

Today is *Part 4* of the series *Healing, Believing, and True Faith*.

We've been going through the book of James and trying to get a better grasp of the context of what's being said there because that's really the only way to grasp, to comprehend where it's going. So, that leads up to the verses we talked about in James 5 that speak of getting anointed when sick, so we're headed that direction. We're in chapter 5 now already in this particular series.

But again, just a little bit of context. Let's start back just a little bit here in James 5. I'm not going to go all the way back to the beginning because we've had this driven home the last three times here. But again, hopefully, we're getting a better feeling of the context here because it has so much to do with what we're getting ready to cover.

So, let's just pick up in **James 5:1** again, **Come now, you who are rich**. It's been a common problem in God's Church. This is not about the world. It's not about anything physical; it's all about that which is spiritual. The book of James is to the Church. It's not to the world. So, a lot of things that are said at times, people throughout scripture, people can take as "Well, this is about the world." No, it isn't. It's about the Church. That's why I've mentioned over and over again that James talks about the brethren, to the brethren, whatever, in that context.

You have to understand too, as he's writing this, they've had a few decades behind them now of the Church and they're running into problems, they're running into difficulties. Paul has had to disfellowship different ministers and so forth because of things that have gone on. Paul has already talked about basically of the time that Christ was going to return. We know the scriptures, 2nd Thessalonians, an apostasy, and the man of sin, the son of perdition. Then John speaks later on here about, obviously, antichrist.

But here they're feeling this already. They're already experiencing this within the Church. There are people who are causing problems. There are people who are leaving the Church or being put out of the Church because they're really not a part of it anymore. And so, James is driving the point home in some of the things he's saying here about how we're to live our lives.

It's a great summary all the way from chapter 1 on, a direction, a guidance, and a direction of how we're to live our lives in the Church. Basically, if you look at it over and over again, it's about keeping your eyes on God, that God should be first, that we need God in our lives, that we can't change and grow unless He is. We're just fooling ourselves if we're going through

the motions. James talks about that but in a different way than some others speak of it. So, that's what we're going through and looking at here.

Here it says, **Come now, you who are rich.** So, he's talking to brethren saying, "Any of you who are self-reliant, you're already rich. You don't need the Church. You don't need the truth. You don't need the ministry, whatever. You're relying on yourself. You have your own ideas about what's right and wrong, what's true and false as far as what you've been taught."

What's an amazing thing is how did they learn what was true in the first place? Where did they get it? That's been the problem for nearly two thousand years now. People are drawn into God's Church, they become familiar (familiarity breeds contempt), and they see people rather than God. They don't recognize how God works and so they begin to judge and tear apart things that they, you know, don't agree with fully.

And so, they have problems with believing - hence the title, *Healing, Believing, and True Faith*. Because if we don't hold on to and believe what God has given to us what are we doing? That's what he's addressing here. "Some of you who are already rich," he's saying, "if you're rich and lifted up." That means you're rich in yourself. You're rich in your own ideas, your own way of seeing things. You're not receiving what is being given to you and you're lifted up by other ideas. You're rich in something else but it's not the truth.

So, it's a matter of relying on self, will not look to God in spirit and in truth, and all these individuals that he's addressing here back at that point in time because he's having to write this because of the problems in the Church. It's been going on, the same thing, for two thousand years. Awesome to understand mankind and our nature.

People called, called out of the world, and people forgetting their calling. Forgetting. Taking their eyes off of how they're able to see and know the truth, that God had to give it to them, and they didn't figure it out on their own. It wasn't given to them in their minds to become apostles and to go out and do the things they needed to do, or some of them even had Christ working with them even as Christ worked with Paul for that long period of time over three years. Incredible. Then he went out and began to minister. Same thing with the apostles, obviously. Then others who were brought into the ministry, like Timothy, because he's spoken of later at different points here obviously, earlier on, Paul speaking to him and him going out then into the ministry.

Here is the problem. There are those who are rich. They forget how they learned the truth. It's like all the ministry, most of the ministry after the Apostasy, around the Apostasy, they lost light of the fact that Herbert Armstrong was God's apostle. They lost sight. "He was a good teacher." It just infuriates me, the thought of saying such a thing, "He was a good teacher. I learned a lot of good things from him." It's so stupid because they learned everything from/through him, if you will. They didn't learn anything on their own. But they

became rich in time in what they felt they understood and knew, and candidly, started changing some things along the way. We came up then to an apostasy.

Come now, you who are rich, weep and howl. That's what they should be doing. Rather than being self-reliant, **weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!** It's not "shall come" it's "are coming upon you." Because what happens when people begin to leave the truth, begin to leave this way of life in their own thinking, perhaps still being in the environs of the church? But when they begin to leave in the mind, begin to think of other things they believe are truth and right, even leaving scripture and going into things like conspiracy theories, which have been around the church forever, different ideas that people get and want others to see and believe in them, when they begin that process they don't have God's favor anymore. They don't have God's spirit working in them anymore because you have to repent of sin in order for God's spirit to work in you, and if that begins to be quenched or gone, if you will, because of disobedience, because of sin, what a miserable life! To have once had the truth, to really, truly be rich in God's way of life, in God's truth. What greater thing could anyone amongst mankind receive and have than the mind of God coming into them, the truth? What greater riches are there than that?

Because you can't take anything with you; nothing physical goes on with you. What you have is what's in the mind. That's the only thing that God can use in the sense of if you change and become transformed then we can become a part of God's Family, and eventually, that's the way it will be with everyone. Then rich beyond our wildest imagination, of things we can't even begin to comprehend in the God Family.

But before that on this earth, physical human beings, what is the greater riches than what we've been given? The truth, God's plan, we understand it. We don't have to understand all the things of prophecy or anything of that nature, but to understand the major thing, the biggest thing it talks about, what is it we're to have? It's that which makes the Family.

Not physical families because they're screwed up. Physical families are screwed up because they don't have God's way of life, and you can't help it but be screwed up, to be dysfunctional, because you don't know how to function properly. Now, some do it better than others, live out their life and have certain family relationships, and so forth. But as a whole, it's still not what God says it should be.

God shows us the right way to have family. His love. That's the only way to have family that will go on and on and on into everlasting life. It has to be because it's based on His kind of love. We don't have that as physical human beings. What an awesome thing to understand.

So, we have to go beyond that which human beings have by their own power of what God has given to the human mind to think and to reason, and then to be called in the Church and be told, "Your reasonings screwed up. You're selfish." "I'm not selfish!" Yeah, you're selfish. A

person really can't see that to the depth that it is unless God reveal it to them by His holy spirit.

That's an awesome thing. It's a beautiful thing to be shown "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." That's what regulates our lives as a whole as human beings until God calls us. Then a change can begin to take place through the power of His holy spirit, and we can begin to combat that and live different.

That's what James is saying throughout the book. That's exactly what James is talking about throughout the book, of what he's written up to this point. He's telling us how we can live life, what truly are the riches that come from God and what are not that come from human beings. Once they've been called into God's Church, what a horrible thing to begin to think that you have something better than what was given to you. Vast numbers in God's church who were once a part of God's Church have done just that, to think they have something better than what was given to them. What words can describe how distorted and weird and crazy and insane that kind of thinking really is?

So, he says, **weep and howl for the miseries coming upon you!** Now, do people believe that, that it's going to happen then? If they're self-reliant, if they believe 14/15 Passover, if they believe some weird things about Pentecost, if they believe other things that aren't true, that they were told that are true and then they reject those things, their life is going back to what? Carnality, human life that they were called out of, but this time it's going to be worse. It's going to be worse in the long run. Over time, because they have known the truth—God gave it up here—and there's a lot of misery in that. Maybe they don't see it yet but one day they're going to face it up and come to understand they have miserable lives for what they have done.

And candidly, there are going to be those who will never choose God again. They prefer the misery. They prefer the drama of life. They prefer to be rich and increased with good in how they think. That's so sick.

But if we can see that, what a blessing to be able to see that and to realize, "I don't ever want any of that in my mind. I don't want any of that in my life, in my thinking." To realize we have battles on our hands. He's going on in a little while and talking about that. Awesome!

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Spiritual, again, not physical. So, it's like Revelation talks about white garments because it reflects that or symbolizes that which is righteous and how we're to be clothed. Not physically, but how we're to be clothed in our thinking, what clothes in our lives, and how we live our lives in according to that.

And so, he's saying, "Your riches, they're already corrupted." The first time somebody moves away from the trunk of the tree of what's been given to them that's true they start a process that distorts, that corrupts the mind. "Your riches are corrupted." It's the worst thing any human being could ever do. To be called by God, to receive the impregnation of God's spirit, and then to begin turning against it, to begin turning against that power that God gave for them through Christ, through forgiveness of sin, to begin to have Him and His Son live within them, and then to begin to think differently. Incredible.

...and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded. What their wealth, what they consider to be their wealth. It's not about a physical thing.

"Your gold and silver are corroded." What you consider to be wealth, it isn't wealth. Again, it just is astounding to think that what we consider to be gold and silver in the sense of the wealth that we have and how we think that's different from God and to realize how worthless it is. Not only worthless, but it destroys because that's what corrosion does, corruption does. It destroys.

...and their... That's why I love this word, and that's why I gave it last Sabbath. It's not the word that's translated as "**corrosion**," it's the word for poison. If we can see it for what it is we can poison our own minds. People that went 14/15, listened to some of the people at headquarters and the evangelists that did that garbage out there for so long, ministers picked it up and went out and talked about it secretly, it's a poison.

...and their poison shall be witness against you. Really, all this really ties in so well with what we covered in the Feast about judgment. We're all under judgment now in the house of God. "Judgment now is upon the House of God." Those who leave it, what's the judgment then? We covered some things at the Feast very, very strong, very strong. When we corrupt our own minds, can we come back if we go that far? Not going to be easy if it can be done.

So again here **...and their witness shall be witness against you.** Then mentioned here that goes on to say, "but no one can tame," or as the word is "subdue the tongue."

James 3:8—But no one can subdue the tongue. So, that's going clear back to James 3:8. It's an unruly evil filled with deadly poison. "Full of deadly poison." So, that's why it's the right word here is "deadly poison." We show ourselves. Eventually, it starts in the mind, but eventually it'll come out of the mouth, and it's a poison.

So, going on now, back in **James 5:3— Your gold and silver are corroded, and their poison shall be witness against you and shall eat your flesh like fire.** Those are pretty powerful words because we know what that means. It means at the end if something hasn't changed, if they're unwilling, not wanting to change, unrepentant, if you will, because that's what it requires, that's the end result. It'll be over with. Because everything is going to be destroyed,

as it says, by fire at the end. All mankind that chooses to live their own life, that are filled with riches in their own thinking, they don't need God, don't want God, that's a choice and it's their last choice when it comes down to it to this point, but it is what it is.

You have heaped together treasure for the last days. So, you know, here this is experiencing time within the Church, people being called at different ages, maybe in their twenties, thirties, forties. You go down the road three decades, four decades, and what happens? Older. Older, older, older, and not far from death because death, it's a way of life. It all comes to an end. It's just a part of a process that God has given to mankind.

And so, he says, "You have heaped up together treasure for the last days." You are getting close to your last days, and you've been heaping up this treasure to yourself, of how great you think they are, of how rich you feel like you are, and you can go against the things that God has given to you and think that something else is true and uphold it? So, shows what's going to happen.

You have heaped together treasure for the last days. Indeed, the wages of the laborers who have harvested your fields, which was held back by fraud, or which is held back by fraud. We talked about that last Sabbath, how we can rob one another. We're in this together and when someone goes against what is true within the Body it robs us of family that we've had for a long time. I've known of so many.

We were talking about some of that last night over there at the Harrell's. So many in the past, in our past, and look at the ones who are gone. So many have come and gone. It hurts when those things happen. Friendships, closeness, of times that were spent. That's why I love that song that expresses, "Walking to God's house side by side, counsel blended sweet," and then no longer.

It says, it cries out, **and the cries of them who have harvested have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, or of the Armies.** So, judgment. Time is coming.

Verse 5, continuing on from last Sabbath, **You have lived in luxury on the earth.** You can take this many, many ways and all be true. Look at what God has given to us, life. We choose how we want to live it. Then the beauty that's everywhere, the plenty that's everywhere. If we will respond, work, life is good as far as human life is concerned, productivity, the reward from that, the blessings of that, the various things we can experience.

But there's far more to it than just the physical life when God opens up our minds and helps us to see it. Especially then once you are called because this is to the Church. "You have lived in luxury on the earth." We have. We do. Because the reality is when you understand what is the most valuable of anything you can have, it's the truth, it's the impregnation of God's holy spirit within your being, within your mind. Very few have had this opportunity in six thousand

years. You're amongst an incredibly few who have ever had the opportunity to experience this.

Now, that's awesome! And so, the more we really grasp that the more thankful we will be to God, the more we'll tell God that, rejoice before God, because we realize how blessed we are in what He's given to us.

We live in luxury if we understand that spiritually. And so, **some**, going on here, it says, **living in pleasure**. This isn't a compliment here. "You've been in the Church, you have lived in luxury, even physically you've been blessed, to have life, to continue on in life, God's called you, God's given you the truth.

"Living in pleasure." This word has to do with **as to please self**. So, he's talking to the same ones here that we just talked about here, "Those of you who are rich." He's letting them know you've had luxury and look what you've done with it. Instead, in that regard, living in pleasure, or the word sometimes is translated as "luxury," but it's about pleasing self, "as to please self."

Those who are rich and lifted up, that's their motivation, to please self, to raise self up in importance. Is that what our calling is about? No, God raises us up, to the time then we're actually going to be born into His Family, changed into spirit. That's God's desire for us.

But you have nourished your own heart. So again, speaking to those above here who are rich. You've just gone about it wrong. You've had luxury and haven't even known it, that which comes from God, exceedingly blessed. But your riches are something else.

You have nourished your own heart, your own way, in other words, what you believe, what you want, what you think, **as in a day of slaughter**. Because it's showing the conflict here in thinking. You're doing things that you shouldn't be doing in God's Church and look where it's leading to. You're so filled with this, but it's leading to one thing, fire, a day of slaughter. Same thing. He's just repeating it a different way here.

You have condemned and killed the righteous. Well, candidly, unwittingly so the worst of this, (there are more things that could be brought into this as a part of the picture and be true as far as the Church is concerned), but what about Christ? When we sin and we're unrepentant we killed Christ. We're guilty. That's what we're guilty of before God. We're guilty of killing Christ. If we'd been right there we'd have done the same. Spiritually, that's what we're being told, you're just as guilty as killing him.

"You have condemned and killed the righteous." You know, people that become antichrist that's what they do spiritually as far as God is concerned, and that's what He wants everyone to understand. That's what He's given to James at that time to write to the Church then, and all the Church after that when they would read this, this is what they were to see.

“You have condemned and killed.” But people who do these things, who get so lifted up they go off on tangents and want something else to be taught or believe something different they cut themselves off from God and may be around the environs of the church for years in that shape and don’t comprehend spiritually what they’re doing. Because when you cut off God’s holy spirit because of sin, you won’t repent...? Mind-boggling.

...and he did not resist you, or set himself against you, or refuse you. That’s what it is saying. That’s what these words mean, “to set against; to refuse.” Once we’ve been called, we haven’t been refused by Christ, our High Priest, our Passover, nor by God the Father because of that. Because if we’re repentant our desire is to be close to God, is to be of the same mind of God, and God doesn’t resist us. Christ didn’t resist us. But people who are called begin to resist God when they turn to self, when they begin to be rich in their thinking, and not in agreement with what God is giving to the Church.

So, part of the instruction here is then, brethren, **Be patient, therefore.** So, the admonition here, “Be patient.” Don’t go off on a wrong tangent. Don’t become like this. **Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.** So, that’s the encouragement to the Church of those who are not rich because those who are rich aren’t really listening as a whole. Some that this was written to and said to, they’re really not listening, because as a whole, the majority of the times their minds are already made up. Unless or until they repent they’re not going to be able to be a part of this anymore. That’s what happens.

That’s why he said, “Weep and howl for your miseries that are coming on you.” People don’t even realize what they’re doing to their own minds in their own lives. Live in Lala land spiritually.

...and he did not resist you. **But be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.** Have you known anybody who hasn’t been patient and keeping at the battle, keeping at the fight? Because this isn’t easy, let’s face it. It’s hard. It’s hard. It wasn’t meant to be easy. It was meant to be hard. It was meant to be a battle. It’s a part of a process whereby we’re able to be judged, whereby we’re able to make choices, and the choices we make depend upon where we end up. Do we want this way of life? Do we fight for this way of life? Because eternal life, or I should say everlasting life and being in spirit life, is not owed to any of us. We have to desire it and want it and love God and love what He’s offering us.

So, it’s plain speaking. So plain. Everything through here is just right down to the wire about what we’re to be living, how we’re to be living, how we’re to think. Be patient. People that get caught up in various kinds of things, various kinds of drama and let things bother them because they’re maybe just tired of fighting self.

I’ve known of people who have left God’s Church saying, “I’m just tired of hearing how bad I am.” Is that what the message is all about? Are we called so we’re just told how bad we really

are? Is that the message? Or is it about you can become something different? You need to understand how bad you are so that your mind can become transformed because you don't want a selfish mind. You want to have a mind as God, His kind of love in your mind, a giving, sacrificing rather than taking, selfishness.

Behold the husbandman (the vinedresser) **waits for the precious fruit of the earth.** See, when we're called this isn't going to happen overnight. It doesn't happen in two weeks. Takes years. It takes years to go through this process of judgment. It takes years for this mind to become changed to where it can be literally changed then from physical to spiritual, to be in God's Kingdom. It takes a long time.

And so, hence the need to be patient, to understand what God is doing. This is what God does. He's patient. Because this is about God, "Waits for the precious fruit." That's a beautiful thing if we understand it. It shows if we respond to His calling what is His desire? He wants to see us have a lot of fruit in our life. That's what pleases God because we're growing. The more fruit we produce, the more in that respect that returns to God, toward God in thanks, in praise, in worship, in truth, in living this way of life because it's believed, living it truthfully. Awesome.

...he waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it. I marvel sometimes how God is so patient with us, with me. We're selfish and we have to keep fighting self. It just doesn't end in this physical life. If we're not careful we can become weary in that. James has some things to say about that. You just keep fighting. It doesn't matter what obstacles.

We have to do that because it shows what's in our mind. You want to fight for it because you believe in it so much, what He said you can have, and you want it so much that you're willing to keep fighting again and again and again until this is over. Because really, in the scheme of things, this physical life, like a puff of smoke. We think that seventy and eighty is old until you get to seventy and eighty. We think ninety and a hundred is old until you get to eighty and on up the ladder, ninety, and then your thinking can begin to change a little bit in those regards. Incredible. We're not here that long.

I can't grasp what it was like for people to have lived nine hundred and some years, into their nine hundreds. I think, give me a break! Now, to have been called back then, whew. To have patience? Well, they were judged by different things back then, the ones who were called. There weren't that many, candidly, up to the time of the flood who were even called then if you look at that period of time and when they lived longer. Very few. Very few. Handful? Not many.

And finally, Noah. Incredible. To have lived back then and think, lived three hundred years, five hundred, six hundred years? Look at Noah's life before the flood. He was old. With all the

world the way it is, and you keep living and fighting? Of course, they didn't see everything that we see to the same degree. They were judged, again, by what they were given...and another story.

So again here, God has long patience for it, for us, for what we go through. He wants to see us succeed. He wants us to be in His Family. That's why He called us in the first place, to be in His Family. Then so many turn against that.

You know, that's got to hurt because He is a parent. He is a Father in ways that a physical father can't even begin to grasp, how great He is in that area, in His attitude and His desire for His children. We are begotten children, and we really can't grasp fully that kind of mind and that desire He has for us to succeed. But we better know it and be thankful for that because that's why He has the patience for us.

...until he receives the early and the latter rain. So, like in a crop, it takes time. You plant something, it takes time for it to grow before you can harvest it. Things have to be nurtured in a certain way in this world and we do too.

Let's turn over to John 15. I think it's worthy here, worthwhile to go through this and talk about scriptures we know quite well because we read these every Passover and then sometimes in other sermons. But this is what Christ gave to the disciples that night, that Passover night. The last thing he gave to them as he was telling them John 14, those things in there, about how God worked in him and dwelt in him and there was coming that time that the same thing would happen to others, that people, that the disciples would be able to have this experience, of God and Christ dwelling in them. They didn't grasp all that by any measure at that point, but later on learned it.

John 15:1—I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser, the husbandman. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away. It's happened a lot, happened a lot over two thousand years. ...and every one that bears, "every branch," it's speaking of the branch, but it's the word "one." ...every one bears fruit He, it says, "**He purges,**" but it's really not the word for "purge." It's the word for "He cleanses." It's a Greek word for "cleanse." ...**He cleanses it.** But it's used in the context of a vineyard, so we understand what the analogy is here, one of pruning.

But it's about that which happens to us spiritually as in a cleansing manner. We have to have certain things cut out of our life. That's maybe a decent way of expressing it. We want them, we want the bad, we want to get rid of it, we want it cut out of our life, we don't want it to be a part of our life. We have to fight for that to happen.

He says here, again, **Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every one that bears fruit He cleanses it that it, every branch, in other words, may bring forth**

more fruit. So, we have to go through things to get rid of certain bad, to grow to a certain point so that we can then begin to see certain things, to repent of certain things in our life. God continually shows us things about ourselves. That's a part of the transformation process. We have to continue to repent as we grow.

And so, as that happens, God's desire? That we bear more fruit. That's what it's about. He loves us. He wants us to be able to produce fruit that is spiritual, that is a matter of His spirit working in us. Because it's not us. It's not us producing it. It's a matter we have to be a part of it, we have to do the work. It's about some of this here about believing and then living it because that's what faith is. If we believe the truth and hold on to the truth and we live it the way God says then we can have true faith.

Because I've known a lot of people in God's Church who haven't believed everything and talk about living by faith and so forth but aren't doing it because it goes back to what God has given us to believe. Are we living that? Only then is it true faith. Otherwise, it's a false faith, and the majority of people I've known, it's been a false faith.

Now, you are clean - see, "cleanses; clean." **Now, you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.** So, that's how it's done. It's through the Logos, it's through the word of God that can come into our being, into our minds. We can begin to see things that we couldn't see before and then act upon it. The truth, the mind of God, and then choosing are we going to submit? Are we going to yield to that? Is that what we want? We want to live that faithfully before God?

Verse 4—Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself. Now, this ties into James exceptionally well in what we're getting ready to go through because the reality is the majority who have ever been called forgot this. It wasn't etched into their minds. They didn't know or didn't believe that you've got to keep repenting. That's the only way, looking to God for help, crying out to God for help to change, crying out to God because that means you want His holy spirit. That means you want Him in you. You want Christ and God the Father dwelling in you through the power of the holy spirit. That's why we repent and want to draw close to Him.

Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself. So, James is addressing those who are rich, who aren't doing this. They don't have God living in them. They don't have Christ living in them. God's spirit is not in them producing fruit. That's exactly what we're talking about here. They're not abiding in the vine anymore. They're just living it how they want to, and it doesn't work that way. We can't just live this way of life being in the environs of the Church any old way we want to. We have to constantly fight against self, fight against pride, fight against lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes.

...as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine. So simple. But it's not simple. People haven't made it simple. The majority of who have ever been called haven't made this simple, and it didn't work for them because they didn't grasp this, didn't hold on to this.

No more can you except you abide in me. We can't change without God's help! We have to know that with all of our being. That should scare us then to think we might get cut off or that we begin to quench the power of God's spirit into our life. All the more reason we want to repent and address matters that are wrong in our life and not live something that's false because that keeps us away from God. It keeps God away from us. He will not dwell in sin. We have to repent constantly of things in our life when they happen, when they occur.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in them, brings forth much fruit. That principle that's true here in scripture and what it talks about, when God sends out His spirit it produces fruit. Fruit is going to be produced. It's absolute. If God's spirit is dwelling in us, we're yielding to that process, fruit will be produced because you're striving to live what you've been given to see, what you've been given to believe. You can't help but fruit be produced. Changes will take place up here. Fruit will be produced. Seems pretty simple but it's not because it requires choices on a continual basis, it requires perseverance (name Israel).

...and I in them, brings forth much fruit. **Because without me you can do nothing.** Seems pretty clear, but it hasn't been to the majority of who have ever been a part of God's Church. Sad. "Without me, you can do nothing." So, they should have wept and howled for the miseries coming upon them because there is nothing worse than to be called, to have the impregnation of God's spirit, and then to turn against God and Christ, to become guilty of the body and the blood of Christ, killing him. We just read that.

If a person does not abide in me, they are cast out as a branch and dry up. It's what it's literally saying here, "and dry up." So, it's cast out here, cut off like the vine. It's not producing. It needs to be trimmed, it needs to be cut off, it needs thrown in a pile and burned. That's quite an analogy of exactly what happens in life to those who are called into God's Church, and if they turn against God. That's what they have to look forward to, the end. The end of mankind when mankind will no longer exist. ...and are gathered and cast into the fire and burned. So simple, so basic, so sobering when seen in spirit and in truth that God gives us.

Verse 7—If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Now, again, that's with understanding the context of what's being said here, it's understanding the context of when these things are spoken of other times and the context we've just read about. He's talking about dwelling in us. He's talking about us dwelling in

Him. That's what we want and that's what we're to pray for. For God's spirit to be in us, meaning we're repenting in the process because we want Him to dwell in us. So, we're continually repenting, and that's a part of this process then.

"If you abide in me and my words abide..." That's a choice. We do that because of repentance. Because if we're not repenting, we know, we should know, we should be able to believe what God says. We're cut off. If we don't have His spirit dwelling in us what are we? Just like the branch, the end isn't going to be pretty; there is judgment.

Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples.

That's a beautiful verse. What a verse to end this on in the sense of going through chapter 15 here, because it's telling us that's what God wants. He wants to dwell in us.

That's why Christ came. That's why Christ was born. That's why Christ suffered. That's why he died in the way that He did, so that we could have such an opportunity, such a blessing in life—incredible—so we could bear, indeed, much fruit, so that they could dwell in us, both of them, to bring about these changes in our mind so one day we could actually be born into the Family of God, the Kingdom of God, into Elohim.

Let's go back to James now. So, what we've been covering here in James is very much about what Christ said that's recorded in John 15 that we just read part of here, something that we read every Passover. The majority of the Church, it passed over their heads. Every Passover they came and heard those words, John 15. Every Passover! I don't believe there's ever been a Passover unless a minister just lost their marbles (which some did) and didn't do this, but they're supposed to preach this, and it's supposed to be on Passover night. But it went over the heads of so many.

How do you justify things like that? Anyway. **James 5:7** again, **Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman/the vinedresser waits for the precious fruit—it's precious to God—of the earth and has long patience for it until he receives the early and the latter rain. You be patient also. Establish—word that means "make fast; strengthen"—your hearts.**

We need that from time to time, obviously. We need to focus on that as well at times and realize we need that strength and that help, and we have to cry out to God for that because that's a part that comes from this relationship we have in asking for His help of His holy spirit in us, to be able to have this kind of heart and mind.

...for the coming of the Lord draws near. It has for everybody in the last two thousand years. It's not a matter the exact time; it's a matter of how you live your life. You think of people in different times. They weren't told when he was coming. They said there had to be certain things take place, like the Apostasy in 2nd Thessalonians, but not really fully understanding

what that was. And yet all people through time, "It's coming. He's coming." That's what it's all about. That's what we've been called to. That resurrection when he comes and the 144,000.

The New Testament, if you will, is very much focused upon the first great resurrection. There are other things through time that began to be given to Herbert Armstrong about the Millennium and what's going to happen there, and then the Great White Throne, and then God's continued to give more about those things. But the primary focus of things spoken of here, even up to the time of John when he actually numbers it, gives the number, 144,000, well, then they understood more or were able to understand more.

"The coming of the Lord draws near," because you don't have very long on the earth. Those from the past two thousand years in the Church, how long are they going to live? Seventy, eighty, ninety, like John did up into his nineties? We understand that's pretty much toward the end. Now, some might hit a hundred, a little bit more of that period of time in the last two thousand years, but it's not that long. "The coming of the Lord draws near." How are you living your life? Are you going to fight it to the end? Choices.

Look at what it tells us then, **Do not "groan,"** it's better **"grieve,"** because it's not about groaning as much as it is why we might groan, because of the grief, what we should have happen, in that respect. **Do not grieve another.** So, it's not about groaning toward another.

"Do not grieve another." That's literally what it's saying. So, how does that happen in the Church? Well, I've known a lot of people that have had grief because of others. I've had a lot of grief because of others, and I probably caused some grief here and there at times in my own life, not knowingly, I think, I hope. But there's a way we should live toward one another that's right, and if we're not doing that we need to change. We should never want to hurt anybody in God's Church, and yet so many have hurt others in God's Church. Especially those who have left; they do a lot of hurting.

Do not grieve another, brethren, unless you be condemned. So, that's what James has been saying all along here. It's about your relationships, how you live your life, how you think. Because in the long run, this determines what we're really living, if we're really living what God had given us to believe, and it's about Family. It's about relationships and how you build those.

We are the children of God, and how we treat one another as a Family is how we're judged. If we treat in a wrong manner, in the sense of how we think toward one another or say things to one another, we have to be careful. We have to judge those things and be careful that we don't cause hurt and harm because of something inside of us, whatever it might be, jealousy, anger, envy, whatever that so often has happened. "Do not grieve another, brethren, unless

you be condemned.” So, if we’re the cause of grief toward someone else in the Church, not a small thing before God.

Behold, the Judge stands at the door! We’re being judged so we have to be careful.

Verse 10— My brethren, take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. So, all those examples through the Old Testament. You can go back to see what they went through, see how they were treated, see what took place. They suffered a lot of things, different ones. “...and of patience” all the way to the end, whatever that might be.

Elijah was taken away. Taken to another place because he had fulfilled what he needed to do, and God gave him some peace, but he kept fighting until that point came, fighting some kinds of battles that we can’t comprehend. I can’t comprehend some of the things that some of them did. Might sound easy when you read through them. It’s not so easy.

How would you like to be in with a few lions? You think your heart might start beating a little faster? They haven’t been fed and they’re hungry? Or walking toward a fire, a fire you can’t even begin to comprehend. Just the thought in the mind you’re being taken up there to be thrown into it, to be burnt alive. Then you’re in there in the middle and had to be pretty good response and feeling then, “We’re still here. I don’t feel the heat. I don’t feel the burning.”

I mean, some of the incredible things that God has done with different ones at different times that it really is astounding. So, you can look at the lives of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, it doesn’t matter, different ones, and that’s what it’s talking about here. Suffering affliction because they wanted to do what God gave them to do, “and of patience.”

Behold, we count them happy/blessed who endure. So, we understand that. Happy? Yes. If you endure, absolutely blessed. Absolutely. But to see the blessings, to see what we have, that’s what so much of this is about. If we really see how blessed we really are, where the riches really, truly are in life.

You have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the LORD—that the LORD is very compassionate and of tender mercy. You think of Job’s life and what he went through to learn some of the things he needed to learn. Because there’s a story in it, there are things to learn from. But God let him experience some horrible, horrible things, and then to see how he was blessed after he had gone through that, after he responded to his calling because that’s what it’s about. It’s about a long process here that took place and the change that took place in him.

And it goes on to say, “...and have seen the end of the LORD,” in other words, what God did with him then, how God blessed him after that. Incredible. “...that the LORD is very

compassionate and of tender mercy.” And yet maybe we can’t really grasp what he went through. But it shows when you’re called it’s not meant to be easy because the most precious and important thing is what’s in the mind and how you respond then to God once He calls you.

But, or the word is quoted, can be used in many different ways, “now” or “yet” are a little bit better. ...**above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath.** Sometimes if people aren’t careful they try to bring God into the picture and do this in different ways, an uncanny way. Sometimes in the environment of the Church and not like was done in the Old Testament when certain oaths were taken, but sometimes by using God’s name or talking about God and how one is justified in the things they’re doing and deceiving their own selves, and not being truthful. Because when those kinds of things are done within the environment of the Church individuals are generally playing games in order to make self look better to others, in order to raise up self. Those are some of the hardest things in life for human beings to come to see.

So, that’s why it goes on to say, **Just let your Yes be Yes, and your No be No.** Be truthful. Just be truthful in life. Be truthful in what you speak. Don’t try to shade things. Don’t try to tell half-truths. So, just be a person of your word, speak the truth. God wants us to speak the truth in everything we do, if you will, and not to deceive, not to make self look better, not to raise self up.

And so, James is going to explain this a little bit later too. So, remember this. It’s not about self and raising up self and making self look better because then we’re not being truthful. We all have problems. We all have weaknesses.

I think after last Sabbath people probably think I’m the worst driver in the world. I use those examples to show what our human nature is like and what sometimes comes into our minds and how we think. Sometimes it’s very hard to tolerate a selfish world. That’s why I talk about when you see, when you’re in a mall and four people are there and there is only width maybe for four or five people, and not a one is budging. It’s like, am I invisible, you know, do they not see me? And they’re coming straight, and nobody is going to move, so what are you supposed to do, dive to get out of their way? Or just stand there? It’s hard sometimes.

And what is that good for, to go through those experiences? It’s a reminder all the time you’re called, they’re not. You’re called and they’re not. So, yes, how we respond to different things in life is important. I have acknowledged that I don’t always respond that well, and those are my, some of my battles, and you have your battles. The point is we all have weaknesses and things we have to fight. Thankfully, there is patience on God’s part.

Just let your Yes be Yes, and your No be No, otherwise, you fall into condemnation. If we don’t do it, if we’re not speaking what is true, if we’re not speaking and acknowledging things in the sense of being truthful that comes out of our mouth and we’re doing, saying

something different in order to put ourselves in a better light, you have to judge that, if it's wise to do it or not to do it. Sometimes it's very unwise to do it.

Now, that doesn't mean you don't go and blurb out everything in your life and everything that's happening, you know, and slam people upside the head, "And you're in the Church?!" It has to do with relationships. That's the context.

So, after covering the book of James as we have and now coming to this point here in scripture to the end of verse 12 and what we're getting ready to see, again, we should be better grasping the context of everything he's been saying because some of it's a part of a repetition to come to this point so that we can learn.

Clear admonition how we should live and how we should not live. So, let's continue on with verse 13, and it all comes down to a difference between believing what God wants us to believe, what He's given us to believe, and our response to that. Our response determines whether or not we're living by true faith. Because again, my experience has been the majority in God's Church have never or haven't when it comes down toward the end of their being in the Church, they're not living by true faith.

So, all this has built up to this point now. **Verse 13—Is anyone among you afflicted/suffering,** different ways it's translated. The word literally means "suffering hardship." **Is any of you suffering hardship?** Well, life can be pretty hard. This is in a certain context as well. But we go through a lot of things in life that are difficult. But what does it say to do? When you're going through various things and things are getting hard and that generally means there's a stress up here that you're dealing with in the thinking, with how you're going to respond. It doesn't matter what it is if we're going through something difficult.

But he gets a little more specific in context here what he's focusing on. **Let them pray.** That means when you're going through something that's difficult just cry to God, cry out to God, ask God for help. That's what He wants us to do. He wants us to be in the habit of looking to Him to resolve problems, to come down to right conclusions and right answers in choices and decisions we make, and we have to then look to Him to ask for the help to accomplish that so that we're able to live life with fruit successfully before God and conquer the hardship, if you will, and be able to endure and have patience and all the things associated with that.

Is any among you suffering hardship? Let them pray. And see, it builds up to anointing when you're sick. Because if we won't do something when we're sick, that we're commanded to do, what are we doing the rest of the time? That's the whole point of all this in James. What are we doing the rest of the time? Are we crying out to God day by day, praying to God day by day, "I need help!" Because if you're not you're missing the mark. If you're not asking God for help every day of your life, for His holy spirit to be in you, there is something lacking in your thinking, and you need to repent of that and you need to ask God for help to look to Him

every day of your life for help. You think you can do it without His help? Then you're rich and increased with goods and you're going to go through some hard times unless you repent. That's what it's saying.

I say this with the emotion that I do because I have seen so many have gone down that track and they're not with us anymore. Deceiving self. We need to see this in spirit and truth for what it is. Choices. Choices. Choices. Let them pray. So simple. It really is so simple. It's like what we went through in John 15, fruit, the vine, the husbandman, the vinedresser, you know. Incredible. The true vine, all those things in those analogies.

Then it goes on to say, **Is any of good cheer?** Well, again, I'm just going to tell you what this context is because it's easier this way in that respect. **Is any of you of good cheer?**

"Rejoicing or encouraged" as the word is used at times. This has to do with how we are in the Church, how we're thinking within the Church, within the environment of the Church. This is to the Church, it's about brethren in the Church.

And so, it has to do with how we're thinking, how we feel about this way of life that we're living. So, if we're encouraged, if we're at a time when we're not going through hardship - that's what he's saying - so, if you're not experiencing hardship, things right now, you're doing well in the respect of how you feel in the sense of what's taking place in your life within the Church. Maybe there is not a certain trial or whatever you're going through at this moment, you're not having the suffering, because we've had all kinds of things that happen to us within the Church and things come up, pop up, and we have to address them, and then things are going really, really well. We're encouraged. You have times like that when you're at times you're having a battle and then at other times you're really up and encouraged with the way of life God's given us, whatever in our thinking.

Let them sing psalms, a word for "praise." Ephesians makes this clear. I've made this comment before, that I think of the scripture where it says, "Singing and making melody or song in your heart." It's not about you have to go out and sing a hymn or sing a song; it's what's in the mind, it's what's inside of you. The lesson learned from singing a hymn or singing, it's about praising God. The Psalms, that's what they're about.

In your heart and in your mind if things are going well, praise God, thank God, you know, give thanks to God for what you have been called to, the opportunities you have. On and on it goes.

We're going to circle back around to some of this in a moment here because it goes on to explain the other aspect in another moment here. But when things are great, thank God that they are. Thank God that you see what you see, that you're encouraged by life, that you're encouraged by the things and what's taking place within the Church, whatever it might be.

I'm going to interject a scripture here, 2nd Timothy 2 about hardship, so let's see how it's used there because it flows together here. Then we'll come back to verse 14.

2 Timothy 2:1—You, therefore, my son... So, Paul is talking to Timothy and encouraging him by the guidance and structure, instruction, if you will as well, of what he's been giving to him, what he's giving him here in 2 Timothy.

You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Joshua the Christ. Be strong. It's a matter of thinking about it and realizing, what does that mean? "Be strong in the grace?" Well, what is grace? It's everything that God gives to us, the mercy, the patience, the love, the forgiveness of sin.

When we grasp those things, it means there is something we have to do. We have to make sure that we're responding to that from God, thanking God for it, making certain that we're repenting because that's a part of grace that we're given, that God love us. If we're not repenting then we've got some problems and it's going to hurt the relationship.

It says, "Be strong in the grace that is in Joshua the Christ." Why mention his name like that? Because it's understanding where it comes from, through Christ, through forgiveness of sin, and then him as our High Priest that we're given help and guidance and direction.

Even the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men. I think of what that means, people that were to go out and to minister as well. So, Paul couldn't do it being in prison so he gave it to Timothy to make sure that he was going to give this so that the Church could continue to expand and grow and give this to faithful men who will go out and teach the same.

You know, Herbert Armstrong did that through Ambassador College to hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of ministers and look what happened in time. Horrible! Entrusting people to be faithful in what they were given, the truth.

I think of just 14/15th alone, Passover. There are large numbers who latched on to that, messed up their minds. Unfaithful, not faithful. They weren't faithful to go out and teach the truth because if they had read what Herbert Armstrong wrote they couldn't be deceived by that man that taught them something different. They would have known he was in error and a liar. So, they're held accountable. Because Herbert Armstrong gave three scriptures when it came to Passover to prove it. It's on the 14th. You accept that, or one doesn't. A lot of them didn't so they weren't faithful.

Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. That was the desire, to teach others also, faithful, look out for and send them out. In other words, be on the lookout. The reality is that God will guide and direct in that in the first place, but he had to be on the lookout to think in those terms. Then a God revealed things to him, to make those choices.

Then what they do with it, that's up to them. Whether people when they go out—because this happened—where people went out in the ministry, they got lifted up by their position, began to think they were so important. Rich and increased with goods to where they started changing things.

I think of one minister one time. Went home from Ambassador and he was a minister in that area at that time and once in a while, he'd take me out on some of the visits he went on because he knew I was in college there and wanted to have someone with him and so, we'd spend some time talking and he told me what he was going to do one Sabbath.

He had a *Pastor General's Report*. Now, *Pastor General's Report* was a report – I think it came out once a month to all the ministry – and a part of that was directly from Herbert Armstrong to the ministry, to the Church, and He would write things that were needed in a timely fashion.

He was going to take it and change a few things because he said, "There are some people here that need to hear something different, something that they need to change and do." In other words, he's going to alter some of the things that Herbert Armstrong said. That's what he did. He got up there (following through the *Pastor General's Report*), he's doing something different, he's teaching something different than what he said and making it sound like it came from Herbert Armstrong because he wanted to have more authority in what was being said as though it was from him because he wanted to address what he thought were some specific problems in the congregation.

That's sick! Faithful men that they can't even report and give that which was directly from God's apostle at that time? It just shows what happened out there over and over again and what can happen within the Church. It doesn't have to be a minister. It can be anybody that begins to think they know something better or there is something that others need to hear that they know. Dangerous stuff.

You therefore must endure hardship. Timothy was going to have to endure a hardship because what God had given, or what Paul had given, and God did give it to him, but what Paul was giving him to do Paul knew what was coming. "You're going to be working with individuals to send them out and candidly, the reality is, working with those called out of the world into the Church, there's going to be some hardship in it. It's not an easy thing. Why? Because we all have carnal human nature and sometimes it clashes and problems arise and you're going to have to deal with various things and it's going to come at you sometimes." It always happens.

...as a good soldier of Joshua the Christ. Now, we should all do that. That's the whole point of all this as well, we should all endure hardship because that's what we've been called to. We've been called that things aren't to always be easy. When they are, thank God. But if it

goes on for a long time, it's going on too smoothly, it's kind of like you get in this position here of something is going to be coming at some point. Because I've gone through this stage where "It's gone on for a long time. When is the axe going to fall," type of thing because that's what we've been called to. There are going to be things that are going to happen and it's not going to be easy.

And so, it uses the expression here, "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Joshua the Christ." So, he was in the ministry in that respect, but all of us in the Church we've been called, and the examples are given of how we are to clothe ourselves in armor because we are soldiers. We are fighting the greatest battles that can ever be fought. The greatest battle that can be fought is each person against self. That's the most important battle to ever be fought on earth. Not any wars that have been fought, this battle, because this determines the life that will follow.

That's what God desires. He's called us to be in Elohim. So, we have to understand we have hardship. That's why James is asking about hardship, "If any of you... Are any of you going through that right now?" The reality is if we are then we have to realize, we'd better make sure there is armor.

What do you do to have armor? You have to cry out to God for that because it's not something you have. It's not something you go in the closet and get out and put on. It's not something you can decide you're going to go out and do that day. It's what you have to cry out to God for help to do and accomplish in your mind and your thinking and whatever you're going to be battling and dealing with.

So, going back here to **James 5:14**. So before, what did he say? He says, "Is any among you suffering hardship? Let them pray." It's a matter, look to God.

Then, finally, we get down to **verse 14**, it goes on to say, **Is anyone sick?** The word is, it's "feeble; weak; sickly." Involve all those things. It can be so many things in life. Get older, we become more feeble in that respect. We are not able to go out and do the kinds of things we might have done before when maybe we could go out and play a game of football or baseball or run around the bases.

I can't run around the bases anymore. I wouldn't even try with my knees the way they are. And strength, I wouldn't have the ability to because I haven't been able to run in quite a long time now. I go out and walk and walk briskly at times, but I can't run anymore because of these crazy things, and I want to keep them as long as I can without getting a replacement. On and on it goes. The older we get, the more difficult it gets. We do become more feeble in time. It's not a fun time. It's another battle in itself that's unique, that you who are younger and don't have any of that, well, one day you'll understand.

It goes on to say, "Is any weak..." So, it can have to do with sickness, it can have to do with being feeble, just weak, whatever it might be, whatever is causing it, **Let them call for the elders of the Church.** So, there are various times we're told to call on the elders of the Church.

Now, if you're just getting older and you're having various things, it's a part of life. Now, you might have something that's exceptional at a moment in time in the sense of a certain ailment, a certain thing that's going wrong in your body, and candidly, so everybody can understand this, we go by the principle that was used concerning Paul that you can go before God three times. And really, the reality is for a specific thing that might be going wrong, perhaps it might be your knee is causing so much problem you can't even walk, and I've experienced that where the muscles and the ligaments, they get so tight you can't even walk. So, it gets to that point, so what do you do? Well, call for the elders of the Church, something unique that's happening.

But if it's ongoing, you know, the first time you ask God do you know what? God heard you. The first time you asked God, God heard you. Now, so is it wrong to ask again later on if maybe you have a week that's good and it comes back again, "Oh, I've got to call for the elders again because it's back." Well, second time, okay, we understand that in the Church if you desire that, but you know what, you really don't have to. You've already done it. You've already done it once. The reality is you obeyed what God said. You took it before God and it's a matter of receiving that and knowing you did your part.

Now, whether God intervenes and heals, whether God intervenes immediately and heals, whether it's maybe part of the normal process of a body and it heals, and then sometimes it never heals, God chooses what He intervenes and does, and we learn through that as well. This is not a promise that every time we go before God, as some have taken it, that He's going to heal you if you have the right faith because that used to be taught. "If you really have faith." I think back at when that was taught and I think, what is faith? It's this working this thing up? You know what was said? "If you're not healed it's because there's a sin in your life. There is some sin in your life." That was taught. It's not sound. It wasn't balanced. It wasn't true.

Now, there are sins that can cause various things. We do it to ourselves in how we live sometimes. Anyway, another story.

So, my desire in expressing this today is that sometimes within the ministry, and there are some out there who have been told five, ten, fifteen, twenty... how many times on the same thing over a period of years? It's not necessary. Shouldn't be done. That's not what this is about. We ask God, basically, once, three times, fine, but it shouldn't be really any more than that because if we really grasp it, like I said, God knew from the first time you said it

that you obeyed and you got the anointed cloth or hands were laid on you and oil was put on your forehead and a prayer was said. So, I'm adding a little bit more here.

Let them call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. Now, this is important. I want to bring this out as well, "In the name of the Lord."

You know, there are times that I have signed letters, "In Christ's service," and I know of sometimes there have been people who have done that. You can't do that. This is from the ministry to do a job. I hope that makes sense. We have to be careful how we, when we send letters or whatever, and I don't think anybody is doing that kind of thing now but a few years back it had been done. It's not what this is about. This matter of being "in the name of the Lord" is meaning someone who has been given the responsibility of doing something in the name of the Lord.

So, the elders have been given that responsibility, that if someone is sick that they can lay hands upon someone, anoint them with oil. But we can't do it to each other. I knew someone... I was going to say very close, who wasn't ordained and felt that they could anoint others when they were sick. They weren't given that job. They weren't given that responsibility from God. They took it upon themselves. It's one of those things when people raise themselves up being rich. You can do something that puts yourself in a position. Someone putting themselves in a position of being an apostle, someone saying they're a witness, someone saying they're a prophet, someone saying that whatever. Doesn't work that way.

So, very simple. The whole point of all this is, the context of this is we are given a guideline here that when we are sick, when we have an ailment that is to the point where it is keeping us from being able to do our normal routine of work, whatever that might be, or even at home or being able to get around within a home and we're bedridden perhaps, whatever that might be, then when that happens we're to go and ask for, call, whatever, ask for an anointing. That's our responsibility whether we obey that.

Now, we've already been told, he added up here beforehand, you know, "Is anyone suffering hardship? Let them pray." Well, the whole point of this being is if we don't go to an elder and obey the order of something God gave to us, to understand how God works, because some of the understanding in this is there's a way that God works, there's a way that we receive the truth and it's through God's ministry. You didn't learn it on your own. Nobody in God's Church learned it on their own.

There are unique examples in time like where Herbert Armstrong was called because Sardis was dying out and yet he received certain word of certain things that came through some of those kinds of channels. But he was challenged in the Sabbath and so forth and God opened

up his mind because he had a calling. He was called to be an apostle, so God began to work with him. Those are very unique circumstances, but it is eventually proven out by the fruit, by what is given, by the truth. God used him to give incredible truth to the Church, things that had been lost, things that Sardis lost a long time ago.

And so, but for anyone else? No one since that. No one. Not one person has ever come into God's Church since that occasion when God began to work with Herbert Armstrong in the very early days, not one person came into the Church because of what they reasoned and found out and earned on their own without the Church.

That doesn't mean that God didn't begin to work with you to help you to see that there were things wrong in churches out here or that God didn't begin to help you to see certain things about the seventh-day Sabbath you had questions about. That's very minor compared to all the rest, but that's God working to draw someone to the truth. But you didn't learn the truth that God gave during Philadelphia on your own. Nobody did.

Well, I think we all know that. Hopefully, we all are at this point in time because the Church has gone through some things. That's pretty simple but so many lost it. Seems simple.

So again here, just a command here again. Just look to God, and if we won't do it on something physical where we're ailing and hurting and suffering? Because I've known too many in God's Church even up to recent time that I don't ever know of them asking for anointing. That's blatant disobedience. What do you believe? Do you believe what God gave James to write if you're not obeying and you're down with something, and you won't do it? I mean, that's a defiance that carries out into other things in one's life.

If we do that we're not going to be doing the other, praying to God like we should and crying out to God every day like we should either, knowing that we need God's spirit, we can't produce any fruit on our own. Too many people in God's Church in times past have tried to produce the fruit on their own. You can't do it. It takes God's spirit. It's meaningless if you're doing things on your own. Truly. Totally meaningless.

So again, verse 14 is, again, rather abruptly thrown into the context here, candidly. It's just kind of tossed in there but for a purpose. I've explained what that purpose is. To help us to see something in a greater light, that if we won't do something we're commanded to do in the sense of God's ministry what are we doing the rest of the time? So, that's a bit of like a measuring stick. What are we doing?

So, it isn't about how hardship is covered in the previous verse but it's about the overall context of the book of James, again.

So, we're going to look at another area that's related to this in a spiritual manner and many have not grasped and comprehended this fully. 1 Corinthians 11. Again, read on Passover. Isn't

it amazing? John 15, Passover night. 1 Corinthians 11, Passover night. Because this is related to this, ties in perfectly with what we're covering at this stage, at this point. And hopefully, as we grasp this a little more deeply it'll help us to grasp the verses that follow here that we've just come up to.

1 Corinthians 11:27—Therefore whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner... What an incredible thing. You know what this is about? It's about how we're living our lives. It's about whether we're striving to live by what God has given us to believe, the truth, especially in relationships. The point is driven home here.

...in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. James just covered that in spirit if you will. He covered that because basically talked about guilty of killing Christ if we're not living what is right. It's what sin does. So, it's about sin, and it is here.

So, if someone is doing something as far as sin is concerned because they're not really living what they've been told to live, not being genuine and true, their yes isn't yes, and their no isn't no, and they're living something false, because it's not just in words, it's in our actions and how we live as well because that's the whole point of it.

Verse 28—But let a person examine themselves. That's our whole life, isn't it? "Let a person examine themselves." It's so easy for us to examine someone else. That's our big problem sometimes as human beings, we examine others too closely and not putting the same examination on self.

So, it says here, **But let a person examine themselves and so let them eat of the bread and drink of that cup.** Because this is where it begins. You can't change anyone else. I can't change anyone. You can't change anyone. Now, I can speak and preach God's word but what we do with it, that's up to us. You can't change anyone.

I think of how many people try. People try this all the time. They're going to change someone. You're living in Lala land if you ever think you're going to change someone else.

...examine self and then so let them eat of that bread and drink of that cup. But whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment. So, it means we're not doing the right things, we're not living what is right, we're not examining ourselves in the context of what truth that God has given to us in how we're living our life.

Because sin should slap us in the face when we sin. We should know when we sin. Everybody should know when they sin. Everybody should know when they've said something that comes out that isn't right, this unruly member, when it comes out, that they sin. Sometimes they won't call it sin though.

So, awesome here what we're told here on Passover night about judging self and if we don't do it, if we're not judging ourselves. That's what examining is, it's judging ourselves to see what we're living. People that are living things that are false, that are wrong day in and day out, week by week, no change is there, got to repent. And if we're not doing that then that's what this is about, making sure that we're repenting, making sure that we're looking at ourselves realistically, asking God for help. Even asking God for help. Because there are so often things in our lives we really can't see, and so as we grow God will show us more. Ask Him to be merciful when He shows you.

Whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner... It means they're not looking at themselves, and the point being, it shouldn't be just before Passover. It should be a way of life. It should be a way of life.

It says, **eats and drinks judgment to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body.** What is it talking about, "not discerning the Lord's body?" It's not just a physical thing. We know that Christ died for us. We understand he spilled his blood to the earth for us, that he's our Passover. But why he did it to make available to us what we're able to have is the thing we are to see. Most of all it comes down to relationships within the Body of Christ within the Church of God and how we think and act toward one another, how we speak toward one another. We're to examine ourselves, especially in those things.

For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. So, again, there are things here on a spiritual plane. There can be things on a physical plane. You have to be careful because sometimes people will start judging each other like has happened in times past, "Well, this is why you're going through this," and they know, "It's because of this sin or it's because of that. It's because you've done this." People have to be careful how they judge others. God says judge self because that's all you can really judge really well, truthfully. Because others, you really don't know fully unless something is really blatant and clear.

I think of how many times people have come to the ministry about disagreements and arguments and things going on and have these stories to tell and want something to be done and don't see self, and sometimes are totally off the wall because they build it up in their minds about someone else, that they imagine that someone is doing certain things or living certain things. We have to be so careful how we judge, how we think toward others.

So, the point being is this is not a good thing, "weak, sickly among you, and many sleep." Physical. Spiritual. It's all in there. Only God can judge it and determine its outcome and what is there, and He may give that to the ministry to judge, to be a part of it.

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. Because this is what it's about. If we just judge ourselves and understand this is the battle, this is the greatest battle of all,

for this to be transformed, for this to be changed, and the only way it can is by God's holy spirit.

So, I think we'd be wise to close there today because I don't want to get into the rest. This will prepare us for the verses that follow next Sabbath because they tie in. Well, it's what it's all about. So, we'll do that starting next Sabbath.