

Today will be the fourth in a sermon series entitled *More To Build Upon*.

Last Sabbath we spent more of the time, quite a bit of time, actually, in the book of Zephaniah, and a lesser amount in Revelation 8 that was a review of the six-part series entitled *The Love of God*.

Now, I'm not a fan, necessarily, of reviewing sermons, candidly, in the manner that we are, but the more that we're doing it the more I understand why we're supposed to be doing it, and we're reviewing so much of what was given beginning in January and we're going to do a little bit at the Feast even on part of some of the things we've covered because it all goes together and there's a purpose of what it's building up to.

I could tell you; you could try to guess what it is, and you may, it might be a good exercise, "Where is this leading?" But when we get there at the Feast it'll be exciting, it'll be inspiring.

We're always learning, ever building upon what God gives us. The more we actually do this the more I realize and understand some of the things we're going through, that we really need to stress that importance more. You don't just do that overnight, it's something you have to grow in.

And so, I hope as we're going through these things that we're grasping that and understanding that more, that there's a reason why we need to focus on these things as we're doing, because it's about change, it's about growing and becoming stronger. So, we need to make sure we're doing that.

Anyway, going on here.

So, again, we reviewed the six-part series entitled *The Love of God*, and then the final portion of that series *The Love of God*, which was in *Part 6*, we began to cover what God wanted us to more fully comprehend concerning how that love, His love, is to work in us. That means we've got work to do.

He's given us things to grasp and comprehend about Himself as a part of the process that we've been seeing here and going through and then He's showing us "This is what you're supposed to be doing. This is what you're supposed to be living." Me, us. God is letting us know that we need to focus on that more because we haven't done that well in the Church through time.

And of course, we're judged according to what we have at a particular time, but most assuredly when Herbert Armstrong came along, when God began to build up to begin the

Philadelphian era of the Church there was a push forward in ways that the Church hadn't experienced in times.

Because we didn't, the world didn't have radio. The world didn't have the printing press until the 1500's, the 1400's, whatever, the beginning of that, and that was kind of archaic in that respect until it got better and better. Then communication got better, transportation got better, and brought us into his period of time.

I remember going through the autobiography. He had two of them when it was all said and done. But when we were going through that, talking about the time when they got in this old vehicle to go west they didn't have turnpikes, they didn't have interstate highways, they didn't have a lot of highways. Well, they didn't have any as a whole. To realize the kind of roads they had when they had to go across there, how difficult that was, how long it took.

I remember later on when he talked about how exciting it was for him when he used to have to take a long time to get from California to New York to do things on radio. When he finally got to a point, where it was four stops along the way, he was so excited you could do it in one day in four stops. You think, what an incredible thing to see these transitions in time. And even the Church was called the Radio Church of God for a time. "Radio" was put in front of it because it was God's Church but showing how the gospel was going into the world in a very unique way, technology. Awesome!

He was moved by those things. He talked a lot about those kinds of things, of technology and the things he saw and how that was affecting the world in the build-up to the end. Then especially when the first bomb went off in Japan in WWII, and then all of a sudden to be able to see and understand how things were going to be accomplished because of prophetic things said about the end, the kind of war that was going to come, the reality that man could annihilate himself.

Before that, you couldn't see that, how mankind could really annihilate himself because of the kind of weaponry there was and so forth. And you can't do it with that. You can't. Somebody is going to be left. And even then, to think what kind of war that would have to be. But anyway, to see something like nuclear war then changed everything in his perspective.

So, we see how things have changed through time, what he went through, what he witnessed, what he saw. The things we've seen in the time of PKG have been astounding, technology and how it's being used.

So again, the Church hasn't fared well in many respects to the degree of what God's given to it through time because the majority of people that have been called have left. Now, that's because of our choices, that's because of the weakness of carnal, human thinking, selfishness,

and the trials that come along with that where we're tried, and we're tested in different ways to see what's really inside of us.

And so, we go through a lot of things. Everyone has that's ever been called into the Church. To see, when it's all said and done, see what our choice is. Is it really God? Is God first? So, we go through a lot of things where that's tested, and it comes out that the majority don't make that final choice. But there are tons of choices to make that one complete.

And so, God has brought us to a point just before His Son is returning and we're going through things now where God is even showing more the seriousness, the importance of, with the ability to see the things we see, the importance of living it more than what we have been. So, the more God gives the more that's expected. That's how we're judged. The more truth we have, the more that's expected. Because we are either in unity with all of it or we're not.

So, even when the 18 Truths were given, and 3 before that, 18 more during the time of Philadelphia, a lot of people disregarded it, a lot of people turned from it, a lot of people argued about it, a lot of people fought over it, a lot of people came into disagreement with it. A lot of ministers did. A lot of confusion throughout churches and throughout church areas, and in some cases people left by the hundreds and into the thousands, even before the Apostasy. Incredible, what we've gone through to learn, to learn what we need to learn, to see what we need to see.

And so, here we are, to me, in a very unique time, in a very unique way seeing things that God desires that we have more within the Church so that we can start there in the Millennium, what we're to live, how we're to live it, how we're to live toward one another. So, ever learning, ever growing more.

So, He showed us, we focused upon His love, agape, and then the importance, in the series that followed, the importance of ourselves living that. Because it's not enough just to know the truth, we've got to live it. That's a great truth, to understand God's kind of love, and that if we have the capacity to begin living it, to live it more and more in our life that's what we're supposed to do. And to not do it, well, that's a sorting process then.

In *Part 6* we focused upon that which we are to more deeply grasp that's revealed in Passover. Now, I marvel at that. Every year we go through Passover, we focus upon the scriptures about Passover, specific ones especially, every year, and yet as I go through them I know or have known that there are things lacking in ability to comprehend what's being said there in the sense of either God's first and we're striving to live this and we're putting that in the forefront or something is lacking.

That's why I think about 1 Corinthians there and what it says so often there about if we don't take it properly... We'll come to that in another time here.

So, let's just take a quick look at this again, John 13, things that Christ said. What a marvel. To me, it's always so inspiring when you go through commanded assemblies, like this a commanded assembly, not a Holy Day. The Holy Day starts at sundown on Passover. So, when Passover is over then the Holy Days begin, commanded assembly. But they all fit together in such an incredible way.

And the plan, and the things God has given us to see that plan, and here Christ on his last day gives the Church some of the most important things that have ever been given to mankind to understand. To understand about him, how he was able to do the things he did was because God the Father was dwelling in him. Then he shared the reality you can have this. This can be in you. This is what is supposed to be in you.

That's why he's dying. He's doing this on Passover; he's giving this information to us on Passover. That's when it's being revealed. And then, wow, I mean, it's a lot. It really is. But to live it? That's why we have to have God's spirit. We can't do it by ourselves.

John 13:33—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. Incredible. Incredible that we're still building upon this, to grasp and understand this deeply, what this is, and what it's all about.

...**a new commandment, that you love**, in other words, "That you love in the manner that I'm telling you." That's how that word is used in the Greek. ...**that you love one another** as, so powerful, **as I have loved you**, "in the manner that I have loved you," **so that or in order that you love one another. By this, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love (agape) one to another.**

And so, we come back to the thing "as I have loved you." He's getting ready to die. He's getting ready to die for all mankind, and as each one is called he died for each one so that we could have our sins forgiven us. He became our Passover, was the Passover Lamb, his purpose for coming, being born, the pinnacle of God's plan and purpose, everything built upon him. Awesome!

The Son of God, the only literal in the sense of born from God the Father, of a woman. Had to be physical but had to have a mind that was unique above all others that have ever lived. The mind of God. Incredible. The Word made flesh.

Then **1 John 2:1**. John just later on in life, God gave him these things to understand more deeply. He didn't understand all this in the beginning. He wrote about these things and as time went on God gave him more because, you know, everyone fits in the Temple in a unique way. John fit in a unique way in the things that God gave to him to teach others. He saw and understood things because this is what was given to him to see, to share in a unique way and

so, was able to build upon those things that were written about, like in John 13 here, and expounded upon them more later on in life after a lot of the other apostles had already been killed.

1 John 2:1—My little children, that's how he started John 13, or Christ did. But now he's doing this, he's saying these things. He's been out there for a long time working with the Church for a long time, getting closer to the end of his age, his life, I should say.

I write these things to you so that you not sin. That if anyone does sin... And so, we know this, we learn this. That's our nature. Human nature, we're going to sin. But we're to grow and we're to learn to conquer the weaknesses and the faults we have, and that sin becomes less and less, and candidly, we start out with physical things, work on the Sabbath, not work on the Sabbath. Then later on we learn about the spirit of the Sabbath. Then there are things that we're always learning and growing in concerning how to keep the Sabbath before God, how to honor God in our lives.

And so it is with all the commandments. But we tend to begin with, in a very physical way, with the commandments. That's the way it is. Then we learn later on the spirit of them more and more and more because of growth.

So again here, the desire is that we not sin. As we grow we learn not to sin. We don't do the same things we did when we were called. It's just the way it is. Still have the same nature, many of the same carnal weaknesses, but we're learning to fight them on a spiritual plane, the things in the mind that we begin to see in our thinking that's wrong, that in the beginning we couldn't see those things. We did things; we didn't understand the process. We didn't understand the power of our thinking and how that has to change. We grow in that.

My little children, I write these things to you that you not sin. That if anyone does sin, which we do, **we have an Advocate**. That's the word "paracletes," which means "helper called to one's aid." That's why in John 14 the word is used. It's the only two places it's used where it talks about the holy spirit being a paraclete, our helper, our aid. We need God's spirit. Christ died so that we could receive that spirit into our life, so we could be forgiven of sin and have that.

Now we have an advocate in an awesome way. Not just our Passover but our High Priest. **And we have an Advocate with the Father, Joshua the Christ the righteous. Even he is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world. Even hereby, we know that we know him if we keep**, that's the word "to guard; to watch over" **his commandments**. That means they have to be valuable to us, precious to us. The more they are and the more we see the spirit of them then there is that which we have to work to guard. Because of this, because of the way we think as human beings. And so, we have to nurture that which God gives to us. We have to guard and protect it in our minds, in our

being. In other words, you don't want to lose it. The majority of people who have ever been called have lost it... lost it.

Verse 4—Whoever says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in them. So, we grow in this. We learn what this is talking about, living the truth that God gives us. We're judged according to what we know and what we see, and we are to pray about those things. We want to do what's right before God. We want to honor Him. And so, we recognize the importance of living what He gives to us. But if we don't, if we're not striving to do that then we're a liar. That's what John is telling us. That's what Christ is telling us. That's what God tells us.

"And the truth is not in them." This has happened so much within the Church over and over and over again by choices people make.

But whoever keeps his word, truly in them is the love (agape) of God perfected. So, though we might not fully comprehend it, if our lives and our minds are truly changing, we're changing how we think toward people. We're working on things. It's a slow process. It's a slow process. We can't make those changes overnight. But the longer we're in the Church and the more truth that God gives to us, again, the more that's expected. God will give us the help, the holy spirit, more of it to do what we need to accomplish because of what He's given us, what's expected of us. In other words, opportunities to grow more.

...so in them, truly, is the love of God perfected. By this, we know that we are in him.

Whoever says that they abide in him ought themselves also to walk—now here is what gives it its punch. Here is what we need to grasp a hold of more deeply. Now, I can say this in ways that only I can comprehend in my own mind but to share with you, I haven't fully understood these things through time, about what this is saying here, about the importance of recognizing that it's about Christ and the fact that he gave his life, that that is the kind of love that it's talking about here, a willingness to do that in order to love others.

And so, we have to, then, by understanding that more deeply as we grow, to recognize or to say or to question, "How do I love others within the Church?" Is it like this? Is it to that extent that we're willing to fight to that point in our lives? That's really, pretty powerful when you see it in the light that it's given there.

"Whoever says they abide in him..." Everyone who's ever been called, who's attended Sabbath services through time, who later turned away, they would have thought they were fully in the Church. They go to Sabbath services, they keep the Holy Days, they don't work on the Sabbath, believing they're a part of the Church. But at some point, something happens, something changes. Has too often.

Whoever says they abide in him ought themselves also to walk... It's expected. It's the way we should be. So, the more we see this, the more we grasp what's being said here, the more we're able to grab a hold of it and really see it more deeply the more we better be doing this.

It's what we're being shown. That we better not have any conflict at this Feast of Tabernacles with anyone else in God's Church. We have grown to a point where we should be able to see that, that it's inexcusable, can't be allowed. It can't exist! And if it does, shame on the person on whom it comes. Because every Feast of Tabernacles we have conflict in God's Church where people get into spats, arguments, hurt feelings. "Well, they said 'this.'" Or "They did 'that.'"

Not looking at oneself and seeing "Well, what's wrong with you?" Is there something perhaps wrong in your mind? Where is your sacrifice? What are you willing to go over, pass over yourself, in order to love that person, that you would rather hold on to something against them? You'd rather have these feelings toward them that you have been wronged? That you've been so wronged that you're justified in how you're talking to them or how you think about them or the things you said to them because of those feelings?

I hope we understand by this time those things are just wrong. Where is the sacrifice? Where is God's love? That's the question that has to be asked. Because Christ is willing to die. Think of the people who spit on him. Think of the people who whipped him, beat him, ripped the flesh off his body, and he died for them. He had something to say if he wanted to. He could have, with great power, destroyed every one of them. But he didn't misuse that power because he knew his purpose.

He could have had legions of angels that were there. Didn't choose to use that power in that way. Instead, did what we should all do, take whatever it is and hope that in time... Because for them, their time, he knew when that time would be. Great White Throne. They're going to, as a whole, whistle a different tune when they see what God has done and they're resurrected. Can you imagine being one of those who had the cat-o-nine-tails and here he is, the means by which you can be forgiven of your sins and be a part of God's Family? Do you think when their eyes are opened, and they see what they have done to the Christ that there aren't going to be those who are moved by that? Can't imagine. The feelings they're going to have all during that hundred years in some cases?

Like Saul and called by Christ, by God, blinded, and then the change that took place in him? But those feelings he held with him until the day he died, that he gave his consent to kill one of God's begotten children, Stephen. Awesome! But he was forgiven, and he knew he was forgiven, but still, those things are in your mind. You can't help it.

Anyway, incredible.

So, God is giving us the opportunity to see a depth, if you will, of something we're to be applying more fully in our lives and being able to put it into not just words and thinking, "Well, yeah, I love everyone in the Church." You do until there's a conflict. Then you've got a battle on your hands until somebody does something to you, says something to you, and maybe really wronged you...maybe really despicably wronged you. Now, you hope, being in God's Church, that they're going to get a hold of themselves in time.

And hopefully, it's not too long, because it's not like Christ looking upon those... But he said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." It wasn't their time. He knew that. Simple. Easy. That's why it should be easy for us to deal with people in the world. It's not their time yet.

We may get frustrated. I do a lot of times driving up and down the highway and seeing the stupid things people do. Like one guy today, the lights turned for me to turn onto the road, so I make the curve. Another guy who has the red light, he's pulling out at the same time onto me. It's like, what is wrong with you? You just going to take the road! And that's kind of the attitude, "Yeah, it's a right-hand turn, and yeah, you're making it, but you need to look out for me, too." Just didn't care.

Well, driving habits, some of them are kind of my pet peeves. They get to me. I have to fight self. I've got to fight thinking that I'd like to pull them out and talk to them about what they've done. I know that wouldn't work, but still, not that that thinking is in your mind, but the feelings are kind of inside there.

Especially when someone in a semi pulls up. It doesn't have to be behind me, it can be behind other people, and they're on their bumper. And you think, if those cars in front of you have to stop you're not going to be able to avoid possibly killing them, going right over the top of that car with that semi. Because it takes ten times longer to stop a semi than it does a car if it's loaded down. "Oh, I didn't know that." You know, the way they wheel in there... I'm sorry, I could spend a long time talking about traffic, but you know, I shouldn't. This is what's important.

But it shows the battle that can be there in our minds. But when it's someone in God's Church it becomes so much more important because we're all God's children. That's why even when it comes to judging others we're not supposed to do that. Now, we might have to judge situations if it's our duty and our responsibility, and if we know of something it becomes automatically our responsibility.

My wife and I were talking about someone here just recently who knew of something, that someone was committing adultery but wouldn't say anything to anyone. "Someone is committing adultery, but I can't say... I'm not going to say anything." Because you might lose a friendship. Think, lose a friendship? You're going to lose a lot more than that if they don't

stop doing that. They're supposed to be in the Church, too? And you're not going to go to them alone?

If you can't judge, "Huh. Adultery is wrong. I love my brother. I'm told I'm supposed to do something about that. What is that?" Well, anyway, it should be automatic in our thinking. You should go to them and tell them, "Hey, I'm concerned for what you're doing here, and I know it, I have knowledge of it, and what you're doing is wrong." Then if they don't hear you, you know what you're supposed to do? Go to the ministry. Because what do you want out of all this? Afraid to lose a friend? Well, he eventually did leave the Church, was put out of the Church for that very thing. Or do you want to see them saved? Because this is, when it's down this far and they've gone that far, for someone to repent at that point, pretty tough... pretty tough by that time. But if there is any hope should strive to do it.

How much do we love our brother? What are we willing to suffer for them? Sometimes people don't want to suffer too much. They'd rather blow off their indignation, their unhappiness, and even talk to others about how someone mistreated them. Beat the drum, make it bigger than what it really was. Anyway, should never, never, never, never happen in God's Church.

If we were in the thousands in these Feast sites it would be multiplied many times over because we're human beings. But we right now in the Church are at a point where God has given us so much and there is an expected response in our life because of the wealth of what He's given to us.

So, we strive to change, we strive to repent and think right toward one another and be willing to sacrifice, to have that sacrificing mind like Christ did. Which most of the time means battling self and saying no to self. Because this is where the real great battle is, it's inside of us, striving to conquer self and the way we think about others and the sin that's in here. That's a job. It's a big job. We need a lot of help.

Whosoever says they abide in him ought themselves to walk even as he walked. Not that I haven't known of these things, but the intensity of it, the power that's behind that series of sermons is a lot greater now than it's ever been. I know that. We all should know that now. Because we see how it fits together in a very powerful way now in a better way than we've ever grasped it.

Then after the six-part series *The Love of God* we entered into a new series entitled *Exercising God's Love*, and that was a nine-part series and certainly has to do with all of this that we just went through. And again, that series that everything before it led up to to that point, is the very timing then of God showing me things that we're to have at the Feast of Tabernacles that this is all leading up to, what's to be given to us.

Now, some might be disappointed because expecting bigger things at the Feast of Tabernacles. “New truth! More truth! More than we’ve seen to this point in time.” Well, understanding things in a deeper way and living things in a stronger way spiritually, it adds to what God has given to us and should be exciting. As we even repeat maybe some of the scriptures we’ve gone through in this series here. We’re going to repeat a few. We’re going to look at a few again. And hopefully, it doesn’t become old, but hopefully, it fits together with a focus we’re supposed to have, making us stronger, giving us the ability to be stronger.

Trying to figure what all to go through in this. Anyway, I’ll just read some of my notes I have here again. So, this series was of such importance, and everything that led up to this year, again, that we needed to review it all in this series here, *More To Build Upon*, and that’s what God is showing us. These things are exceedingly important to Him. That’s why we’re going through this because they’re to be exceedingly important to us.

If we can grasp how we’re fed, if we can grasp how God leads us, especially when there is something that started in January all the way up to now and leading to the Feast, and actually reviewing certain things, that shows the importance to God. Because if I had my choice I wouldn’t have done this. I’ll be honest, I wouldn’t have done it. But I have learned a long time ago when God gives me something I know when He’s giving me something and what I’m to give.

Because I don’t rely on myself, what I think we need like we used to, or what we used to be taught at certain periods of time in Laodicea in the Church. We’d come together and it’s like, well, you should have so many childrearing sermons in a year. You should have so many husband and wife marital sermons in the year. You should have this and this and this about this subject matter and plan them out months in advance.

No, you should be led by God’s spirit to give what you’re supposed to give at any moment in time because you don’t know how a congregation is being molded and fashioned at any moment in time, why something might be needed at one point that’s important to them, to their wellbeing. God does. He’s the one that’s doing the molding and fashioning. Joshua does. He’s doing the molding and fashioning. I hope you understand what I said there.

So, we’re going to go and review of that nine-part series entitled *Exercising God’s Love*. It began by focusing on some of the verses that have been misunderstood and even misapplied in the past. So, we went through some of that.

Again, **1 John 2:9**, and we’re repeating some of this because some things are going to be added. **Whoever says they are in the light and hates their brother is in darkness even until now.** So, these, a lot of times people will read this, or it’ll have been given in times past and it’s like, “No one hates their brother. We don’t hate anyone. That’s a harsh word.” Yeah, it is, but the reality is it’s been done a lot in the Church. But that’s not what this is talking about.

So, as it was pointed out, this distorted misapplied translation, and again, the word has nothing to do with the concept of hate in what's being said here. And by the fact that it was translated in this manner, it's caused confusion at times with people in the Church and people within the ministry.

So, we went through some verses, some other scriptures to show what this, how this word has been used, and how it's to be applied. We're going to go through those again because we're going to add a little bit to some of those today.

After Christ gave the parable of a certain man who prepared a great dinner and then sought to invite many guests to it. Then they all began to make excuses of why they couldn't come, and again, you remember some of those then in Luke 14. So, we're going to go back there.

Now, this becomes more important to us again because of the timing and so much of this specific parable really is about the end here. Now, there are things to learn from it for all ages.

I think of the messages to all seven Church eras. They're really for the entire Church at any time. The only thing is by the time Ephesus, the message to Ephesus was given Ephesus was about over. It was toward the end. But still, what was said there is for everyone of any age, of any period of time to be cognizant of as far as the Church is concerned and what we're to be on guard against.

Just like being lukewarm. Anybody could have read that in Thyatira or whatever period of time, and what's said there, you sure don't want that to happen in your life. You should be hot and on fire for God's way of life and definitely not cold, because that means you're turning against it. But to be in the middle is not acceptable. So things like that have been good for all ages who have had the ability to have those scriptures before them, to go through them, to learn from it.

And so, it is with this here, but it's more specific and those eras were more specific about specific trends and thinking at that time. Here it's more about the end-time though these things have happened to people through time.

Luke 14:16—Then he said to him, A certain man planned a great dinner and invited many, then sent his servants at the time for the dinner to tell those who were invited, Come, for all is now ready. Now, what an incredible thing this is about our calling. It's about what God has done with those whom He has drawn, and then to understand that the majority have left through time, speaking specifically of the Church over the past two thousand years. It's mind-boggling. It's astounding.

Then he sent his servants at the time for the dinner to tell those who were invited, Come, for it's all ready, the time is here. But all of them with one began to make excuses. Now,

the thing about this is this applies to everyone because the reality is this is what happens to people once they're called.

What takes place? Someone is invited, they were invited at a specific moment in time, then later on to be told "Everything is now readied," well, that's from point A to point B, from the point of being called to the point of dying.

And so, those who didn't remain to be made ready as a part of the 144,000, certainly failed in some of these specific areas then that are going to be addressed here. Because these are the things that have affected people and people have turned from God, turned away from their invitation, the calling that they received from God Almighty.

But all of them as one, in other words, this is what they did, as if they had talked to each other, as one began to complain. In a different way but making excuses why they couldn't be there.

...began to make excuses. And the first said to him, I have purchased a piece of ground, and I must go see it. I ask you to have me excused. Well, it isn't that this specific thing took place in this manner but it's to learn from what's being said here. What is it about? What are the kinds of things that people have begun to turn away from God within the Church over the past two thousand years? Well, for a lot it's been physical pursuits. Certain point, things became more important in their physical aspect of looking at life and looking at their life and where their focus began to be rather than on God and His calling. They began to change in their thinking.

So, yes, made excuses of why they couldn't yield, couldn't do the things of their calling, why something else became more important. Well, what was it? Well, for some it might be, "Well, he hasn't returned yet; I'd better start focusing on other things, better start whatever that might be." Think those things have happened? Well, we're all hit with some of those at different times.

I don't care what period of time of the Church you lived in, because you know what, everyone has looked to the time Christ is coming. No one in the Church ever grasped and comprehended that it wasn't going to happen. Like in Ephesus, they didn't know it wouldn't happen for eighteen, nineteen hundred years. What would that do if people knew that? There would have been more who had left earlier on. That's just a reality of life.

But if you have something in your mind, even physically, then you can begin to learn the spirit of it even more so that regardless of the timing it's what's in the mind and what you're living that it's all about. God's Kingdom will be here, God's Kingdom will be established, and you have to live what you're living regardless.

Sometimes people do it for the wrong reason, like 2012. That was given there for a good reason, and even as an example that we can learn from that will be used in the future. Everything that's ever happened in six thousand years that have been monumental moments in time, you know what, they're written in scripture. And those that aren't, well, they will be spoken of later as well.

Things that happened during the time of Herbert Armstrong, certain peaks. What do we go to oftentimes? We go back to the beginning of the seventies oftentimes when there were ministers and people in the Church that began to accuse him of beginning to teach something that was not true, when he began to have things revealed to him in a way that the Church hadn't grasped and hadn't comprehended about God, about time and so forth.

I'm trying to think of the name of the book that was given. *The Incredible Human Potential* I think it was, *Incredible Human Potential*. And some couldn't hear it. Why? Well, they'd become spiritually weak, and they couldn't hear what he was teaching, which is what God was teaching, what God was giving to the Church at that time, and to understand a process there that we hadn't understood before.

Just like with Pentecost later on. Something very simple and very basic just a couple years later and yet it was brought to his attention that some felt that we need to look at it because some of the things in Hebrew and so forth, is it on a Sunday instead of on a Monday?

Now, if something is ever changed in the Church when it has to do with truth, that is believed to be truth, and you find out later on that wasn't true, that shatters some people's thinking. They can't take it. Like make-up. Something as puny as make-up and you take it to the level, to the degree that one does, and not even understanding that was just strictly an administrative thing. But some tied it into scripture because Jezebel wore make-up. And so, if Jezebel wore make-up no one should ever, ever, ever wear it. She wore a dress too. She wore clothes. Anyway, I don't want to get into it.

Sometimes the thinking and the conclusions that are drawn are for the wrong reason. And so, we grow spiritually, and we learn those things because God's teaching us. He wants us to know how to think and He wants us to get rid of the thinking that's not sound, the thinking that isn't good in judgment. He teaches us how to judge, how to think. What an awesome thing!

So again, those heights, those things that have happened through time that we go back to and look at because of what we can learn from it. And so, 2012 is one, coming back to that. There are people who did it for the wrong reasons. People who focused upon it for the wrong reasons and the response to it, if you understand what I'm saying. But we either learn through that entire period even in judgment or we didn't.

I think of when 2008 was addressed, when in 2008 when it was addressed about Feast of Trumpets, that it's not about the timing of Christ's coming. There's a timing for Trumpets and there's a timing for certain things that are going to fit into that, have fit into that, and will fit into that. But the tying in of the Wave Sheaf and the wave loaves is something on a spiritual plane that revealed, and that's why we were given that then, to understand Christ is returning on Pentecost. He died on Passover for a reason, he's returning on Pentecost for a reason because that's the way God planned it, established it, and that's what those things teach. We can learn from them.

But there were people right away, ministers, something happened in the mind, and they couldn't take it, they couldn't take the change. "How could this be in God's Church, that we were wrong about that, if this is God's Church?"

So, sometimes we look at physical things and they pull us away. Sometimes we can become too focused on physical things, and it can pull us away from God. Sometimes occupations and jobs can pull us away from God if we start putting too much value upon certain aspects of it. It's great to be blessed, but you know what? David said something that we should never forget - not to have too little and not to have too much. Not to have too little that you'd curse God, and not to have too much that you would turn away, because wealth, things that are physical can pull people away from God. We can begin to see ourselves and build up ourselves. I hope you understand what I'm saying in those things.

This is that first example then, began to make excuse, wanted to go out and look at a piece of ground that he had purchased, showing just how foolish turning away from God would be, to be invited to something so incredible that we've been invited to, what He's called us to, and then to turn away for something physical that's temporary when everything belongs to God in the first place? That we should let that pull us away from God? It's insanity. It's unsoundness of mind. Well, weakness of spirit. Because somewhere along the line individuals began to become weak and began to turn to something they shouldn't have turned to because that can pull people away from God if it becomes more important.

Then another said, I have purchased five yokes of oxen, and I am going to try them out. I ask you to have me excused. So, physical things. I already mentioned the part, and they work together sometimes like this. But, you know, things about work, whatever, a job, things, whatever it might be that can pull people away becomes more important.

Still, another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. Well, what's wrong with marrying a wife? What's wrong with marrying a husband? What's wrong with marriage? Well, isn't that sad that today... Anyway, the world is so screwed up, so screwed up.

But here is an example. It's about relationships. One of the closest that we've been shown through time and one of the things we should grasp in a very great way is a husband and wife,

the relationship of marriage. It's the most awesome relationship any two people can ever experience in life. Closer. It teaches so many different things, truly does. But yet so many people, so many people because of a mate that's drawn them away, because of children, because of parents, because of friends, close friends.

So, it's about relationships. And sometimes if we're not careful as human beings you have to fight a fight. It's always the same whether it be a job, whether it be physical things in life, pursuits of life, there is balance in all of these. Or if it be a matter of something here that is a matter of relationships. Because these are the kinds of things that affect people's thinking. These are the kinds of things that many in God's Church through time have left over. At some point, one of these, a combination of these.

I think of on our way over here today I had to go make some copies of a sermon that I forgot to copy, so I went to Staples and got these. Otherwise, it'd have been an impromptu sermon today. So, this is the one I was supposed to give.

Anyway, while we were driving we started thinking about this area. Now, as soon as we started driving over from Boston yesterday, driving by, saw certain exits and it gave the name of certain towns, I thought of certain people—I couldn't help it—who used to be with us in PKG. Then we started talking about the different ones who would have been here today if they'd stayed. Now, I know that we didn't count them all because with time and situations like that, especially time and probably age, you don't remember all names as well, especially depending on the length of time they might have been around.

But thirty-one people in a group here that would have been with us. Think, what a shame. What did they leave over? In a lot of cases, in this case, it was a matter of relationships and someone going off on a tangent on one thing and then others following suit because it's family. So, they all do it.

I remember as soon as the Apostasy happened a lot of people started making decisions about where they were going to go, what group they were going to be with because of close friendships or family. That is not a reason to make such profound choices in one's life. To not perhaps be able to judge things clearly and correctly if things are being done in a way that is not of God, that should have revealed this is not of God.

Where do you take a stand? It should be on conviction of what you believe. It should be on conviction of what is true. And if half the ministry is teaching 14/15th Passover that ought to say something, and if it's being allowed by the governing source that these ministers are out there believing these things and some of them teaching it, and they're not being corrected for it? Because what should happen? They should be put out in a second. Not just removed from the ministry but removed from God's Church for affecting so many people's minds that

they're willing to teach them such sickness and perversion as a 14/15th Passover. Because a lot of people in God's Church have gone that direction.

So, judgment can be messed up badly because of friendships, relationships, a husband, a wife, a child, whatever, a grandparent, a close friend that a person has known for many, many years in the Church. That caught a lot of people. Because somebody made a certain decision to go to this group, that's why they went regardless of what's being taught. Wrong reasons.

That's what these things are covering, things that have happened to us in the Church through time over the past two thousand years, reasons people have turned away from God. Because it wasn't about God. See, it reveals whether God is being placed first in a person's life. Is God first? Is the truth first? Do we hold on to it and guard it with all of our being with what we know and what we see?

So that servant came and reported things to his master. Then 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 here the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. People who are willing to listen. People who are not caught up in haughtiness and pride.

I'll go a step further - I believe we've lived through that already in PKG, that God can call people in life who have various kinds of weaknesses and astound later on by what He molds and fashions in every human being, the change that goes on in the mind where He raises us up in ways we can't even begin to comprehend.

And the servant said, Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room. So, the master said to the servant, Go out into the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. I believe that's been fulfilled too, literally, during the time of PKG. **For I say to you that none of those men who were invited will eat of my supper.**

So, there are people in time, like in 2008, God said He wasn't going to work with them. Some of it wasn't manifested for four years, five years, whatever it might be, but He manifested it and made it clear. All those thirty-one that should be here today, could have been here today, what they gave up.

I think of the reasons of some of the cases, of situations, and I think, so puny. Don't understand the value of what we were given. Where do you go from the truth? What do you do when you were once convicted, went under the water, came back up to walk in newness of life, and you saw things that you couldn't see before? So how should that turn out when it's all said and done, to turn against Christ, to turn against God, to turn against something so awesomely valuable that Christ was willing to die for?

“None of those will be invited to my supper.” What’s that all about? Well, we’re going to talk more about that at the Feast of Tabernacles.

After this, a great multitude went with him, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not—it’s not the word “hate”—to love less, in essence, by comparison to what’s being said. That’s the context again, just like John does in 1 John. But this one here very specific. It’s by comparison their father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and their own life also... See, it goes back up to this thing of relationships, this example does.

So, what’s more important? That’s what everyone has to judge in their own life. There’s not a person called that doesn’t have to make hard choices towards relationships when it comes to the Church. Because inevitably it’s going to happen - family, relatives, friends, they don’t like what happened to you. They don’t agree with what you do. That affects relationships, and if God’s first, He’ll deal with it accordingly, always. Always.

Do you realize that you have to make a choice and a decision and every time you’ve ever done those kinds of things, when you’ve been tried in them, that these are some of the most powerful in many respects that you make? That God is first and that you don’t want to see anyone not be able to be called in time. You hope that all will be called in their time that have opportunity.

But you know what, it even goes beyond that. That you have to be willing in your mind to say that even if it comes to the point that they’ve committed the unpardonable sin what God is going to do must be done. That’s hard if you genuinely love the individuals that such a thing can happen to. But that’s where you have to go in your thinking about such things and your conviction about such things.

Wish all would choose God’s way of life. But God is showing us, especially how we focused on certain things at the end-time here, there are going to be billions who will not choose God, and that’s very hard for the human mind in many ways to grasp, that such a thing could happen. It’s not so hard anymore but used to be very hard to think how that could be, that there could be incredible multitudes of people that Satan can stir up and they think that they’re going to do some of what is in their mind.

Choices, choices, choices. And they’re not small. They’re about, life - whether we’re going to have it or possibly not. That this is all it’s about... or a little bit later on.

Thought I would give a personal example of something that happened to me back in 1982. We were out in Lubbock, I believe, I think by that point, got a phone call. Dad gave me a call and told me that he wanted to tell me before anyone else told me. He said, “We kept the Feast in

Branson, Missouri.” Branson, Missouri? There’s no Feast site in Branson, Missouri for the Worldwide Church of God. There was one in the Ozarks, but not Branson.

And then, finally, “Ding,” Garner Ted Armstrong. They’d made a choice - left Worldwide, went with Garner Ted. Well, disfellowshippment means disfellowshippment. Turning against God means turning against God. So we had to make some choices and decisions at that time. It was hard. But those are the kinds of things that everyone has to come to a conviction of no matter what happens.

It’s harder if it’s in the Church than if in the world because in the world your hope is then in the Great White Throne or maybe the Millennium, in many cases. But it’s all a matter of God’s time because God knows the best time for us to have the potential for being saved, if you will, for making the right choices. And so, that’s where we place our trust.

One of the series of sermons that preceded all this, in essence, *Place Your Trust in God*. So, we know that God knows the best. We are convicted that we know God knows the best. But when someone is given this opportunity to be begotten of God’s holy spirit and be in the Church, and then to turn against that, to turn against the truth that one is given because of whatever the reasons might be, well, God is showing us more and more right now as we get close to Christ’s coming that that’s more than what we’ve grasped in times past, the accountability for our choices and what that means.

So again, these things that we’re being given are so exceedingly serious that we grasp, that we comprehend, that we understand when it comes to our relationships especially, that we are able to say, “I get it. And there will never be an occasion... And if for some reason I get to a point where something hits me and I’m caught off guard by something that someone does and I say something back or I react to it improperly, I’m going to repent of that so quickly because of this conviction.” I hope you see where I’m going with all this.

In other words, we don’t want to have wrong thinking, wrong thoughts, or even when we’re done heinously wrong by someone, if that were to happen. And you know what? I don’t know that I’ve ever really known of people being done that wrong, as a whole. Some things have been pretty bad but if we can’t sort through them and deal with them God’s way by what God says where are we? Because what should surpass all of it is that we love each other, that we want to see each other continue on.

That’s one thing that encourages my wife and I so much in our traveling, seeing the closeness of the Church today compared to what it was a year ago, two years ago, five years ago. We’ve come a long, long way.

But still, as small as we are within the midst of that, every year, every year someone goes a different path. And when you really love people that hurts. But then you also deal with the

reality that's what's best, because if that's where they are they don't belong in the Body. But it still hurts. It should if we love each other, if we want what's best for each other, if we want to see each other come through this.

Because this isn't easy. What God's called us to wasn't meant to be easy, it's hard. But what He's offering us is so exceedingly great, so far beyond even our ability to really grasp it well. Because we don't. We see it in part. But to latch hold of that and realize what we have now is very short-lived.

It doesn't take very long and you're at a point where you realize I don't know if I'll be alive tomorrow, things can happen at any time. The older you are the more that becomes a reality. I get a feeling in my chest somewhere, get a feeling in the back, which I had this last week—not up here but back here—and it's like, been told this could be heart related. Well, if it is it is. If something can be done, fine. And if not, we're in God's hands. It's in God's timing.

That's the way it is. You're not going to change that. We all get old and as a whole for six thousand years, you know what, everybody has died. It's just a part of the process. It's a reality of life. But it does go by so quickly. You look back and you wonder where...? It's like when you're younger you don't think this is ever going to happen. It happens. It's good because there are things you learn, to grow in, you see that you didn't see in the same way before. That's a part of the process that God has given to us.

But to think that we can live forever and not in a weak, physical body to where you have aches and pains? I like that a lot. But we don't comprehend that fully. But that's what God promises and that's what we hold on to. That's our hope and we believe it with all of our being. We know it's true. So, how can we compare that with anything that's so short-lived? But how we use our time while we have it, well, that's what's important. That's what it all boils down to, especially when we've been given the ability to see and understand things that otherwise we couldn't.

So, going back to that story I told you about, 1982. That was hard. And yet there was no question. That's what everybody has to decide, what do you do in those cases? God is first. And if God says no fellowship there is no fellowship. You can't on a spiritual plane anymore. Now, as time goes on, some cases many years, if they have that much time, there can be a bit of a physical relationship.

But you know what, there is nothing you can compare with the spiritual family relationship in God's Church. Because you don't really have family until you have this because this is what lasts, can last forever. The physical can't. Not just because it's physical, and it isn't close to what God offers us in the Church, in His Family. Hope we are learning those things and understand those things and are convicted of those things. The other things we learn from,

we grow from, and they're important, but not nearly as important as what God offers us and puts in front of us.

Somewhere I left off here. Anyway, it's about this comparison here then of loving less and what it means here. Again, just a reminder of those particular scriptures here in 1 John. I don't think I went through **1 John 2:9** yet, did I, where it says, **Whoever says he is in the light and hates**, in other words, in the manner that John was saying, **their brother, is in darkness even until now.**

So, if we understand what's being said here, if we're not willing to sacrifice, if we're not willing to love the way God says and sacrifice in order to love someone else, in order to want what's best for them there is the darkness there that has to be gotten rid of. That's where repentance comes in.

If we want to be in the light, so much of that has to do then with how we think toward one another, and if we see that there is something wrong there in our thinking toward anyone then repentance is an absolute must because we're sinning, and God wants us to get past that type of sin, if you hear what I'm saying.

So, we can't now especially "love anyone less" than what God has shown us here. He's given us more to see, to understand, and so now we have to measure ourselves by this, by what God is showing us in a way that is good and exciting and inspiring to see that level of that kind of love because He's saying you can have more agape than before. You can experience more of His kind of love than before.

And that, a lot of that has to do just with repenting, perhaps of things in the past we didn't realize we should have repented of, repenting of those and if it ever pops up at any point in time that we repent of it quickly so that we can be at one with God and one with His Son, and at one with everyone within the Body of Christ in spirit and in truth.

So, pretty strong language here. That's the point of it all, is to come to see this. That's why we're repeating it, that's why God is having me repeat it so that we can see it deeper and deeper, and it becomes more serious to us and more serious to us so that we realize "I can't let this... I've got to do this more. I've got to apply myself more."

Verse 10—Whoever it is who loves their brother abides in the light, "in this manner," in the right way, sacrificing, willing to sacrifice, "is in the light." So, when we're not in the light and we've done something wrong we're in darkness and we have to repent of that. Now we're given the ability to do that in a better way than before, to see it more clearly, to see it more quickly.

...and there is no stumbling or offense committed, if you will, **in them.** Powerful words.

Verse 11—But whoever loves less their brother is in darkness, by what John is saying here, by what we’re being told, and walks in darkness, and does not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded their eyes. I’ve seen this happen to so many people, that this is what takes place at times in relationships and could go so far that can’t see and can’t even see the truth anymore.

And so it was after focusing upon these verses here that we went back to the beginning of 1 John and began to go through the entire book. Not going to go through all that but we are going to hit on just a few highlights here before I close today because each time we do this, this should be etched into our thinking a little bit more. And of what value is that?

1 John 1:1—That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and which we have looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

That which we have seen and heard, and we declare to you, that you may have fellowship with us; for truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Joshua the Christ. So, again here, to understand these things on a spiritual plane, to understand what he’s saying is what we’re to understand within the Body, within the Church toward one another. It’s about fellowship because it’s spiritual.

We don’t see God. We don’t see Christ physically. We don’t have to. It’s a spiritual thing. But we see them. We see that we have life and that thinking and that mind, and that’s what draws us closer to them, through the truth that we’re given. Because of all the truths God has given, the more God gives the more I love Him. That’s the way it works. Love His way of life. But it’s Him, it’s His thinking, it’s His mind that He’s sharing with us, and we’re able to share this with one another. What an awesome thing!

You can’t share this with anyone else in the world and this is what gives us a closeness in a family that is unique to us, that you can’t explain to anyone else. It’s what you live. The world doesn’t have this. Instead, there is prejudice and people grow up thinking differently toward others because of who they are or where they live or the color of skin or the education or the country or the part of town, or whatever it might be. What a sick thing!

God calls people from all kinds of backgrounds and brings us together and makes us a family. You can’t give that to anyone. They wouldn’t understand. They can’t understand that.

I think of one time we were in this restaurant because after services we often go to restaurants. It was down in Bowling Green. We had this huge, long table, and every background, age of people that were there. It was like being at the Feast of Tabernacles. You know how we are when we start talking.

There were people coming by and wondering because it puzzled them. They thought it was a wedding. “Is this a wedding and you’re all... and you know each other because of...” No, we’re in the same Church. How do you tell them that? We’re a family. And some ask, “Are you family?” “Yes, we’re a family. You won’t understand that but...” Yeah, anyway.

You can laugh about those kinds of things because it’s like they’re puzzled. They don’t see anything like that. Because there are certain things you can’t explain. They’re just out there and they see that closeness... Anyway.

It’s like people at the Feast of Tabernacles, and so often you’d see when there’d be thousands come into an area and “I really like those people,” and they would be so excited to see us back in different areas and billboards—of course they liked the money, too—but anyway, if it’s hotels and restaurants. But people genuinely like God’s people. But comments as well would be, the following to that, “But that crazy religion,” or they didn’t like what they believe but they’re sure a good group to be around.

Verse 4—Then these things we write to you so that your joy might be full. This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. And what’s the whole point of that, for saying this? This is what we’re to be like. That’s what he’s saying. That’s what we’re being shown. We’re to be the same way when you talk about a fellowship, when you talk about the way God has loved us.

That’s why we had that series when you think about what Christ did, that kind of love, sacrificing, and that we’re supposed to because we’re to do the same thing. To not do the same thing makes us a liar. Those are pretty strong things. To be in darkness if we don’t do the same things, if we’re not willing to sacrifice for one another, to love each other?

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness... It gets into this is the darkness he’s talking about, is relationships within the Church, within the Body.

It says, **we walk in darkness, we lie, and are not doing the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.** Now, see, those words ought to jump out and grab hold of us in a deeper way than they have even in the past if we understand what God has given to us as a family. He’s given us one another and we have this fellowship because of that fellowship with Him.

...and the blood of Joshua the Christ His Son is cleaning us from all sin. That’s always there because we’re always repenting. I’ve had to repent today, have you? Human nature, things that come in the mind, that guy that comes out of the road. Argh!

1 John 2:1— My little children, I write these things to you so that you sin not. We already went through that already, but the last part of that as a reminder here, because as was said

in that particular series of sermons, this is the key to it all. **Whoever says that they abide in him ought themselves to walk even as he walked.**

So, how much are we willing to sacrifice, to love each other, to not mar the Feast of Tabernacles, to not mar anything at any time within the Church because of something someone has done that we think has hurt us?

With that, we'll stop for today and continue on next Sabbath to *Part 5*.