

Welcome, everybody, to this seventh day Sabbath.

When the world talks about a broken heart it is mostly talking about a human condition, a human reasoning thing, which is to do with human love. People say, "Oh, that person broke my heart." You'll hear things like "He/she broke my heart," which means a physical desire or a desire that a human had toward something or someone generally and that person rejects that desire. Well, a person says, "Oh, you broke my heart." It's a human thing.

In human terms a broken heart is when a human desire is not satisfied in a relationship. The carnal mind is disappointed to an extreme level because it cannot have what it desires. In other words, "The person broke my heart"; and yet that desire is not being fulfilled, and therefore, the person feels emotionally sick about it because it's actually a feeling, it's an emotion that takes place.

The purpose of this sermon is to look at what God requires of somebody that is called into a relationship with Him. Once called we are to remain in a mindset of being humble. Because the general process of a person is that they are called, and then that calling involves some level of humbling. Now, we don't always see that humbling taking place, but it can be often financial or can be with regards to different things in life that there's a disappointment and we're brought low. Well, it's that lowliness of mind and then God can then call us and work with us over a period of time.

Now, I believe that this sermon came about because of something that I was doing, which was not fasting as I should. And something that Ron had said in a particular sermon hit a chord with me. I'd worked on this particular sermon because this was really about me and my feelings towards something. And I realized, I came to a conclusion that was that fasting is a choice. And now, when we look at the scriptures we'll realize is what God requires of us is fasting - well, what God requires of us is a broken and contrite spirit. Now, that's a choice. It's something that's just not human don't have, or you know, just automatic - that we're just not automatically humbled by nature. We're not. We're the opposite.

The title of today's sermon is *A Broken Spirit*.

Now, I want to read what a sort of a section... It's not exactly word for word, but basically the intent was from *An Extraordinary 4½ Years, Part 5*. Now, I worked on this sermon, and in the middle of that particular sermon that Ron was giving he made these various statements. And it fitted in so well with what I had been thinking about and working on, and it had come to me about this conclusion about, well, fasting is a choice and what God requires is a broken heart or a

broken spirit. It's a choice that we have to make. God just doesn't give it to us, we have to choose it. And I'll read these parts that came out in this sermon, and this is just a section of it. "We have to be of a humble spirit. Basically, that's what God can work with, a poor and contrite spirit," or a broken heart. "That's the way we have to be or else He (God) can't mold and fashion us," because we're in the wrong attitude, in other words. Because, really, when you look at it, a broken heart or a broken spirit is seeing ourselves on a spiritual level (and it's not physical; it's actually spiritual in nature) and we see the way we should be. And we have a different view of ourselves than the natural carnal mind does. We have the view of ourselves as God sees us. Well, if we have that view because we've chosen to humble ourselves before God, well, then God can mold and fashion. He can work with it. It's pliable.

Continuing on: "Because if we're not pliable, if we're not yielding, and we are resisting and fighting, He (God) can't deal with that." It's an attitude. In other words, we're hanging on to our pride. We're not choosing to humble ourselves. We're not choosing a broken, contrite spirit. A person has not chosen to be yielding to God. And that's the key. And that's what this sermon is really about. It's a choice. Fasting is a reflection of it.

If we look at it, when we fast something happened. We made a decision. We chose something. Now, if we're not fasting on a regular basis what is it? We have chosen not to humble ourselves. Because choosing to fast is choosing to humble ourselves. And that was the key to this. I'd realized I wasn't making right choices. I was choosing something different. I was choosing to go on with my human nature, my pride. And it wasn't until I fasted and then I saw this aspect of it, that fasting is a choice.

Now, we'll all remember that there was a period where the Church called for fasting once a month for a year period. Well, did everybody do it? Well, only God knows that. Because people can say, "Oh, yes, I fasted twelve times over that year." Well, maybe, maybe not. It's a choice that a person made.

Now, a person can come to Sabbath services and choose an attitude or they can choose to have others believe of an image that a person projects. But they're all choices that the natural mind makes. Well, if we did choose to fast twelve times over that year period, once a month as the Church requested, which is really what God requested of us, we then demonstrated something to God. Because fasting demonstrates that we are willing to humble ourselves, to be of a broken and contrite spirit. That's the choice. But that is our choice. God will not make us. God will not force us to be of a broken and contrite spirit. It's a personal choice.

Now, it's something we all have to examine ourselves with and say, "Well, what have we been choosing or what have we chosen over the last twelve months?" Well, we all know the answer within here, and God knows the answer. Doesn't matter what other people know, it's more about us as an individual and that relationship with God. Well, God requires us to choose. God requires us to choose. It's a personal choice.

And going on, what Ron had said, "We have to choose it." We have to choose about this broken spirit. "And if we don't choose to yield He (God) does not force it upon us." It's all a personal choice. "God will not force us to change." So that's what this choosing is about. It's about, well, are we going to humble ourselves to realize by the power of God's holy spirit, that we are nothing compared to God. We have our natural pride and we think we're smart and all these other things and that our way is right. Well, that's all physical, carnal thinking. Well, we have to choose to humble ourselves to realize no, we need God's spirit to live our life. To be fulfilled in life we have to have God's spirit.

"God will not force us to change. He will give us the opportunity to make choices and willingly choose what He places before us." Now, that's referring to the truth. But God places the truth in the Church; well, we have to make a choice. Are we going to humble ourselves and believe God or are we going to say, no, that can't be right because 'this' and 'that,' and 'that' doesn't 'this and that,' and 'that' doesn't fit, and Mr. Armstrong used to teach 'that' and 'this and that', and we reason and rationalize. Well, that was a choice. We choose. If we really believe that Mr. Weinland is God's apostle, and that truth only enters the Church through an apostle, well, it's a choice. And we all have the capacity and the capability of making a wrong choice. It's happened to many of people. People have been in the Body of Christ making choices and then something comes up in the way of a truth or something new and they choose a different way. But it was a personal choice.

And what we'll find if we really get down to it and examine it carefully it goes back to this principle. Because this sermon really is about a broken spirit which can only come about by a choice to fast. And if we go back into it and examine the person's life we'll find that they might have been fasting but were they fasting as what God had said, or what was the reason for the fast? Was it just going without food and water? Thousands of people can do that. Because there's a lot more to fasting. It's about this choice that we have made.

We're going to start by looking at Psalm 34:18. So as the title, *A Broken Spirit*, it's a choice. It's a choice that we have to make. It's not something that God will just give us. And we have to demonstrate something before God, that we're willing to be of a broken spirit or a contrite heart, which is a way of thinking. We have to choose it.

Psalm 34:18—The Eternal is near to those who have a broken heart. So what that's really saying is God is close to those who have chosen to humble themselves. "A broken heart," which is a broken mind, a broken way of thinking. It has to be broken because pride has to be broken. God can't live with pride, can't dwell with pride, and can't work with pride. Because what does pride do? Pride resists. It fights against God. But God's saying here "The Eternal is near to those who have a broken heart." Now, that broken is "break in pieces; to be crushed." A mind that is thinking low of itself. Now, that requires God's spirit. So a person can fast without God's spirit. What's achieved? Absolutely nothing. And God isn't near that person. Because once a person is called and

has God's spirit living and dwelling in them God is wanting to draw closer and closer and give more of His spirit to the person. But the person has to be willing to humble themselves.

Now, we see who we are. There's no church, I can assure you, there is no church that exists other than God's true Church where it is preached directly to God's people that they are pathetically selfish. Because no one will turn up. We should understand that. Well, the more that God reveals our selfishness to ourselves the more we have to realize that it requires a broken spirit and it takes a mind, a different way of thinking to lower ourselves to realise that without God, without God's spirit we are nothing and we can do nothing. We can do nothing spiritual. We can do lots of physical things without God's protection and God's guidance. We can do those things. The world does that. But for us we have to choose this broken way of thinking.

So with God's spirit we can choose to fast, and then we know this fasting is going to mean something. It's not just going a period of time, 24 hours generally, without food and water. It's not just that. It's a much deeper thing. It's much more about this attitude. And we hopefully will get to it with time. We'll see how we go.

So this person has actually chosen to be of a humble mind, to see themselves and admit before God that without God they are selfish. Everything that we desire in life is just selfish. So this broken heart is completely different than the world's broken heart. This is someone that is lowly of mind. They do not think of themselves with pride.

Continuing on in **Psalm 34:18...and saves...** Now, that word is "delivers" **such as have a contrite spirit.** A crushed and humbled spirit. So God says He will draw near to us if we've chosen to humble ourselves, to draw closer to Him.

Now, why do we fast? If we look at that, why do we fast? Well, we fast for the basis of repentance, to change the way we think. Because the way we think naturally towards others and to everything is wrong because it's selfishly motivated. You know, we have our prejudices and all those different things. Well, when we get into the various scriptures about fasting we will see that there's a need to change of attitude - when we have to admit before God that our natural mind is selfish and that we're wrong by nature, we're just wrong, and that with God's spirit He makes us right, righteous. But it takes God to do it.

So God says that He'll draw near to those who have chosen - talking about someone who is called and has God's spirit - they've chosen to fast, chosen to lower themselves, and He will deliver us if we have this humble attitude. In other words, we're God reliant. We rely on God. We don't rely on self. This is someone that knows their real value as a human.

Now, how many people in the world know their real value? How many people? Well, there's a small number. They're called members of the Body of Christ. They have God's spirit. They are the only ones who know their true value. Because without God we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing spiritual.

So this is not an attitude of self-pity. It's not a little violin. When you see Ron with his ... he gets a little one and goes like that. I tend to get the big one. That's new. That's human nature. You get a big one and you want everyone to hear all your problems and all your dramas. It's not the little one down here. That's somebody who's been in the Church a long time, might use the little one, but we are all using great, big ones for self-pity. Well, that's not humility and that is not God. It's not about us. It's not about selfishness.

So someone that is called by God is called to see the self in self, which means we're called to see ourselves, what we're really like, that selfishness. We're called to see it and then once we see it we realize how evil it really is, and therefore, we make a choice. We don't want to be like that anymore so we make a choice now to humble ourselves before God because we want to draw close to God. We want God's spirit living and dwelling in us. We don't want our selfishness.

Now, this broken spirit is someone that is of a humble in attitude, or is humble in attitude. Now, it's not referring to the so called humble that the world sees and people do a demonstration of humility, and it's generally within certain organizations, religious organizations, and they demonstrate their humility by the way they dress or the way they walk or the way they hold their head or their hands or their, you know... It's a demonstration, outward show, "I'm humble, only you just don't know it. Can't you see it? I'm humble." It's got nothing to do with any of that. Someone that is humble has God's spirit and knows, and sees, and understands themselves. They know it because God's given it to them. Only way to see it.

Psalm 51:15—O Eternal, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. So this is about giving credit to God and not to self. So if we see anything spiritual in the Church or any aspect of a truth, well, we see it because God's given it to us. Doesn't mean to say everybody sees that aspect. And that's why there's no point in going out and talking to other people about the truth. And we have to be very careful within the Church that we don't become teachers when we think we see something. We may or may not. We have to be very careful. If we think we see something we keep it with ourselves because it's all about us. We have to go back and say, "Well, if I see that what am I doing about it within me?" Not about what other members of the Body are doing. God will work with them. So everybody is at different levels.

So God will show us things. Well, that's where we give the credit to God. It's not me that saw something, God gave it to me. Now, I've learned from personal experience that sometimes that if we see something that we think we see it is far better to not say anything at all but to work on self. Because sometimes we can be given something that we see that we go, "Wow! Look at that!" You know, you see it. Everyone is at different levels. Well, the test... Seeing something, truth, is a test. What will you do with it? Will pride enter and will we now take it to self that, "Ah, I see it," and "You all don't see it, but I see it." Because, see, seeing truth can be a big spiritual test. Just like new doctrine or new truth coming into the Church, big spiritual test because we tend to think, "Well, I agree or disagree." Well, it's not about that. We either agree with God or we don't. Simple.

So seeing things or believing we see things or whatever, this is a personal test. And it's far better to work on self and if we believe we see something and it really is important to us, it's best to be important to us and us alone, because other people may not see it. God may not be giving them that test to see it. So sometimes truth can test us, as we know. New truth tests the Church. Well, sometimes when we think we see things it can test us not to say anything at all. Because the credit must go to God who's giving it. It's nothing about us.

Verse 16—For You do not desire sacrifice. Now, this is "You" is God. **For You (God), do not desire sacrifice.** Animal sacrifices. God says, this is in the Psalms where God doesn't requires us to go out and grab animals and cut their throat and sacrifice how many and do tithing through killing of animals, giving to the priesthood. That's all changed, of course. So animal sacrifice is not what God wants, **or else I would give it.** David's saying, "Well, I would give it to You if that's what You wanted." **You do not delight in burnt offerings,** all these physical things. That's not what God really wants. We've been called on a spiritual level for a spiritual sacrifice.

Verse 17—The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit... So now if we really desire to sacrifice self before God what is God saying? God is saying He desires a broken spirit. So now if we choose to humble ourselves through fasting that's what God desires, a broken attitude, one that's not self-reliant, relying on self. Now, that's a sacrifice. So every time we choose to fast, to humble ourselves, we are sacrificing to God, and then (it goes back to Psalm 34), God will draw near to us. It's what He wants. And He will deliver us from the problem that we have within our self. God will deliver us. We can't overcome our selfishness by human nature. Which people do, people say, "Boy, that person's changed." Human effort. People can change certain things on human effort, but spiritual things cannot be changed without God's holy spirit. Absolutely impossible.

But God says that if we choose this broken spirit, **a broken and a contrite heart—These, O Eternal, You will not despise.** It's a beautiful scripture, that, because what it's really saying to us: If we as God's people choose to humble ourselves with fasting, personal choice, don't have to tell anybody at all, personal choice, God says He will draw near to us and He will deliver us. Isn't that incredible? But it is a personal choice. Now, if we haven't chosen to fast over a long period of time we are not offering the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit, which, what God desires. What God is looking for in us is an attitude towards Him and how we see ourselves. God wants to know how do we really see ourselves. Because by His power He'll give us the sight to see ourselves.

This is all about a choice. We must choose to humble ourselves before God. That's as simple as it gets. We are not born with a humble attitude. A lot of people think they are, but we are just not born with one. It's something that has to change within us because we all have pride by nature. God requires us to humble ourselves, to have a humble attitude. Well, we have to choose it. Fasting reflects a choice to humble self. God requires us to fight our pride. Well, this is all spiritual in nature that we're talking about.

Isaiah 66:1—Thus says the Eternal, Heaven *is* My throne, And the earth *is* My footstool. Where *is* the house that you will build Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? Well, they're all questions which is virtually saying, well, God is Almighty and He created everything so what could we do as weak, pathetic humans for God? What could we build? It all belongs to God so, you know, we can't do anything really. So it's about, this is referring to also to an attitude that what God really wants, He doesn't want physical buildings, and He doesn't want that. What He wants is a relationship with us, but we have to come to a certain understanding.

Verse 2—For all those *things* My hand has made... So God made it all. He owns it all. It's all His. And all those *things* exist, Says the Eternal. But on this *one* will I look: So what is God really after? This is all about members of the Body of Christ, the only ones who can understand this. On *him/her who is poor and of a contrite spirit*... So this is about somebody that is willing to humble themselves. A contrite spirit, a broken heart; it's one and the same thing, really. It's about an attitude. A person, what's God going to see? This is who I'm looking at. I'm looking for members of the Body of Christ who will humble themselves before Me in repentance. That's what God really, really wants from us.

On him who is a poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at My word. So that's another aspect of this fasting. So there's a respect for God, there's a respect for the truth and what God has placed in the Church. That's who God is looking at. So all of these other things physically, God owns it all. There's nothing we can do for God. But what God requires of us is that we humble ourselves through a personal choice, that we want to have this relationship with God, and God says He will draw near to us. And that's about as simple as it gets. Sounds easy, but it does require a choice.

And fasting is never easy. Personally I've never found fasting that easy. I've always found that making the choice to pick a day and to do it is probably the harder part. And then once you start, yes, generally for me it's been... It's difficult to start. But once you start and get into that momentum I believe God intervenes and helps us through it. And it's got nothing to do with food and drink; it's about this broken spirit. This attitude we have is that we see the need to fast. We see the need to fast because we see the need that without God and without God's spirit and without the gift of repentance we have absolutely nothing.

So God will look on anybody that has this poor or this humble attitude and that trembles or is fearful to go against God's word. That's what God is looking for.

Now, the word "contrite" here is slightly different than in other places. The word "contrite" means "smitten," or literally "maimed, or dejected, or lame." So in other words, it's something we've chosen. We've chosen, this pride-filled mind, that we realize, well, we need to get rid of it. We want to replace it with something else. We want to replace it with righteousness. Well, God says, well, if we have this contrite attitude and we're willing to strike the pride down through fasting

God will look at that, because that's what God's after. God's working on a spiritual matter. It's not physical, it's spiritual. That's what God is looking for.

And the word "poor" there is "afflicted; humble; lowly; needy." And I love the word "needy," because somebody that has God's spirit can see, by the power of God's holy spirit, that they are needy, that without God we've got nothing. And that's the tragedy of somebody that leaves the Body of Christ, the Church of God, that they've lost the sight of being needy. We need God. We need God. We need the truth. Truth will set us free. We need all that. Well, why we see it is because we have God's spirit.

Now, somebody who doesn't see that they need or they're not needy anymore, they won't be fasting, they'll be relying on their selfishness, their self-righteousness, their self. That's what happens. Natural. Been there; speaking from experience. I'm not talking about people here. It's more about me, what I've learned, that the lack of fasting is actually a demonstration that we don't need God. It's simple, really; we're relying on self.

Now the word "trembles" there. If we tremble at God's word, it's "fearful or afraid." It's to fear to go against God. So if we are afraid to go against what God said, well, we will be choosing to fast.

Now, really, humbling ourselves is the opposite to pride. Because if we've got pride we're not smitten, we're not lowly in attitude, we're not fearful, and we're not needy. Because we're relying on our self, we're okay.

Fasting reflects a desire to have a broken spirit and a contrite heart before God, which is this humbleness of thinking. We don't see that we're needy - we've got pride. If we see that we're needy we will be humbling ourselves, we'll be choosing to fast.

Isaiah 57:15—For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, which our minds can't grasp, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and lofty place. So God inhabits and dwells, which are exactly the same word. So in the Bible you often see words that are translated differently based on their context. Well, this is actually exactly the same word only it's done in a different statement which is "to abide or remain in." So God is in eternity. Now, we don't grasp it all. We know that God is eternal. ...**with him**; so God says that He dwells in a high and lofty place, but He also will dwell **with him/her who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble.** So that's what it actually takes. It takes a choice that we have made to humble ourselves. Well, God says He will revive the spirit, which is God's spirit. We'll be seeing things about ourselves. We'll be seeing the need to change our behaviours, to change our attitudes.

Now, attitudes are an important thing that we have a choice to make. It's been said that no one can make you angry, no one can choose an attitude for you. We get up and we choose an attitude based on things aren't going our way or a frustration that we have. It's no different than somebody cutting someone off in a car. We can choose to respond or not. We can choose to think a particular way. But it is a personal choice. Well, God says that if we have chosen the contrite

and humble spirit that God will revive the spiritual aspect of us, as long as we have chosen that path. "To revive" means "to quicken, make alive or make whole the heart of a contrite one/ contrite ones." So God will heal us. Because, really, our life as members of the Body of Christ, part of the Church of God, having God's spirit is all about healing. Our minds have to be healed and it takes a long period of time.

I was just saying to Chris today we were baptized some 35 years ago now and how much healing has actually taken place in my mind. Long way to go. A long way to go, you know. There's certain things in the beginning of a calling that are generally to do with physical things that are changing. There's a change of mind that's taking place. You see the Sabbath, you see certain things, so yes, there's a change of thinking and we respond with zeal, generally, first love, zeal, zealously change things. Well, as you go on in time those things, well, you don't think about breaking the Sabbath because the Sabbath's 35 years of Sabbath keeping. Even when we were spewed out we were still Sabbath keeping. It's just part of who we are. Well, what happens over time is that if you're not careful, which has happened to me, is that you don't see what's changed and you don't see what needs to change because you become a little bit automatic. You know, it's like a robot; it's robotic. But the reality is that we have to choose to humble ourselves so that we can see ourselves so that God can reveal more to us.

Now, we know God won't dwell with pride so the choice to fast or not really is based on pride versus humility. It's really straightforward. We must come to see ourselves as God does.

Now, I want to just stop there and look at that statement. So really it's a comparison. We have to see ourselves as God sees us. Well, we could say, "How does God see us?" Well, God designed and made us and created us a particular way for a marvelous and wonderful purpose. And if we forget that purpose it doesn't take long to leave the Body of Christ. We've been made this way so that the healing of our minds can take place and so that over time that God will begin to work with us through choices that we're making and to give us truth so that we can see ourselves as we really are, see our nature, and that we don't want this and we want to have our minds transformed, we want to be healed so that a point in time God says, "Now I know you. I know what choices you're going to make. And no matter what happens I know the choice you're going to make." Because that's what we want; we've set our minds to choose it.

Now, can you imagine this, that how would God work with a person that hasn't fasted for 2½ years maybe, or three years, or whatever it is, or pretended to fast during the twelve fasts that were called - they missed three or four because, "Oh well, nobody really knows." Do you really believe that God could work with that? Well, there's no demonstration of a sacrifice. Because that's what God says. And He says He will draw near and revive the heart of the humble. No humility - no healing of the mind. It's not possible. God can't work with pride because it's not yielding, it's resisting.

So once called we have an incredible potential that we often don't see. But we have to grasp it firmly and hold tight. And it's not easy. Not meant to be easy. Life is not meant to be easy. It's a battle. And we all have different battles and we all have different tests and trials. That's what it's about. Having a test and trial is not a problem.

I was talking to Sue and Zoran today about certain things that go wrong in life and the statement "It could be good or it could be bad." Well, one part of that is on a spiritual level, because if you look at it all physically it could be good, could be bad. But reality is that it's all good. So anything physical that looks bad, spiritually is the best thing that could happen to you. So it's very difficult. In God's Church people are going through these horrendous trials and there's Wayne being there saying, "Oh, best thing that ever happened to you!" Half the family's wiped out and all this has gone wrong and money problems and it's the best thing that's ever happened to you if we draw God into the picture. If we leave God out of it it's not going to go well because God's not going to be working with you. But being part of the Body of Christ we have incredible human potential - that book that Mr. Armstrong wrote. It is incredible the potential that we have considering who we really are. We're nothing. We're just humans. And left to ourselves we will hurt others and hurt ourselves. That's just the way we are.

So what an incredible opportunity the way God sees it. God sees us as begotten sons and daughters of God. Isn't that incredible? That how God... and He nurtures us and guides us. But in all that we have to be demonstrating choices that we want; we want God. Well, we demonstrate that we want God by our choice.

Verse 16—For I will not contend for ever, nor will I always be angry: for the spirit would fail before Me... Because we're just human. But God says He's not going to give up on us. God never gives up on us, we give up on God. And that's the problem. God doesn't. He wants to draw near to us. He wants to help us. He's creating a family. And God will do that with or without us based on our choices. There will be 144,000. There will be spirit beings in Elohim. And at the end there will be nothing but spirit beings in God's Family and the angelic realm. And what knows after that, we don't really know. So the choice is how much do we want it? And if we're not in it whose problem was it? It was ours. Because we made choices...we made choices.

Verse 16 continuing... for the spirit would fail before me and the lives *which* I have made. So God made all this and God knows He has a plan and He's working to it. Jesus Christ is there working to this plan and we are part of that plan. Others out there at the moment haven't been called to be part of this plan at this point in time, but we have.

Verse 17—For the iniquity of his covetousness and I was angry and struck him: This is talking about Israel. But we're spiritual Israel. I hid, and that is because of sin. So God hid. Remember it said there that God would draw near and revive the heart of the humble. Well, because of sin that means prides involved, well, God say's He hid Himself from sin. He's not going to be around sin. He can't work with sin. It has to be repented of. ...and was angry, because of sin. Not anger

as we understand it. Human reason, human beings are angry for selfish reasons. ...and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart, which is selfishness.

Verse 18—And I have seen his ways, which are pride, **and I will heal him**. I think this is incredible, really. God will heal mankind if mankind chooses to be healed. Because we have to choose. The desire has to be that we want to be healed, we don't want to be this way. We don't want to be selfish. We don't want to say things the wrong way. We don't want to say things that hurt others. We don't want to be like that. We'll do it, because we're natural; we'll do it and we'll make mistakes. That's normal. But we can turn to God and say, "I don't want to be that way anymore. I want to change. Help me with that changing." And the best way is to turn to God with fasting. Because it's a demonstration we want to change. So God will heal our minds on a spiritual level, and that is the key to all of this.

And I will also lead him, this is by God's spirit, **and restore comforts to him**, by granting him repentance and the need for peace. Humans don't see the need for peace. Man thinks about peace as the absence of war. Well, that's actually not true. It's not. Peace is from God. It's peace of mind. It's a different way of thinking. Because in the world there's no war and they say, "Oh, these two nations are at peace." They hate each other's guts. They really hate each other but there's no fighting going on so they're at peace. No, they hate each other! That's ill will. That's sin. That's evil. That's not peace. But God's way is different. So repentance will lead us closer to peace. It's a time process. Continuing on... **and to his mourners**.

Verse 19—I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him who is afar off. It's referring to repentance. And then "afar off." Who's afar off? Well, the Last Great Day is those that have lived in this 7,000 year period that will be resurrected; 6,000 years and the last 1,000 years that will be resurrected to physical life again, well, they will be brought to a point where we are, which is learning the truth, having to humble the self, get rid of pride, and to make a choice. God first or God second; that's the choice. ...**and to him who is near**, referring almost like to the Millennium, **says the Eternal; I will heal him**. "I will heal the mind." But God can only heal the mind if the individual desires it. If the individual does not desire to have their mind healed on a spiritual level it cannot happen. It has to be from within us. We've got to want it. So the more we want to be healed, the more we want to get rid of our selfishness the more we will draw closer to God who can heal it. Because God's the only one who will heal the mind. No one can heal the mind except God.

Verse 20—But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest... So it's restless, it's always desiring more because it's carnal. ...**whose waters cast up mire and dirt**. Well, that's the natural mind. That's all it can do. **There is no peace, says the Eternal, for the wicked**. It's not possible. Their minds cannot be healed. There is no peace of mind.

Isaiah 58, which is about fasting, which we're going to go into. **Isaiah 58:1—Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, tell My people...** Who is this referring to? Well, this is written

to Israel, "My people," but to us it's spiritual Israel. It's who we are, spiritual Israel. "...tell My people." We are begotten sons of God; we are God's people. This is God's Church. So we know, we hear, we can understand what's being said. **...tell My people their transgression.** "Tell My people their sin," what's wrong with us. **...and the house of Jacob** (spiritual Israel, the Church) **their sins. Yet they** (spiritual Israel, the Church) **seek me daily...** Now, that would be reasonably right. Israel did. They used to go through certain rituals and certain sacrifices indicating they were seeking God. But us, we can seek God daily through prayer.

...and delight to know My ways. We love the truth. Like, we delight, we want to know more... More. "Don't stop speaking after two hours, Ron. More." "Oh no, he's finishing too early. I think an hour and a half." How many people do you think in the world actually go "Oh no, he's finishing!" It's true, isn't it? Where most people after 10 minutes go, "You're joking! This guy's going on and on and on." We are God's people. We desire to know more. We delight to hear more, to know the truth. We love it!

...as a nation that did righteousness. Well, we know Israel could never do righteousness. They could on a physical level in the sense of obedience, but this is talking about us, God's spirit. We can do righteousness because God does it in us. We don't do it ourselves. We can choose to want to have it and to have God live and dwell in us, but it is God that does the works. It's God in us that does the works. But we have our part in the fact that we have to choose.

...and did not forsake the ordinances of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice. Which this is what we want. We believe we want justice. **...and they take delight in approaching God.** Which we do in prayer.

Verse 3—Why have we fasted, they say, and You have not seen? Now, this is really referring to Israel. They were fasting for the wrong reason. They were looking to get something. They wanted to, you know, "Look, God! We're doing 'this.' And, hey, you're not doing 'this' and you're not doing 'that.'" It's referring back to God saying, "Well, we've done all this, God. What are you doing? You're not protecting us. You're not providing food and all those things." Well, that's the wrong motive. That was fasting to get.

Well, ours is different. We don't fast to be seen. So when we fast we should tell nobody that we're fasting other than maybe the husband and wife situation or where it has to be said, where there's things change with the diet or food or whatever. But if we're individual we wouldn't go around saying, "Oh, by the way, me, I'm fasting today." No. Now, on that we must also - and has been covered many of times in sermons - we have to take into consideration health. We have to take into consideration that certain people have medications for heart murmuring and all different reasons. Age. It's not wise to go without water for a 24-hour period because of dehydration and next day die. What did that prove? So we have to be wise in all of this. It is about physical health. It has to be all these types of considerations. We know our body. And more importantly we know

our mind. And that's the point. That's the whole point. We know our mind. We know what we can and can't do.

Now, some people may fast for 12 hours and get as much out of that twelve hours (because of medical reason or whatever) than somebody who fasts 24 hours. Some people may fast the 24-hour period from, say 5:00 to 5:00 and get absolutely nothing out of it. It was all pointless exercise. Just went without food and water because they didn't follow what God said as far as the instructions were concerned about fasting.

So there are sermons on the website that cover about fasting, as far as there needs to be wisdom involved in that fasting. But we fast for spiritual reasons. That's why we fast.

Well, here Israel is saying, "Why have we fasted," and they say, "And You have not seen, God. You haven't looked." **Why have we afflicted our lives, "Why have we fasted," and You take no notice?** It's pretty... When we look at this, this is pretty horrendous stuff, really, isn't it, to have this type of attitude? So they had the wrong attitude. They had the wrong motive. They were fasting to get for self and not fasting to give of self, is what really this is about. In fact, **in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit (oppress) all your labours.** So there's no attitude change. Their attitude is one of control and oppression over others. So they're exercising more control, more oppression, which is not what it's about.

Indeed, you fast for strife and debate, for contention, and to strike with the fist of wickedness. So they're totally unfair about what they're doing. They haven't changed their attitude at all. **You will not fast as you do this day.** So God is making it very clear here that fasting is not about just going without food and water. **You will not fast as you do** and not change an attitude. Now, they couldn't really change on a spiritual level because they didn't have God's spirit. We can. We can. We can see ourselves and we can change. Now the motive here God is exposing: **you do this to make your voice heard on high.** So their motive for fasting was they wanted God to do something for them. Ours isn't.

Verse 5—Is it a fast that God has chosen? No. That's that God is saying. "Well, did I choose a fast like this, that you would do this to try to almost, like, bribe Me and get attention? God I'm doing this, why aren't you doing something for me?" Well, God says He didn't choose a fast for that reason. It's the wrong motive. **...a day for a man to afflict his life?** The answer is no. That's not what God wanted. **...is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,** just for show, "Look at me." And there's example of that where people would fast and be all droopy and not shaven and all weary because they're doing it for the wrong reason. "Look at me. I'm fasting. I'm drawing close to God. You're not." **...and to spread out sackcloth and ashes?** Because they used to draw out sackcloth and throw ashes over themselves like it's a big pity party thing, you know, you're just drawing attention to self.

Would you call this a fast, an acceptable day of the Lord? Would you do that? Well, it was all physical. It was all about appearance. It was all "Look at me, God. And You should be doing something for me because I'm doing something for You." Now, isn't that an incredible attitude? When you look at it, isn't that a shocking attitude?

We, brethren, have to fast for the right reason and it's all spiritual. Fasting is about a broken spirit and a contrite spirit. Fasting is about humility and fasting is about repentance. They're all spiritual in nature.

Verse 6—Is this not the fast that I have chosen? says God, **to loose the bonds of wickedness?** Because it's about us. It's not about others looking out at anyone and saying, "Oh, I'm fasting. Look at them. Look at what they're doing." This is about us changing "to loose the bonds of wickedness." Now, when you look at bonds or yokes or whatever, it holds tight. Bond's hold. So, tie hands, you've got to loosen them. Well, it's about ourselves, about our thinking. We have to get rid of the way we think. We have to reject sin that is holding us or controlling us.

Now, we all know our own sins and they're all different. I know my priority in sins and I've never overcome them. The desire is to overcome them but I'll be really straight down the line - the two or three main sins that I have I have not overcome them. I hate them, I don't want them, and often I fast about them, and probably they'll jump up within half a day if I'm lucky. It's because it's who we are. It's all that... Oh, I look back at my childhood and what happened to me, going away to boarding school at 12-13 and the way that I was brought up, and I was called when I was thirty. Well, boy, was I pretty set in a lot of way of thinking. And biases and prejudices, they still exist in me in lots of things. And often I hear myself saying them and I realize after that's Wayne of old. That is wrong thinking! But it's still there. It takes years.

And I don't think anybody in God's Church over a long period of time ever gets to the point where they say they've conquered a particular sin, where it's completely dead. We change and overcome certain things and think slightly differently and in some things more than others, but other sins remain with us for a long time.

Well, God is saying we're to loose the bonds of wickedness. We're to reject sin in our life. Because God will reveal it to us and the depth of it, the intent of what we do. And if we were to examine in any given day our intent or motive behind everything we do we would be shocked, absolutely horrified, that we might even want to lock ourselves up and not go out for a day. Because deep, deep down our motive and intent is always selfishness. That's just who we are. Well, God says He will reveal things to us. Well, we've got to reject what we see about ourselves and what's holding us or controlling us.

Now, we are all being controlled by pride and we're all being controlled and being held by selfishness. It's natural. There's nobody on this earth that isn't. And it pops up now and again in different degrees.

Continuing on there's another point here... **to undo the heavy burdens.** So what God is saying, "This is the fast I've chosen." First is "to loose the bonds of wickedness." We're to reject sin that is controlling us. We don't want to be that way anymore. That's number one.

Number two - "to undo the heavy burdens." Now, what is that saying? Well, what is a heavy burden? Well, the heavy burden is what we're placing on somebody else - an expectation or a judgment or a bias or a prejudice or an attitude. That's what we're... God's saying you've got to undo that burden that you've put on somebody else. It's like in the old days they'd have donkeys and asses and they would put a big burden on it, which is a big load, and they would lead it and it's doing all the work. The expectation is it's going to do all the work. Well, same with us. We put expectations and burdens on others. "Look at their attitude." "Look at that..." Well, God's saying, "No, no. You need to take all that away. You're to get rid of that. You should look at yourself. Stop pointing out there, look at yourself, and don't have expectations and put burdens and aspects or things on others." The words not coming to me, but it's like a projection of an expectation we have of other members of the Body of Christ or even out of the Church. We have an expectation on them. Well, that's wrong. We shouldn't expect anything from anybody. We should be worried about our own selfishness. And the expectation is we are going to change, we don't want to be that way. So that's point two.

We're to let go of what we hold others with, our prejudices or expectations, to let go of what we expect of others and what attitudes we expect of others. Because without knowing it we expect members of the Body of Christ to have a particular attitude. And when they don't we judge them and say, "Well, you've seen that attitude they have." Well, no, God's saying, "Well, no, that's not right. This is the fast I'm telling you that you should do. You need to change your attitude, not others. You change your attitude." That's what God expects. The answer is don't expect anything from anybody but be concerned with our own thinking.

Now, I understand that these are easily said and very difficult to do, but the desire has to be that we will humble ourselves and change. We don't want to be the way we are. And it's a painful process, it's a long process, but God looks at the heart. He wants to know, have we got a broken and contrite spirit? Which means, are we willing to humble ourselves and change? And the answer should be, I know, it's yes, we want to change. We don't want to be this way. And that's why God said He'll draw near to that person.

And point three, **to let the oppressed go free**, from attitudes that we try to control. We let them go free. Let people live their lives. Let them learn their lessons. Something I've learned that without fully understanding it is that we tend to have a desire to control things, control situations, whereas we actually have to let it go. And if a person wants to walk out on the road and get run over by a bus we have to say, "Well, that's a choice they made." We don't have to go and try to save everybody, help everybody. It's not what it's about. It's about letting the person live their life. And do you know how they grow? Through trials and tests. Could be good. Could be bad. Could be good. Could be bad. Spiritually it's the best things ever happened to them.

So people going through trials, yes, we feel for them and we have a desire that that burden that they're being placed under would be removed. But it's not necessarily the best thing for them to have that burden removed, or that trial removed, because God knows it's probably the best thing for them, if you know what I mean. "Probably" is the wrong word. It's the best thing for them if they involve God in it, if they repent and seek to think about it the way God thinks about it. Righteous judgment.

So sometimes we try to control others by attitudes or because this is the way we would do it and they do it a different way. No, it doesn't make any difference. Let people live. Let people learn from their choices. We have to let others live their lives. And it's something over time that I've come to see and slowly getting better at, which is don't always agree with the way people live their life but it's their life and God's so powerful He can do what He wants. He wants to reveal a certain sin to them; He'll reveal the sin to them. It's their life. God's working with them and He's got a position for them. And if we intervened all the time in people's lives where would the growth be? You know, we'd be little molly coddled, cotton wool babies in a corner where nothing could happen. No, we've got to get on and live life.

Point four... **and that you break every yoke.** That's what God requires. Let go of what you are holding on others or what you're holding them with. We're to be merciful and forgiving. Now, this is... I know this is easily said. We're to be merciful and forgiving. Now, what's that attribute? That's not human. Not human mercy. Not human forgiveness. This is spiritual. Because we see ourselves. Because you know what? By nature we're not merciful and we're not forgiving. We have to learn it. By the power of God's holy spirit we have to change the way we think. And then with God's thinking we'll become merciful and forgiving. It's the only way. Can't be done on a physical level. Let go of your controlling attitudes and selfish expectations.

So you can see the difference here. Ones a fast for physical, this is a fast about spiritual, about us changing individually, a broken heart. We have to choose this broken heart, choose to want to change.

Verse 7, point five: *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry?* Now, if you look at that physically people say, "Oh, I've got to go out and sell everything and give it to all the people that don't have anything." No, it's not saying that. It's about an attitude. We have to be generous and willing to share; share of ourselves more importantly, not just physical goods. Share of ourselves. You know, be who we are becoming, which is God in us. Share or sharing in a right attitude. Because I've seen many a time over the years where people share but it's sharing with an expectation, if you understand what I mean. So they'll share - it's like people giving gifts to each other at a certain time of the year. Christmas, they share, give you a gift, but you know what? "What are you giving back to me?" And if they'd given you a \$50 one and you give them a \$2 one you'll see the difference. Well, we should give with no expectation of getting anything back at all. Now, this is a spiritual attitude - to give not expecting anything in return. Now, that's giving! If we

ever give anything in life where there's an expectation of getting something back it's not of God. It's sin. It's selfishness; we want something back.

I remember a time when I used to work in a retail store and there used to be people that come through the shop and they would buy certain gifts and I'd ask, "Well, who was that for?" And they'd say, "Oh, this is for just in case they turn up and bring me a gift." So people were wrapping up gifts and putting them in cupboards in case somebody else turned up that they hadn't necessarily invited, and they might turn up and say, oh, the neighbor, or whatever, "Here's your Christmas gift." And they didn't want to get caught short, of not having something to give back so they'd wrap them and put them back in the cupboard. If they didn't turn up, well, they'd give them to someone else next year. The whole attitude is just so perverted and evil, when you think about it. It's not giving without an expectation and it's a backup of pride. "In case they turn up I've got something in the cupboard. Me, I'm still doing okay. I'm alright. You won't have a bad view of me." Well, we're to get rid of all that and God says we're to share, to share with a right attitude expecting nothing in return at all.

The desire must be the best for others. Now, this could be very difficult at times, no ill will. Can be very difficult to get to this right way of thinking. Well, the only way you can get to this right way of thinking is that the person whether they're—because they're not in the Church possibly—is that they have the potential to be begotten sons of God and to enter Elohim. And who are we to walk around holding other people with a bond that they're not worthy? We're not worthy. We never were. Never will be. It's only by God's great mercy that He makes us worthy because He's working with us. And if we're refusing to have a broken heart, won't take long. We're not going to be counted as worthy because we're rejecting God or happy in our pride.

Now, sharing the truth is one thing where there is no expectation. Well, we have to be very wise about how we share the truth. There's no point in sharing the truth with unconverted people. If the opportunity comes up we would maybe... You have to be very careful how you handle it because it won't do any good because why? Because without God's spirit it's all pointless. If God calls them and opens their mind they'll see it. Other than that there's no point; they're not called to see it. We're just so blessed that we've been called to see it. But we've not been called to run around and tell people everything about it. "Christ is going to return soon." No point. It's the way we live that's the key to it all. It's the way we live. And this is an example of a way we live, change the way we think about everything.

Point six, and this is, I think it might be verse 6 actually? No, it's point six. We're still in verse 7. This is point six out of this fasting: **and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out.** This isn't saying we're to run around and grab all the homeless people and bring them into the house. Because that's not really what it's about. This is about an attitude, the way we look to the needs of others. Now, we can do this in the Church by looking out for the needs and the welfare of others. Now if it's within our capability we can help in certain areas, but this is more about an attitude of a willingness to listen, for example, listening to others that are having trials and tests,

not giving them all the advice under the sun about what they should do and what they shouldn't do. Just being there to listen. So we're to take them in, we're to sacrifice our selfishness, put others first.

It was interesting. Driving down in the car we had said to the kids—I know in other countries they call them other names—we'd said to the kids "Would you..." because they'd gone off McDonald's. They're on to Hungry Jacks, which I think is called Burger King elsewhere. We said to the kids, "Would you like to go to Hungry Jacks or to Grilled?" which is the other burger place for lunch, because we told Samantha that we would drop the kids off before lunch and that we would have fed them. And one said, "Hungry Jacks!" And the other one thought for a while and said, "Mmm, Grilled." Then one of the children turned around and said, "No, we'll have Hungry Jacks." Now, that is a sacrifice. Now, he's carnal, was Jayden, he's carnal, but just to see that demonstration, that he was willing to give up so that he could please his sister. Now, that's a carnal child. I'm sure there's a motive in there somewhere but we can't see it. But on a spiritual level how much greater us where we turn around and go, "No, let's do 'this,' let's do 'that?'" Now at the end of this don't all stand at the door and say, "You go first." "You go first." We'll never get out of here. But you understand what I mean. This is about a willingness to sacrifice our desire for the benefit of others in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and externally. Because that's what this is about, about "inviting someone into your house," giving up something, sacrificing for somebody else.

We're to look out for others needs and those that have not been called to see the truth. We're to look out for them. Because often we in the Body will think it's all about love of the brethren, which is true, we're to love the brethren. But God's love is not—what is it?—partial. God's not partial in His love, and He says, "Well, I'll love you..." He can love us now because He's called us so that we love Him. Well, they can't love Him but they'll be given the opportunity one day. Nobody out there without God's spirit, without a calling can love God. It's absolutely impossible because to love God is to obey Him and they don't obey Him because they haven't been called to see it. Whereas we have. So we have to love the truth because we see it. We can share the truth by living it, believing it. That's how we share it. We don't have to go and force it down each other's throats, we're to live it. We believe it. We love it. That's how we can share amongst ourselves. But we can't share with others that truth at the moment because they can't see. But the day will come where they will see it and they'll look back and say, "Oh, now I remember."

Another one, which is **when you see the naked, that you cover him**. Now, this is really about being of a gentle and loving spirit towards all. Because when we look out there we don't see everybody physically naked but we see everybody naked of the spirit. They don't have God's spirit. They're naked. They need covering. We can't do it but we can live it so that we are demonstrating that our desire is to cover them because of what we live. So it says here "When you see the naked," well, we see out there in the world they're all naked, "that you cover him." Well, we can't go out there. We can't give God's spirit but we can live God's spirit towards others so we're helping them by our attitudes and what we've chosen.

...and not hide yourself from your own flesh? So what God is saying here this is taking a change of attitude about sacrificing. It all starts in our families. Now, if we can't live love within our own families are we ever going to live love to others? We should know the answer. How greater is it that we here in this environment... Now, families, the way the world sees families it's more about breeding and selfish desires. We see family differently. We are all family here. We're all willing to sacrifice for one another. So it's a different attitude because we have God's spirit. Well, God is saying here that we're not to hide ourselves from it. We're not to be selfish. We're to sacrifice for the benefit of others. It starts here within the Body of Christ. We're to learn to live love here now within the body. We love them all because they're God's children. They belong to God. We all belong to God. Who are we to chose that we don't love somebody? God loves that person and we choose that we don't love them? Something is really wrong. But if we have God's spirit we'll realize it takes effort, takes work. We have to work on these things. But it all goes back to an attitude.

The way we treat others is important and it all starts within a family. We must learn to live love to all. Now, that's probably one of the most profound statements that God requires us to learn. Fasting is about learning to live love to all. Takes effort. It's hard work. Takes a choice. Be an example of God's way of thinking to all our families, physically and spiritually. If we repent we think differently. So fasting (this broken heart), is something that we have chosen because we desire to think differently. We don't want to be the way we are by nature.

Verse 8—Then, if we do this, if we've done all those points, which are a lot, then what does God say He will do. **Then your light will break forth like the morning.** Now, we've seen the sun come up. You know, it's bright. It's a beautiful thing to see. **Your healing** (spiritually) **shall spring forth speedily.** The healing of the mind will begin because we're going to start to see something differently about ourselves. We're going to start to see what we're really like and we don't want to be that way. **...and your righteousness**, which is God in us, **shall go before you.** So now we're going to be living a different way. We're going to be choosing different attitudes. We're not going to be choosing selfish attitudes; we're going to be choosing loving attitudes. We're going to try to sacrifice for the benefit of others. We're going to start to give to others without expecting anything in return. In the smallest part we're going to lay down our life to the benefit of others. "Your righteousness," God in us, "shall go before you," because of the way we're now living, and the way we're now thinking, because it starts with thinking. **And the glory of the Eternal shall be your rearguard.** Because God is in it. So God is there. God will work things out. The more we sacrifice, the more we give, the more we choose to have a broken and contrite spirit, God says He will be with us, He'll draw near, He'll help us and we will transform our thinking because God will do it for us.

Verse 9—Then you shall call... Because if we haven't been humbling ourselves and we haven't been choosing a broken and contrite spirit our prayers when we called can't be heard because pride exists, self-reliance is there. And God's saying, "Well, you're not humbling yourself. You're

not demonstrating to Me that you really want Me involved in your life because you're acting in self-reliance. You're going along the way you think you want to go; you're doing okay." Well, now God is saying "If you're willing to humble yourself, choose to humble yourself, turn to Me and change your attitude, be willing to change your attitude, want to change your attitude," God says, "I'll come to you. I'll draw near to you." **Then you shall call, in prayer, and the Eternal will answer;** because we've repented and chosen a broken and contrite spirit, a humble mind or attitude. So it goes back to a choice.

You shall cry, and He will say, Here I am. So God's going to listen to us because we've chosen a right attitude. **If you take away the yoke from your midst,** which is this wrong attitude we have towards others, that we're holding them with, change our thinking and control over other because of our attitudes, remove expectations we have placed on others and our attitude towards them, well, God says if you take that away, "I'm here. I'll be right with you." ...**the pointing of the finger,** this is quite classic, really, because we've all probably done this. You've seen that. We've all pointed the finger. Well, it's about an attitude that we can do. We don't have to point our finger physically; we do it in the mind, a spirit of condemnation, "the accuser of the brethren." Who does that remind us of? "The accuser of the brethren." Well, God's saying, well, if you take this away, you take away that yoke, the pointing of the finger, which is this judgmental, condemnation or condemning attitude, **the speaking of wickedness** about others towards others, **if you extend your life to the hungry,** which is this giving attitude, sacrifice for others, **and sanctify the afflicted life,** which is to give love and, you know, to live love and to be merciful, be forgiving. If we have chosen this spirit and with God living in us **then your light shall shine/your light shall dawn in the darkness,** because of this example we're being. Different attitude.

Now, how often have we seen attitudes in people and go, "Oh!" You know, you can pick the attitude. And how often can you see another attitude? Someone who is of a humble spirit and they go, "Oh, okay. That's not a problem." Its different attitudes. You can see it. Well, God says that our light, this different attitude, this mood that we used to have is changed. We're taking it differently. It's obvious. It's obvious even to the carnal world, but it's more obvious within the Body of Christ. "Then your light shall dawn in the darkness." We'll be able to see it. ...**and your darkness shall be as the noonday.** Well, we know what it's like at noonday, twelve o'clock, it's bright on a sunny day.

So God's saying change your attitude, be repentant, humble yourself and it will be obvious - obvious to Him, but it'll be obvious to others as well.

Verse 11—and the Eternal will guide you continually and satisfy your life in drought. Now, what's a drought? Well, we, some here have been through a drought, severe drought, the worst it's ever probably been in God's Church. It's called the Apostasy. No truth. Truth being eroded to the point of where truth was abolished. That's a drought. Spiritual famine hit God's Church and there wasn't truth. There was no apostle leading. It was horrendous. For those that can relate to

that it was a horrendous time in our life, when that was all eroded and taken away, when the truth disappeared.

Well, God is saying then if we've changed our attitude in the Body of Christ now and we're willing to humble ourselves **the Eternal will guide you continually and satisfy your life in drought.** So we don't have a drought. We have an excess. We have a horrendous amount of truth. Probably the wrong word to use but there but there is so much truth that we can't grasp it all and the context of it. Like when you go through the 57 Truths and you read a couple of paragraphs, well, that's written, but to understand it, to live it, to have it in our minds and to be praying and fasting about these truths and repenting before God? God says He'll give it to us. We will see more. We'll understand it more within ourselves. It's not about others seeing, it's about us, that we will see it. Then we can change because we see it.

Ah ha, the rightful place of women. Now, it's good to know, but to live it, to see it, to have it implemented in our thinking, in our minds will change our behaviors towards everything because it's part of us, the way God sees it. So although there's words written in the truths there's much more to it because it's all about this attitude or the approach we have, the motive and intent behind what we do.

So God says He will help us to see the truth more on a spiritual level, **and strengthen your bones**, which is our faith and our strength. So bones give us strength so we'll be strengthened because we've chosen to humble ourselves, to have a broken and contrite spirit before God. And God says it's like a sacrifice. He says, "Look, you're sacrificing before Me because you know that's what I desire. You're giving up your selfishness." That's what God desires, give up our selfishness and be willing to do it. Well, God says He'll strengthen our faith because of this attitude we have chosen.

You shall be like a watered garden. Well, what's a watered garden? Well, where we are at the moment it's pretty dry and you have to water the garden to keep it alive. Same for us on a spiritual level. We'll be like a watered garden. If you've seen a watered garden it's beautiful, it's flourishing, it's flowering, and it's green. Well, it's about growth - growth-garden-growing, and it's all done by the power of God's holy spirit. So if we're willing to fast and humble ourselves and to seek God and follow those steps that were written out and we've gone through, God says we'll be like a watered garden. We're going to flourish spiritually. We're going to grow. We're not going to wither on the vine and die. We're going to flourish. We're going to bud. We're going to bear fruit. We're going to bear the fruit which is in Galatians 5; the fruit of the spirit, which are listed there in Galatians 5:22-23 if I remember rightly. But that's what we will reveal. We'll be living God out to others, living the fruit of the spirit. We'll bear fruit, which is what God requires of us, to bear fruit.

...and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. We can't fail because God's in us; God does the works. So if we're willing to admit who we really are and humble ourselves God will live in us and we will grow spiritually.

God's spirit in us enables spiritual growth. Can't come any other way. Spiritual growth is the power to think differently than before. Now, it's an incredible thing when you go back and think of the way we used to think about things and the way we think now about things. And people will say certain things to us, in times past, personal experience, I would react to it and try to prove to them we're all going to Petra. That's my nature. "Let me tell you how we're going to get there." But with spiritual growth and time now people can say things, "You're an idiot, Wayne." "Tell me something I don't know." In the end it doesn't affect you, does it? Whereas when you're first called sometimes these things affect people, you know, like, "You joined a cult and you're doing 'this,' and you're giving 10% ...!" And it affects you. You get a bit tense about it. You try to defend yourself and argue and prove a point. "Can't you see? Can't you see?" In the end you go, "Does it matter what they think?" That's the view. Does it matter what anybody thinks? Anybody? Well, as you grow spiritually you realize it doesn't make any difference. It's not their time and it's more important what God thinks of me than what it does about anybody else thinks. Because not going to try to protect an image. I am who I am. I'm trying to change. I'm doing what I can to change with God's spirit. I want truth. All those.

And in the end if people think you're just a weirdo that has a day off on Saturday and no one can come and work around the property, that's their problem. One day they'll realize, "Oh..." It's a wonderful thing. So that's spiritual maturity. You don't worry about what other people think. You don't worry about what... People won't give you a job because, you know, you won't work on a Saturday. Does it matter? Not really. Doesn't make any difference because you know who you are and I know who I am and the most important thing is we want to please God. God is first no matter what. And it's no matter what. And there are certain things we just won't do. Even though there is a physical penalty at this time because it's Satan's system of government, that's fine. We'll pay the penalty. So we have an opportunity to grow spiritually because we've got a change of attitude.

"Like a spring of water whose waters do not fail," because God's spirit won't let us down. God's spirit in us enables spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is the power to think differently than we did before. And that's what happens, we think differently than we did before.

Verse 12—Those from among you, those in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, shall build on waste places. It's referring to future. But we're building on waste places because up until a certain age—I didn't know it—my mind was a waste place, completely wasted. It was a worthless, self-righteous, pride-filled mind. It was worthless to God. We'll we've built on that. It's been gotten rid of and there's a component that now has God's spirit. So the worthless part has been getting rid of and we're building on it. You know, same ground, same mind, but now it's changing and it's going to be something different than what it was before.

...**you shall rise up the foundations of many generations.** Now, this is about having family, living the truth, and being humble and teachable. That this is a process. It's not about others doing it, it's about individually we have to choose to do it. ...**and you shall be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets to dwell in.** Talking about Millennium and what's going to change.

Well, the foundation of the Millennium is the Church of God, and it's what we think. And what a wonderful blessing it would be to have the knowledge that we have, to live into that time, and when someone comes up and says, you know, "How do I draw close to God?" to be able to explain to them, "Well, one way is to fast, to choose to humble yourself to fast and to draw close to God –through what?–getting rid of selfishness. Not asking God for the new car or the money or you know, all those things, no, to change the way that I think so that I change my way of thinking so that I think like God." And to be able to transfer that knowledge, how beautiful would that be? And that they go and say, "Yeah. I'm the problem." Because it's going to take them a while for them to get to see that they're the problem like it was for us. And I know when I was first called I did not see that I was the problem. I just didn't see that component, that I was the problem, that I was selfish. Whew! And if you'd come up to me probably in those times and say, "Wayne. You're selfish." What?! I would have defended myself to the death!

Well, we're different. We're a different people, different time. God has given us a lot more and we willingly admit we are selfish by nature. And it doesn't bother us. I believe we just, "Yep." Someone come over and said, "Wayne. You're selfish." Yep, what's new? We are. And that's what we're like now as part of the Body of Christ. Now, what a beautiful gift that we have that God has revealed that to us. It's a wonderful thing. Out there, no one. You can't mention that word. I know; I've tried it. It backfired on me.

Verse 13—If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath... This is about polluting it. Turn away from polluting the Sabbaths (because that's what they were doing), **from doing your pleasure on My holy day**; which is the Sabbath and also the holy days. Not doing what we want, but stopping and resting, worshipping God, turning to God. Stop trampling over the Sabbath by doing your own selfishness, doing your own business, like negotiating.

I remember I had mentioned in a sermon once with regards to the way that you can pollute the Sabbath and it's a spiritual matter. And when we start off in the Church we think it's about stopping and resting. But we can stop, not work, and do all those things and still pollute the Sabbath. Because we can go through the whole Sabbath thinking about what we're going to do tomorrow. That's polluting the Sabbath. Because it's about the mind. It's about the spirit. It's about the attitude. No, the Sabbath is about learning from God, listening to God. It's a spiritual matter. But if we go through the whole Sabbath and do all the physical component and our minds are raced about all the things we've got to plan tomorrow, "Got to do 'that.' Got to move 'that' or water 'that,'" that's polluting the Sabbath. It's not a rest of the mind - because it's a spiritual matter. So we've got to stop working in the mind as well, not just physically. It's both.

...and call the Sabbath a delight. Now, we do, brethren, I know we call the Sabbath a delight. We love the Sabbath. We do know that God pours out more of His spirit on this day, that we hear things, we know more. God pours out His spirit so that we can see. What a great day to then take it on board and then to choose a fast to implement what we might have heard. How good's that? How do we think God would view that? God says they're the sacrifices I look at. Not all the animals and that. ...a holy day of the LORD, honourable. This is a day for listening to God, to listen to God, what God's got to say about a matter. Now, we've been through this from the point of view of fasting, what God says about it. Going without food for 24 hours is a pointless exercise. It's about our attitude and what we've chosen to humble ourselves before God because we want more of God in us. We want to change the way we think.

Verse 13—and shall honour Him (God), not doing your own ways, not our own thinking, nor finding your own pleasure, entertainment and sport, doing what we think we want to do, nor speaking your own words, the ways of selfishness.

Now, if we do these things that God has said that we should be doing, **verse 14—then you shall delight yourself in the Eternal; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth.** Now, we shouldn't look at that physically. This is talking about something spiritual. We will have spiritual blessings from God, which is about the transformation of our mind. That's a blessing. The day that we change the way we think about a matter to come into more unity and agreement with God on a matter is a marvelous and wonderful blessing that mankind cannot comprehend at this point of time. So when a truth enters the Church it is a time of great rejoicing, great blessings. Well, we should take it to heart and humble ourselves so that we want to be more like God - change the way we think. And God says He'll give us more, more spiritual food...more spiritual food. Incredible. There is no famine. ...and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Eternal has spoken *it*.

Now, God cannot lie so all of these things we've been through today about changing the way we think, God says that if we desire to have it He will fulfill it in us. We have the opportunity to be different people than we are today, totally different people than we are today. We've all made growth, but now the opportunity to be like God more has never been available like it is. With the amount of truth that is given, and if you go through what we're going through, this series of *An Extraordinary 4½ Years*, it's amazing what we're learning, and what we know, the knowledge we have. The knowledge in and of itself is not enough. It's not enough. Knowledge is knowledge but it's not what God wants.

We're going to close by going to Romans 12:9. When you go through Isaiah and look at the fasting, really it goes down to love versus selfishness, Godly love versus selfishness or pride versus humility. That's what it's really about. Well, we are encouraged to live love. And the only way we can do that, of course, is by the power of God's spirit.

Romans 12:9—Let love be without hypocrisy. Now, this is not... Hypocrisy is a double standard. So our love has to be genuine. It has to come from God. It cannot be from our own reasoning, which is hypocrisy. Because hypocrisy is when you do one thing but you do another later on. Well, that's not it. This is about an attitude towards the brethren, the attitude towards others that is constant, and it's one of sacrificing no matter what.

Abhor (hate) what is evil. It's easy to hate evil out in the world. We see all sorts of things going on now. But to hate evil within ourselves, our own selfishness, to learn to hate it? Takes time because there is a temporary pleasure in sin. So our selfishness, when we fulfill our selfishness, there's a temporary pleasure in it, but it's temporary. That's the most... - "temporary" - underline it - temporary. It doesn't last. Whereas God's way with God's spirit it lasts. The mind that is healed, whatever it does out of love it lasts. It lasts in the mind and it lasts when it's given. It's a wonderful thing.

So we have to learn to hate evil within ourselves, **cling to what is good.** We have to hold what is good. What is good? Only God is good. We have to cleave to what God teaches the Church. We have to cleave to God by drawing near to Him. **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love; in honour preferring, giving preference, to one another.** So that's about that sacrificing. Because, really, we go through Romans 12 here, it's really going over the fasting chapter only it's just putting it in a different light. It's the same thing, giving preference to one another. It's an attitude.

...not lagging in diligence; in other words, not doing it half-heartedly; **fervent in spirit; serving the Eternal.** Because that's why we're doing it, we want to be more like God. **...rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation.** So no matter what comes along we're patient in it because we know the truth. Everything's temporary. We are all going to die if we have physical lives. It's just a given. It's happened to everybody else. They've all died. Thousands of people have died. Well, it says here we got to rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, **continuing steadfastly in prayer.** So turning to God always. **...distributing to the needs of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you: bless, and do not curse.** Easy said. Well, as we mature in God's Church we realize that people that persecute us or curse us, we don't have to retaliate. We don't have to speak back. We don't have to do anything. Leave it with God because we're turning to Him.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. It's an attitude. It's one of compassion and mercy and forgiveness. **Be of the same mind towards one another. Do not set your minds on high things but associate with the humble.** Now, how do we do that? Well, who is humble? God and Jesus Christ. I know this is referring to physical, but we should draw close to God. That's where humility comes from.

Do not be wise in your own opinion. So we're not to lift ourselves up in pride but let's take the lower ground. It doesn't really matter. Someone might argue that it's black and someone will say it's blue. Who cares? Could be either. You know, like, who really cares? So don't raise ourselves up

and argue about matters that are irrelevant. That's just a waste of time. And our own opinion about something, it's all irrelevant and it too will pass.

Verse 17—Repay no one evil for evil. Don't seek revenge. Don't try to get even. Leave it with God and wait. Be patient. **Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.** So it's the way we live to all. **If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath,** which is all about this getting rid of this attitude, because wrath is an attitude, **for it is written, Vengeance is mine. God will repay when it's time to repay.** Now, some people, as David had said in some different places, where, well... and Solomon it might have been. "Well, look at them all out there. It looks like the wicked are prospering." And that's partly true. The wicked trample on others and they have a lot of wealth and it looks like they're all prospering. But it is temporary. It's just temporary. It too will pass. It's going to be gone and they're going to have to change the way they think just like we're trying to change the way we think with the power of God's spirit now.

And God will repay. No one gets away with anything. It might look like it at times - nobody gets away with anything. And everyone that has lived up to this point in time and then died, they get away with nothing. They're going to have to address the issues in their life just like we're having to address the issues in our life. God says, **I will repay. Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.** Now, this is not necessarily talking about physical things. It can apply to that. But spiritually feed him, which is giving hope. It's giving hope to others by the way we live. **If he is thirsty, give him a drink: for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.** Because we're the ones who are having living something and at some point God's going to deal with that person. They might have taken a lot of things, but one day they're going to have to learn it's more blessed to give than to receive. They'll learn it. But their time is not now.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. So that's a total change of attitude, which we've learned about today.

The key to life is to choose to be humble and to have a humble and broken and contrite spirit. That's the key to our life in the Church of God. When we choose to fast with a right attitude, a right motive, God sees our sacrifice of a broken spirit.

With that we'll finish.