

This will be the last part of this particular series entitled *God's Righteousness*. This is *Part 4*.

It was mentioned at the end of *Part 3* that we should be grasping more deeply, more fully the righteousness of God and there really is a lot to this subject. There's a lot to drink in of what God is revealing and showing us about some of this, and especially how righteousness is attributed to us, how it's accounted to us, and to come to more deeply understand God is the only source of righteousness, period; that's it.

But indeed, our Father blesses us with the forgiveness of sins so that He and His Son can dwell in us and that's a part of a process. He will not dwell in sin. It's an awesome thing to understand. That's why it's so important to repent quickly of sin and to fight to live this way of life. There is more going to be said about that because there is an order in how God works with us and molds and fashions us and I already see some of the things that are coming. So to me it's exciting to see how God works with us, molds and fashions us, and gives us better understanding, deeper understanding, and reminds us of things we need to be reminded of just as we're approaching the days of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, if you will, and the Passover season.

There are things we go through every year, but God continually builds upon that, even by the sermon series we have right now for some time leading up to Passover period. Because we all grow at a different rate, in a different way, and we go through different experiences. We have different time within the Church by which we've been molded and fashioned and so there is an incredible work that takes place in continually helping those who have been around for a long time to grow more and those who are newer to grow more. But again, we're at different stages and God is also molding and fashioning us for different purposes, for different things, and there are different experiences we must go through and learn. God works with us in an incredible way and it really is inspiring when we come to understand those things more deeply.

So again here, God will not dwell in sin. We understand that. Where there is no sin there is righteousness that remains. But we're not righteous. We always have sin. We always have things to see in ourselves because of our human nature, and those matters of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life that are in human beings, period. That's why Paul talks about this battle that goes on inside and there are things we know that God reveals to us in the mind that we want and we desire and we want to work toward and we pray about and seek to grow in, but there is this other part that is just a result of us living in a physical body and it takes time to fight against that, to grow spiritually. But God has great patience; He gives us great mercy, and He works with us to grow and to conquer and to overcome. It's a continual process as long as we're in this Body.

We ended here on Romans 12. We'll pick those three verses up and then continue on in another area of scripture that Paul spoke of. But again, it's an awesome thing to understand that God gives us the ability to see, to know His truth. No one can come to learn it and understand it without God's help. The human mind, because of the way we are, is so contrary to God's way, and that's what God says very clearly about the human mind, it's at enmity with God. That's a very difficult thing for people to accept. It's a very difficult thing for people to come to grips with when they're called into the Church even and it's especially difficult as someone in the world hears about that and thinks that, "No, I don't fight against God. I'm not at enmity with God," and basically the same word meaning an enemy to God, "On the contrary, I do 'this.' I do 'that.' I want 'this.' I see this good. I want this good in life." And yet they don't understand it's from a human vantage point. It's from the way we see it, the way we think it should be, and especially in what we call traditional Christianity, for what people have learned.

Because they have learned things from a very early age and that's all they know and that's what they believe. That's understandable. Until God comes along and says, "That isn't right," then we find out what human nature is like. We find out what human nature is like at some of the early stages when God begins to say that His Son was not born anywhere near December the 25<sup>th</sup> or different dates that different people have in different parts of the world that they celebrate that season of the year, because there are a lot of different dates. But most in this part of the world believe it's December 25<sup>th</sup>, and in time some biblical scholars have come to acknowledge that by what scripture says that, no, he really wasn't born during that season of the year, that he either had to be born (by what it says) around the springtime or the fall, and from what it says about other instances there leading up to his actual birth that it's most likely in the fall. Well, that's right.

But it's not something that God said should be celebrated. Whatever God wants to be celebrated, whatever God wants to be observed year by year He's made clear. He made it clear in the very beginning as He was bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt. He first gave a codified law of how we should live. Four commandments that have to do with our relationship, mankind's relationship with their Creator, with God, and the last six commandments having to do with how we are to have a right relationship with one another, how we're to live in order to live right, in order to have right fruit and right blessings in our life. No other way can bring that. Those 10 Commandments reveal a right way of life to be lived that can bring peace, that can bring happiness, that brings prosperity, that brings a sound mind. We see a world that doesn't have soundness. As time goes on, because of technology, it's just getting worse and worse out there.

So what an incredible thing. Then God didn't leave us hanging either. He began to reveal why He created us! What an awesome thing! People don't understand why they're created! Closest thing they can get to sometimes is thinking that everyone's to go to heaven, or if you don't live right it's kind of like the Santa Claus thing, if you don't do what's good, if you don't do what's right. There's a stupid song that goes along with that: "You better not shout, you better not cry," something like that, "I'm telling you why." Anyway, something to do with if you've done good, if

you've done bad whether you get presents or not, or whatever it might be. I think that's how it goes. I'm so glad I'm so far removed from that I don't know.

But it's kind of like the thing with God too, then. It's like if you don't do what's right, if you don't live a right kind of life then you're going to this bad place. It can be some kind of place in between the two, as some believe, or it could be all the way to the bad one, to the one that we don't know where it is, but it's a hot place and you're going to be tormented for all eternity. I think what a hideous god that would do something like that, that would punish people for all eternity.

I think of torture and things that people do to others, have done throughout the middle ages especially, some of the things in Europe when you go through some of the castles or ruins and you see how people have treated others, or you go through some of the things that happened during WWII even and you see some of the torture and some of the things that took place. It boggles the mind how a human being could have the kind of mind that thinks its right to see people suffer, to want them to suffer. It's really sick! Then to think that there would be a god who would not only want someone to suffer for not obeying him, but that he'd want to see them suffer for all eternity. I think you can have that god, if that's what you really want.

But they don't understand, and so one day they're going to rejoice when they realize God is not like that in any iota! No way! He's a God of mercy and He's a God of love and He has a great desire for His creation; He loves His creation! What an awesome thing to understand.

As soon as we begin to find out that, oh, it's not December 25<sup>th</sup>, and not only that, He's told us what days we are to celebrate, what days we are to observe starting with the Passover season, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and on it goes all the way into the Fall, and through that we learn He shows us a plan that He has for His creation in order to become a part of His Family. Not to go off to heaven. People still try to go off to heaven, even in the scattered Church, things that took place toward the end there, of people that wanted to go up there at least for 30 days or 45 days or whatever it was. You think, no, you're not going there at any point in time; God has a different plan that He's working out.

We go through a lot sometimes. But if we think we have answers to things without God revealing it to us, well, we have to learn some hard lessons. Because we don't; God has to show us everything! He has to reveal every truth to us. You can't figure it out on your own. You can't go into scripture and figure it out on your own. His plan, His purpose of why we're here, God has to reveal every bit of it along the way. It's a lifelong process of learning it and growing in it and coming to see Him more clearly.

We really are quite puny when it comes down to it. I marvel at the patience and the mercy and the love of God because He sees something far, far greater than what we are, the potential, because He knows what Elohim is, the God Family. He knows the kind of power and the kind of minds that He can give to us at any time, bodies that are spirit in composition, that can manifest

themselves physically as Christ did after he was resurrected. Awesome, the things that God has revealed.

So we come here to Romans 12, looking at part of this process of what it means to come to understand God's righteousness, to come to understand how we can have it. We can have truth only because God gives it to us. We can have a righteousness attributed to us, counted to us only because of what God has given to us. That's because of the truth He shows us. Then it's up to us whether or not we choose. We have to make a choice then. "I can see it. I know it's true." One day, whenever God shows it to you, you see the seventh day Sabbath. You see a 7,000 year plan. You see it. God puts it in your mind. He puts more. Then He puts the Passover in there and you see that. You see that there is no such thing as Easter and Christmas to be observed, that they take people away from the truth. He shows Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread and what they mean, and Pentecost and what it means. Then He says, "You choose. I have set before you this day life and death. What do you want? Do you want this way that I'm revealing to you or do you want your own? Do you want the way of the world?" And so people have to make those choices.

And sadly, even after many have made those choices, after the majority have made those choices, at some point along the way they turn against God. That's happened to a majority of the Church since it began in 31 A.D. Many have been called but few have been chosen because of their choices. God lets us make free choices. Awesome! Then we're accountable for those choices. He'll help us along the way if we choose what's right. But not if we resist Him, fight against Him, make choices of something, that we put something above God, we raise up an idol, because that's what spiritual idolatry is, it's raising something else above God. Whether, as I mention so many things, things like the most basic of things like tithing. The most basic of things of not working on the Sabbath. The most basic of things in life, in that respect.

**Romans 12:1—Brethren, I, therefore, urge you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.** So this is what we have to decide as we approach baptism. Everyone has to decide that. "Is my life truly God's? Because that's what I'm saying to God. I want Your way of life. I love what You're revealing. I want that and I don't want what's in the world." You make a choice. Then you realize that as a part of that choice you have to fight against this, a living sacrifice. Because you have to sacrifice self and what self wants over and over and over again. Because, basically, self wants things their way, "the way I see it," "the way I judge," "because my opinion, my idea is better than yours," some of the most basic of things in life when people get into disagreements or arguments, or whatever it might be. He's saying you have to fight against your selfishness.

You want to go out here and live in a different place or have a better car, those things are great to do, but only as you can afford them, only as you're obedient to God, and then God will bless you in those things. But if you decide along the way that, "Hey, I need 'this,' and I need 'that,'" and you go out and get it and all of a sudden, "But I don't have enough now to tithe on, so that's

going to have to wait until I can get things in order.” How do you think God looks at that? “Oh, God has to wait.” He says, “Ten percent, and you have everything out here in life to live and to have that I’ve given to you,” and we say, “No, no, I want this, too, so when I get this all done then I’ll start tithing again.” You think, it doesn’t work that way! Incredible. A living sacrifice. We have to learn to say, “No,” to self. We have to fight against our own nature. It’s the greatest battle there is. It takes God’s help. It takes God’s spirit to fight against self; it truly does, because we can’t do it on our own.

So he says ...**that you present your bodies**, your life, in other words, **as a living sacrifice, holy...** Well, what does that mean? Because we’re not holy. But we have that access to God’s spirit and we’re to grow in that as God says, as Christ said, “to become holy,” as God said in the Old Testament, but repeated again, “because I’m holy.” You’re to have a certain kind of mind, a certain kind of thinking. So what is that? God is righteous. What are we to become? We’re to work toward righteousness. We’re not just to be accounted as righteous because we believe God, but we have to work toward it as well. That’s what’s coming next in order.

Because we have to work at it. We have to fight for it. A change has to take place. We have to be a part of the process. God doesn’t just say, “Okay, you’ve asked for it. Here it is. Here it is. I’ll give you this new mind.” You have to go through experiences and make choices to have this new mind developed in you. By your choices that mind is molded and fashioned. It’s not something that can just be pumped in there and all of a sudden you’re like this robot, “Okay. I will obey.” That’s what it would be; it’d be robotic. God doesn’t want robots. He wants those who by free choice have chosen Him, who have chosen to love Him, who love His way of life. That’s what a real relationship is about.

So, **holy, acceptable to God**, because that’s what’s acceptable to God, that we grow in that kind of a mind, that we want that kind of a mind. That means that you have chosen that you want to be at-one with God in the mind. You want to think as God thinks toward others, toward Him, toward His creation, toward His purpose, toward His plan because that’s what’s exciting, that’s what’s inspiring, that’s what’s beautiful. Anything else that gets in the way, that comes from selfishness, from mankind’s thinking, it does just get in the way.

So that’s what’s acceptable God, **which is your reasonable service**. That’s just the way it should be. **And do not be conformed to this world**, as we talked about last week. On the contrary, we’re to come out of it. We’re to be different from this world. We’re the pace setters. We’re the ones leading in a different way of life, a new way of life by how we live, by how we think.

Even things like how we dress and what we do, everything we do. It’s not to try to be like the world. Now, if there are things that are okay, then it’s fine. It’s like dressing; it’s a matter of moderation. We don’t go to extremes, one way or the other. We don’t go back and think that somehow by not having zippers—because there are some religions that think if you have a zipper it’s sin—so you still got to have buttons in your pants, whatever. People get caught up in these different ideas. Well, now you can have a car, but you’ve got to paint it like matte black. It can’t

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be shiny, because if it's shiny that's just vanity. I'm serious and I understand. They can't help it, that kind of thinking. Or that you can't even have a car and that it's better to still, you know, be back there in the past in the buggy, whatever, with a horse and you can't use technology but you can kind of hire out others who do use technology. These games that human beings play because they don't understand. I'm not trying to make fun of them. I'm just showing how we think as human beings and how that can be so messed up sometimes.

So, **Don't be conformed to the world.** We can be too far to one side and too far to another. There is a soundness of mind, a balance in life that comes from God. **Don't be conformed to this world but be transformed,** transformed...metamorphoo in the Greek, like metamorphosis, like a change from a cocoon and all the way through to where you finally have a beautiful butterfly. It uses that process. This word, only used twice in scripture and this is one of those places, to show something that actually happens in the human mind, of a change that God is making in how we think and what is coming and what is being developed is a beautiful thing, awesomely beautiful from how it started out. Because how it starts out is not so pretty in a physical world let alone in a spirit world.

So, **be transformed by the renewing of your mind,** so that it's not the same mind. It has to change. Again, I mentioned last week that's why I love the word "repent" in the Greek language, because it literally means "to think differently." God wants us to think differently than the way we do as human beings. And that, primarily, is one of coming into unity and agreement with Him, to think as He thinks. Is that possible? Absolutely! Absolutely! The more we can do that the more we can come into unity and oneness with God, the more blessed our lives become, the richer they become, in that regard, spiritually, in understanding and knowing and seeing God's plan and purpose.

So it says, **in the renewing of your mind that you may prove...** What does this mean? Well, it means by how you live your life you're proving it, that this works, that God's way of life is rich and full and inspiring. That's how you prove it. You prove it by living it, by putting it into practice. The more we live it and the more we live what God says the better life becomes. That's how you prove God's way of life is beautiful, full of peace, full of harmony, full of oneness, full of beauty, full of inspiration. ...**that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** That's beautiful, the perfect will of God.

For I say through the grace given unto me, to everyone that is among you, **not to think more highly than one ought to think,** you know, of ourselves. Because that's what gets in the way. It's pride; our opinions, our ideas. No, God is righteous, we're not. So either we agree with that and want to live that and strive to live that or we do something else, we do our own thing. We have problems then when we do that.

...**but to think soberly...** I'm having a hard time staying away from some of the holy day sermons coming up because this thing about thinking soberly and what it means and what we're like, and how we even treat God's word sometimes and the truth He gives to us, and we don't recognize

sometimes our frailty in our human thinking even when we're in the Church. So we're to think soberly, to be sober-minded. Why? Because of what we are. Because of our tendency of how easy it is to turn away and turn to self and what we want instead of fighting this.

...according as God has dealt to every person the measure of faith. So what does that mean? Well, it's the knowledge, the truth that God gives to us, and then what's dependent upon giving us more depends on our response to that, as to whether or not we truly seek to live it. Because just being given the ability to believe the Sabbath, the holy days, on and on it goes, like in the beginning, what matters then is if we start doing it and if we start doing it that's what faith is. We start living what God has given us the ability to believe. That's a beautiful thing to understand deeply.

Let's turn over now, going on now, to 1 Corinthians 1. What we've covered to this point ought to give us a greater appreciation for other things that are written about how God calls us and this process we go through as He grants us great mercy and blesses us, again, with His righteousness. There is so much said there.

**1 Corinthians 1:1—Paul, called to be an apostle...** I think of that amazing thing, as he was Saul and how Christ struck him down and he was blind for a time, and it sobered Saul up mightily. He began to be given an ability to comprehend, to see things of what he was doing, and he began to see things about his Passover. He began to understand things that we do when we're first called and he repented and he changed and Christ let him know that he had an incredible job ahead of him.

Now, it was very unique what happened to Saul. Saul was highly trained in Judaism. He learned at the feet of some of the greatest teachers of that time. He had great position and position in family as far as Judaism was concerned, and because of all that training once he was called his ability to comprehend things that were written in the Old Testament, when God gave that ability, it was there because he knew it in the mind. He just didn't know it for the truth that it was on a spiritual plane.

Once his mind was opened up it was a powerful thing that God did with him, and right away he was able to begin teaching what was true. He didn't have to go through years and years of training. Well, he did go through a few years, three years of specific training. But he didn't go through years and years and years of growth and development, because his conversion, in that respect, was unique because he'd been prepared well ahead of time before God actually gave him His holy spirit. God had drawn him and worked with him for some time and when it was time, finally, to humble him and to begin using him in a different way he was ready. It's a very unique situation that happened there.

So, as it says here, **Paul, called to be an apostles of Joshua the Christ by the will of God, and our brother, Sosthenes, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.** So again, writing these letters, not able to go there. As with so many of the letters of Paul, sent them out and working

with the Church. ...**to those who are sanctified in Christ Joshua**. So again, starts out here telling a story here in the very beginning by Paul. You are sanctified; you are set apart for holy use and purpose by and through Joshua the Christ. Well, we understand that. Because it's about the Passover. It's about him being our Passover. We have the ability to be forgiven of sin, and then once we're forgiven then we're clear, we're clean and it's all behind and we move forward and we don't have to carry any baggage with us.

So we're sanctified, set apart for holy use and purpose. What is that? So that God can dwell in us. Because God gives us the impregnation of His holy spirit upon baptism and the laying on of hands, then we can begin to grow. And indeed it's God's purpose - holy use and purpose - so that now, because of our Passover, God can dwell in us; He can work to transform the mind. Otherwise, He won't dwell in us, because He doesn't dwell in sin. He won't be around sin. That's what's an awesome thing to understand about the mercy and the grace that God gives to us through His Son and how He set us apart and called us to begin a process of growth in His Family. Like Mr. Armstrong used to explain (I love that example), because that's the way it is, he talked about how the Church of God was as an embryo. We're not yet born; we're like babies not even born, but in the womb, in other words, until we're born.

So we're like, in that stage on a spiritual plane, we're begotten but we're not yet born into the spirit family. We have that working in us, being molded and fashioned. The more we grow, the more we look like what we're going to become.

Just like a baby. At the beginning you have an ultrasound. Then you can see a heartbeat, you can see certain things, but it's not even formed fully. There are certain things not fully formed. The more you do it the more you can see what it's to become, you know, and you can eventually tell whether it's going to be a boy or a girl. It's an incredible thing.

Well, just like for us, when we're first called it's going to take some time to tell what we're going to become because we've got a lot to overcome and there are a lot of changes and transformation that has to take place in our thinking. Then finally it becomes more a part of us and we begin to reflect more fully what we're to become. That's just an exciting thing. The more we grow, the more this mind is changed and transformed, the more we begin to reflect what we're supposed to be, how we're supposed to live. It's a beautiful thing. But we're not yet born into that family. But what a beautiful thing that God has called us to work with us, to mold and fashion us, to transform us, to form us into Elohim.

So, as it says here, going on ...**with all who in every place call upon the name of Joshua the Christ our Lord, both theirs, in other words, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace...** So it's a greeting, it's a beginning of a letter here of things he's going to address, but it's powerful what he's already stated here if we understand it, and by knowledge, by what God has given us as far as the truth is concerned.



**Grace to you and peace.** So just the matter of receiving grace, mercy from God, of how we can have a relationship with God, of how we're able to be a part of the Church, of how we're able to have fellowship with one another, and this thing of peace, that we just went through some sermons on recently. Peace! The peace in the mind, you know, and getting away from the drama of life - in the mind and how we think and how we feel toward things around us, whether or not we can be at peace or whether we ourselves. We might see the world stirred up around us, and how we deal with that depends on largely what's going to be the result in our life, the fruit in our life, whether there's going to be peace or whether we're going to drink it in and let it affect us and it becomes our drama too. Or we have our own drama.

In case you don't know by now, I hate drama. We should all hate drama because it's the opposite of peace. Peace is a beautiful thing that comes from God and it comes from living and thinking right. It comes from thinking right, not just living right. You can go through the motions, but to think right that produces right life is another matter.

So it says here, **Grace to you and peace.** God wants us to receive great mercy. He's giving us great patience. He's offering us His love, something that's not being offered to the world right now. It's not time yet.

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Joshua the Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf.** So again, this matter of being thankful. Thankful for one another. How thankful are we for the Body? We've been whittled down to size and for some of us we've gone through this more than once and we've seen people make choices, going by the wayside, and it's horrible. It's a horrible thing to experience in life, but it also works to mold and fashion you. But hating to see people make wrong choices, as any parent would hate to see their own child make wrong choices in life whereby they're going to suffer because of it. The older they get and they go out on their own and you get to a point where you can't control anything in life.

Parents, this happens to parents in the world all the time, and even in the Church things that happen sometimes. You have no control of choices any child is going to make. So if they make wrong choices you hate to see them suffer. You don't want to see anyone to suffer, but by making wrong choices people do suffer.

It's a matter here of thanking God for what we do have. We don't have to be 97,000. We don't have to have that. But it was a beautiful thing when we did, as far as number of baptized members and those that God was working with around the world and countries all over the world where you could go to services and be with a group of 150 or 300 or 600 or whatever it might be depending on where you lived. You get up to a certain point and after a point in time they'd generally divide that in half and have two different church areas, maybe in the same city. Like Cincinnati, I think, it became five churches then in time with all the people that were there, so that people could go a little bit closer. It was more convenient. That was enjoyable. That was good.

But it's good now. We've been whittled down to size. But to be a part of God's Church, to be able to have fellowship with people of the same mind, what an awesome thing. That's why it gets so exciting when we are able to plan for a Feast of Tabernacles, if so be that we're able to have one again this year. Because I still don't know. Things can still happen.

This world is topsy-turvy and if God wants things to happen in a little bit different way right now because of something that's taken place either in the Church or in the world, so be it. Then He'll show us later on, "This is why I did that." We learn a lot of things by looking in the rear view mirror. "Oh, now I know why we had the Apostasy. Look what we did." And on and on it goes in life. We learn because some things change depending on what's taking place. So again here, incredible the process we go through.

So it's good to read something like this and think, do we thank God for those whom He's called that we're able to have fellowship with in the Church? And especially when we're able to come together with a larger group at the Feast of Tabernacles or on special occasions or whatever it might be. It's a time to thank God and to think about that, to think about the relationships we're able to have with people of the same mind - especially now even more so, candidly. It should mean even more.

**I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God**, because we're only here because of the grace of God. We're only here because of His mercy. We're only here because of His patience. On and on it goes. Thank God He's given mercy and patience to every one of us. That's why we're here. We're not here because of how good we are. We're here because of God's mercy and patience and love, and because as He's blessed us with the truth we have made choices. We have made choices that we want this and so He's blessed us to be able to have it.

**...for the grace of God which is given you by/through Joshua the Christ.** So everything is made possible by and through him. **...that in everything you are enriched by him** or through him. Indeed, we are. We're able to continue moving forward because of that. Because why? Because we know we still have sin that's going to pop in our life and we need help as we repent to continue to go forward, to be stirred up with God's spirit, to learn what we need to learn, to be able to repent and change.

**...so that in everything you are enriched in him**, or through him, **in all speech**, or in all that's spoken, as it means here in the Greek language. So everything that's spoken. Wouldn't that be an awesome thing if everything we said was right before God and we didn't sin, if everything that came out of our mouth was right? But we can't do that because somewhere along the line there's going to be something of self come out. It's going to happen. It might happen as soon as you pull out of the parking lot here right out into traffic. It can happen quickly. Or right out here in the lobby it can happen quickly. We have to be on top of things.

We have to cry out to God to fight against this, to fight against wrong speech, wrong thinking. It starts in the mind first, but it uses speech a lot in scripture because that's generally when it

manifests itself. As long as it's in the mind here you can fight and work with it, but once it's come out, it's a little too late, the actions have betrayed us. Well, we betray our self.

...and in all knowledge, even as the testimony (witness) of Christ was confirmed in you. So we can learn and we can see that there are changes in our life. We have experienced many things and we understand his life in us because we know that's the only way we can do what we need to do, what needs to be accomplished.

**Verse 7—so that you come behind, or fall short...** in other words, **not fall short in any gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Joshua the Christ.** That can be a lot of things on a spiritual plane, on a continuing basis, or in time for what we look forward to, and especially for the Church and when this was spoken everyone that was coming into the Church through time their desire, their goal, their purpose, their calling was to become a part of a first resurrection when Christ returns, so this is what they were shown, this is what they were taught in time, and so that's their thinking. So they're waiting for the revelation of when Christ does come and establish God's Kingdom on this earth ultimately.

**Verse 8—Who shall also confirm...** It means "to establish or secure" **you unto the end.** That's God's desire for us. That's Christ's desire, to establish us, to help us become established, fully molded and fashioned so that there is a time that God can look down and say, "Now I know you," just as He did to Abraham. "Now I know you; you can be changed into Elohim. You have come this far. Your mind has been transformed to this point where you can now be born into the Family." Though you may live, as he did, for several decades later. He lived for a long time after that was told to him, a long time.

**Who shall also confirm (establish, secure) you unto the end.** So we're in God's hands and it depends on how we live toward Him, toward His Son that determines this outcome. **...that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Joshua the Christ.** How is that going to happen? Well, we know the only way we're going to be blameless before him is because of God's righteousness that He attributes to us, because He's given us the truth, we've been blessed to respond, He's helped us to respond, but we had to make the choices. You have to make the choices. But if you make the right choices, what an awesome thing, with understanding, "I need to repent. I'm thankful for it. I'm thankful for my Passover and I want to live this way of life to the fullest I can. And that's my fight and that's what I'm going to do." As you're determined to do that God will help you all along the way...all along the way. If we make the choices that are right - putting God first (because that's the right choice), putting God first, wow, He helps us to accomplish what needs to be accomplished.

**...that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Joshua the Christ.** It says, **God is faithful.** Now, that's an awesome thing there to look at. God is faithful. The problem is with us. We're not always faithful as human beings. But we need to strive to be. We need to strive to live by what He's given to us. We need to cry out for help to live by what He's shown us, by what He's given us as His truth and desiring to be faithful to Him.

**God is faithful, by whom you were called.** So again, over and over again Paul talks about a calling. God is the one that calls us. It's not because of anything special of ourselves. It's just God's choosing, God's calling. What an incredible thing to be thankful for! It's not because of how great or anything special we've done or whatever. It's just an awesome thing that God looks upon His creation and decides to work with someone, to mold and fashion them. It has to be those who can be humbled, those who will respond to Him in humility because He can't work with haughtiness and pride. He has to continually work with us to help us to see haughtiness and pride and to help us to see how ugly it is so that we'll want to repent and He does. If we don't make the right choice in that as He shows those things to us, well, then we go off by the wayside as so many have.

**God is faithful, by whom you were called.** So God does the calling. As it talks about, "No one can come to Christ except God the Father draw him," call him. God has to be the one to begin opening up our minds and bring us to the truth of who the Passover is and what it means in our life and why he died. Not just stopping at some of what the world talks about, being forgiven of sin, and like they can go off and do anything they want to. Go have a wafer stuck in their mouth and all of a sudden you can go back out right away and start living just how you did the rest of the week.

Because I knew, I had some friends that grew up that way. I never understood that. "You can go do that and then you're clean the rest of the week, sort of thing, huh?" Well, you're not clean but you can go out and just do whatever you want to do? How does this work? Just once a week you have this thing done to you and you just go right back out. Candidly, I really didn't understand that. I thought it was kind of a strange thing. But that's how they thought. That's how they believed.

**By whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son.** So what an awesome thing to have a fellowship with **Joshua the Christ**, as it says, **our Lord**, to recognize that relationship and what it means. So a lot just in the introduction here of what Paul is sharing with them and talking to them about. You know, it's one thing to read those verses, just a few verses there, it's another thing to deeply understand every one of them and what they mean and what we've just talked about here. Awesome!

**Verse 23**, jumping on down; **but we preach Christ nailed to a pole.** What an amazing thing to understand! I look forward to the day that people come to understand that this didn't happen, and that all those things that people wear around their neck never happened. It never happened that way, and then for them to come to understand history and how that came to be taught in time. Satan has done a number on this world and everything is off in some other direction to deceive, to distort, to confuse, to confound, to get as far away from the truth as possible, of what is true. He didn't want people to know the only way he died was with his hands up, one spike through both hands together. That's an incredible thing to understand. Just as far as a separation between what the world perceives and what is true. Incredible!

He puts these things in here about a process, of what took place, especially from the very beginning here, the story that went about. But at this time here they were making it very clear, as in the Greek language, it was a pole, or a stake, as the word means, and it was not a word for two pieces that crossed each other because there are different words that would have to be used then in the Greek language. Incredible!

**We preached Christ nailed to a pole, which is to the Jews a stumbling block.** Why? Well, it's this Passover thing. "If he was put to death and now these people are saying he's our Passover? We're not going to accept that." They're not going to believe. They don't believe that so it's a stumbling block to them, because they won't accept it. Because it's like, "He was not our Passover. The Passover is a physical lamb!" The concept that it was the Son of God was foreign to their minds, their thinking. They couldn't understand the truth because God didn't give it to them. They were thinking along a physical plane, the only way they could think, and by what they'd been taught for so long, their traditions of having a particular meal. It turned into a meal and the meaning of it disappeared through time as far as when they left Egypt and what took place, and that had been passed down for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years and what they lived by then. Incredible!

So, it was a stumbling block to them, so much so that they began to change the time of Passover! Because of this very reason. They had motive behind it. There were some high priest who weren't so high (they were high minded), and they started changing some things and they got Judaism to believe that, well, it's at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> and getting ready to eat the lamb now in the 15<sup>th</sup> at sundown. You think, where did that come from? Because, see, that was a change in time that came about in Judaism. You can't tell them that because they won't accept history. They don't believe it. Whatever.

It's just as much today people don't accept history going back to 325 A.D. It's like "Well, what Church did you come from?" "Well, I'm with this group here." "Well, when did that start?" "Oh, a 150 years ago? What about 2,000 years ago?" "Oh, it didn't go by that name? Huh." "So where did you come from? Where did you get your ideas and beliefs?" That's a toughie because if you go all the way back every church in traditional Christianity has its foundational beliefs out of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church only. They didn't have existence. They didn't have existence for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years after the Catholic Church began. They just discard all that. It doesn't mean anything. It's not that important.

That's why I love what the Catholic Church has to say about the weekly Sabbath. They said the only authority anyone has of a change in the seventh day Sabbath to Sunday worship is the authority of the pope of the Catholic Church. That's true. They acknowledge it's not scriptural.

Then traditional Christianity comes along and they have to scamper because they don't accept the authority of the Catholic Church, but they've got to find something in the Bible that gives them some kind of precedent, "Oh, yes, it mentions he was resurrected that morning, Sunday." He wasn't even resurrected Sunday morning. But, "He was resurrected Sunday morning and that's

the time that God showed to us then we're to worship Him." Again, it's a matter of human thinking and human reasoning. They can't help it. Again, they can't help it. But what a horrible thing when human nature gets in the way.

That's part of what Paul is talking about, these things, these things that are stumbling blocks to people that people can't accept, that people won't just accept the truth. Because they can't. They can't until God begins to draw them, to work with them, to open the mind. So be exceedingly thankful for what you see and what you know, because the world around you can't see it and can't know it yet. But there is coming the day, and we look forward to the day, that they can because it's a time of freedom.

He says, again here, **to the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.** It's just foolish to them. Paul went to an area where we call Athens now. Greece. Corinth is south of Athens a little ways. We were blessed to be able to see some of those areas and see some of the history there. Really, it makes things come alive of where Paul visited and what he did and why he said it. But anyway, even Mars Hill there, where Paul went up to reason with various people. Remember the account of "the unknown God?" They had this marker here that said, "To the Unknown God," and then Paul started talking to them. There's that rock up there where the supposed wise people sat and then others would come and present themselves before them and talk to them and reason with them. Anyway, so this is the kind of attitude and kind of mind. To the Greeks, hearing this was foolish. Because, see, theirs was a matter of intellect. It wasn't a matter of Judaism and things they had learned in the past and about hearing about Passover. Now it was someone who never had that history so they looked at it intellectually, supposedly, and to them this story about someone who would come along, a Son of God who would be killed and die and be resurrected to life again, it was just foolish to them. So that is what Paul is saying here, "to the Jews it's a stumbling block, to the Greeks it's just foolish."

**...but unto those who are called, both Jews and gentiles,** speaking, gentiles are Greeks here, same expression here that's used, basically, referring to those who are just non-believers is what it's about. **...but unto those who are called,** because who is being called into the Church? Jews and gentiles. That's who Paul was sent to, the gentiles. Corinth is a gentile area and so Paul was sent there. He says, **but unto you who are called from amongst those people,** from both the Jews and gentiles, **Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.** I love that because we understand like in the book of Proverbs when it talks about wisdom it's like using the word "logos" in the New Testament, the Word, because it's about the mind, the revelatory thought of God. That's God. True wisdom comes from God. The Word, the truth of everything in time comes from God.

**But the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.** I just have to say that's a great understatement because that's putting it mildly. It's so far beyond that. The more we're in the Church, the longer we're in the Church, the more we come to see and marvel, candidly, at the patience and the mercy and the love of God...that we are so puny,

we are so small, but He loves us, incredibly so, and He's preparing us, molding and fashioning us within that, that one day can be in His very family. That is so incredible!

Because He sees the result and what it takes to get us there. It's like looking at this embryo again. What is that? Two things have come together and starting to form, something's working there and all of a sudden there's this little heartbeat thing, and little arteries, veins, and things going, and what is this? Well, we know what it's going to become. It's exciting! We look forward to that. If that's planned you look forward to that time, whenever that life that comes into existence. It's an incredible thing. But we see the end and that's what God sees. He sees the end product. He knows what we're going to become. That's why He has the patience and gives the time, and goes through whatever it takes to do it, the suffering, because God has gone through a lot. He gave up peace in order for us to have life.

**For you see your calling, brethren.** So he's telling the Church, "You see it." Well, we need to see it. We need to understand deeply how we have been brought here, why we're here. It's because of what God has done all along the way. **For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many who are wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.** That is not God's way. Why? Because those who are that kind of mindset, as a whole, are not able to be worked with. There are some exceptions through time for a purpose that God might have had and whatever. I mentioned one a minute ago. Saul. See? But God had worked with him so that one day when He humbled him and brought him to a point of blindness God had molded and worked with him enough even on a physical plane before working with him on a spiritual one to know what he would do. Incredible!

**Verse 27—But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound (put to shame) the wise.** That's a beautiful thing to understand, to think that, wow, God has called us to in time, because of what He's going to make and produce and mold and fashion within us, that others who knew us in times past or have known us in times past, one day when they come to see and understand what God did, they're going to be dumbfounded. That's what this is about. It's showing what the power and the might of God Almighty can do. And candidly, that'll give a lot of encouragement and hope to those when they're called. "Oh, I've got a chance." No.

**...and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty.** So that's a reason that God is doing it in this manner as well. No one can say that it was accomplished because of how good they were or how great they were, how wise they were or how knowledgeable they were, how intellectual they were or anything like that. On the contrary, it's because of how great God is to do this in us.

That's why even at the end of this age here we're a small group. God is going to bring about the end of an age, God is going to intervene to save mankind from destroying himself, and then bring to the forefront what He has worked 6,000 years to create. The first phase of His Family, 144,000 and 1. Awesome! Those who come with Joshua the Christ at his return. God is making it very clear how He's going to do this and how He's done it. It's by His great power and by His great might.

We're not great...not great. God is great. God has blessed us with a whittling down in size to make that very, very clear in time, through time, that it wasn't because of how big the Church was or how many magazines or how many languages or how much we were able to accomplish. Because human nature then, human beings begin to tend to take that to themselves. God is making it clear, "I did it. I did it. I brought these things to pass by My great power and by My might." We're blessed to share in it as small as we are. Awesome!

So in like manner here God has called people of various backgrounds and so forth, but not the great and the mighty and the wise of the world because, frankly, first of all, as a whole they won't receive it, and next of all is such minds can't be worked with as a whole. They just can't until they're humbled. That's why it takes the kind of humbling in the world that's going to happen here in an incredible world war of nuclear weapons.

I'll tell you some of the rhetoric going on out there right now and that's been going on in the last year is absolutely dumbfounding. If you see a lot of this stuff going on it just almost chills you to the bone to realize how certain nations, Russia and China and different ones are talking, the kind of rhetoric they're using. It can literally happen at any time. It's just when He says, "Okay, you can begin," when He allows a demonic world and Satan to do what they want to do anyway. Whenever God gives that nod then it can begin, but it can't begin before that. There are certain things that have to take place first. But we're right on the precipice. I mean, it's awesome to see what's going on.

I'll just mention, too, something that's stirred the pot even more. If we don't grasp what it means of what just took place here now that's it's been stated that Israel should have the Golan Heights. That is a major, major move in the world, of changing attitudes and so forth of different countries in the world toward the Middle East, toward this country, and some other countries. The reality is there is only so much they will take. This is all for a purpose and all by design. But anyway.

Again here, it says, **God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty**, those who think they're great and mighty. That's why this world is going to be shown, "You're not great and mighty." You have everything you have; this country has everything it has because God gave it to them. God gave it to us by a promise that He gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the family lineage that would go on through time to where a tribe of people prophesied in time, Manasseh, would have this country. He said he would be the greatest nation, the most wealthy, powerful nation the world has ever known and this is it. We're there. And that the other, Ephraim, the brother, would be a commonwealth of nations, and the greatest as a group of nations. They were to a point in time to where it was called "Great Britain." But they're not great and they haven't been great for a long, long time. But again, a fulfillment of a promise that God gave, and only because God gave it was it great and had a world domination like it had for so long at the end of an age.



**Verse 28**—and base things of the world and things which are despised God has chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are. So everything, God has to show your religion, your belief, your government, nothing can save you. It all has to be destroyed— incredible—so that a new one can be raised up, God's. So that's when the judgment comes to this earth, an incredible judgment that's been talked about and spoken of by prophets from the beginning of time. Not a final judgment as so many in different churches believe that it's about, a final judgment. It's not about that. It's about an end-time judgment that comes upon the world as a witness and to show the power and might of Almighty God and the mercy of God to bring His Kingdom to finally rule this earth for a thousand years.

**Verse 29**—so that no flesh should glory in His presence. No one can glory in God's presence. We receive what we have because God's been merciful, filled us with grace, favor, forgiveness of sin, and on and on it goes.

**Verse 30**— But of Him you are in Christ Joshua. Because of God and because of what He's given to us we're able to be in Christ Joshua and he's able to be in us, and we're able to be in God the Father, who became for us wisdom from God. I love this. Again, it's that wisdom, the mind of God. John 1, the Logos, "the Word of God became flesh." The mind, the being of God made the Son of God. Awesome! There is still much to learn about that one.

...and righteousness... So again, this righteousness we're able to have because it's accounted to us for that. And, candidly, we're able to begin to live a more righteous life because of that as well because that's the next step. When understanding God has accounted this ability to believe what is true and to make the choices, "This is what I want," and you start living by faith, that's accounted to us for righteousness. But then God says become that, live that, change to that.

...and redemption, or in other words, released from payment through Christ, that according as it is written: He who glories, let him glory in God, not in self. I'm going to be real candid with you. So much of what I have seen since I have been called into God's Church in 1969, and even within the ministry, has been more a glorification of self than of God. That's why we came to the Apostasy. That's why we suffered as we did. Because the mind of individuals began lifted up, began to see themselves in a way they should not see themselves, and people began to think of themselves more highly than they should. We should never be that way. We should always seek to be of a humble spirit, to know who we are and what we are, that we have everything that we have because God has given it to us. We're not special. We're not better than anyone else. It's just we're a part of a choosing that God has given and we're so blessed to be a part of it. Hold on... Hold on.

2 Corinthians 5. Paul here is speaking of Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:15**. Paul goes on to say, **He died for all so that those who live should no longer live unto themselves**. So we can't just live life like we want to anymore. Once we've come to baptism, we came to baptism, we gave our life to God, meaning His way of life, to be molded and fashioned by Him into something new. That's why

it talks about, you know, that old man coming up out of the watery grave, that we're to walk in newness of life. Or woman. It's that old person, whatever.

**...but unto him who died for them and rose again.** So no longer live unto themselves, selfishly and so forth, now there is a purpose in life to become a part of God's family and to understand what Christ did for us. **...but unto him who died for them and rose again.**

**Verse 17—Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creature,** or a new creation, as the word is. A new creation. So if we're in Christ and Christ is in us we're part of a new creation, part of Elohim, something different, not human. We're not here just for what we have in this human life. We're still in the human body but there is something different now that is growing inside, and it's with the impregnation of God's spirit, like that embryo, not yet born but it's growing. This is where it's growing - in the mind, on a spiritual plane. What an incredible thing to understand.

**...they are a new creation. Old things are passing away.** They better be. The old ways, the old thinking, the old whatever it might be that we were; that old person that went down in that watery grave best stay there and whenever it starts to pop its head up again just put your foot on it, right back: "No, you're not. Stay under the water. Stay drowned" and walk in newness of life, the life that God gives us through the power of His spirit.

**Old things are passing away,** going on here; **see how all things are becoming new.** We better be able to see that, how life is changing, we think differently than we did when we were called and we can look back over whatever period of time and we can see changes in our life. We can look back to the time we were called. We can look back two or three years ago, or five years ago, whatever it was, there are things we in the last few months we've seen that we're working at changing in our life, to do something different. That's what God gives us opportunity to do. That's why when you repent of sin it's gone. You don't have to drag it around anymore. It's gone.

**And all things are of God...** So all this is made possible by God, everything that's new, all that is being molded and fashioned, this new creation, **who has reconciled us to Himself through Joshua the Christ.** So again, constantly talking about this process of being reconciled to God, being able to be at one with God because of what Christ has done, because of the ability to be forgiven of sin on a continual basis.

**...and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.** So that's why we're able to preach and talk and discuss the things we do. We learn from that and we're inspired by it and reminded of different things, and we continue to build upon it. **...whereas God was in Christ.** So, I love that. It screams out to me John 14. One of the most inspiring places of something that God revealed to the Church, to mankind that has ever been revealed, that Christ did what he did because God dwelled in him, the power of the holy spirit and that Christ was letting us know on that night, on that Passover night that we can experience the same thing. Not to that level, not to that degree, not to that fullness, but in a very high measure of it, of God the Father and Joshua the Christ

dwelling in us and we dwelling in God, being a part of the vine, and Christ coming in the flesh, as it talks about, constant, continuous, not being cut off.

That's why it's so important to repent of sin, because as soon as sin is there we are cut off from the flow of God's spirit. That's an awesome thing to not just know but to believe. Because if we believe it we're going to respond quickly to God when sin comes about.

**...whereas God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...** So the only time that they are is if there is not repentance. But if there is repentance for those who are called then those sins are not imputed to us anymore, they're forgiven. **...and has placed in us the word of reconciliation.** It's something that actually lives in our life by how we respond to it.

**Verse 20—So then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God has exhorted you through us: we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.** It's a process. Become reconciled, at one in unity and harmony with God.

**For He has made him to be sin for us, speaking of Christ, who knew no sin; so that we might be made the righteousness of God in (through) him.** Beautiful. There is a lot said right there, a lot to think about and meditate upon, of what we're being told, of what this entire series has been about. "For He has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin so that we might be made the righteousness of God in (through) him," through the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin. Incredible. So that God not only imputes righteousness to us, we can go on and live righteousness. As soon as we sin again and that lack of righteousness is there we can repent, and again continue on. Awesome. Continue on seeking to live righteousness, what is right before God. It's a beautiful thing.

Let's turn over to Philippians 3. So again, so incredible to understand this process that we've been talking about. **Philippians 3:7—But whatever gains I've made (I've had)...** Now, this is Paul just talking about his life, **these things I have counted as loss for Christ.** So again here, there are those things we're able to have in a physical life, we're able to experience in a physical life. But this physical life is not what it's all about. It's a means to an end, or a fulfillment or a purpose that God has. We're not to always be in the womb.

Candidly, what happens to us is we come to a point of death or we die and because of God's purpose and God's plan that which was molded and fashioned can be given life at any time, everlasting life, because it's the spirit. There is that spirit, like a recording or whatever you want...whatever is there. Who we are is not our body, who we are is what's in this mind. It's how we think. It's what's in the spirit of a human being, the spirit essence of a mind that God gave that made us different from the animal kingdom and with God's spirit and the impregnation of that with that spirit then change in thinking can begin to take place. To understand that is incredible. To begin to think more as God thinks, to become more at one with God, reconciled to God. It's a beautiful thing to live.

So he's talking about here, **whatever gains I've had, these things I have counted as loss for Christ.** What is more important, in other words? What's more important? Why would we do anything in this physical life, say anything, demand anything, to have our way, to have what we want as opposed to what God is offering us and why Christ died?

**Yet, without a doubt I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Joshua my Lord.** What can we compare to the riches of what God has given to us? Really? **For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them as rubbish...** That's what the word means, rubbish, that which is just to be thrown away. It's of no value, no use. Because what's important is God, it's Christ, it's God's purpose and God's plan and what we're able to live and grow in. As it says here, **that I may win Christ.** So that's a matter of a love to God, toward God and toward Christ of something we want. We want that change to take place in our being. We want it. We love it. We desire it. And you have to fight for it!

**Philippians 3:9—And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness,** because there is no such thing; we don't have such a thing. That's what happened with Abraham and Sarah, their own righteousness. They tried to work out God's promises through their own way and we can't do that. We aren't righteous; it comes from God.

As it says here, **which is of the law,** in other words, by how well we can do something. If you try to live life like that, it doesn't work. **...but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by/through faith.** Again, that's what this entire series has been about, of what's accounted to us, attributed to us, but to understand the next step. Because of that understanding and because of what God has granted us, and He grants that to us so that He can dwell in us and His Son can dwell in us, so that He can continue to mold and fashion us, but the purpose is that we respond so that we begin striving to live it, practice it, to strive to walk righteously, to think righteously, to ask the question before we judge something, "Well, what's right before God? What should I do before God in how I am reacting or responding to something?"

**That I may come to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.** We get that. The fellowship of his sufferings, we can learn that. If you obey God you're going to suffer. If you seek to live a righteous way of life, a right life, you're going to suffer. Just because you keep the Sabbath, just because you keep the holy days. Because the world around you doesn't and they're going to treat you accordingly, so there is suffering. That's why the example is there about Christ. He lived and taught what was true and what was right and the world hated him, except for the few whom God was calling and drawing. The rest hated him to the point they wanted him to be put to death above and beyond criminals. Even wanted one to be released! They got their way. Not him who hadn't done anything, you know, to be guilty of death, but they just wanted to see him die because they hated what he taught!

People hate what you believe, as a whole, when it comes down to it. That's why sometimes it's good not to go too far with some things. It's enough that they know about the Sabbath and the holy days, but if you try to give them the whole truckload you're probably going to get some **God's Righteousness, Pt. 4**

repercussions from it in time. Unless God is drawing and calling them, or unless they ask a specific question and want to know, and then you have to be kind of careful not to, again, give the whole truckload. Just answer the question. But we want to share. Well, be careful because that sharing might come back and just smack you in the face sometimes. So we have to be careful.

That's why I encourage people don't go out and start saying, "It's not Jesus. Don't you know? It's Joshua!" No, we don't do that because you're just asking for trouble, unnecessarily so. There is enough to suffer for the things that are going to be obvious. You take off for the Sabbath, you take off for the holy days, within your family maybe one tithes and one doesn't. You tithe so you're going to suffer, whatever it might be. You won't do certain things at certain times of the year because you're going to the Feast of Tabernacles. You may be going to suffer, whatever. That's enough. You don't have to bring more on yourself. But sometimes we do. Sometimes that's just how we grow in some wisdom and understanding through time because we realize that wasn't the best thing to have done.

**Verse 10—That I may come to know him, and the power of his resurrection...** It's looking to God and realizing that what we have comes through Christ. Everything we're able to have, the power, the life, the knowledge, the understanding, everything is made possible through him. **...and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;** In other words, even being made like he was in death. So again, how deeply convicted are we? How much do we want to hold on to what we have in this physical life? Well, we see a greater plan that God's working out and that's what we've chosen to be a part of. God's getting ready to change the world. It's far better to be a part of that.

**...if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.** Well, we live in a unique time because some don't have to wait for that one to continue on and see things that are going to come to pass that have been spoken of for 6,000 years now - God's Kingdom coming to rule this earth.

**Verse 12— Not that I have already attained or am already perfected, but I press forward so that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Joshua has also laid hold of me.** So we realize we have this blessing of life we're able to have. We made certain choices. We made it at baptism. We gave our life to God, to His Son, and now we want them to mold and fashion us and change us and we want to yield to that process. This is a part of what it's talking about.

So he's making it clear, "I know that I'm not already there. I know that I have work to do. As long as I'm in this flesh I have work to do." And that's basically what he's saying.

**Brethren, I do not count myself as having already taken hold of this, but this one thing I am doing.** So he's saying here, look, we know what we are as physical human beings. We have this battle and we'll have it as long as we're in this physical body. He says, **but this one thing I am doing, forgetting those things which are behind in the past.** You don't have to drag along the

big bag. When you're forgiven you're forgiven, knowing in full well you're going to do something at some point. But you'll still be able to repent and it's going to be behind and you're in God's arms, in His love, in His care and His Son's care and love. What an incredible thing. You're able to pray at any time and know that God hears you. We sometimes just don't grasp what we have.

I think of the high priest who could only go in, on a physical plane, could only go into the Holiest of Holies of the temple once a year and that's symbolic of being able to go before God. Once a year. That was all physical. We're able to go before the Holiest of Holies any time we want—awesome—through our High Priest at that.

**...but this one thing I am doing, forgetting those things which are behind, in the past, and reaching forward to those things which are before, in other words, that are in front of me.** That's what this is about. We keep pressing forward. We get to a certain point, we have a certain marker, and once we reach that we keep going farther, we keep pushing forward in this way of life. That's a part of what he's saying here, **I press forward to the mark.** It's a word literally meaning about looking carefully or keeping your eyes fixed on the goal. That's what you have to do and sometimes you can't see the full goal (as we've talked about), you see these markers along the way and you keep pressing forward and not look behind. The past is the past. You keep moving forward and we keep growing and God keeps leading His people.

So he says here, **I press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Joshua.** Well, this is the season of the year, isn't it? This is what it's all about. It's about what God has given us through His Son, through our Passover, Joshua the Christ. I marvel that all these things we've been going through leading up to this period of time, this is what it's about.

One last area of scripture: **2 Peter 1:1.** So here now it's not Paul speaking but Peter is speaking. It says, **Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Joshua the Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith.** We need to see it as that. What kind of a value can you place on what God has given us? Just the ability to know the truth, to see the truths that we have, how blessed are we? **...having obtained like precious faith with us,** so we're able to do this as a family, we're all able to see these things as God gives them to us, **through the righteousness of God.** It's God's righteousness, His mercy, His plan, His way of working with us and dealing with us and having a fellowship with us, because we have to be accounted as righteous. There is only one way to do that, through forgiveness of sin and by living by what we are given to believe. That's faith and that's how God accounts that to us then.

So it's not just being forgiven, it's a matter of what we're seeking to live by, what we want to live by and what we choose to believe. If we believe what is true, what God has given us, then we're living by faith and we're living a more righteous life. We're being perfected, becoming perfect. We're far, far from it but it's a process.

**Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and it is, and Joshua our Lord, according as His divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and**

**godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue.** What kind of words can you give here about what God has given to us and a calling that we have, as it says here, “Through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue,” what we’re able to have in a relationship with God.

**By which have been given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature.** You think about that sometimes when you’re able to pray? That you’re able to kneel down before God, you’re able to pray to God... You can be driving down the highway and pray to God and He’s listening to you because the way into the Holiest of Holies is made possible through His Son. And to think, what an incredible thing, I’m able to partake of this nature. Because when you’re speaking to God, when you’re praying to God there is that communication that is of your mind to His, but it’s a mind that’s been begotten of God’s own spirit. You’re able to experience the holy spirit. When you’re of that mind and you’re praying to God there is a relationship of something on a spiritual plane that’s taking place. You need to think about that when you pray, to understand that.

It’s hard to be human in the sense of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life when you’re praying. Your mind is set a little differently at that point and you’re able to experience something far richer and far better in life when you’re able to pray to God.

**...that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...** So not only at that time but in our life then we’re able to have this continually living within us. We’re able to have God in our life continually. **...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.** So it’s a process. We haven’t fully escaped but thank God we’re in the process of it and thank God He accounts us as righteous, though we’re not. It’s a beautiful thing.