

I'd like to say, "Welcome," to everyone today on God's Sabbath day. We are at home today in Georgia.

Brethren, we've been looking at what God has offered those that He has called, and we've looked at what God calls treasure, treasure in a field that one could find. And God also tells us about a pearl of great price and that's the way God likens it in His book. So I hope everyone has some understanding of what they have been offered by our God, that treasure that He has offered us, you and me, at this time.

So this will be *Part 3* of the sermon series *Treasure*.

Brethren, we are approaching November 7th, the Year of Dedication, and by the time that most hear this sermon, the Year of Dedication will be over. It will have come to a close and it's brought many things to the surface.

So be turning to Ephesians 4. And it's about where God instructs you and me in the way that we should live our lives so that we can have the treasure that God has offered you and me. There are some that have gone before you and me that have already attained this treasure, that pearl of great price. And the book of Hebrews tells us and gives us the names of some of those that have obtained that pearl of great price, that treasure that God tells us about in His book.

God tells us in His book how to use the spiritual mind that He has given you and me, and He does it through the holy spirit, the mind that God has enlightened you and me of to His ways, the mind that shows you and me how to conduct our lives.

Ephesians 4:17 tells us about the influences that will be upon you and me because of the demon world that is there and has so deceived this world. And we have just celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, and now we are entering the seasons of this world where the Satanic influences will be mighty upon this world. And it is a long stretch from the Feast of Tabernacles until Passover. So God tells you and me in His book how we are to walk (better said, I guess), conduct our lives. And in **Ephesians 4:17** it says, **This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord that you should no longer walk as the rest of the gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.** And this is exactly what this world is doing. They are walking in the futility of their mind. They are without understanding, so to speak. But it's not so for you and me. God has given you and me understanding. But when we apply this to the world around us, the world that you and me find our self in, at the time this was written it was applied to the gentiles, but we can apply it to our time that we find our self upon this earth. God says that they do it with "the futility of their mind." But you have the blessing from the Great God of this universe to have understanding, understanding of His plan, and you do not walk with the futility of your mind.

Let's continue... **Having, their**—let's notice what it's about; it's about understanding—**having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God**, just what we're talking about, brethren, **because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their minds** (better said); **who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness**. And when we look at this world, when we look at the morals of this world, it's just about all we see now is lewdness, the minds that have so descended into the darkness of this age. ...**to work all uncleanness with greediness**, and you do see greed. Everywhere you look, brethren, it's greed. And it is a sick, sick world that you and me find our self in. All you see is greed and corruption in this world. We see "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and it's rampant. And that seems to be what it's about in this age, the lusts that are in men and women.

Verse 20, let's notice what God had written: **But you have not so learned Christ**, and you haven't, because you have understanding, brethren. We still have to change and come out of this world. We have to learn a different way of life than this world.

And in **verse 21** we see that word "if" that so impacts our lives - **if indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**. Brethren, this is where the truth is. It's found in God's Church and it's where Jesus Christ is the head. And it's where you and me are to direct our minds, to the things of God. And we're to let God prepare our minds. And it's by the truth of our Great God that we do it. And that's what our focus should be on, the truth and on the things of God, the understanding that He has afforded you.

Verse 22 tells us – **that you put off, concerning your former conduct**, talking about where we've all come from in Satan's world. And we start to understand when we come into God's Church about the human nature that we all live by. We begin to understand the lusts that are in men and women, but we **put off concerning that former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts**. And that's what they are, brethren, deceitful. Satan paints a pretty picture about sin, but it's about those lusts that are in man. And it has been the downfall of so many. And it's actually been the downfall of so many in God's Church that you and me walked side-by-side with, the very thing that Jeremiah told us about, this flesh that affects mankind. God tells us to **be renewed in the spirit of our mind**. This is talking about God's influence upon the mind. That's what is happening today on God's Sabbath. And that's why we come before Him Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day by Holy Day, to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. ...**and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness**, and live the way that God says we are to live our lives.

Let's turn over to 2 Corinthians 4, 2 Corinthians 4. We'll look at verse 3. We are entering the seasons of this world where this world has been blinded to the truths of God, and they live in the deceptions of this world that has been created. And those deceptions are many; the religious deception being the strongest. Most of mankind does not know what they are worshipping because there is a being that has put a veil upon their minds and blinded mankind. God tells us that the world, the whole world, is deceived. So when we look around at this world we see the influences of this deception by this demon world.

And in **2 Corinthians 4:3** we find, **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.** They don't understand that they are blinded. And we understand that it is not their time. It is your time now and you have been offered much treasure, brethren. You have been offered that pearl of great price, that God calls it. We understand that they will be offered that treasure at a later date, that pearl of great price, that treasure that is in the field.

Verse 4 tells us who has blinded them – **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our minds** (better said), and it is God's influence upon the mind that gives us the knowledge that we have, that understanding that you have been afforded. That's how it's done. So with this understanding we should want to direct our mind to the things of our God. And it's through the mind that it is done, through God's holy spirit.

God talks about "light" in His book. We understand that it's talking about understanding, when we walk in that light that He tells us about. And the reason we walk in that light is so we can come out of the darkness (so to speak), to light our paths, to show us the correct way to live our lives.

And 2 Corinthians 10:3 (it's just over a few pages)... **2 Corinthians 10:3.** We are in a spiritual war, brethren, against wicked spirits in high places. And the apostle Paul likened this war and he told us about the weapons that you and me should use in fighting this war. And in **2 Corinthians 10:3** we find - **For though we walk in the flesh—let's notice—we do not war according to the flesh,** because it's a spiritual war.

Verse 4 tells us that, **The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments, and every high thing that exalts itself against—let's notice—the knowledge of God,** talking about understanding. And let's notice—**bringing every thought into captivity.** That's what it's about. It's about the mind and the spiritual war that we find our self in. And you and me have to bring every thought into captivity, and we have to then focus upon how to prepare the mind and how to direct that mind to the things of God. So God had it written in His book and He tells us how to do these things. And He says, **casting down arguments, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.** We are facing a season of this world that will try to exalt itself above God. We are facing Christmas. We are facing Easter. And most everyone knows that Jesus Christ was not born on December 25th, but they still try to exalt it above the knowledge of God. They do so even knowing it is a lie. God tells you and me that we are to bring every thought into captivity, even when our family and friends try to impose it upon us, especially in the months that are ahead you and me, we will have to bring all of our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of our God.

Let's turn over to Romans 8, Romans 8. Jesus paid a horrific price for you and me, and the whole world eventually. He gave his life so that you and me could have understanding of God's plan and become in the God Family, become Elohim. In **Romans 8:1** Paul wrote—**There is, therefore, now no**

condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. And Jesus Christ paid that price, paid that penalty so that we could have these things that we are reading about. For the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. And they do, those lusts that are there, those lusts that make the flesh feel good, those lusts that are so deceitful. ...but those *who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded—let's notice—is death*, that's what it brings about. That's what those lusts that are in man will bring about if not repented of. ...but to be *spiritually minded is life and peace*. And this is the place where you find that peace, brethren, in God's Church. When God puts that spirit in your mind it does bring about peace. And it brings about understanding of what you are offered, that treasure that He has offered you, that pearl of great price.

Verse 7—Because the carnal mind *is* enmity (hostile) against God. And Jeremiah told us about that mind, and Jeremiah told us that **it was not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.** Jeremiah told us that man could not direct his path. It's just not in man to do so. And we have the history of man to know that what Jeremiah said was so true. **So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh—let's notice—but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you.** There's that word "if," if we don't cut our self off once God has granted us His spirit. **Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is not his.** So when we sin and do not repent of the sin, if we continue in the sin, we are cut off from God, brethren. **And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the spirit *is* life because of righteousness.**

So let's pay attention to what verse 11 will tell us—**If the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead, and we understand that that was God the Father that did it, will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit which dwells in you.** So this verse tells us about that treasure that we can have, that pearl of great price - eternal life, brethren, life for eternity, life without pain, life for an eternity with happiness, life without any more death, life without any more sorrow. And this human mind cannot comprehend such a thing, but that's what God has offered you, and He calls it "treasure." He calls it "a pearl of great price." Hopefully, we can have some comprehension of what God has offered us.

Verse 12—Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die. We know about that lake of fire that God tells us about, for those that refuse to live God's way of life. **But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** Jesus Christ has made this possible for you and me, brethren. He has paid that price so that we can have that eternal life, that treasure that God has offered you and me.

Verse 14—For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God. So it's talking about you and me at this time. It's our time now. Many have gone before you and me and they are

dead, and they are awaiting the resurrection. But now God is telling you and me how to prepare our minds and how to direct our mind to the things of God. And it's by the spiritual mind that it's done. You and me are told to come out of this world and not to partake of the things of this world, the lusts that are there, the lusts that have caused so many that walked side-by-side with you and me to fall. The lusts that they succumbed to, that is what caused their downfall. And they can no longer have that treasure at this time that God tells us about until repentance takes place. And hopefully that will take place in the future.

Let's turn back to Romans 7:15. Romans 7:15. Paul said these words after twenty-five years in the ministry. And Paul understood the struggle. And Paul understood that it was a lifetime of experience of how to prepare the mind, and how to direct the mind that God has given us to the things of God. And Paul spent his whole life doing just that. And Paul left us some words of wisdom. And in **Romans 7:15**, let's see what he said after so many years in the ministry. **For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.** And I think every one of us can relate to these words. **Then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that's what I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

And verse 21, let's notice - **I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.** So we can relate to what Paul is saying in God's book because we find this very thing in our lives. Paul understood after many, many years the importance of the mind and directing the mind to the things of God, to stay focused upon those things, to let God mold and fashion his mind. And we have to do the same as Paul. It is our time now. We have to let God direct our minds.

And in verse 22 He said, **For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.** And I think we can all say this because of the understanding that God has given you and me. We understand about those commandments that teach us how to live our lives, and we delight in those things. I think every one of us that are sitting here in this room today look forward to this day, the Sabbath day. And that's the day that we delight in, the Sabbath's of God. So we can understand what Paul is saying.

Verse 23—Paul said, I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. And Paul said, after twenty-five years in the ministry, of striving to live God's way of life, he said, **O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God** - and here's where the understanding that Paul was given comes out in God's book. And he understood that it was through Jesus Christ. That's how it was done. So he could be delivered from that body of death. So that he could have that treasure that God tells us about in His book, that pearl of great price. **So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God,** that's what Paul said. In other words, he knew he had to prepare the mind. He knew that he had to constantly direct his mind to the things of God, so he said, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord, with the mind I myself serve the law of God." So Paul understood about the mind that was in

man. Paul recognized that Jesus Christ had paid the price and that he has made a way for him to have his sins forgiven. Paul understood that it was through Jesus Christ that he was delivered from death for an eternity. He understood that now he could have that eternal life, that treasure that God had offered him. And we understand and know that Paul attained that pearl of great price.

Let's go over to Romans 12, Romans 12. Paul wrote about how we are to conduct our lives. And in **Romans 12:1** we find what he wrote: **I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** So Paul wrote about just what God expected from you and me. God tells us not to be conformed to this world, Satan's world, not to be influenced by the world that has been created by the demon world, not succumb to the lusts that are in Satan's world. And we can see that demon world making those lusts look so good on that little box that we turn on every day, those lusts that make Satan look good and his way of life. But God says for you and me to **be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** So Paul tells us that we are to direct our mind to the things of God. And Paul says we do that by being a living sacrifice, by the way we live our lives, acceptable to God, striving to keep sin out, brethren, living the correct way to live our lives, to come out of this world and live the way that God says live, one that will be acceptable to the Great God of this universe and His Son. And by doing so it does renew our minds and it prepares the mind for the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth, which is in the near future, brethren. We should be letting God prepare that mind for that Kingdom of God.

And God tells us in verse 9 how to act. God gave us some rules of conduct, and he did it through Paul. And living this way does prepare the mind, and it automatically brings about a different way of life. God tells us in **verse 9—Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.** In other words, focus upon that, focus on what is good. And God tells us that all good things come from Him. And that's where our focus should be, on Him and His influences. **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.** So God is telling us how we are to treat one another. **...not lagging in diligence.** So we are to be diligent people, brethren, especially when it comes to the things of God. We're to be **fervent in spirit, serving the Lord** as diligent people, brethren, **rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation,** when we have those trials. We should be rejoicing just like Jesus Christ did when he was hanging upon that stake because of that understanding that you have of that treasure that God has told you about that you could have. Patient in that tribulation. Patient in those trials because we know the end of the story, brethren. **...continuing steadfastly in prayer.** So we all understand that we should pray. We all should understand the importance of prayer in our lives. You cannot prepare the mind without prayer. You cannot direct the mind without prayer. And God tells you and me that we are to continue steadfastly in prayer. So that's how we stay close to our God.

Brethren, every emotion we have will be tested as this world comes to a close. We will be in tribulation as this world comes to a close. The war drums are being beaten and we will be in tribulation as Satan's world comes to a close. And you and me will have to patiently wait upon our God.

So we should heed these words in God's book and we should prepare for what's coming, therefore, our name, preparation for the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth.

Verse 13 tells us—**distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse**, and it's hard not to. It's hard to bless the IRS, brethren, as I've said before, because of the persecution. God's Church has always been persecuted down through time. It's our time now.

Verse 15 tells us to, **Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. And be of the same mind toward one another. And don't set your mind on high things.** So God is telling us how to direct the mind and how to prepare the mind with His influences, not ours, so that we can have what God has offered us. And God says for you and me not to set our mind on high things. We are to **associate with the humble.** So we know where we find the humble - on the Sabbath days sitting before God learning about God and His ways. God says don't be wise in our own opinions. We are disciples, brethren. We are here to learn. We are students, brethren. So we are here on God's Sabbath so that we can learn to live the way that God says to live our lives. And we are students. We are disciples. And we are to conduct ourselves with one another the way God says we are to conduct our self, and also with the world.

God says to, **Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.** And we are to remember that all good things come from God. That's where they come from. It doesn't come from man. **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men**, those in the world and those in God's Church. **Beloved, do not avenge yourself.** And sometimes all of us want to do this, avenge our self. I've said before, if you could just give me a sword some time I could handle most of my problems. But we know that that's not the way. We do want to avenge ourselves. God says we're not to do so. God says we are to **give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the LORD.** Therefore, **If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in doing so you will heap coals of fire upon his head.**

So God says vengeance is His, not ours. So we understand about this "heaping coals of fire upon their head," because we have a just God, brethren, and there is a time for those that will have coals of fire heaped upon their head, those that refuse to live the way that God says to live life. So God says vengeance is His.

Verse 21, God tells us, **Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Chapter 13:1, we find that God has set up a way in His Church to help prepare the mind, and a way to help direct the mind to the things of God. And we understand that that's just how God works. **Romans 13:1—Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.** So we can see that God allows it to be this way and He tells us how they are appointed. Therefore, **whoever—let's notice—resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those—let's notice—who resist—what will happen—will bring judgment upon themselves.** So it's just how God works and it's for the good of the whole Church when

we understand. **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority?** The question that is being asked. "Do you want to be unafraid of the authority?" God says all you have to do is, **Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good.** So that you can have that treasure, brethren. It's for the good. And it's to help prepare the mind, and it's to help direct the mind to the things of God, to have understanding of His plan. And it's why we are here. And they are God's ministers for good, so that you can have that pearl of great price, brethren, that God has offered you.

Verse 11—Do this, knowing the time, that now *it is high time to awake out of sleep.* It's not a time to be falling asleep in the Church of God, brethren, it's a time to let God prepare your mind for what we will face in the near future. And we are to be diligent people, brethren, especially when it comes to the things of our God. **...for now our salvation *is nearer than when we first believed.*** All we have to do is look on the horizon and we can see that this world, Satan's world, is coming to an end and a new world is just about here. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand.** And it is; we can see it. We are on a countdown, brethren. It's not long before the salvation that we're reading about will be a reality for some. We can see the day and we can see how near it is upon us. God says, **let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.** In other words, let God prepare your mind. Put on the armor of God, brethren. **Let us walk properly.** In other words, let God direct your steps, direct the mind to take the steps of God that are deemed necessary for us. And that means coming out of this world and not taking part of the activities of this world that are contrary to our God. God says, **Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, those lusts that we see that are in Satan's world, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its lusts.*** The very thing that we've seen so many do. And it's not where our minds should be. It should not be on this flesh and not on the ways to fulfill the lust of the flesh. You and me are to let God prepare our mind. And we are to let God direct our mind to His ways, to prepare for the Kingdom of God that is coming to this earth. That's what you and me are to be doing, preparing for that Kingdom that is coming to this earth.

Let's turn to Ephesians 4, Ephesians 4:22. God had it written in His book what we are to do. And in **Ephesians 4:22** we find—**that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according—let's notice—to the deceitful lusts, the deceitful lusts that are in man that so many have succumbed to, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.** Brethren, we are told to put away the old way of thinking, the old habits, the old way of doing things. We are to learn a new way to live our lives. We know about our human nature and it's influences that Jeremiah told us about, the mind that is in man that is hostile to God and the mind in man that cannot direct its own steps. We can look at this world and we can see what Jeremiah wrote a long, long time ago. We can look and see that that is so true, that man cannot direct his own steps. Man, in his natural carnal mind, has created a world that will come to a crescendo that our minds cannot comprehend. Man has created weapons with his mind that will destroy every living thing upon the face of this earth. He has that capability with his mind. And if God did not intervene, if He did not send Jesus Christ back to this earth, everything would disappear, every living thing, brethren. But God will send Jesus Christ back to

stop that genocide. And you have that understanding. Man thinks he can fix it, brethren, but we know the end of the story.

Ephesians 4:25—Therefore, put away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. This includes husbands and wives, brethren. Do you think lying would happen between husbands and wives in the Church of God? Do you think such a thing could happen in God's Church? It does. We are told to direct our mind to the things of God, which is speaking the truth, especially between husbands and wives, especially to one another in the Church of God.

God tells us in **verse 26—Be angry, and do not sin: and don't let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.** And we can do this so easy. We can let Satan's influences enter our minds so quickly. We are approaching his festivals, and we understand his influences will be mighty. And some of his music is actually catchy, some of it's actually beautiful. Satan was a musician. And if we're not careful we catch our self patting our foot. I've caught myself patting my foot to some of that music, and probably some of you have done the same. We have to understand where it's coming from. We're told not to give place to his influences, not to let it in our mind. God tells us in His book how we are to live our lives the correct way. God says, **Let him who stole steal no longer, rather, let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.** That doesn't enter many minds, brethren, "working with his hands what is good," let's notice, "that he may have something to give him who has need." It's usually all about get. It's not about give; it's about get. God says, **Let no corrupt word proceed out of our mouths, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearer.** So we need to direct our mind to the things of God. That's what is being said. **And do not grieve the holy spirit of God, by whom you were sealed—let's notice—for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.**

Ephesians 5:1. Brethren, God says a lot in His book about how we are to conduct our lives. God tells us about how we are to build life with one another. God tells us how we are to conduct our lives before Him. God tells us in **Ephesians 5:1 to be imitators of God as dear children.** Hopefully, that's as obedient children, children that want to walk, to be imitators of the Great God of this universe and His Son. **And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.** God tells you and me to be followers of Him as children. So it means to direct our paths to the Great God of this universe and direct our minds to His things as obedient children. An obedient child is a wonderful thing. An unruly child is not a blessing, brethren. An obedient child is a blessing. And we understand that.

Verse 6—Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them.

And **verse 15—See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.** So how do we become wise? We become wise by directing our minds to the things of God, coming before Him as students,

coming before Him as a disciple, to learn from God through His inspired words on His Sabbath days and on His Holy Days.

Verse 16—redeeming the time, because the days are evil. We live in Satan's world, brethren. God says the days are evil, and you and me should be redeeming the time. We live at the end of an age when the demons will be released to do some awesome things upon this earth, and we will see some horrific evil at the end of this age. Some of us will have eyes to see that evil that will take place. And we do have to redeem the time that is ahead for you and me, and we are to stay close to our God, and we are to let God prepare our minds for what is ahead for the Church of God that is preparing for the Kingdom of God to come to this earth, brethren.

Verse 17 tells us, **do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.** And God is giving you and me understanding of His plan, therefore, our name. That's why we have that name, because of the Kingdom that is coming to this earth in just a short while. And some will inherit that treasure that God tells us about in His book at that time. They will have that pearl of great price as Jesus Christ returns back to this earth - eternal life.

Verse 18, the last part tells us to **be filled with the spirit.** In other words, let God's influence upon the mind be there. It's how you do it, by staying close to your God through prayer and living the way that God says live. We should always stay close through our prayer life, striving not to sin, praying to the Great God of this universe, praying to the very one that can help you and me.

Verse 19—God tells us about how we are to live with one another, and He says it in a very unique way. He's talking about, **speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, things that are uplifting, brethren, **singing and making melody in our minds to the Lord, and giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.** So you and me should thank Him, brethren, for our minds that we have. Because that's what it's about, it's about the mind. And we are in a battle for that mind, brethren, and we should give thanks to God for opening our mind to His truth and to His plan.

Ephesians 6:11. Ephesians 6:11—It's about that armor that Paul told us about. And he tells us to, **Put on the whole armor**, not part of the armor, brethren, **that you may be able to stand**— let's notice— just what we've been talking about. We live in Satan's world and Satan is the god of this world, the god of this age. And God says we have to put on the whole armor, not part of it, so that we may be able to stand **against the wiles of the devil.** In other words, the reason for putting armor on is so that you can stand against the demon world, the demon world that God lets you and me know about, the demon world that has rebelled against God. This world celebrates the demon world. They picture Satan as a little red man with a pitchfork poking people in the rear, burning them in the fire. They put on costumes and they celebrate this being. But God lets you and me know about them, and He lets us know about the truth of the matter. He lets you know about His plan for them. You have that understanding of their fate.

Verse 12—For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, let's notice, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. It's a spiritual war, brethren, and we have to put on spiritual armor to prepare the mind. These scriptures we read through many, many times, but these scriptures are going to take on a more awesome meaning to you and me in the near future when the demon world is unleashed and will do what it will do upon this earth. And it will come to a crescendo that your mind cannot comprehend. And you and me will realize who we are really wrestling with, and that it is spiritual powers in high places. And we will realize that they are rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual host of wickedness. And you and me will understand verse 13 more fully.

God tells us, **Take up the whole armor of God**, all of it, not part of it. He said all of it. And let's notice. You would not want to go into battle with half the armor on. You would want to prepare for that battle with everything that you could muster. So God tells you and me to **take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to withstand in the evil days, and having done all**, not just part, brethren. God says we are to be diligent with what He has afforded you and me, **and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore—let's notice—having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness**, living the way that God says to live your life. **Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet—let's notice—with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith**, and it's how we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. That's how it will be done. **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit**, the sword that you will use, brethren, the sword of the spirit. And it's where the spirit dwells in the mind, the spirit of God, **which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me**, let's notice what Paul prayed about, **that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains**. But he won't be an ambassador in chains very much longer, brethren. He was while he was upon this earth (so to speak). God's Kingdom is coming to this earth and none of us will be ambassadors in chains at that time.

God's spirit will go out upon the face of this whole earth, brethren. And we are ambassadors for Christ. At that time, no longer will any of us be in chains. God's truth will go around this whole earth, brethren. Remember the mustard seed? Remember the stone that struck the image on the feet that encompasses the whole earth? Paul understood he was in Satan's world. He understood that he was an ambassador for Jesus Christ and God the Father. And He prayed that in Satan's world that he could **speak boldly, as he ought to speak**.

So as we face our future events as Satan's world comes to a close, just as this writer, we will find ourselves as ambassadors for Christ, just as he did, and we will need all the armor of God, brethren. You will not need part of it, you will need all of it as Satan's world comes to an end. And we will find that some of us will have to speak very boldly as this world comes to a close, and this takes preparation, takes preparation for the mind. And we have to direct our mind to the things of God as

Satan's world comes to an end. And we're not to focus upon the destruction that we will see. We will have to take up the whole armor of God to stand. We know that this Christian struggle is an ongoing, seemingly endless war against spiritual adversaries that never sleep, that never quit. They are always there. And they are always there in their attempt to cause the people of God to stumble. And this battle can be so overwhelming at times that we can become worn out in the process, we can become weary. And there is much danger when this takes place. We need to stay close to our God as this world comes to an end.

Let's turn over to Matthew 24, Matthew 24. And these are very familiar scriptures. And many of us lived through some of this. In **Matthew 24:14** God had it written in His book about what would take place. And He said—**This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end would come.** And this puts us in a timeframe that we have come to understand. We know that Mr. Armstrong fulfilled this and the gospel did go to the world to the extent that God wanted it to go.

Verse 15— We see that, **Therefore, when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand),** and we have come to understand the meaning of God's word. **And then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.** And we know that this was a remnant at that time of God's people that did flee as this abomination took place in the Church of God. And we did "run to the mountains and the hills," and wherever we could find bits of truth at that time. It said, **Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.** And there was a reason for this at that time because of the abomination that was taking place and the battle for the mind that ensued that that time, the battle for the minds of God's people.

Verse 19, God says, **Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!** Spiritually speaking it's talking about those that were just being called at that time. And it was dangerous times for them because of what was taking place. Prophecy was being fulfilled. And it marked a very specific time in man's history. An announcement was being made that Jesus Christ was now going to return to this earth. This was a sign to the Church that he was now going to return. There was to be a falling away from the truth that God had delivered to His people. There was a leader that was set in great authority within the Church of God, and this leader rebelled and betrayed a great trust that was given to him, and he even opposed God by raising himself above God and taking on a prerogative that was God's alone. He began determining what was true and what was false. He made those decisions. He determined what was good. He determined what was evil. He determined what was right and what was wrong. And He turned from the truth that was once delivered to him. And the falling away that occurred was because of that unfaithful leadership of Joseph W. Tkach, who set out to destroy the very thing that God was building. The Abomination of Desolation that took place was a desecration of the truth of God, brethren, and with that came great deception. And lawlessness abounded at that time. And it was just as God told us, "the love of many grew cold."

And back up in Matthew 24:12 it's just as God said, lawlessness would abound and the love of many would grow cold. And it did.

And let's notice **verse 13—But he who endures to the end will be saved.** Brethren, just because we understand some of these things does not mean that the war is over. We are in the battle of our life for our spiritual life. That's where we're at. The battle is for your mind.

Let's go over to Luke 12, Luke 12. **Luke 12:35**, and let's see what was inspired to be written in God's book. And God said to his servant at that time, He said, **Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning.** So what does this mean? We just read that our waist was to be girded with truth, and here God had it written in His book about our lamps burning. **...and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself—and let's notice—and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.** In other words, brethren, we know when Jesus Christ is coming back. We know it *will* take place. We know the time. God tells you and me to be ready so that we can have that treasure that He tells us about in His book, that pearl of great price. God had it written to "keep our lamps burning," to be dressed for action, because we know it's coming, brethren.

Verse 40—Therefore, you also be ready....

Verse 42 ...Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, that's the question, to give them their portion of food in due season? That's the question that was asked. Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

And let's notice **verse 45.** And there's a reason God said this way—**If that servant says in his mind (better said), My master is delaying his coming, and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware.** Understanding will be taken from them and they will not know when Jesus Christ will return. So it's talking about those that turn away and forget about the spiritual war that they are in. They forget about that battle that is for their mind that has taken place, and now they will not be aware of when Jesus Christ will return to this earth. Let's notice what will happen... **and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.**

God says in **verse 54 ...Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, A shower is coming; and so it is. And when you see the south wind blow, you say, There will be hot weather; and there is.** And let's notice what God said, **Hypocrites! What God said! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?** That's the question. In other words, you and me should be able to look and watch and tell what's coming upon this earth.

God gives us ears to hear and eyes to "see." We can see it on the horizon. We can tell we are at the end.

Let's go over to Luke 13:22. **Luke 13:22—He went through the cities and the villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. And one said to him, Lord, are there few who are saved? And he said to them—let's notice what he said—Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, it's not a few, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open for us, he will answer and say to you, I do not know you, where you are from. Then you will begin to say, We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. But he will say, I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.** So let's notice the timeframe in **verse 28—There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**, let's notice why, **when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets—let's notice where they're at—in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.** So we know this is when Jesus Christ has come back to this earth and God's Government has been established upon this earth. And it is the time when the 144,000, which includes these that are mentioned (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets) and they are in the Kingdom of God that is now upon this earth.

Verse 29, let's notice what will take place. **They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the Kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.** The gate that you and me have to pass through is a narrow gate, brethren, but God has made a way for you and me. And when you understand who you are and what you have been offered (and we understand that the biggest battle is for our mind), God tells you and me that we have to strive to enter through that narrow gate. And He says many, many, not a few, will seek to enter through that gate. You and me must be alert. We must be diligent is what God has told us in His book. We must be alert and understand that we are in a spiritual war of a magnitude that I *know* we don't understand. We understand that Satan and the demons are there. God says he's "like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." And it's for your mind that he's after. And I hope you understand that. We must be alert because of this very thing. God likens these demons as thieves. God likens them as a thief that wants to break in and steal what you have. And it's how they do it, through the mind. That's how they get to you, is through that mind. God is giving you and me a down payment on eternal life, which Satan wants to steal, brethren. That's what he wants. And it's like the slaves in this parable in God's book.

So we have to stay alert or it may be a return to judgment for you and me, rather than that of a reward at the end of this age. We can fall asleep again, brethren. So there's a warning for you and me to remain spiritually alert, especially where we are at in time.

Let's go over to 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 Thessalonians 5. And it explains to you and me, as the Church of God, who we are. And God tells us in His word that we are not in darkness. God uses light in His book and He uses darkness. And we know that light is used as understanding. **1 Thessalonians 5:4**, God says, **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** So it

explains that there are certain ones, the called out ones that this Day will not overtake as a thief. God says that **we are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness**, because we have understanding. We have that light that lights our path, that lights the way to live our life. **Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.** So it's when you step into the darkness, that's when you cannot see where you are going. So what God is telling you and me, as we read earlier, we're to keep our lamps lit so that we can see the path that we are to walk, so that we can see where we are going, so that we can understand where we are in time. God tells you and me to watch and be sober, not to step in that darkness and lose our way. We know that darkness is all around us. We know that it is the light that illuminates our path. And we know where that light comes from. It comes from the Great God of this universe. That's where it comes from, that understanding that lights our path. But it's when you step out of that light, that's when you stumble. And that's what God is telling us in His book. Don't step out of the light.

Verse 8—Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath—let's notice what He did appoint us to—to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ. So this is how you keep your path lit, brethren, through Jesus Christ.

Therefore (verse 11), comfort each other and edify one another, just as we are doing. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourself and for all. Rejoice always—let's notice about prayer—pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ for you.

And let's notice **verse 19—Do not quench the spirit**, that we have seen so many do. They have stepped out of the light, brethren, and they have quenched that holy spirit. They have quenched their understanding, and now they will no longer know the day that Jesus Christ is returning to this earth. **Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.** If we don't step back into that darkness, if we stay in the light, our paths will stay illuminated and we can find our way. Jesus Christ has paid that price, brethren. He has made a way to keep your path illuminated, and he's telling us how today.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter 5. **1 Peter 5:6.** God tells us how to keep our paths lit. He says to, **humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.** That's how we are to do it. And let's notice the rest, what will take place if we do these things, **that He may exalt you in due time**, so that we can receive that treasure that God said that we could have if we continue to the end, so that we can have that pearl of great price.

Verse 7. With all the heavy trials that most in the Church of God have experienced God says to **cast all our cares upon Him**, when we have those trials, **for He cares for you and me.** But that's the way we grow. That's the way we have more understanding, brethren. God likens it to pruning.

Verse 8—God says we are to, **Be sober, be vigilant; because our adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.** And all you have to do is step into that darkness. And you're gone, brethren, once you step into that darkness, once that mind takes a turn. I've said it before, most don't find their way back out of that darkness.

Verse 9. God says—**Resist him**, talking about Satan, **Resist him**—let's notice how—**steadfast**, not half-hearted, **steadfast in the faith.** That's how you do it, **knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ, after you have suffered a while...** And when we look at it in the space of time (I've said it so many times), it's like putting our suffering on the head of a pin. God tells us that we are just like a fading flower. We're here for a while and we fade away. And the suffering is how we learn. We should keep our paths illuminated by staying close to our God. And God tells us that after we have suffered a while He will, **perfect**, He will **establish**, He will **strengthen**, and **settle us.** We know the end of the story, but the war is not over, brethren. We are still here. But God does tell us the stages of the war that we are in, and we can see where we are in time by that spiritual war and the battles that have taken place in God's Church. We know about the Abomination of Desolation that took place. That's in our past. We know about the falling away that took place in God's Church. We know about the announcement that was made, that Jesus Christ was now returning back to this earth. And he is sitting at the right hand of God now, brethren, preparing, making preparation to come back to this earth, to set up God's Kingdom upon this earth. God tells us about that future.

So let's turn over to Revelation 13, **Revelation 13:9.** Let's look at what was written. **If anyone has an ear, let him hear.** And let's back up to **verse 4—They worshiped the dragon**, talking about Satan. And we can look around at this world, we can look around at this season of the year when his influences will be so mighty upon this earth, and we can tell that's what they're doing. **They are worshipping the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?** That's the question. So what this is telling you and me is that it is very massive, brethren. God inspired this to be written in His book, "Who is able to make war with him?"

Verse 5—He was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name—and let's notice—His tabernacle. So let's pay attention to what it's about and who he is blaspheming. And this is a massive power, brethren. **...to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.**

And let's notice **verse 7.** We are in a war, a spiritual war, and it is a battle for the mind (for your mind) at this time. **And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell upon the earth will worship him—let's notice—whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** God had this plan before time ever began, brethren, and He had it written in a book for you and me.

Let's go back to Romans 13, Romans 13:11. If we don't stay alert.... The Year of Dedication is over. If we don't stay spiritually alert we will fall prey, brethren. Satan seeks to devour you and me through his pressures, through the deceit that is out there, through the lusts that are in man. And sometimes these pressures can be very mighty. Sometimes the trials can become very severe. And if we are not alert and understand, have that understanding that God gives you and me, if we don't stay in that light that He tells us about, he will tear us to pieces, brethren. So we need to know about the war that we are in. We need to know our adversary. We want to know how we are to fight this battle that we are in.

God tells us in **Romans 13:11—Do this, knowing that *it is high time to awake out of sleep***. We know the parable of the 10 virgins. It tells us where we are, tells us that they all slumbered and slept, all of them. And it's only by the grace of God are you sitting here today. **Do this knowing the time, that it is high time to wake out of sleep, to stay alert, for now our salvation is nearer than when we *first* believed**. We read this earlier. Let's focus upon it knowing where we are in time. The Abomination of Desolation has taken place. Jesus Christ has made an announcement that He is returning back to this earth. **The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, don't step back into that darkness, let us put on the armor of light**. The armor of understanding. And this is where you have it, brethren, in God's Church.

And let's notice **verse 13—Let us walk properly, as in the light, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust**. Don't succumb to those lusts that are in man, **not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts**. All those lusts that are there in Satan's world. And that's one of man's biggest downfalls, is to fulfill those lusts of the flesh. But God tells you and me not to make any provisions for that flesh, to fulfill those lusts. So God is telling you and me to stay in the light, not to step back into darkness where you will stumble if you do such a thing. Redeem the time. Know where we are in time. Understand what the war is about. And I've said it many times, it's not a time to play games with God. It's not a time to stumble from the light back into the darkness.

Let's turn over to **Ephesians 5**. We read some of this earlier. We'll go back through some of it. God says in **5:1 to be imitators as dear children. Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma**. So Jesus Christ paid the price for you and me. He gave all. He gave his life so that we could have that treasure, that pearl of great price, eternal life that God tells us about in His book. Jesus Christ made that possible by what he did. So how should you and me treat what has been offered to you and me? How should we conduct our lives with the understanding that God has given us? God tells us how in His book.

Let's drop down to **verse 15—God said that we should walk not as fools but as wise**, that we should redeem the time because we are in the evil days. And we are in a sick, sick world, brethren, the very world that this demon world has influenced. And we can see the results. And it's like I said earlier, every living thing would be destroyed that is alive upon this earth if man would be able to continue with his mind and not use the mind of God. But God will send Jesus Christ back to this earth to set up a new government upon this earth, a just government finally upon this earth.

Let's turn over to 2 Peter 1, 2 Peter 1:1. **2 Peter 1:1—Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ. And let's notice who it's written to: To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by and through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. So this is who it was written to. Grace and peace be multiplied to you, let's notice, in the knowledge (understanding) of God and of our Lord, Jesus Christ, as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness. In other words, He's given us everything and told us how to live this way of life. ...that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge (understanding) of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which you have been given to us exceedingly—let's notice—great and precious promises - the treasure, the pearl of great price that God has offered you. And we are to live the way that God says so that we can receive these promises from God. ...that through these—let's notice—we may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption—let's notice—*that is* in the world through lust. So here God had it written about these lusts that have so affected mankind.**

And let's drop down to verse 11. Brethren, if we don't step into the darkness where we will stumble, **verse 11 tells us an entrance will be supplied to you and me, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know.** And we do know these things. We understand about the demon world. We understand that we are in a spiritual war. I know we don't know the magnitude of that war, but we have been told about that spiritual war we are in, the battle of our life for our life, our spiritual life. But Peter said that he would not be negligent to remind us always of these things. And he did. He had it written in this book and we're reading it today, about these very things. We know that the physical trials can get our mind off of our God. It can distract us. We have to be reminded by God Sabbath by Sabbath about this war that we are in, this battle. And God tells us that this battle is going to get harder as we move closer to the end.

Verse 16—For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he's telling us that they were eyewitnesses of this very thing. They saw it, brethren. For he received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to him from the Excellent Glory. And let's notice what they heard, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. Can you imagine hearing such a thing, brethren? But that's what they heard. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed—let's notice—as a light that shines in a dark place. Just what we've been talking about, that illuminates our path that tells us the correct way to live our life. ...until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation.

And let's notice **verse 21—prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as *they were* moved by the holy spirit.** And it's the same today. God reveals it through His prophet and apostle.

Let's go down to 2 Peter 3:1. **2 Peter 3:1—Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both* of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder).** And that's what God is doing, reminding us

about the war that we are in, that spiritual war, the spiritual battles that are for your mind. ...that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by and through the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, and they are here, scoffing against you and me, the Church of God, walking according to their own lusts, the very lusts that we have been talking about today, the lusts that are in mankind. And when we look around there were some that were amongst us that have now joined these scoffers. And they walked side-by-side with you and me on God's Sabbath. God says they would be here. And there are some saying, **Where is the promise of his coming?** And they make fun. For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation. In other words, "It won't take place. Time will just come and go, just as it always has." That's what they're saying.

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. They forget about the power of God, brethren. But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved—let's notice—by that same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. There's a lake of fire for them, brethren. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise. Jesus Christ said he would come back to this earth. God said that He would send His Son back to this earth to set up the Kingdom of God upon this earth. So the Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, those that say it will just come and go again, just like it always has, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. I wish all of them would repent, but we know the end of the book. We know the end of the story. We know there will be a lake of fire, brethren, for some, for some that have walked side-by-side with you and me.

2 Peter 3:14—Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent, just what we've been talking about, to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; in other words, live the way God says to live our lives, and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, unless God reveals it to you, brethren, through the mind, which untaught—let's notice—and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the scriptures. You, therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand—let's notice—beware, lest you fall from your own steadfastness, and be led away with the error of the wicked. So we have to be careful who we associate with, who we listen to.

God tells you and me in verse 18 that we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That's what we are to do.

Let's begin to finish up. Let's turn over to 2 Corinthians 4, 2 Corinthians 4:7, and let's look at what God inspired to be written in His book about the very thing that we've been talking about. 2 Corinthians

4:7—We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. *We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body of the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also—let's notice—may be manifested in our body. By the way we live life, brethren. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, at this time, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe, and therefore, speak, knowing that He who has raised up Jesus Christ will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man—let's notice—is being renewed day by day.

Let's go over to 2 Corinthians 5. 2 Corinthians 5:1—For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands. So it doesn't matter whether we live or whether we die, brethren. We know that if we die, we know the only thing we can take out of this life with us is God's spirit - the only thing upon the face of this earth that we can carry with us. And that's what you would want to die with, if it is your fate. You would want to have God's spirit when you left this earth. God says if we have that spirit we have a building from God, a house not made with hands; we will have that spiritual body.

Verse 2—For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, talking about that spiritual body. And I do. I do long to shed this flesh. And I think all of you do, too. We *will* shed this flesh one day. And we do groan while we are in this flesh. But we do desire to be clothed with our habitation that God has promised us. We desire to have that treasure that He told us about in His book, that pearl of great price, eternal life, without pain, without suffering.

So we (verse 4) who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened at this time, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life, real life, brethren, in a spiritual body for an eternity. Now He who has prepared us—let's notice—He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God. And hopefully you have been prepared for that spiritual body, brethren. God is preparing some for the Kingdom of God, and He says that it was He that prepared this very thing for that Kingdom, those that will be there. And let's notice, who also has given us the spirit—let's notice—as a **guarantee**. God's guarantee, brethren! What better guarantee could you want, brethren, to receive that treasure that God tells us about, that pearl of great price.

This will complete the sermon today.