinking of God, to think differently.

Now, we've been through the past sermon about all the things we think differently. This is *exciting!* God is preparing our mind. God is preparing our minds now to move from selfishness to righteousness, and we should be excited by it! We should take no correction personally, but we should rejoice in the fact that God loves us so much that we are being corrected. Now, if we feel pain with that correction, be on guard that we don't go into inward thinking, into self-pity. We shouldn't become weary or discouraged, but we should do the opposite. We should rejoice in this correction, based on a spiritual level. It's *difficult* to do if we have pride! It's difficult. It's only in humility that we can rejoice in correction. So it requires humility. It requires correct thinking, of who we really are so that we can rejoice when God the Father corrects us.

Verse 12—Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down, don't become weary and get depressed or become inward in thinking, hang down the hands and give up, **and feeble knees**, in other words, become weak in our stance for God's way of life. Because God is correcting us based on love. So don't give into the pressure of correction where we take it personally, where we think about self, because God is doing it because He loves us. So we should "strengthen the hands that hang down and the feeble knees," because we're weak now because we're thinking about self, **and make straight paths for your feet**, turn to God, to God's righteousness, **so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.** So it's the spiritual healing that is the most important thing. It's the healing of the mind. Now, we should not reject correction. We should take on the correction and be thankful for it because we have the right view about what correction is about, that God is correcting us out of love and we are to take this because the fruit of what's going to happen, the outcome is we'll be taking on righteousness, we'll be taking on correct thinking, the thinking of God. Our minds will be being healed. Our minds will be being healed.

Verse 14—From this healing...Pursue peace with all men, we're to seek peace with others. How do we pursue peace? By seeking, pursuing righteousness. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and *His* righteousness." *God's* righteousness! Now, if we're seeking this righteousness we will not be reviling, we will not be

gossiping, we won't be retaliating. We'll be seeking peace, we'll be seeking peace with all. ...and holiness, which is the mind of God, **without which no one will see the Eternal**. No one will see the LORD. So if we don't pursue peace, if we don't take on the mind of God, if we don't take on God's thinking, no one will see God. It's *impossible*! Because selfishness cannot enter the Kingdom of God. It's only the mind of God, those that are taking on the mind of peace, the mind of unity, the mind of righteousness, God's thinking, it's only those that are *yielding to righteousness* that are going to see God, which is to see Elohim, which is to enter the Kingdom of God. What should we do? This seeking God, seeking peace, seeking the mind of God, thinking differently, thinking like God? What should we do? ...**looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God**, because it is God that has given us this mercy, this grace. God's desire is that we take on His thinking. Well, we should look diligently towards taking on this mind of God. We should remember our calling, the favor God has shown us.

So now we are looking diligently towards God's way of life, to think differently, taking on this very mind, **lest any root of bitterness spring up cause trouble**. Now, because of this correction that will take place, what happens is a root of bitterness comes in. It's like a poison and it eats up the mind. It's like a justification of self. Pride is hurt, and therefore, when pride is hurt, what can happen? We've got two choices. We can turn to God in humility, to ask God to help us, to understand why we have been corrected by Him, by the ministry through a sermon, through reading of the word, whatever it may be, that we're corrected. It may be our wife or husband that may correct us out of love so that we're no longer arrogant or proud, or liars, or whatever that may be in our life that they see that we haven't got a grip on yet. Well, when we're corrected, we should look diligently towards God, for God's mercy and favor, for His forgiveness. Because we don't want to fall into this root of bitterness, because this root of bitterness (which is all based on pride) will *poison our thinking* and it will spread. It will spread within our thinking and we will then become hostile towards the correction. And what we become hostile towards is hostile to the one who gave the correction, because the *bitterness* creeps in, because we'll justify and defend self. We'll think it's unfair that we were corrected that way. *How dare* that person do that! Or *how dare* God's ministry do it! Or *how dare* God's prophets do it! Or *how dare* an apostle says that! Or *how dare* God do it! Because that's what we're really saying.

If we do not take correction from God's servants we are really saying, "*How dare* God correct me!" and the root of bitterness creeps in. Now, this has happened within God's Church for hundreds and hundreds of years, hundreds of years, because nobody likes correction. The natural carnal mind does not like correction. A person with God's holy spirit should rejoice at correction. It's a difficult thing because it requires humility. A person can only take correction if humility is in place. And if humility is in place repentance is in place, and therefore, the ability to think differently is in place and the root of bitterness will not spring up. So "in looking diligently, lest anyone fall short of the grace of God," the favor of God, "lest any root of bitterness spring up cause trouble," **and by this many become defiled**, many become polluted. Many go back to the natural carnal mind. Many give up, they become weary and discouraged because of the correction, and they give up fighting against their own selfishness.

So, brethren, the important part here is that we do not give up.

Verse 16—lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. He gave up! He didn't continue the fight! We have to not give up in any shape or form. We're not to give up on God. Now, this giving up can be on something that is very, very small, like a piece of food he gave up. Now, people do that. They give up on the smallest matter and they walk out on God. They leave God's Church because of something small, a small correction. Somebody that may be given a role as an associate elder, or someone that may be given another opportunity within the ministry, people don't agree; they give up on the smallest possible matter. Therefore, brethren, we should be on guard. We should "strengthen the hands that hang down and the feeble knees." We're not to become discouraged. We should make straight *our* paths. We shouldn't sin. We should not sin! We should have our minds healed, healed with humility, healed with the righteousness of God.

Verse 17—For you know that afterwards, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, no place for a change of thinking, because repentance is to think differently.

So giving up spiritually is a terrible thing, brethren. We should not give up spiritually for something that is physical. We are to strive on a spiritual level. And all the things that happen to us physically have a spiritual component. **For he (Esau) sought it diligently with tears.** He did it in his own selfishness, because to shed tears over it was about him being selfish. Because he didn't have God's holy spirit. But he did give up. This is the example of something physical. He gave up a lot for something small. Well, on a spiritual level, we can learn from Esau. We shouldn't give up battling self. We shouldn't give up our salvation because of something small, some small, little matter, because of our pride, something that's affected our pride, some form of correction. Well, God is saying we shouldn't give up, but we should be *repentant* about the things that are wrong. Where we *are* corrected, let's repent! Let's think differently.

Well, brethren, we will end the sermon here and we'll pick up *Part 2* soon. □