

## More To Build Upon, Pt. 1

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In mid-November of this past year, we held what we called “Church Organizational Meetings” in the Dallas, Texas area, and those meetings were then followed through December with a series entitled *The World Is Plunging into Chaos*. Hence today some of the news, it’s mind-boggling what’s going on out there.

But anyway, that series set the stage for what followed in all the sermons that we have been covering since the beginning of January, starting January the 7<sup>th</sup>. To me, it’s always an inspiring thing when I go back and look at various things and see how God is leading us because of what He is teaching us. Sometimes it’s more pronounced than ever, and I would say that this time is probably the most pronounced that I’ve ever seen it, in that respect.

So, all the sermons are leading up to the Feast this year. I don’t know what’s coming after this series but we’re starting a new series here today, obviously, and we’ve completed the last one. I believe it had nine parts to it. That’s rather long. But again, that just shows a reason and a purpose for certain things going the way they do because there is much we still have to learn.

But all the sermons are leading up to the Feast this year, all the way up to the Last Great Day. God has already given me a focus. Now, I’m going to go ahead and read this as I had in my notes as I prepared this sermon. “God has already given me a focus for what’s to be covered at the Feast, and even for the Last Great Day.”

Well, this was prepared a little earlier in planning trips and so forth. But during this trip being able to be out here, first of all in Rancho Cucamonga, and then up in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and now here today in Dublin, Dublin, California, I’m excited to tell you that all sermons that I am preparing for the Feast have been prepared during this time. So, it gave me the time to be able to focus more. I do better in the midst of traveling in a situation like that and when it comes to focusing on sermons. This morning I put the finishing touches on the Last Great Day.

So, anyway, I’m excited about that because that was seven in total. I couldn’t even do the schedule yet because of giving out some of the other sermons that need to be done, pre-recorded, couldn’t do that because I wasn’t sure how many I was supposed to give. And finally, became clear this past week.

They’re all complete and I’m very, very thankful for that. Still have a little touch-up to do and then I’ll be sending them off. I want to go back through them and clean up some of my notes. Sometimes when I’m typing I’m doing some things rather fast and it makes it a little harder for those who get the notes because in Europe they need them ahead of time and especially those who do the translating for Dutch

and for Spanish, so that those are done by the Feast time. I give them the notes because I'm not prerecording five of those. Two of them have to be – the first one, obviously, because it's to be played in all places around the world at the same time. Well, not at the same time but on the same day, the first, the opening sermon, and then, of course, the Last Great Day, has to be prerecorded so that it's ready for all areas as well.

So anyway, I have five to give later so this is a good time here by June, the end of June to already have all these finished because it helps the translators then to do their part – at least people in Dutch and in Spanish will have the outlines in their own language. So, that really helps out.

Anyway, so the sermons, again, that we have already covered and that will be covered leading up to the Feast may well prove to be some of the most important ever given over such a period of time, talking about January all the way to the Feast. Because they're all very focused and that becomes evident as you go through some of this.

The reason for that particular statement about possibly being the most important over such a period of time is because it's a long period of time, and these sermons have very much to do with who will soon be sealed as far as completing the sealing, those who will be chosen to live into the Millennium, and those who will not be chosen to live into the Millennium.

So, we live in a very unique period of time right now and it would be wise to focus on some of those things and to pay heed to all the sermons that have been given, especially since January. How everyone responds and more fully lives what we have covered will determine those outcomes. That's just a reality. That's where we are.

We are unique in that respect. No period of time has ever been in this one in the sense of what's coming next. God has allowed things to go on, allowed things to go on within the Church for nearly two thousand years, but we're at a point where change is going to be abrupt and it's going to be very impactful as far as God's Church is concerned because it has to be thoroughly cleansed, has to be thoroughly clean, in that respect, for that which is going to continue on, and there has to be a completion then of the sealing as well.

So, we're going to begin a new sermon series today entitled *More To Build Upon*, with this being *Part 1*.

In this series we're actually going to go back and review some of the highlights contained in the sermons since January the 7<sup>th</sup>. These sermons are just that important because they're preparing us for the Feast and what's going to be given at the Feast. They are that important because the reality is that we have not yet grasped everything that we've been given, and it has to do with grasping the seriousness and the magnitude of where we are and what God is placing before us.

So, we, the Church of God—PKG, again, are at another very unique moment in time. We've been in a lot of them but this one here is toward the end where things are being wrapped up.

So, in the last series, the last series alone there is so much that I know that it has not been able to be digested fully on a spiritual plane or on a plane of its deep importance. Again, this is a building process.

You know, it's one thing to go through a story in the Old Testament and build upon lessons that can be learned. I think of the ones we went through when we discussed some of the things concerning the captivity of Judah, their being in captivity for a time, and then the kings who finally came along after a period of time began to give favor to Judah to let them go back. God brought all that about. But able to go back into Jerusalem and rebuild and rebuild on the temple and rebuild the walls around the area. Those are inspiring stories and there are things we learn from that that God shows us.

But sometimes there are things that we just have to dig a little deeper in the sense of it's not a matter of knowledge in the sense of how smart we are, it's a matter of God's spirit. Because there is that which is just simply on a spiritual plane of understanding and that's why we have to cry out to God anyway as far as our growth is concerned, our ability to hold on to what is spiritual, God's purpose, God's will, what He's giving us from His mind to grasp and understand. Those things can come in no other way; it has to be given by God. It's a matter of God's spirit; it's not a matter of our intelligence. I hope we understand that.

So, to digest all these things on a spiritual manner, on a spiritual plane, if you will, again, it just can't be given by listening to a sermon. It has to be a matter of prayer and our digging into it and thinking about it, meditating on some of those things, thinking about it. It's a building process.

I think of how much we've been given, so much in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John and the book of Jude. Those are powerful, powerful things that we have gone through, and what's inspiring to me is they're really for now more than ever before. It's about this period of time more than any other time because God's giving us understanding of those things on a plane, in a way that has never really been comprehended to that depth.

Well, there is a reason for that. It's because of what we are to learn because of where we are, what we're to see because of where we are. That's why God is giving it now. It's going to be hard to keep out of some of the Feast sermons.

But there are things that God has given over six thousand years. Very little in the first four thousand years, really. Just very little because God was just working with individuals as a whole. He called individuals, worked with them to prepare them to be a part of His Kingdom. Then all of a sudden in 31 AD the Church began and so many more now being worked with. The vast majority of the 144,000 are going to come out of this period of two thousand years.

It's like we were talking the other day here about Thyatira and that period lasted over a thousand years. We really know diddly squat about it. We don't know much at all. That history, the knowledge of what took place during that time, we don't know. We don't know how many people were called but there

must have been a lot of period through that period of time with whom God worked. Because I think of what happened to us since Philadelphia and we've taken, in a sense, taken a beating, the Church has, because of bad choices that people have made, especially leading up to Laodicea.

Anyway, Jude and 1<sup>st</sup> John are so important to understand, to grasp the message. In that last series alone the questions to be asked include, you know, "Where have we gone?" you know, "What have we covered?" We need to think about those things. "Why?" "Where is God leading us?" And so, this is a part of this story here that's leading up to the Feast and what's going to be given. It's an incredible journey.

So, the first series at the beginning of the year was entitled *The Creation of God's Family*. We're almost there to the first part of that family. Now, obviously, Christ our elder brother was the first of the firstfruits nearly two thousand years ago. And now we're at a point where God has worked with human beings, certain ones for over two thousand years, over that period of time, very specific.

When God does things we should be in such awe. 144,000! That really magnifies and glorifies God to do, to have that kind of planning, that kind of preparation, to do what He did in four thousand years, Him, God knowing, desiring that there would be specific individuals, in other words, things that certain ones would be called to fulfill during that period of time in the first four thousand years. He worked with them on an individual basis, much patience, much time. Then all of a sudden the Church and larger groups then finally being able to be worked with to fill in more of the structure. Awesome to understand those things.

And so, this is all about a process of God creating His Family, and we're almost to the first great phase of that, of the first resurrection of 144,000 who are going to return with Christ. I marvel at what we're going to be blessed to witness, the time we live in.

So, before beginning a review of that let's consider something said back in Romans 8:18. This is very much a part of the entire story, something we need to grasp and comprehend. We do as a whole, but sometimes we can dig just a little bit deeper and understand a little more clearly what God is telling us.

**Romans 8:18**—Paul says, **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time...** Now, that can be said at any time but he's saying it then for what they were going through, what the Church was going through, and this was early on. This was pretty early on as far as his ministry is concerned, pretty early on for the Church. Paul was being sent out to the gentiles, and the others are working with, primarily, Judah or the Jewish people, some others of Israel but primarily the Jewish people in that region of the world.

Paul is being sent out to other areas to cover other parts of the world. He went through a lot; he went through a lot of suffering. But it was all about sacrifice. It was all about giving. It was all about a work to be done that burned inside of him.

You have to consider his background, what he went through. Here was someone who was high up in government, if you will, as far as the Jewish people were concerned. He was given the responsibility to lead parties that went out to find people who were a part of the Church, and if need be to kill them right there on the spot. So he did to Stephan. He gave his approval, nodding to do him in, in the respect of stoning him, because he was there and it was him, he did it.

To think that when Christ came along and began to draw him, blind him, do the things that he did with him to wake him up? Because the reality is God was working with him for a long time. It didn't just start all of a sudden and He just picked on somebody to do what he was going to fulfill. He had been worked with. He chose a man whom He was already molding and fashioning. It was God who gave him the kind of training that he received. He was highly schooled, Paul was (Saul at the time), and high up, in that respect, as far as Judaism was concerned at that time.

And so, he was to be given to Christ. Christ began to work with him. But that mind of knowing, he knew what he had done, and he had a greater zeal because of some of that to do what was right, to glorify God, to glorify his elder brother. He was stirred up in a way that so many never have been, in a unique way.

**I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.** He was so deeply convicted of that. He knew this on a plane that many whom he spoke to didn't grasp. It's because of the reality of how Christ worked with Him, especially during that period of time of his calling. Very unique.

The disciples had a unique opportunity to be around Christ, speaking of the apostles there that were at the end, at the beginning of the Church if you will. You think about some of these things, of what they went through, and they saw Christ, they were around him for that three and a half years. They heard from him. They didn't understand so much of what he said, but finally, in 31 AD on Pentecost all of a sudden they could understand. Because it's spiritual. What Christ was telling them was on a spiritual plane.

All of a sudden all those things, because of God's spirit, came to light. They could see it – see it spiritually. That was awesome in itself, but Paul is different, unique in the regard of how God worked with him, for a purpose, to fulfill what he was to fulfill. And so, he went through a lot of things, truly did, and making a statement here that everyone needs to understand in their life.

Because sometimes we just get caught up with how bad we think it is. So many people have left the Church because they've had this mindset too often that it's just too hard. I've heard that, "It's just too hard. Too much is required." "God is too hard." "If this is what..." They don't say it that way because they don't understand it. "The Church is too hard." "The Church makes me do 'this' or makes me do 'that.'" And I think, no, the Church doesn't make you do diddly squat. It's your choice. If you don't want it, don't do it.

I think of so many times in the past where I've known of people in God's Church in *Worldwide* who would come up with this comment that when they had to give an excuse to someone or a reason (maybe that's a better way), for doing something on the Sabbath or the Holy Days, "Well, the Church makes us do this." Boy, that puts the Church in a great light, doesn't it?

Don't you have a brain? You mean you don't have thoughts? You mean you don't have conviction that you're doing this because this is what you believe? So, what are you doing here? I hope you understand what I'm saying.

So, I saw a lot of that over a long period of time, people doing that. It's like, "What are you, a robot?" God doesn't want robots. He gave us minds to be used and we have choices to make. And if you don't want to be here, don't be here. If it's too hard...? And that's what they do, they eventually go.

But they don't really see God in the picture because they get to a point where they don't really believe it's God's Church or it's God's ministry. It's amazing what we've gone through, it truly is. And this leads into, very powerfully, the Last Great Day.

So, whatever we go through it's for a purpose. Once we're called, once God has given us the impregnation of His holy spirit there may well be things that we've been prepared for long before we were ever called, or at some point in time before we were ever called, and God begins to mold and fashion us, prepare us for a day when He's going to call us.

He doesn't just, you know, like going down to the casino or spinning a wheel like some people might do and hoping the thing falls on a certain one...and then say, "Well, we're just going to do this by chance." Let's spin this like some people do in prayers. Let's go out and spin the wheel because these are our prayers going up to God. And you think...?

God plans. He determines who He's going to call. To understand when you're called that God chose you, God chose me, for a purpose in the end-time? We can't understand that. We see others who are living life better than we did by far. Why weren't they called? God has a purpose. He sees things in the mind that we can't see. He knows the mind. He knows what He wants to mold and fashion. He gives us the opportunity to be molded and fashioned and He makes the choices based on being God Almighty, His ability to see, things that we can't even begin to comprehend.

And so, we are just to be thankful that we have been so blessed to be called, that our minds are opened up, that we've gone down under the water, we've come up to walk in newness of life, to become a new person with God's spirit, have hands laid upon us by the ministry of God's Church to receive the impregnation of the holy spirit. Awesome, awesome, awesome!

You can't tell this to the world. You can't tell this to other people. They don't understand such things. How blessed are we to see them, to know them? And then to know that with that calling you're going to go through struggles, and the greatest struggle you have to go through is in here – it's in the mind.

There may be certain physical things that happen, whatever it is, around us, in us, but it's for a purpose because God has a design in it for what He wants to mold and fashion in you. And there are things we cannot receive from God unless we go through specific things that affect the mind in such a way that we can be molded. What word do you use? Astounding? Dumbfounding?

So vastly incredible that God has the power to do such a thing. He knows that essence, that spirit that's in our minds. He knows what makes us tick. He knows how we think. He knows how to mold and fashion what's in here. But the key of it all goes back to the reality that He gave everyone free choice. Free choice.

We have to make our own choices. He doesn't force us. He doesn't want people to say, "Well, the Church, God made me do this." Where is the mind in that? God doesn't want that kind of thing. It's not what He's looking for. He wants what is in the heart, in the inner part of our being, which is ours freely to give.

And so, if we respond to that and we want what God has placed before us and we've made that choice then you've got a fight on your hand, and it's in here. It's a constant fight to fight against our selfish, carnal, human nature. Because our minds are created in such a way that just as Paul said, we're at enmity with God.

What an incredible thing that God created us in a way to be against Him. How? Because He made us, that capacity because of being physical, that we're selfish, "Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life," pampering self, taking care of self first. We can't help it's just what we are; we're carnal, physical human beings and that's the only way a carnal, physical human being could be. What a mind.

What an almighty God to do that in creation so that somewhere along the line He can begin to draw us by His holy spirit, give us truth that we can see so that we can make a choice. We first had to be this – carnal, selfish, human beings – after the mind and being of Satan. Because that's what he became in the angelic realm. He was spirit; had every capability to be loyal and faithful to God through all time but something happened. And when he did that in spirit, whew, he became selfish forever. Can't be changed. Doesn't want to change. Because of his composition, what he is, the way he functions as a being. It's him. It was his choice. Set forever.

We are made so that we can change. What an awesome thing. We have a portion in our minds that is a spiritual component that gives us the ability to think and reason; unlike the animal kingdom, we can make choices, we can think things out. Then with God's spirit the ability to see things on a spiritual plane and make the greatest of choices of life.

So, whatever sufferings that people go through it's not time to play the violin. It's not time to think, "Oh, how tough this physical life is." Yes, it's tough. It's hard. There are times that it gets you to the core of

your being because of the things we see and the things we suffer in physical life in this world. And if we think we've got it bad all you have to do is look around a little bit.

Go to some third-world countries and see how others have to live. Sometimes we don't know how blessed we are to live in the midst of what God has given to mankind within because of certain promises that were given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on a physical plane to be part, to live, to be a part of this, the recipients of such blessings.

That's why it pains me to, candidly, come out here to California and see some of the things I see, to know what's going on in San Francisco, Los Angeles, up in Washington state in Seattle, Portland, Oregon, Chicago, New York. It's sick what's happening in this world! I'll be honest with you, if I were not in the Church and know what I know I would probably look to some other country but be stupid in doing it. Because just like some people moving out to different states right now. They want to get away from some of this because it's turned into insanity. That's where we are in time.

So, where would you move? You going to have the same thing? Is it going to be just as bad? Governments are just as bad over the world. Things that are happening in different countries. You might not have as much crime in some areas for a while, but eventually, it's going to hit there.

We're so blessed, so if you have to suffer understand your life is in God's hands, He loves you with a love that you can't comprehend fully, and to know that if you're in His hands you're in the best care you could ever be, whatever your suffering may lead to, your death, and so often when we get older it does. Well, what's behind that? Life, everlasting life. Choice. Not just life but life with peace.

Mankind, because of his way, it's just a world of suffering. It's had different levels of suffering, and depending on where you are what people suffer. But when you're called into God's Church it's for the purpose of changing self and molding this into something that's going to have a place of service, of giving, of power in the time to come in a beautiful way.

**I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy**—shouldn't cross our lips or our thinking—**to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us**, what God is offering us.

**For the earnest expectation**, it's not "creature." Some of these things just burn me up anymore sometimes when I see what mankind did to it. But he did it out of ignorance. So many translations of so much of the scripture because they don't understand God's purpose and God's plan, and that's understandable, but still irritating.

**...the expectation of the "creature,"** it's the same word as "creation" in verse 22 because that's what it is, it's "creation." **For the earnest expectation of the creation (God's creation) earnestly waits for the revealing (the manifestation) of the sons of God.** So, one is in the Family, God's Family, but to think what God is going to reveal to the earth when 144,000 more are brought into that Family and God begins then



at that time to show it to the world. For a thousand, one hundred years they're going to see them.  
Awesome!

So, that's what it waits for, the manifestation, the revealing of that.

**Verse 20—For the creation was made subject to vanity.** We just talked about that. **...not willingly.** In other words, it literally means in the Greek here “not by our choice.” It's just the way God created us. We didn't have any say in it. We're here because God created us, created mankind, and then the ability to reproduce for the great purpose that He has, and it's by God's design, by God's will. Man has no part in it, we just have choices to make when that time comes, how we're going to live.

**...but by reason of Him...** It came from God; it's a matter of God's doing. **...who has subjected the same in hope.** So, so much is able to be molded and fashioned into us by being able to live by faith without seeing God. We don't have to see God. We don't have to see Christ. To know in the mind, to see them on a spiritual plane is what's important. To see something physical? That's why Christ condemned them when they wanted signs for things, the Jews, and he said, “You're an evil and an adulterous generation. You're sick!” That's what he told them. “You are sick! Because you have the ability to know certain things just by knowledge and you've rejected them.”

**...but the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption.** Corruption. It's what man chooses. That's what mankind, that's what selfishness does, turns to corruption and corrupts everything around it. You may not think that's true. You may think, “Well, I'm not, I don't try to corrupt things.” Before you came into the Church, let's say. “Where is the corruption?” Life is going, some people just think it's okay. That's why so many have left the Church because they think what's out there is not so bad. That's why they go back out there.

Wow, how blind! It's a bondage, and only God can free mankind from bondage, spiritual Egypt, and love that has to come through the revealing and the freeing of the mind so that we can see what is true. But sometimes human beings like to like deception. They want to be deceived because they think they're happier in that.

**...delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** That's what God offers, a liberty, a freedom, a life that it's hard for us as human beings to even comprehend living in physical life. To understand peace and what that means, no wars. To understand there is no jealousy and bickering and fighting, like I've mentioned happens at every Feast of Tabernacles. Someone gets into it. Deplorable. Shameful. Sick. Perverted. Disgusting that we let those things happen to us.

It's a bondage and God lets us, He tells us we can be free of that if we will seek to change how we think about each other, how we think, period. It's a matter of the mind being transformed and changed in our very thoughts about people, especially those close to us or who are supposed to be. There is not anything closer to us, God reveals, than everyone in the Church.

You can't have those relationships with physical family in the world. You can't have the same relationship. You can't share in the same things. But to be able to share God's way of life, that's an awesome, awesome thing.

**For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.** It's the way it's been since the beginning. Pain, suffering, hurt. Now, there are two kinds of suffering. There's suffering because of selfishness in human life and we suffer – and there is so much of it – and then there is suffering when we make choices to fight against our carnal nature. But that, one leads to death, one leads to life forever in peace and happiness that's genuine and true and not put on, not fake, not worked up.

So, in the introduction of that first series in January, *The Creation of God's Family*, it was stated, "We are now going to follow up on this series we just completed last Sabbath, and this will be a continuing follow up of the organizational meetings we had in Dallas. There is actually much to be learned from the unique way these meetings were organized, for this can be expounded upon in order to teach from very great lessons and truths for the Church."

I poorly worded that, but anyway, the point being was even then God was showing me, which has to do with the molding and fashioning, frankly, of my mind, of things that we're to learn, of things that we're to be taught within the Church and to learn from something that we did differently. I can't give that; I can't explain that fully.

But anyway, it went on to say, "This all leads to an opportunity for greater spiritual growth." That's where we are. That's what we've been going through for the past many months. We have a point now where we can have greater spiritual growth than we've ever experienced, in that respect, in the Church. Deeper, stronger.

When you talk about a Body that can be more fully united than ever before, closer together than ever before, which is accomplished by God's spirit and can only be done that way, and that God is offering us to experience more of that, that has to do with spiritual growth and ability to see and comprehend.

Because there are things we can do and be a part of our life that will accomplish that even in a greater way and it gives a greater fulfillment inside spiritually, a greater sense of that accomplishment and joy and happiness that's true and genuine. So, this was said clear back then in January. Mind-boggling.

"This all leads to an opportunity for greater spiritual growth within the Church and to come to understand more deeply how God molds and fashions His Church, and we're to learn from this process." So, that's what we've been going through, it's a building process, something that God is building.

And shortly after that it was stated, "Please understand that God is offering and molding things in all of us," now, that's if we choose. He doesn't just put it in us. Molding something doesn't mean that you can

just make it that way. With God, it's molded by a response from us of choice, "I want to be a part of that," and we pray about it.

"...and molding things in all of us for things that pertain to the future," that you cannot grasp. That wasn't said then but that's what is being discussed here, "that are unique to each of us." So, when you think of 144,000 and the uniqueness of how God called and worked with individuals in the first four thousand years on an individual basis, that's a marvel in itself. Just to think about each one spread out over such a period of time.

Think of Abraham's life after all that time, after Noah, finally ten generations deeper God began to work with Abraham, and Abraham had been around Noah the first part of his life (of Abraham's life). Then Noah died and it came time God began to work with Abraham and told him to move away so he could work with him. "Go. Leave your family and go." And so, different family members went with him but that was all a part of the design. But as far as everyone else around, everyone else that they knew of, that had come from that period of time of Noah and his sons, "Leave them."

He's noted for saying, basically, he went. He did it because God told him. Awesome. If we could always just do that, just respond to God immediately for what God gives, cheerfully so, going to do it regardless of what's in front of us.

So again, please understand that God is offering and molding things in all of us for things that pertain to the future that are unique to each of us. Abraham was unique. Noah was unique. Enoch, anyone you look at. And you are unique. There's not a lot when you look at all humanity, 144,000 and those who get to live on into the Millennium. There's going to be very few. And to think of the opportunities that are before you, that you can't even grasp what's there? They're great. It's by what you're going through now and the opportunities you have now. Fully in God's hands, and it's a matter of faith for each of us, as was stated.

This was later followed by these statements: "In order to learn more deeply, spiritually, from what we will be covering in this new series," back in January, "first there are some very specific things upon which we need to focus. Before doing that I want to show you a painting that is somewhat humorous, that Laura and I picked up in order to stress two very specific aspects of our calling."

So, in January we started with this thing about our calling and God began to help us focus on the importance of it and what He's doing in our lives. And so again, kind of a unique picture, if you remember, this cat is looking in a mirror and he's painting what he sees in the mirror, and it's a tiger. It's huge. Beautiful tiger. And he sees himself that way. And it's kind of comical in that respect when you think about it. But we talked about then the need for humility.

And then there is the other aspect of it that sometimes we need to see our calling in light of God is making something far, far greater than what we are. So, in that regard, on a small, physical plane, a little

painting like that, to have those spin-offs of what was taught then in those sermons is awesome. Truly is. Things we're to learn. They go together.

Because God can't work with us when He calls us if we don't hold on and strive for having that spirit of humility, which is understanding how great God is, what God has given to us, the structure we have by which we are trained and taught, molded, and fashioned, the structure God has given us of a Church, the way He teaches us, the way He reveals things to us.

Because we've gone through a... We went through a period of time in Philadelphia and in Laodicea and in PKG where there have been so many who felt that they had things to give, not understanding that God doesn't work that way. There is a structure whereby God works when things are right and it's up to us to yield ourselves to that process and not to raise ourselves up above it. Because then God can't work with us anymore.

That's why I love Isaiah when it talks about fasting and it makes it clear that God can't work with someone lifted up in spirit. He won't. It works against His spirit and so they're cut off. It requires humility to understand ourselves, to understand what we are, how blessed we are to have and receive anything from God.

So, the first scriptures that were quoted in that series, in Romans 8 as well, we read some of it a little farther down but we're going to back up a little bit here to verse 14.

**Romans 8:14—For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.** We're God's children. "If we're led by." That means a choice to follow, a choice to follow where God is leading us by His spirit. And He does. He molds and fashions His Church, His people within the environment of the Church.

How? Through sermons. Primarily through sermons – Sabbath sermons and Holy Days. That's the primary way God molds and fashions us, teaches us, leads us, shows us where He's taking us. In time we don't know until we get there. And then we look back and say, "Now I get it." So, it's a matter of faith, it's a matter of obedience, of following God, of remembering our calling and how we were drawn and how we were able to come to understanding of what was true.

Not a one of us did it on our own. Doesn't work that way. And yet people in God's church think they can go out on their own again or go join somebody. Okay. That's your mind, so be it, but you just lost everything in your thinking. Where is the mind? What happened to you that you could come to such a choice and decision, to lose understanding of the process?

**For indeed, you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.** It's a bondage. We've gone through that. We've talked about fear. We've talked how it affects human minds and within the Church when things are not right. If we're striving to do what's right and living what's right and ready to repent

every time God shows us something that's wrong, there is nothing to fear from God, from the Church, from one another.

**You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption.**

I love this word because it has an etymology to it that means "to choose for oneself." To be adopted. We have to make the choice. God made the choice first to call us. Then it's up to us to choose, to respond. "That's what I want. That's what I desire. That's what I want to fight for. That's what I want to work for."

**...whereby we cry, Abba** (depending on the pronunciation and where you live). So, we have the ability to cry out to God as our Father and we begin to develop a new thinking even in that realm about what it means that He is our Father. Because we have to get rid of that which is in human thinking as a whole because it's very imperfect. We as physical human beings don't do things perfectly by... Not even close. We make mistakes. And sometimes people can suffer a lot because of some of those mistakes that people make, human beings make. And sometimes people have a struggle in the beginning to look to God as a Father because of their past, because something has happened up here, not good experiences.

And so, what an awesome thing when there is that endearment in a way that gives strength and happiness and a fullness that is profound because it's spiritual. He's our Father. He called each one of us individually out of this world, to free us from bondage, to free us from the bondage of the mind. And that brings peace, that brings of deeper sense of family, of belonging forever and ever and ever, not just a short time. You just keep adding to it and adding to it and adding to it.

Anyway, **whereby we cry Abba, Father.**

**The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.** Some, well, many in God's Church have failed to ever comprehend that one. People have gone astray, gone by the wayside because they haven't understood that how we yield to God and as we grow in spirit, if we're growing in spirit, "in spirit and in truth," in that respect, that there is something that's reflected in our lives, obviously, of what we're living and how we're living it that proves we're of God. Because you can't do that on your own genuinely so.

**...then if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.** Now, sometimes people think about when they're heirs in families and people die and it's not always a pleasant thing when families get to that point in time where, say, parents or grandparents die and then things are going to be divided up, and especially if somebody is really wealthy. And even if they're not wealthy, it's amazing what human beings will do to fight for what they want – "My portion that belongs to me! You don't deserve any of that. You didn't do any..." And on.

Now, all of us probably have some experience somewhere in our life if we're old enough, especially, and even if we're not, that we probably have seen that or experienced that. Seen it in the world around us, how human beings can be in physical families when someone dies. It's like, you've got to be kidding me!

But it shows how deep the selfishness is inside of us and how we really feel toward one another and that which is on a physical plane is.

It can't even... That is like Paul said, can't be compared with God and God's Family and what God offers. And yet God's offering us things that we really can't comprehend – everlasting life, spirit life. Not in a physical life. We can manifest ourselves in a physical body but we're going to be spirit forever and God will always be in us, we'll always have a right mind and right thinking toward everyone because that's what we are, because we're god in the sense of the God Family, we have that mind of God in us forever.

We have a portion of it now but then it'll be forever, God in every one of us forever. That mind. It's about the mind and the thinking and the unity and the oneness and the agreement of that way of life.

There are no commandments in the future. There are no ten commandments in God's Family. There is no need. There is absolutely no need because things change a lot anyway even on a spirit plane, if we understand it, because of what's up here in every one of us. We're at one. We're in agreement. We have different lives like we do now, but we all have this agreement and unity like should be within the Church fully, that we're working for, as it talks about in Ephesians 4, desire, working for this bond of unity and oneness.

**...joint heirs with Christ if so be—If! If! If!—we suffer with him.** In the way that we're told to suffer, like it does in 1<sup>st</sup> John, like it does in Jude, different places in scripture. Those become very strong. Suffer. Because when you sacrifice this, your will, to do God's will, the more you do it the less you suffer, but you suffer in the beginning because you're telling self no until no becomes yes, you're in agreement with God. Your mind has changed. You think differently. Awesome!

**...joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings...** So, there we are, back down to 18 and 19 here, and that how everything is waiting for this manifestation of the sons of God, God's creation. Six thousand years to get to this point, for God to reveal this to the world. Long time, a lot of suffering that mankind has gone through because of blindness and ignorance.

**1 Peter 2:1.** So, we're told, **Therefore, laying aside all malice.** Now, if we can put that together with 1<sup>st</sup> John and what we went through in that series, and Jude, we're going to grow, we're going to become a better family, we're going to become a closer family in how we think.

"Laying aside all malice," all evil, all that is bad, all that is wrong in our thinking toward one another within the family. This is a must for God's Family. We should want to see each other succeed and be successful in everything that you put your hand to, want the best for everyone, and want you to be a part of God's Family.

**...and all guile – Laying aside all guile.** In other words, it's a word meaning "deceitful practices," as in trying to manipulate or control others. And sometimes people who do that don't realize that's what they

do. Sometimes, people that are passive-aggressive, they don't realize that they're passive-aggressive, they don't realize how they work to get their... It's about getting one's way and how we think that others should be doing things "my" way.

And sometimes we throw things out, maybe advice, maybe advice to someone else about how we think they should be doing something. And this is a bad thing that can happen within the ministry then because it has a more powerful impact on people because of someone in the ministry. And if it happens that way that's a horrible thing. And so, we kind of give them no choice, "This is what you're supposed to do," and yet guidance and direction and advice...

So, we have to be very careful how we do things in life. I can't give that to anyone. It's a thing that you have to understand, you have to see. It has to be given by God. Because the reality is that human beings try or want to manipulate others. Maybe you don't see it that way, but anytime you want someone to do something your way be careful what comes out of your mouth and how you react, how you think toward them, what you say about them, because too often it's because something is being said in a light because you're thinking a certain way of how something should be. And if it doesn't fit that scenario they're just not living right.

"Oh, that everyone could think like me." That's our nature, and it sucks. It's not good. We're not supposed to be that way. That's not love, not God's love.

**...and hypocrisies.** Hypocrisies out of the side, this "play-acting; pretending." So often as human beings, we try to put forward this image of this is what we're like, and then when we're out on our own or whatever or with someone else we act differently totally. And so, we have to fight against that.

**...and envies,** jealousy. That's like a cancer, jealousy. If only we had the capacity (and we don't except by God's spirit) to say "Why do I feel this way? Why would I ever be jealous of anyone? What's causing that?" To understand that is to understand your own mind, your own thinking. That's why so often then it's a matter of God wanting us to look into a spiritual mirror because the problem isn't all... It's not out there. If we're unhappy about certain things in life, it's always in here. Something has to be adjusted in our own thinking to get right with God.

**Verse 2—as newborn babes.** I think about this, and I think, oh, we're beyond that, we've been in the Church for a long time, haven't we? No. We haven't been born yet. We're not even really babes. We'll be newborn babes, in that respect, once we're in God's Family. And Joshua is there – he has more than two thousand years ahead of us, if you understand what I'm saying. Because his mind was of God from the very beginning.

We live in this carnal human life, and we have a lot of things to work on. So, it takes time to grow and to mature even once you're born. But you can have the same mind, the same thinking. But to know, to

understand, to grasp everything? We're not going to; it's going to take time. But we're already set in a certain way that God will always be in us and we'll be in God because it's set. That's another story.

So it says here, "as newborn babes." For us, we need to see ourselves in this light. Because when you see a baby on the floor it can help put a perspective on things if we can relate to that in our spiritual development, where we are. What does that mean? We have a lot to learn. We have a lot to grow in. We're not there.

Sometimes we think we're pretty good and we think... No. I'm amazed at how long we go through scriptures and God just keeps revealing more and more. We think we see something. I have to admit in my part in 1<sup>st</sup> John, thought we...and we have seen things there that were never understood by *Worldwide*, and definitely not in Laodicea, things in 1<sup>st</sup> John. Because we'd been given so much I thought, "Wow, we've been given understanding of 1<sup>st</sup> John," and you get to a point and you realize, "Whoa, there's a lot more here we need to dig out, of things we need to see and grasp." Always learning.

**...as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.** Whatever and wherever God gives us, that which we can grow in, **that we may grow thereby, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.** And all of us, we should have that in our being, to know how merciful, how patient, how caring God is to each one of us because of the things we have experienced since we've come into the Church.

**To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.** So again, showing the value that God places upon us in our calling and if we'd just respond to God and want everything that He places in front of us.

**You also as living stones...** What an awesome thing to see. Christ is referred to as a living stone. And we are referred to as living stones because of what God is doing in us.

**...are being built up a spiritual house.** Every one of us is going to fit in a specific area. Needed. You can't have holes in the walls. You can't have holes in the ceilings. We're all going to be in a spot that gives support, that makes it all work together in a way that's so beyond any building that we can comprehend.

**...are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.** And if we could just understand that. Even within the Church over...since *Worldwide* or the period of Laodicea or any point in time of PKG, even within the ministry to understand that sometimes people have wanted certain things, desired, think they were owed certain things. "Should have been ordained a deacon. You know, I deserved that more than they did." And "should be this," "should be that," and you think, if you grasp what your calling is, that you're a part of a holy priesthood, that's beyond anything that has ever been as far as the ministry is concerned.

It's like going a step farther than beyond the ministry of the Church than the Levitical system. The Levitical system was nothing compared to the structure of what God has given within the Church to carry out the certain functioning. But every one of us has been called to something far greater. We're in a holy



priesthood even now in training and preparation for where we're going to be in God's Family if we could just grasp that on a spiritual plane.

**...to offer up spiritual sacrifices.** What are they? **...acceptable to God by/through Joshua the Christ.**

Spiritual sacrifices. If nothing else in this whole sermon, or all the sermons given since January, if we could understand this, what this is talking about, what this means, what it's saying, that this is what God expects of every one of us, to offer up spiritual sacrifice. He's made it very clear to us so we understand this fully – nothing, there is nothing physical sacrifice.

But we have to understand what a spiritual sacrifice is, and it's what we're willing to give up in our carnal human flesh, in our carnal human minds of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" in order to obey God. The growing in the ability to say no to self and fight against self. There's your battle. To fight against what's in here is your battle.

It's not other people. It's not how they treat you. That's not where the fight is. The fight is in here. And that's what God is looking for, the willingness to suffer self, to give of self, to go through whatever trial, hardship, and fire we go through to do what is right. That's what God wants because that's what it takes to become a part of His Family – "To offer up spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God." Because that is what is acceptable. Anything less is unacceptable. That's the reality of it.

**Verse 6—Therefore, also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone that is chosen (selected) and precious and he who believes on him shall not be confounded.** So, our ability to continue in this way of life, to continue to receive what God shows us, to hold on to it, to believe all that He's given to us from the beginning on, and then to live by it—because that's what faith is, to choose to live according to that—says you won't be confounded. You just keep growing. You just keep going forward.

And thankfully, all of you to this point in time that are hearing, that's what you've chosen to do. It's been a battle. It's not easy. And the majority of people before you have gone by the wayside.

**Unto you, therefore, who believe, he is precious, but unto those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed.** That's really impossible for people to comprehend. When they get to the point where they've separated themselves or start separating themselves from God's spirit through sin, they can't comprehend this anymore. They don't understand what's taking place, those who are disobedient, and they don't realize what they've done is they've turned against Christ. They become anti-Christ. And that's far from their minds.

Had a conversation not too long ago with someone who thinks they're going to read their own bible and learn what they need to learn. You think, after being in the Church this long, *Worldwide*, and then on into the period of time of Laodicea, and then go through the Apostasy, and then have the opportunity to be awakened and become a part of PKG, and then to think you can go out, separate yourselves from

God's family, separate yourself from the structure that God gives to teach, mold, and fashion us and you're going to study on your own?

What happens to the mind to think such a thing? People become anti-Christ. They work against Christ because Christ doesn't work that way. God doesn't work that way.

So, **the same has been made the head of the corner**. In other words, God's going to fulfill in His Family with His Son, with the rest of the Family, continue to construct it without others. In some cases maybe, obviously, forever.

**Verse 8—and a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense**. What an incredible thing to think that rock and that they themselves have stumbled at it. And the mind gets to where it can't see that. They would laugh at such a thing, "I haven't done that toward God and Christ. I can see what scriptures tell me."

**...a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at the word**. Being disobedient, turning against what they're being taught.

**...thereunto also they were appointed**. So, God has given so much about what happens when people aren't of a spirit of humility, when they will no longer be of a spirit of humility, when they're going to work on things their own way regardless of what is said or told to them and thinking they have this kind of a special relationship between them and God. There is no such thing apart from the Church. Doesn't exist. They don't live in the time of Abraham, and they're not Abraham.

"Thereunto also they were appointed." So, what they're appointed unto is not pleasant if it doesn't change. And in so many cases it's not going to change.

**But you are a chosen generation...** To see ourselves for who we are, what we're a part of, a chosen generation, God did it, **a royal priesthood**. That's great. That's beyond what we can have right now in this physical life. We are a part of it already in the sense of what we're growing in and what God is molding in us.

**...a holy nation, a special people, that you should show forth the praises**. This is a word that means "the virtues; the moral excellence." In essence, it's showing forth by how we live the mind of God, this is how God is. That's why we live the way we do. That's why we obey like we do. And the more we obey the more we can have that mind within us and be in agreement with us.

**...show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, who in times past were not a people but now are the people of God**. There can be nothing greater than in this human life to be the people of God on a spiritual plane. To be the people of God on a physical plane was great in the sense of other nations around them, but it wasn't the answer. It wasn't what was to happen in time by any measure.

**...who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy**. Beautiful.

2 Peter 1:10, backing up a little bit. So, all these things we're repeating, we're going back and looking at what we already focused upon at the beginning of the year. And we're doing it because we're supposed to do it. Because there is more we need to see and dig deeper into to help us prepare for what we're continually being given, and candidly, what the highlight of that is for the year is the Feast of Tabernacles.

**2 Peter 1:10—Therefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence.** That never changes. Never changes. The work, the effort, the thinking, **to make our calling...** There is great sacrifice that went into our calling and there is great sacrifice then that we're to make afterward in our calling. **...and election (selection) sure.** Because it's not sure until your change comes.

**For if you do these things you will never fall; for such an entrance will be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Joshua the Christ.** That's what we're striving for. That's what we're working for. But we have to be diligent at it. We can't just go through the motions and hope that time passes us quickly. And you get older and all you have to realize is it's passed pretty quickly already.

**Verse 12—Therefore, I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things.** Of what? To remember our calling. That's what this is all about. To hold on to it, to be grateful to see it for the awesomeness that it is, and hang on...

**...though you know it, and be established in the present truth.** I love this because you think through time, which we're going to focus on even more so at the Feast, to think of how things have changed through time, of what God has revealed to mankind, it is astounding.

And to live at this time? I am so blessed; you are so blessed to live right now. Of all time, of all mankind, to be at this time I don't know that we can fully grasp how incredible it is to be here now at a transition in time of something that God has planned for, has looked forward to since the beginning.

We don't even know what that means. Millions? Billions of earth years? Trillions? We can't comprehend such things. Been a long, long time. Awesome! And we get to see the pinnacle of it, the beginning of what it's all about. Those who lived during the time of Christ experienced it just a trickle, but an important, awesomely important one, because that was the building stone for everything else for the temple. And some witnessed and saw some things.

But to be here now finally after out of humanity, not being the Son of God but being those who are called out of humanity, to become part of God's family, 144,000? Mind-boggling.

"And be established in the present truth." So, I think of how much God has given us since the beginning of PKG. It's mind-boggling. It reminds me of Elijah and Elisha and how there was more poured out later. Not a lot written about it. Not a lot told about it. Double portion? Mind-boggling. And we've experienced that on a spiritual plane that is so awesome, truly is. Should be exceedingly humbling, too.

Then in *Part 2* of that series, *The Creation of God's Family, Pt. 2*. We covered the portion of that painting, again, which reflected the importance of our need for humility. God has us address this from time to time. He had us address it then and He's having us address it again. If we understand how God works and molds us and fashions us Sabbath by Sabbath by Sabbath.

Isaiah 57, or it referred to this, but let's notice it again. Powerful scriptures. **Isaiah 57:15—For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity.** We can't comprehend that. Is He high, is He great? Beyond words that we can even begin to try to use. Feel totally empty in not being able to adequately express it, because how do you express that?

**...whose name is Holy, I dwell in the holy heights, and with those,** because this is referring to something on a spiritual plane, **and with those of a crushed and humble spirit.** It's the way we have to be in the sense of self, knowing what we are. Crushed, not lifted up with any kind of pride, but knowing what we are.

My nature sucks. I know it. I see it. I loathe it. I look forward never to have it again. Because the beginning of it is "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." It's just there and it's ugly. And so when I do ugly things I feel sick inside. And yet they pop out of me. They pop out of our thinking. They pop out of our mouths. They pop out of us and we have to go before... And no matter how refined, how far we go it'll always be that way as long as you're in this human body.

But that's a part of acknowledging it, "I am wrong, God is right. I look forward to being totally freed from this." The process starts when we're called but we're not free of this until, well, most of the time it's death. Only for a very few will it be just a matter of a twinkling of an eye at the last moment. But they'll be unusual in all of history, of all mankind, ever who fulfill some of that.

**...crushed and humble spirit; to revive...** To make alive with real life, with meaningful life. Not with physical life. That's not what God's creation is about. It's about more than that. It's about age-lasting life, everlasting life, which is spiritual, has to be on a spiritual plane.

**...to revive** (to make alive) **the spirit of the humble.** That's God's desire. And He can't work in us if we're not, if we don't strive to maintain, to hold on to that spirit. That means always acknowledging what we are and being aware of it when pride lifts. We start feeling important about ourselves, we start feeling lifted up about, we feel that our way of seeing something, our way of doing something is more important. Well, why?

**...and revive** (make alive) **the heart of the broken.** That's the power of God to accomplish that. And that's what He has to work with to do it. Anything else, He can't work with it. That's why so many have gone by the wayside. He can't work with them. They're discarded. They're like the clay that just can't be worked with anymore and it's discarded on the floor. More for the Feast.

Then we looked at this very, very basic scripture. **Matthew 23:12—And whoever shall exalt themselves will be abased.** Not “shall be,” it’s just a fact, **will be abased** (“shall be,” fine, if I’ll say it that way in the future), but that’s what’s going to happen. Might as well see it in the tense that it’s there in front.

**...and whoever will humble themselves** – choice, that’s a choice – **whoever will humble themselves will be exalted.** So, to be a part of the Church, that’s already being exalted if we can see it for what it is. To be a part of God’s Church, to have God’s spirit in us, we have been lifted up above all of humanity. How blessed are we? And then when the change comes?

So, this thing here, I think of this often, about how this has happened so often within the ministry as so many, the majority, have tended to exalt themselves trying to raise themselves up of importance in front of others to be looked upon as being important. You know, that’s just sick. It’s carnal. It’s not of God’s spirit. To try to have to magnify that above what it already is? If one knows what it already is there is peace there, there is giving there, there is the mind of God there. It’s not about self. It’s not about how important. And never letting that take place in one’s thinking.

That’s why I love a stark difference between Herbert Armstrong and Joe Tkach at the Feast of Tabernacles. If anyone began to clap, and generally it would just spread. Somebody would start it and sure enough before long whole group is caught up in the same thing. And he put a stop to it, told them they weren’t to do that. You know, that’s good. He knew that wasn’t good for him and he knew that wasn’t his purpose in being there, that anyone should do that toward him. He had a humble spirit. He knew he was God’s apostle. He didn’t want that on top of that because it isn’t healthy for the individuals who think that way, that that’s what is needed. And it’s not good for him. So, he said, “Stop it; don’t do this.” Don’t be participating in such a thing.

And then we had the other. “Oh, you can do better. You can do better! Is that all the longer you can do this? That’s not very loud! You can be...” Making those motions, “You can do more...” (“*Look how great I am.*”) That’s not what he said but that’s the spirit of it. “Look how great I am, the man of sin, the son of perdition. That’s what I’m getting ready to do.” Might as well have said that because that was in his heart and that was in his mind everywhere he went when he did that.

Now, that should make you want to puke. It’s sickening to be of that nature and yet we can be on that in a small plane in how we think about ourselves if we’re doing something and we want someone else in the Church to see how important we are. “Oh, look at me, what I’m doing. Look at what I’m serving and doing.”

I see it, and it still exists in the Church. And it’ll always be there as long as we’re physical. But I love to see it less and less in everyone because I see it and it makes me want to puke every time I see the slightest smidgeon of it. Because I know how bad, how evil, how wrong that kind of thing is, and it will destroy anyone who takes pleasure in it. Any kind of little pleasure at all, it can destroy you. We’re not through this yet.

Anyway, such a thing sickens me and it's because of all the training and things that I've been blessed to see through time and seeing the two examples I just gave you. I count myself exceedingly blessed to see and to have experienced that example of God's apostle, Herbert Armstrong, when he said, "Stop. Don't do it," because there is that which to be learned on a spiritual plane that you can't put a price on.

And then the other which says this is Satan. That's what he wants. He wants to be praised. He wants to be lifted up. He wants to be seen as important. Disgusting.

And those are the kinds of things we have to see in our own life, in our own thinking. There are things that are disgusting when they're selfish. Anything we do that's based on selfishness is always disgusting and we should be somewhat, and a lot if we can, disgusted whenever we see it pop up in our lives. And then we go before God and repent and keep fighting that fight. Because that's our fight. Carnally, of ourselves, we're disgusting, and yet God loves us, helps us to grow, helps us to see those things. Because we have to be able to see them to fight them. And that's what this is all about. That's the kind of suffering we have to go through. To offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, to ask for forgiveness, and to see those things and acknowledge them and admit them is a sacrifice.

Because too often people don't like to admit they're wrong. It's a blessing to admit you're wrong. In God's Church, it's a beautiful thing to admit when you're wrong, to repent. You're growing in character, spiritual—What price can be paid for that?—when you acknowledge before God you're wrong. Or to someone else, "I'm sorry I shouldn't have done that." You're showing that you're wrong and something needs to change – this! That's our battle and it's a beautiful thing if we can see it for what it is.

Romans 12, we'll stop there. In the last part of that series, we focused upon one of the most overlooked and awesome areas of scripture, which is here, to that which God has called us to be able to accomplish by and through a process of personal choices. It's always about choices. If we can see the choices we make day in and day out it's about these choices. Yet this scripture here we've been reading, has hardly been lived by most in God's Church who have ever been a part of God's Church. That's astounding.

**Romans 12:1**, we know it well. **Therefore, I implore you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies, your life, a living sacrifice**—That's what we've been talking about—**holy, acceptable unto God**. That means suffering. You've got to have some suffering up here because of what you're fighting.

To realize what we are is not a bad thing, but sometimes getting there and being able to say it takes some sacrifice and some suffering because the self is saying, "You know, you're not that bad," or "No, you're not this," or "No, you..." Yeah, yeah, I am. I just thank God for what He's molding and fashioning in me so I can see it and live it and do something different about it.

**And do not be conformed to this world**. You see, because the majority of God's Church through the past two thousand years have not understood this, have not lived this, didn't present their bodies a living

sacrifice. On the contrary, wanted to hold on to something, something they wanted to do that God says we shouldn't. Every one of them. Every one of them, that's what was decided. Choices.

"Don't be conformed to this world." You've got to be different. How are we different? Because of God's spirit and yielding to it, the change and humble spirit.

**...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** What an awesome blessing that we don't have to be this way or remain this way forever. You just may be there for... Well, since 1969 I'm still dealing with this. Some changes since then. So, we can look at our lives and think, what an awesome thing that we don't think the same way anymore. We're totally different.

What are we willing to do? What suffering are we willing to go through? And you come to the point where you are willing to die if need be. What does that mean? If it were to help others, save others, gladly so. Don't care what it is or how it is if it's God's purpose. That's the way we should think. We're in God's hands.

Because we're not fighting to keep this. Sometimes people do. It's like how many tubes can you get up through here [your nose] and you're there fighting for your last breath? And "Poke anything in me; put me in a thing that compresses my body back and forth so I can breathe. Keep me going because this is what I want to hold on to forever."

No, you've all got to die. That's just the reality of it. Every one of us has to die. And who wants to die in misery? Candidly, my best thought of it would be in my chair in the living room. Now, my wife wouldn't want to find me there and I wouldn't want that for her. But I'd far rather to have that than some other types of horrible ways of dying that people have to die. We have people in the Church that die some horrible ways sometimes.

I remember the first time that I learned a great lesson, being a minister up in Pennsylvania. I think she was in New York, right across the border. Called over there at different times. One night we went over there, she was dying, hardly able to breathe. She's fighting for every breath, and she says, "Would you pray for me that I could just die?" Now, in the Church at that point in time such a thought would have been unheard of. And I prayed for her that she could die, that she not have to suffer like this. Because she's going to die, but to suffer to where you have no air anymore and the thought, the thinking, the fight, the struggle that the body is going through? Thankfully, she was able to die.

Now some heard about that and were kind of shocked about that, that you would pray for someone that they no longer have to suffer in this physical life. You know, there are cancers that eat people up and are horrifying, and sometimes when you get to a certain point—not that there shouldn't be life before that—or a heart condition or a lung condition, and if the mind is there, if we're still there and able to visit with people and have fellowship what a blessing in life to be able to be together to experience family, an awesome thing To not have to have tubes feeding us.

I hope you understand what I'm saying. God created us that we all be able to die once. Some are going to die twice. Some who have been a part of God's Church are going to die twice. Sobering. But it's designed that every one of us has to die once. It's just a part of life. I accepted that a long time ago. You don't have much choice. When this quits, it quits.

So, we come to a point in time where we come to understand things deeper about what God tells us. This life was only meant to be temporary. It's physical and one day it stops. You can accept that, or you can try to fight against it, but you're not going to change it. We're not going to change God's purpose and God's plan for us. And if we can see the things in the light of God's plan, even through the Last Great Day, on into the Millennium, into God's... Whatever it is, the more you see God's plan in it the more at peace you are, the more thankful you are.

So, that's what's always before us. Choices. And to realize there are certain realities of life that we have to accept because you can't change them. We can just yield ourselves to them. And it's beautiful when you see God's plan. I was thinking of it this morning. You can't help it when you're preparing a sermon for the Last Great Day and you think about the awesomeness of God's plan in the Last Great Day. Billions who have never known the truth. Billions upon billions upon billions are going to have an opportunity to become a part of God's Family. And then billions who will not want it. Which is mind-boggling.

But at least to know that everyone we've ever known who wasn't a part of the Church is going to have that opportunity. And we hope that they will accept and receive that opportunity. But to also know and understand if perhaps ones you have loved the most in physical life were not to choose that what is best for God's Family? If they reject it, it's the acceptance of something that God has had to receive from the very beginning of time.

He desires that everyone be a part of His Family. But because of free moral agency knowing that there will be so many who will turn against You, turn against Him, turn against you, who won't accept the beauty of God's plan and God's purpose. But if that's what's best for God's Family, so be it. The ability to accept that one sometimes can try people in a very deep way.

I remember one evangelist, who up to the point his wife died, and she wasn't being healed, he turned bitter against God (because God wouldn't intervene to heal her), and he left this way of life because of it. Now, that happened very early on in my calling. But you think, what a horrible thing, because of something you want to hold on to and you blame God that you're not able to have something in this physical life there are things you're missing and you don't grasp.

We have the ability to grasp God's plan, the ability to hold on to God's plan, to hold on to our calling, to draw closer to God.

So, we're going to continue going through these sermons that started in January and we're going to come all the way up to the present time. I don't plan on going back through this one again if you



understand what I'm saying. We're reviewing them and "I'm going to go through now the review of the review." Well, you know what, if God tells me to do that I'm going to do it. But hopefully, we don't have to do that.