

This is a continuation of the current series *The Love of God* and this is *Part 6*.

In last week's sermon we delved a little more deeply into the aspect of fear being contrasted to God's love, and that's kind of a unique thing to even have as a subject matter, but it's covered in scripture and it's something we need to understand. That's what we're being given more, the ability to do right now, is to grasp and understand what that's talking about.

So, we're going to continue in that same context and even look at how the bondage of fear is to be cast out of our lives. That's what we read about last Sabbath. It's a part of coming out of sin, if we understand what that's talking about then, it's a matter of coming out of sin because that isn't to be a part of our life, in our thinking.

So, it might be good if we just turn over and read Romans 8 where we ended last week, and then we'll continue on.

Romans 8:13—For if you live after the flesh, you will die. So again, age old story of God telling mankind basically in essence the penalty of sin is death. Because God's purpose is indeed that all mankind die, but that's not what He's referring to. It's a matter of that which is God's purpose for mankind to have the opportunity, the ability in time, in God's time, in the time of their calling to be called, drawn into God's Church, begotten of His holy spirit in human life, and then at the end of that, as an individual has grown and matured and the mind has been transformed, as we understand the process, to be born into Elohim, God's Family.

You think of the world. They don't understand those things. They don't understand our purpose, of why we exist, of what God's great plan is. To think we're to become a part of a God Family is not in the mind of human beings. They haven't been taught those things. So, it's an awesome thing that God has revealed to some through time.

Again, this matter "If you live after the flesh," if you live according to your carnal nature, which obviously all of us have. We all have carnal human nature and therein is the battle. God calls us and tells us this is what you're to fight. This is what you're to conquer. This is what you're to overcome, your selfish nature.

Because it's a nature that came into existence a long, long time ago. We don't even know how long ago, millions, whatever it was years ago, if we were looking at earth time, and a being rebelled against God, an angel, Lucifer. Satan, a third of the demonic realm followed him. The thing that God wants us to grasp and learn is that that is a hideous, sick nature when you turn to selfishness.

Yet that's what we're born with. That's what we have because He wants us to learn how evil that kind of thinking is. It doesn't produce peace.

You look at the world, and you think, mankind can't get along. What an incredible thing to understand that we can't govern ourselves. It's a basic story that we have learned in God's Church that became more powerful as Herbert Armstrong began to teach and do things on the telecast and write things and send out that message – mankind cannot govern himself. You look at the world today and God is amplifying that to help people to begin to see that more clearly. We can't! Wars after war after war after war and we're headed for another one, the last one. We can't learn. Only with God's help can mankind change. What an awesome thing to understand.

He says if we live this way the end result is going to be death. **But if you through the spirit...** So when we receive of God's holy spirit we can begin to change, we can begin to put to death, as it says, **mortify the deeds of the body, you will live.** God shows us how to do that, how to accomplish that. We can't do it on our own. It requires the strength of God's spirit in our lives.

For as many as are led by... And that's a choice. Once we're given God's holy spirit, once we're baptized, receive the impregnation of God's spirit in the mind, then it's up to us as to whether we respond to God's spirit, as to whether or not we want a continual supply of that spirit to change. It's a matter of following God, how God leads us. If we will do those things it's guaranteed we're going to be a part of His Family.

But we have these battles, and we see the history of God's Church, we see the history of the majority who have been called through the past two thousand years, especially within the Church, have left, have abandoned God, have turned against Christ. That's almost difficult really to grasp and comprehend.

For as many are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God or the children of God. It's not a matter of sons and daughters but that's the terminology in scripture, to understand there is a family and we're to be the children of God.

For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. We have a different spirit and we're to change and to move away from that because that kind of mind, that kind of thinking doesn't produce peace, it doesn't produce what is right.

...but you have received the spirit of adoption. Incredible, children, "a spirit of adoption" whereby God wants us and desires us to come into His Family, to be a part of His Family, **whereby we cry, abba, Father.**

The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. So that witness or testimony, if you will, according to how we live is what proves whether or not we are God's children. We are God's children if we're being led by God's spirit, if His spirit is active in our life and we're responding to what He's saying, if we don't get cut off.

All this, again, is a matter of God's love, how much God loves us. He wants to give us His Family. He wants to bless us to be able to become a part of His Family. Then the choices come down to us.

Now, we're going to continue on from where we left off last week, and one of the most revealing and most important areas of scripture about God's love, and also the matter of contrasting love with fear is covered

by the last apostle of the period of Ephesus, the Ephesian era, the era of Ephesus, who was given incredible truth, understanding, and much revelation.

You read the book of John, and then the books of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, and then the book of Revelation, and to understand that those final books weren't written while Peter and Paul and other apostles were alive. They had been killed long before that, put to death long before that. He was the only one that we know of who was able to live on.

He was on the Isle of Patmos for a time. That's where he was given the ability to see things that were to be written in the book of Revelation. He wrote these things, but he didn't understand them. There was understanding to be given later on, especially toward the end-time. Because what John wrote, basically, is about this period of time. It was what was to happen at the end-time. Most of it is about a build-up to that particular time.

So, even these matters of what he talks about and what we're going to cover here they didn't have. Paul didn't have, Peter didn't have, the other apostles, they didn't have this. 1 John 2, let's notice.

I love these books. These are the most revealing books in all of scripture about how to live life, about the mind and the being of God, and that ability that we are given to have this life living in us. These are incredibly revealing, and God is even giving us more now than what we've had before.

You think that we've gone through things and there is nothing else to see and we've been given incredible things, and then all of a sudden, something else comes along and just builds upon that a little bit more.

1 John 2:1—My little children, speaking to the Church, **I write these things to you**. So, he was an old, old man by this time. (Of course, some of us are approaching that.) **I write these things to you so that you not sin**. That was his desire. It's God's desire for the Church.

Then if anyone does sin, we have an advocate. Now, the word is the same that I referred to, I believe on Passover night there, and it's a scripture that talks about the helper when it refers to the holy spirit. It refers to the holy spirit as being a helper, in essence, because it's that Greek word "paracletes." This is another place where it's used, because now it refers to Christ, because he is the one that helps us if we serve and look to him properly. Starting with the Passover, I mean, what a beautiful start to understand.

...we have an advocate, our High Priest, the word meaning "helper" or "called to one's aid." That's what we're supposed to do, we're to cry out for help. On a continuing basis, we want God's spirit. It starts with a desire to repent and crying out to God to forgive us of our sins through our Passover, and then it continues on from that.

Even he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. So he died for everyone. He gave his life for everyone. That's his desire, to see anyone who is called and drawn have the opportunity to become a part of God's Family.

Even hereby we do know that we know him, if, that great big "if" in life, **if we keep**, which is a word that means "to guard, to watch over," **if we keep his commandments**. So again, people think of the

commandments, they think of the Ten Commandments. Yes, it's the Ten Commandments, and there is one that wraps them all up too. It's about God's love, understanding what God's love is. It's about the mind of God and it just reflects how we as human beings are to live then in response to His love. Those are broken down then in so many other areas of life and everything will fall under that in one area or another.

So, all that He tells us, all He commands us, all He instructs us of how to live we're to seek to obey with all of our being, which is all, again, about repentance. Because we have to change. All of us have sin in our life, all of us have baggage in our life, all of us have things we have to fight, and they pop up at different times in our life. Our job, our responsibility then is to fight as God reveals those things to us or as God reveals them and brings them to the surface so that we can see them.

Because some things we just don't see until He brings them to the surface so we can see who we really are, so we can really see our nature and be sickened by it. That's where we repent and ask God, "I don't like to be like this, I want to be different." We have to cry out to God for that.

Whoever says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar. That's really strong. He doesn't mince any words here whatsoever. He says we're either living in the truth or we're living a lie. That's the way it's always been in God's Church. Through time the vast majority have lived a lie.

Whoever says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in them. And yet it's hard for the human mind, especially when caught in some of these kinds of things if someone is being pulled by certain sin and yielding to it and not fighting the fight, not asking for forgiveness and not seeking repentance, in that respect, and just doing whatever they want to do in a particular area of life, whatever that weakness might be, and repeating it regularly, it reflects something powerful that we're supposed to be able to see.

Because that's what draws us to repentance. That's what draws us to change, becoming convicted. You know, every time you repent you can grow in character. You're to grow in character. That's part of the growing process. It's that continual fight against sin and your willingness to do that says you agree with God, you're becoming more convicted God is right.

That's why you repent because you agree that He's showing us something better, right, true that we want to live but are incapable of living without His help. It takes His help.

"Whosoever says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in them." So, individuals like that when they get into that rut, whatever it might be, think they're living the truth because maybe they're tithing, maybe they're going to Holy Days and attending Sabbath services, and so it's easy to deceive oneself that, "Well, I'm living the truth within the Church."

John is going to bring out there's a lot more to living this way of life than going through the motions of those things. Because everyone, the vast majority who have left have gone through the motions. They're not with us even to this day or those in times past who will not be in the first resurrection.

But whoever keeps his word (guards, protects, embraces it). You have to fight for it. You have to want it. You have to desire to do what is right. "Whosoever keeps his word." That's what it means when it talks about his commandments, keep his commandments, keep his word. ...**truly in them is the love of God perfected.** That is in that respect then God's love, agape.

So again here, "...his word, truly in them is the love of God perfected." That's what we want. In that love is His mind. It's His mind toward others. To grasp that and comprehend that and everything else is built upon that. His entire plan is built upon this love, agape.

His love can be perfected in our lives. What a beautiful thing to desire, to want that kind of thinking, that kind of mind.

By this we know that we are in him. So, if we experience these things and we see the ability to repent, the ability to change, the ability to think differently about life and we recognize that we are fighting these battles and we want to conquer them, we want to overcome them, we're crying out to God for help, there is a confidence you can have in this, God is saying. You can know. We know that we are in Him. Because you can't do it by yourself. There are things you can't experience in this way of life and live in this way of life without God's help.

Whoever says that they abide in him ought themselves also to walk even as he walked. Now, this phrase becomes a lot more important as we go through this series, or I should say, the next series because it's going to change names as far as the title is concerned. But we've been focusing on the love of God and the purpose of this has been hopefully to help to see and understand more about God's love toward each one of us, His desire for us.

Then this sermon here is kind of a bridge to the next series and what we're going to be covering because things shift a little bit as we continue on. Not going to tell you what that is now today. Got to wait until next Sabbath.

So, we need to grasp this and comprehend this even more deeply, in that respect, in what John is saying here. He says, again here, "Whoever says that they abide in him ought themselves to walk even as he walked." Well, who is this about? This is about Christ. Just say it in a nutshell. There are certain things that he made clear to the Church on the night of Passover.

It's amazing how much was revealed on that night, some of the most awesome things as far as any teaching he ever had, ever gave to the disciples. It was covered just in that night of Passover before he was taken to be beaten and then put on a stake to die for everyone, spilling his blood to the earth.

So, let's notice then, again, this matter of fear that John contrasts with the love of God over here in **1 John 4:15—Whoever confesses...** it basically means, "to speak the same of; to agree with," in the essence of meaning, "to be of the same mind." **Whoever confesses that Joshua is the Son of God...** So, it's not a matter of just words that people say and like in the protestant world, "Just say you accept Christ and you're okay." No, you're not.

It's not a matter of just the words and the expressions that are empty and meaningless. It's a matter of something that's alive and has to be real, obviously, in one's life. This has to do with our actions. It's by what we do that reveals whether or not we are truly in agreement with the fact that Joshua is the Son of God. And where does that start? Passover. Repentance. We want repentance. We want the ability to repent and to go on from that.

Whoever confesses that Joshua is the Son of God, God dwells in them, and they in God. So, if this is being reflected in our life, that we are doing what we need to do to grow, to conquer, and to overcome, it's going to be seen. The book of John, as we go through this series, is really telling us more than we've grasped in times past in the sense of this being a measuring tool in a very powerful way to see ourselves even more clearly.

Verse 16—Now we have known and believed the love, the agape, again, which is God's love **that God has toward us.** That's this series. That's what we're talking about. The more we can grasp the love that God has toward us, of why He created us, of all that's gone into this over millions, billions—we don't know how long—and everything that was created out there. And finally, this little place in the middle of the vastness of it all that mankind can't even see the edge of or get to. They just look in one little area and say, "Yeah, it's 13.5 billion light years away. Aren't we intelligent?" They don't know where the end of it is yet. All they know is it took that light 13.5 billion years to get to the earth so they can see it. They don't know what's beyond that that hasn't even arrived yet! Incredible. We have no concept of what's out there and how vast it is.

But God has created it all for His Family. We can't grasp that. It says we're to inherit all things with Christ. There's a lot out there, a lot more than we need, but it's out there for a purpose.

Now we know and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love. That's who He is. That's what He is. That's His thinking. This is all His motivation. There is no selfishness in it. Not any whatsoever. There wasn't any selfishness in all that had been created until finally this one being became jealous, became envious, wanted more, wanted to actually be greater than God, which is somewhat mind-boggling in that respect, to think that a being, a created being, angelic being (they knew they were created), to think they could become greater than their creator?

God is love, and whoever dwells in love dwells in God, and God in them. Because it's like saying His spirit, but that's what it's about, the spirit enables the ability to see these things, to have these things become a part of our thinking so our thinking can change and be like this.

Herein is our love perfected, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Because as he is, so are we in this world. If we're living in truth, we can change. We don't have to be fully selfish. We're still going to have that in us always until we're out of this body, but it becomes less and less and less and God's mind, God's spirit, can become more and more and more in how we think toward others. Because this is really about others. Ourselves first in how we think, and then toward others.

There is no fear in agape. There is no fear in God's love. In the world they don't understand it, they don't see it, but there is fear, uncertainty, chaos, confusion, unhappiness, wars, bitterness, jealousy; all these things cause the mind to be unstable. All that kind of thinking, the drama that it produces cause human life to be unstable. We live in a very unstable world and it's more unstable now than it was ten years ago or twenty years ago. It's getting more unstable. The minds of people are becoming more insane.

I think about the times of Noah and what God said and why He had to intervene, why it was time to destroy the earth, in the sense of mankind. Now, this was all a part of God's plan. He allowed mankind to come to this point and God knew it was going to take place because it was a part of His plan to allow it, as much as the Apostasy was in the Church. It wasn't His intent that mankind live for nine hundred plus years except at the beginning so we can learn from that.

Then we come to a period of time much later on and we start having things that God starts giving to human beings in the sense of science and technology, and we lift ourselves up and think how great we are that we did these things. No, we didn't. God gave it to the minds of human beings to have such ability.

So, are the people in this period of time, the Einstein's and so forth of our time, are they that much greater than those who lived in times past, that much smarter? No. It's not about that. It's about what God gave in His time, that technology was to come forth. Look what we've done with it. The world is far more evil today than in the days of Noah, all because of technology. Incredible. We've so far passed that it's not even funny. There are things being done today because of technology that couldn't be done back then that... Oh, it's just sick. The world is sick.

There is no fear in agape. But love casts out fear. What is that about? It's about God's way of life. It's about His love and His love helps us to become more sound, more sound minded. It helps us to learn the way of peace, how to live peace toward one another, and the joy of that when people are at peace with each other, when there is no jealousy, no envy, no pride in the sense of looking down upon others and judging harshly others. Because that's just the mind of carnal human beings, to judge others harshly so sometimes, and generally it's in a context of "The way I would do it..." "The way I think it should be done..." When in the Church we learn, we have to learn it has to be in agreement with the way God says it's to be done and striving to live by that.

There is no fear in love, in God's love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear, "has torment" but the word literally means **is punishing**. That's how it works. It doesn't bring good fruit into people's lives. It hurts. The word means "arduous; burdensome; like being in captivity." Incredible to understand that.

One who fears is not made perfect in love or is not being made perfect in love. So, it's this matter of coming out of these things that are in the world, but it's in the mind. It's in the way we think. To desire to get rid of, candidly, the way we think because the way we think as human beings is based on selfishness, "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." The more we can do that, the more unity we can have with the thinking of God it's a beautiful thing.

I think of that scripture Herbert Armstrong would say at the Feast, I don't know if there was ever a Feast he didn't get up and talk about it, "How pleasant and how good it is," basically, paraphrasing some of this, "for brethren to dwell together in unity." It's a rewarding thing. It's a joyful thing to see that.

One of the things I love in traveling is to see what I saw here, people talking and it's like at the Feast of Tabernacles except on a smaller scale. But we're in a small room so it's just about as loud, you know, and people are talking. It's an exciting thing. We get to share life. We can talk along the same lines of things we all share together. We share in this way of life.

It's an awesome thing to understand that we're all in this together. We are a family. The more we grasp that and comprehend that it becomes more beautiful in how we can think toward each other instead of having some of the problems and things that exist in our lives that have to be gotten rid of to get to that point.

Sorrow, unhappiness, pain, suffering, drama – all these things because there is something wrong in the mind. It's this, it's sin. It really is. It's about sin and what it produces. Obedience to God produces peace, soundness of mind, unity of mind with God Almighty. There is power in that, strength in that that's beyond human life.

But in the world the things that are a matter of, well, this word that's used here is "fear" and all the things we've talked about in the sense of drama, the heartache that comes from jealousy, the heartache that comes from the things that human beings do, the cheating, the lying, the stealing, the hurting of others, the attacking of others, the backstabbing that human beings do, the harsh judgments. All those things we have to come to that point where we hate them with all of our being, we hate to see them, we hate to see them in people's lives.

But each one of us can only be responsible for what we do in the seeking of the ability to change that and asking God for help to change that so we're not like that. You can't change anybody else. That's the problem a lot of times, we try to change someone else. No, you can't. You've got to change self! Sometimes by the fact that you change and change more, people can respond to that. You're a better person. It's easier to get along. Now, whether everybody will respond like that, that's in their ballpark, even within the Church.

One who fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. Even the ability to love God, which is a matter of loving everything about God. Because everything, every truth, all the truth we have, the picture of the entire plan of God in the Holy Days.

That's why I love God – because it reflects God. It reflects the mind of God toward us and desire for us and what He's given to us. To see such an awesome plan and He's giving us the blessing of being a part of it? How incredible is that?

What words are used to describe that? But those are the things that can help us, do help us to learn to love God as our Father and to have that close bond in relationship, to know how He's worked with us, the patience, the mercy, the kindness, and the love. He wants us to succeed. He's always there for us, ready,

quick, wanting to forgive. But we have to go through the actions and reflect that's what we want. We want to repent, we want to be like Him, we want to have that mind.

So, what an incredible thing that God has placed before us all because of His love first to us. Beautiful scripture. **We love Him because He first loved us.** That's if we love Him. Because sometimes people can become so weak because of not living what John is talking about (that we're going to go into more deeply) that they can't see, they don't grasp this, they can't hear it. That's a shame.

So again here, do we see what this is saying? If we have fear, we're not being transformed, if we're living in a way that we shouldn't be living. You know, fear exhibits a lack of faith, belief in what God tells us. Because we don't generally call it fear, however, but that's what happens in the mind. We don't grasp what's happening in the human mind.

God's telling us what takes place. Because it produces all these evil things, these things where we don't think right, where we have jealousies and envying and get upset with people and lose our patience and say things we shouldn't say. It all goes back to this kind of nature we have. That should be, indeed, it's a fearful nature, but we don't grasp what it's producing, the drama that is ever produced.

So again, that's what it reflects here, and yet sometimes people can get caught into this where they don't grasp that they're not living by faith, which means living by what you've been given to believe.

So, it reflects more of a trust in self is what it does. A trust in self. That's the big problem. We trust in ourselves so often even more than God if we're not careful, which again, is a matter of self-reliance, relying on ourselves, how we see it, how "I" think it should be. I think I mentioned that in the sermon...or on maybe the High Day. I think it was on the High Day, that sometimes I still hear murmuring. "Why aren't you doing it this way?" "Why..."

It comes through other sources, but someone can say it to another brother, to a minister, or someone else out there and you think, "Don't you see what you're doing? Don't you grasp what's going on? Don't you understand the order of things, how God works within our lives and within the Church? Relying on yourself because you think there is a better way of doing things. You think that things should be administered differently? That isn't your decision. It hasn't been given to you." That's just calling a spade a spade.

Are things done perfectly? No. But what is done we're to be in unity with it. Sin involved? No. So, if there was a matter of sin that would be another matter and God will take care of that. Always has.

So again, this thing of self-reliance, it always produces various levels of fear that people don't grasp in their lives. It's hard to see as we're going to go through and continue into the next series here. Fear doesn't produce peace – perhaps better said, doesn't produce peace of mind. What a precious thing to have, peace of mind, confidence that you're right with God.

Instead, fear always produces drama. You can guarantee if there is drama in your life this is there at the door. Sin is at the door, too, but that's what this is all about.

Let's go over to John 13. These are the kinds of things that help to reveal to us more clearly if we can see it where we are spiritually, what needs to be changed, what needs to be addressed in our lives. It's amazing how closely all this stuff ties in with Passover and so forth.

John 13:33. Again, this is Christ speaking on that Passover night. **Little children, Yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews, Where I go, you cannot come. So now I say to you, I give you a new commandment.** Now, this is beautiful because it's coming up in the sermon over and over again here. It came up on Passover night. You kept Passover night; this was in it. So important to grasp and comprehend what is being said here, what Christ had to say.

I give to you a new commandment. Now, John explains it in a unique way later on. Again, I love how these things are covered by John. And frankly, they're just given by God's inspiration in the first place. That's what it's all about.

I give to you a new commandment that you love—and this word is going to keep popping up as it has in this series already—**agapaó**. It's not agape; it's not God's love. It's a term that just tells you by the kind of context. It's saying there is love, by the context of what's being said, you can only grasp and comprehend what it's talking about by the context. So, it's saying, basically here, that we are to love someone in a particular manner. This is the manner, by the context. Whatever that, that reflects the manner, what manner it is.

...that you love one another, and the manner is, the comparison here that's being given is **as**. So, this is how we're to love. This is what he's showing. This is the new commandment, he is saying, I'm giving **...as I have loved**. In other words, in this manner. What is the manner? **...as I have loved you, so that you also...** What did he do? What was he giving? That was Passover night. He's telling them, "Look at what I've done." Now, they wouldn't understand this right away, but they were going to still on that day because they were already into that day, the nighttime portion of it, Passover.

He was going to be taken. He was going to be beaten beyond recognition, blood dripping down off his body, pieces of skin off of his body, his face and his body because he was beat with cat-o-nine-tails by the Romans, which rips the skin off, it says, to the point that you couldn't even recognize who he was. Then taken out, put on a pole, nailed to it, and died after a soldier came by and pierced him, as it says, with a spear, and then came water and blood out of him and he died right there midafternoon.

That's what he was letting them know, he did this for them. He did this for everyone. He became our Passover. What an awesome thing. So, it reveals here that he's talking about a sacrificing kind of love. This kind of love in a human being, to experience God's love means you're going to have to sacrifice. What do we have to sacrifice? Self! "The way I see it." "The way I want it." "My will." "My judgment." That's what we have to get rid of. That's what we have to fight. Because that is us! That reveals the way we think. The way we think has to change.

All of us have to change in this. All of us have to grow in this, and this is what John covers. This is what John talks about. This is what God wants us to see. He wants us to see, first of all, His love, the love of His

Son, what His Son was willing to do. God the Father was willing to see His own Son, His only begotten Son, the only one who would ever exist as he did, born of a human being, of a woman, but God being the Father. The mind that was in him we cannot comprehend, things that he just knew because his Father was dwelling in him in a way that's far beyond what we experience as human beings with the begetting of His holy spirit.

He was willing to give His own Son, whom He loved. He loves all of His creation, but His Son the more if we understand. Willing to sacrifice. Willing to see him put to death and beaten like he was and then a spear run through his side all for a purpose, a greater purpose. For everyone else.

That's what we have to see, a willingness, a desire to love God's way and to realize this matter of selfishness, this matter of getting our way really sucks. It really stinks. If we can see that in ourselves it just stinks. Yet it comes out of us, our way, "the way I want it," "I'm uncomfortable."

I had a conversation here just before services about getting on the highway, and sometimes that's where it comes out. And you realize, you know, the way I want it, well, there wouldn't be anybody on the highway but me, if it worked perfectly. So, we have to go beyond that. We have to work beyond that kind of wrong thinking. We have to fight that. Because there are things that come out of our thinking that we have to deal with. And it comes out, in a sense.

Every day of our life there are things that go on in the mind that aren't perfect. That's a hard thing for us to see as human beings. God is so different, and He wants us to see that, and He wants us to desire that, His love, His kind of love. The more we want it and the more we cry out for it He's going to show us things in ourselves that are pretty ugly. Some of the drama that's produced in our lives, that stinks so much, and how we hurt other people by our drama, the way we want things, the way we think things should be, how we think things should be, on and on it goes.

So, a new commandment. It isn't enough just to understand what it says in the Old Testament because you don't get it just by reading the Ten Commandments. You can't see it. "Love your neighbor as yourself." How deeply does anyone really think about that and what that really means, you know? Sure. Does anybody do it? No. We're incapable of doing it as human beings because you love yourself first above everyone else. To love others as our self is an impossibility without God's help, truly.

There are things we need to learn to practice toward others around us, especially our neighbor, the one it's referring to in scripture there, those who are closest to us, the Body of Christ, the Church of God. That's first and foremost.

So again, **I give you a new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you, so that you love one another...** Anyway, **verse 33—By this, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.** In other words, it's showing here that this is going to reflect whether we're children of God, whether we have God's spirit working in us, if we can make this transition, if we can see the fruits of it, if others can see the fruits of that in our life and how we treat them and how we act toward them and how we speak toward them.

1 John 2. Some of this we're going to go full circle but that's how we're going to be able to see more and learn more. But we have to drink in what we have before us, strive to anyway.

1 John 2:7 he starts out by saying, **Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment you had from the beginning.** Well, who is he talking to? He's talking to the Church. So, what's he talking to, "that you had in the beginning." Well, the Church at this point in time, there are some that could be as old as he is, there are many who are younger because the Church continued on, and it continued to grow, and people continued to be called into it through the period of Ephesus and on.

And so, he's referring to and he's talking to the Church but what did they understand that he was discussing? It really goes back to the book of John, what he wrote first and foremost. But anyway, he's saying, "But an old commandment which you heard from the beginning."

The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. About what? It's about the subject of love. The whole book of 1st John here is about love, about God's love and how we're to think, how we're to be, how we're to exist in our lives.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you. Now, this is an awesome scripture in itself because this is the only way it can be accomplished. It's by being in Him, by being in God and Christ and they in us. That's the only way this can become true. That's what he's saying, **Which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness,** you know, coming out of Egypt, spiritually, coming out of bondage. It's a long process for us.

For them, it wasn't a long process. They started a journey out, in a short time crossed through a sea, in essence, dry ground, and their coming out of Egypt was over with. They were in a new area, a new region, and began to go wherever Moses led them in the wilderness.

And yet for us, it's a lifelong process. So, that seven days, as we've talked about, of the days of Unleavened Bread, of what we're supposed to be doing, is eating unleavened bread every day is something that's reflected in our entire time of our calling. So, it's talking about a completeness, that which is complete. That's what seven is all about. It shouldn't escape us.

And so we live our life, whatever that extent is in the physical human body and it's this process of continually fighting to come out of bondage. We don't come out as soon as we're called. We're not out of bondage when we go under the water. It's a start. It's the start of the journey but far, far, far from complete.

So much so that many get tired of the journey, and they just quit. They go off and do something else, they're pulled by something else that they've been told is wrong and they know it's wrong. After a time, the mind begins to be dull in thinking and not sound and it'll go after whatever it desires. The human mind really stinks. It really does. Selfishness is an ugly, ugly, ugly thing, and if we see that we're going to try to fight it and conquer it, and with God's help overcome it, obviously. Lifelong process.

...because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines. So, is it? Is the darkness past? Well, no, it's still in us. That's the truth about it all. We still have things of darkness inside of us that we don't yet see. But we've started a process as soon as we were put under the water, and we started a journey out, and as we go forward we see more and more of the light if God's spirit is continuing in us, if we're led by His spirit and we're moving in a particular direction. It's about seeing God on a spiritual plane and seeing a way of life that we embrace more deeply, and we grow in understanding of things far more than we did. We continue to grow.

That's what moving toward the light is all about. It says, "Because the darkness is past," in other words that which we were is behind us and we're to be moving forward into the light. "And the true light now shines." It'll continue to shine and show us the way as long as we choose to be led by it, by God's spirit.

So, all this has to be understood in its context. It's not simple, as it's difficult for the carnal mind to grasp this in its true light. We deceive ourselves as human beings. We somehow think we're going to get by with certain things that we choose to do and live.

And even though it's been spoken of so often, God is cleaning up the Church right now. I marvel at it. It's being cleansed more and more, and we either yield our self to that process willingly and with great desire or we become a part of what's being cleansed. We can do it individually or God will take care of it.

So, to really grasp what is being said here it must be understood in the verses we already read from the beginning of this sermon and on here. 1 John 2, let's go back and just look, strive to understand the context of what's being said.

1 John 2:1—My little children, I write these things to you, so that you not sin. That's the goal. That's the desire. Not to go back into the darkness, not to hold on to the darkness. **Then if anyone does sin, we have an advocate.** Again, what a beautiful thing here. We have the helper, that aid. So, is this going to happen? Absolutely, because we're carnal human beings. We're going to have sin, but we should be fighting and striving to come out of it, and when we do catch ourselves in the midst of something in our thinking or whatever it might be we have to go before God and ask God to cleanse us, to cleanse our thinking, to cleanse our mind, whatever, to change. We have to repent.

...we have an advocate with the Father, Joshua the Christ, the righteous. The unleavened. It's what we're to eat of, the bread of life. **Even he is the propitiation for our sins.** So, what a beautiful picture. It always starts with Passover. It's the beginning. Coming out of sin. **...and not for ours but also for the whole world.**

Even hereby we do know that we know him, if, as we covered here, we guard, watch over, keep his commandments. So, we're going through this to better grasp the entire context.

Verse 4—Whoever says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in them. Straightforward words here. It doesn't mince anything at all.

But whoever keeps his word... What's that about? It's about living this way of life. It's about hearing the things we hear, and we see things that we're not living, and we repent of it, we strive to change. We don't keep messing around with things that are wrong.

Got pretty strong in the sermon here on the High Day about things that we need to acknowledge and see in our lives that are wrong, and if we're messing around with things that we should be far beyond, we've got big problems.

And yet some are messing around with things they shouldn't be messing around with in life, and involved in thinking and actions that don't reflect God's Church, they don't reflect the truth, they don't reflect peace, they don't reflect God's spirit. So what is going to happen? Either repentance or not. And if not, the end is not a pretty thing.

To miss out on everything? To not be able to have part in it? What a horrifying thought.

Verse 5. So the mind, the carnal mind to think that it can live a certain way of life and it's living the truth, if it's not living the truth (if that makes sense), if it's not really living the truth – an absolute liar. Absolute liar and deceiving themselves.

Verse 5—But whoso keeps his word... So, if we're really living and striving to live the things that God has given to us, fighting this carnal nature, repenting on a regular basis, not screwing around with sin out here, somehow thinking we're going to get by with it, that God isn't going to address it in our lives, thinking whatever. We just keep going back to whatever that sin is.

God isn't going to be tested in that way. He's not going to allow it. He's going to address it. We're at the time that these things are being addressed more and more.

But whoever keeps his word, truly in them is the love (agape) of God perfected. By this we know that we are in him. Whoever says that they abide in him themselves ought to walk even as he walked. How did Christ walk? He told us that Passover night, didn't he? A new commandment I give you; you've got to be willing to sacrifice. It's not easy. You can't do that kind of sacrificing without God's help because it's fighting against our own natural wants and desires and the way we think and feel that things are right. "My way is right." "My thinking is right and if you're not in agreement with me..." No, we're to be in agreement with God. So, there's a huge difference there.

Verse 7— Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. What is that? Exactly what Christ said. In other words, the Church has known it from the beginning. John has kept this in front of them the whole time as well because it's in the book of John that it's written first of all, about what Christ said on that night of Passover: "A new commandment I give to you, to love one another As. I. Have. Loved. You." That's the new commandment. That's the way we're supposed to live. A sacrificing, giving love.

I see a lot of things out here sometimes that aren't sacrificing one iota in relationships with others. What is it that we're sacrificing of self in order to have peace and unity and harmony with others?

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you... So, that's the only way it can be true, and that's the point being made here that I mentioned earlier. Because of God's spirit, if we're in Him and He in us. Otherwise, this isn't going to happen. It's not true. That's why He says, otherwise it's a lie. It's calling the individuals liars.

...because the darkness is past. Is it? Is it being put behind or are we dragging it along and actually going back into some of the things of darkness that we shouldn't be involved in? **...and the true light now shines.**

So, I don't care what it is, as I mentioned on the High Day. Sex has always been the big one. It's a big puller for people in God's Church that pull people away because it's one of the strongest pulls of human life, and of people lying and cheating in some of those things that are done, and it happens in the Church.

Going back to drugs. Because people have been called out of some of those things and so sometimes they go back to it.

Alcohol and going back to it, or not giving it up, whatever it might be.

Pornography, whatever it might be.

Some of the most filthy garbage of the human mind. God says we're not to be like that. That doesn't reflect God. If we can't get along in life with one another, what's wrong? There is something wrong in our minds and we're not living what we should be doing. This is the time where God says more than ever before this must change! If we want to continue on it's going to have to change quickly. Because things are coming quickly now, quicker than ever before. And if we can't see it we are indeed blind, which fits into some of the things that John has to say too.

So, let's go on here in the next verse. Now it becomes even more specific here. **Verse 9—Whoever says they are in the light and hates their brother, is in darkness even until now.** So everyone says, "I don't hate a brother. I don't hate anyone in the Church. I don't hate anyone. That's not me." Well, not by the definition of what's really here. Because that's not the right word to be understood at all of what's being said here. We should know that by other things that have been said in times past, but sometimes we don't relate the two or put the two together.

So, this word "hate" here is very inaccurate as far as a translation is concerned and it's far from revealing what we need to see and what we need to understand about what's being said here.

There is another area of scripture that should be familiar with us that is a matter of the way we think when we're drawn toward baptism and so forth and what Christ said must be done, how we must think and live and so forth. Let's go back there to Luke 14. Because the same word is used here, misused here where it's a little more obvious that it's misused.

Luke 14:15—Now, when one of those who sat at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, Blessed is he who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God! Then he said to them... So, here is a part of the story here of what Christ is going to be telling them. We're just kind of breaking into some of the flow here.

So, one of them had made this comment in that respect here. It says, "One who sat at the table with him heard these things and then said to him," so responded to the things that were said previously. Sometimes we think we come up with these jewels, these gems, that we really understand or see certain things and so we say something. Sometimes the motive isn't really good because it's a matter of trying to impress or whatever. If that's ever a motive we ever have then we've already missed the mark, and anything that might have been spiritual, it's gone.

So he said, he went on to tell how they should be focused and what the real truth is in this matter, of how one should think and live.

Then he said to him, A certain man planned a great dinner and invited many, then sent his servant at the time for the dinner to tell those who were invited, Come, for all is now ready.

Now, this is an awesome story because this really fits in as far as a parable is concerned more with the end than any other time. It applies to all periods of time that people have been in the Church, but in the sense of some of the things it's talking about here, it really fits even more succinctly in with this period of time and what we've been going through.

But all of them as one began to make excuses. So, they all basically started doing the same thing, making excuses of why they couldn't come to this great supper, dinner that they were being invited to.

And the first said to him, I purchased a piece of ground, and I have to go see it. I must go see it. I have to go see it. I purchased it and now I've got to look it over and whatever else is involved in that. **And I ask you to have me excused.**

So, it's showing here that we can make some of the most flimsy excuses in life sometimes to do the things we do, to justify what we're doing when we should be doing something else. Because God should be first, Christ should be first, His Church should be first, His way of life should be first, and on and on it goes. Sometimes if we're not careful we do other things. That's a part of the story flow here.

Verse 19—Then another said, I have purchased five yokes of oxen, and I am going to try them out. He's just so excited about, you know, "I've got to see how they perform...if they really...if I've made a good purchase, so, I'm just not going to be able to make it."

I think, what kind of excuses do we come up with sometimes to not do the things that we know we should be doing, especially in relationships towards others and so forth?

So, he says, **I ask you to have me excused. Still, another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.** So, whatever the excuses are, carnal human reasoning sometimes, this is what it's talking about here. It's showing the carnal mind and how we respond. We can make the most flimsy of excuses

sometimes for not living God's way of life. Because that's what this is about. For doing something different, for not responding to what God has placed before us.

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry... Now, I think of the things that have happened too that happened as far as the Apostasy is concerned, and some of the things that followed after that. Some of this fits in an incredible way as to how God is working with the Church, has been working with the Church since the Apostasy.

So, it says, they came and reported these things, and **the master, of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and the lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.** So, this is just showing how people respond to the invitation that God gives into His Church, an invitation which in some places is translated as and referred to and related to talking about a calling. Invited, called.

So, they're called. They were called to participate in a great feast, if you will, a great dinner. We're called to participate in something that is far beyond what we can really grasp sometimes.

(Sermon audio and video were interrupted at this point.)

So, here it's showing a response to that. I think of the world we live in today, and candidly leading up to the Apostasy, and then after that, and you see how the world is getting worse and worse and worse. They don't want God's way of life. There is that which has to do with hearing and listening that's worse than it's ever been as far as the truth is. People don't care.

Now, they're going to have to get shaken up really bad, and sadly, that's where we are. God has to shake this earth so severely to awaken people out of the sleep that they're in, and in a very carnal way because this world has gotten so evil. They don't care about God.

Even in a physical carnal way in the world as far as Protestantism or anything else. Fewer and fewer care. They don't care about what God says. That's all they understand in a carnal way, in a physical way. They don't know the truth. But even there people who have any desire, you go to a different country, you don't talk about God. You just don't mention the word, as a whole. It's not something people would discuss.

Now, in the South, you'd find people that still talk about it, or on TV. There's one station that's kind of turning into a religious station now, more protestant than ever before, and they're fighting a losing battle.

But you think, how weird and how sick this world really is, what's taking place. People don't care. They don't want anything to do with anything that's right. As a whole, there's a great movement to do everything that's wrong. Anything you can think of. "And you better agree with me or we're going to have some problems here."

It's like what happens to us right now. We have some advertising that goes over Twitter, over Facebook to put a message out there, exposure of some of these things, on Google. There are words you can't even use anymore on Google. It's almost a full-time in itself as a job to stay on there to be able to use some of the kinds of words as keywords that people might click on to and then an ad comes up.

Then we have these—I don't know if there's a word for it—they're with a picture. I can't think of it. Anyway, rather than just by a word or whatever there's like an advertisement that has a picture, and you see the book or background of it partially, it says something else across it.

But we've had the account frozen. In other words, you're kicked out at times from both Facebook and Twitter. So it kind of depends on who you get a hold of sometimes in talking to them as to whether or not you're going to stay on there very long or how long you're going to be able to advertise on there.

But that's the kind of world we live in because you can't even use words to reach out there to warn the world about a third world war, about where the United States is, what's coming in the world, what's happening. You can't even mention some of the people involved or countries involved, if you would, or some of even the war itself. "You can't do that."

You think, how nuts are things getting? So, this is just a reflection of the way things are in the world. It's getting worse and worse and worse. They don't want to hear. They don't want to think about anything that has value in it or the potential for truth. What is truth? It's about as bad as whatever Pilate said, I guess I should say, "What is truth? You've got the truth? Right." That's the attitude. "You think you have the truth?" They don't see anything that's truth, people who live that way in politics and government and so forth. It's like they learn to manipulate, they learn to be conniving, they learn to throw things out there that they know aren't true.

Anyway, sick, sick world we live in. That's what the time period is here in the sense of looking at some of this. People don't want to hear it. So, what do you do, how do you do it? Well, God has to shake the world up. Only slowly but surely are a few beginning to take note, a few beginning to speak out about their belief.

Just like when Xi Jinping went to Moscow. Now, they've met many times before that, but this here was unique, and it shook up some people. Shook up some leaders. Because to think this is where they are and now to see Saudi Arabia to do what it's doing and to see what's happening to the dollar.

I listened to one president in one African nation here recently just talking about, He said, basically, he's telling the people, all the people gathered there, "Start getting rid of dollars because in a week you're not going to be able to deal with them. So, you better, if you've got some, you better start exchanging what you can now."

You're going to get the opportunity to hear the rest of this today, so you think about it during the week, because we're going to come back to this then next Sabbath obviously, and go through part of Luke, what it's talking about.

But again, the excuses are being made here and then Christ went on to say (and I'll say more about some of this next Sabbath so that everyone can hear it): **Verse 23—So the master said to the servant, Go out on the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in so that my house may be filled.**

We've experienced this in the Church. This is what has been happening for some time now. This is exactly what has taken place in that respect. **...for I say to you that none of those men who were invited will eat of my supper.**

After this, a great multitude went with him, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and their own life also, cannot be my disciple. It is not a word for "hate." This by its context ought to show us a reality. Christ telling everyone that we are to hate others? You know, "father and mother, sister and brother"? Insane! Yet this is how it was translated.

It's a word in essence here that has a context "to love less by comparison"; the comparison being made is that Christ is to be loved, is to be first. God is to be first. The reality is that all others less. Because there are many, many people even within the Church who have made choices and decisions because of relationships to leave God's Church.

I think of when the Apostasy happened. Many people made choices about where they were going to go, what group they're going to go with because of relatives or friends or whatever it might be. It wasn't a matter of what was true; it was a matter of something else.

So anyway, "to love less by comparison." Now, to wrap that up, go back, and how does that apply to the verse we read there in 1 John, because that's where we're going next Sabbath.