

Today will be *Part 6* of the current series *Healing, Believing, and True Faith*.

Last week we ended as we were covering the story of Elijah at a time when he had fled into Judah to escape Jezebel who was out to kill him. Not herself but had sent people out to kill him. And she'd already been after others and had killed different ones. And so, he went down there for safety. And unique in the story here because of some things said later, which I'll touch upon.

But the story of Elijah, we went through that for the purpose of building upon what James had to say in three particular verses in chapter 5. So, we're going to go back there. I'm going to read those quickly.

**James 5:10** where it says, **My brethren, take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience.** So, part of that story in James has been that we all have to suffer. There are things we have to go through when we're called and living God's way of life, whether it was back in the Old Testament time or the period of time of the Church from the time of Pentecost 31 AD and on. It's a part of our calling, suffering affliction, suffering hardship, if you will, "and of patience."

And then **verse 13** goes on to say, **Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let them pray.** So again, that admonition. Sometimes if we're not careful, because of these verses and where they're located, and we read about healing, anointing, and so forth, people have read other things into the verses where really this is the primary thrust of what it's talking about in the first place. It's a focus that James has, that he wants us to grasp, that God wants us to understand. And so, we suffer hardship from time to time, we go through difficult things. It isn't easy.

So again, suffering affliction, suffering hardship, and then it says, "Let them pray." So, it's a matter of looking to God. And that's what this is all about. It's a matter of looking to God in our life, making certain that whether times be good or times be difficult. Which James also addressed. You know, there are times to rejoice, times that are different when things are going well, and then times where we're to do this, we're to pray, we're to draw closer to God than other times.

Now, we're always to pray day by day but there are times that we put more into it, or we should. And the point being is that sometimes people don't or haven't. And that's the admonition here, that you're going to go through these things - make sure you're putting God first.

That's what it means "Let them pray." Put God first. It has to do with believing what God has told us of a way of life we should live in a relationship with Him, and that involves prayer. If we need help (which we always need help), if we want help (which we should always want help), if we desire His holy spirit (which every day we should desire His holy spirit to live and dwell within us), we should be praying about it. We should be asking God for help.

Then **verse 16**—**The effective fervent** or better translation of this is **The actively working prayer**... "Actively working prayer." It takes effort on our part to pray. We have to think about it. And it's active because it's something that we should be doing every day.

**Actively working prayer of a righteous one avails much.** Or as the word is here, "is strong" or "is powerful." There's a lot of strength there because it's about a relationship with God, it's about looking to God for strength and help because we can't do this on our own. We can't change on our own, we can't grow on our own. Christ made... That's why we went through John 15 when it talked about the vine, the vinedresser, and our part is to understand that we can do nothing without God's help, without Christ and God the Father dwelling within us and we in them.

So, that is in the context of anything that is profitable to our becoming a part of His Family, growing spiritually.

So again here, it says, "The actively working prayer of a righteous one avails much." And then it brings up the question, "How are we righteous?" We know we're not. And that's why we have some of the title of the sermon here, *Healing, Believing, and True Faith*. If we believe what God has given to us, the truth that God has given to us, the way of life that God has given to us and we strive to live by it, as an example, praying day by day, as a matter of repenting continually on a regular basis, whenever that is something comes up in our life that we need to repent of, and because we believe God and we strive to live by that and we practice what He's given to us, then God attributes that to us for righteousness.

It's not that we are, but because we believe God and live it, what He's given us, He attributes that to us for righteousness. What an awesome thing!

So, last Sabbath's sermon, just before we delved into the story about Elijah, we covered one more verse. It's the next verse here after the one we just read, and we're going to begin there and then continue on.

**James 5:17**—**Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.** Why does it say that? Well, it says, first of all, to look to the prophets, what they went through, and then it says they had the same makeup as we do, went through suffering, went through hardships, and we're to look at those things and to learn from it and to understand that the prophets, or in this case here

specifically, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours," that's the story of Elijah. After he had done what he did...

What an incredible thing, that he had all these priests, these false priests, eight hundred fifty altogether, do what they did, built an altar, all the running around that they did and praying to their god, and he was mocking them in those things, in essence, as the day went on from morning until afternoon, and then finally, time of the evening sacrifice and he did what he did. And nothing happened with theirs as far as who they were praying to, having no ability, obviously, not real. And then Elijah doing what he did with all the water on top of everything else and then everything of the dust even where the pit was, everything was taken up in essence, fire, and devoured.

And after seeing all that and then being a part of destroying all those false prophets, killing them, being a part then over that, telling them to gather them together and the people did and started killing them, and the attitude of the people that he saw change.

Now, that was what his life was very much about. He didn't understand God's plan as we do today, that in essence, God wasn't working with them, but they had a part in a story and a part in time to show what Israel was like, which had to do with the ten tribes to the north. And his desire, obviously, being a prophet and being sent there and saying the things that he did was to see them change, to come back to being a part of what they were before, of the history of what they had together with Judah. And yet they had gone off to worship other gods.

And for all those individuals at different times, the different prophets, with what they knew to that point in time, the present truth, this weighed heavy on them because they saw this as a desire, a want, a hope, not understanding about God's plan and becoming Elohim like we do today and the process you have to go through that we understand within the Church.

So, everyone has been judged according to what they knew at any moment in time, at any particular time. And so, this was very hurtful to him, that all of a sudden now he's done all this, and the people responded well but, you know... It's like what's happening over in Israel. How long does it take before attitudes of people start to change and they start to turn against you when they were maybe on your side for a little while? Doesn't take very long.

That's the way it was here. Didn't take very long and the people started going back to what they're comfortable with. It doesn't matter what they saw there. And they saw this incredible thing with Elijah, and especially now that Jezebel is back on the warpath and pushing her own husband to be of the same mind. And he was a wimp and gave into her, obviously, the whole time. Never made a stand in that respect in those things.

And so, here she was sending out people to kill Elijah. He prayed to God, "Just let me die. Let this be over with. I've done it. I've done that part of my life, served You," and he says, "It's enough. Let me die." He was old and he didn't want to go through anymore.

So, he's like us. There are times that things go well for you, and you see God's intervention in your life, and you have a moment in time... Like the Feast of Tabernacles, generally, is the time we're strengthened more than any other time of the year. And then it doesn't take very long, and something could happen and all of a sudden everything that strengthened you and encouraged you now becomes a battle.

Because that's the way we are. We're physical human beings and we go through suffering, we go through hardship, and it's a part of our molding and fashioning. And when we understand that, that's awesome in itself because that helps us to go through those things.

So, the point of the story of Elijah, again, is to help us to understand he struggled. We struggle in a different way from what he saw. But to him, it was very real, and it got him down. He was... He didn't just go down - I think it was the Beersheba area, that area of Judah if you look at it. I think that's where it was - and then he went out in the wilderness a ways. He wanted to get away from everybody. Incredible.

So, **Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly.** Well, that's what we're supposed to do, especially when we're going through a difficult time or when we know there's a greater need for God or we want to see God more in our life at a particular moment of time because of the importance of whatever it is we're addressing and we want to do it well.

**...and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.** And even the time when he told the individual to go look out toward the west, look out toward the sea, "What do you see?" He went back and forth seven times! But he was persistent. Did that cause him a little bit of discomfort? Absolutely! Because he was wanting - he believed that God was going to do (looking at the things that happened previously), that God was going to give that rain. When? Well, that can begin to cause you some doubt, some concern, and it most assuredly did him. But he was consistent, persistent.

Just like earnest prayer, praying earnestly. You keep at it. You keep doing it.

And so it was here. And then the seventh time, what an awesome thing then when it happened on the seventh time. Saw this little bit of a... like this hand coming out of the sea, just a little cloud. And that gave him incredible encouragement then. Awesome!

So, he prayed that it **wouldn't rain for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.** So, here the cycle again of that which they were suffering through, and they were lacking in things producing because of the

drought they had for three and a half years. And now all of a sudden it was going to change. It was obvious this is starting to change.

**Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns them back, let them know that whoever turns a sinner from the error, or the word means wandering of their way will save a life from death and cover a multitude of sins.** Now, we should be able to understand this, thinking about it, "What is it saying? What does that mean?" Ask the questions that need to be asked, "What is being said here?" and break it down.

So, in this particular case, "If anyone among you wanders from the truth." Well, we see that. We've seen that at different times. But so often what we're supposed to do we don't do well or don't do at all. And one of the things is to go to a brother alone if you know - and this is such a hard thing it seems like for people to do because too often there are huge mistakes made. One is being exceedingly judgmental and condemning of an individual and having that puffed-up righteous, self-righteous feeling. Because I've seen this over and over again within the Church.

When if we do go to someone alone out of genuine love and care and concern, not the attitude of the one of now is your time to go and tell them off, basically, for what they're doing wrong, and they should have known better. That destroys relationships. That hurts people more than helps them.

But if someone goes before God and asks for a humble spirit to go to someone alone if, first of all, if there is really sin, because too often it's not even a matter of sin. It's what they suppose or build up in their mind about someone else. This type of thing happens constantly, continuously. Less than it used to, but it still happens.

And so, we have to be very careful if we see something, that first of all the question is, "Is it sin?" I've worked with elders on this area, to help them. They bring something to me I say, "Where is the sin? What is the sin?" Because sometimes we feel that something is being done wrong when in reality there are different choices people can make. And then if we're not careful we're scrutinizing the choices that people make and judging them accordingly. And well, it's supposed to be a matter of sin.

And if someone is not repenting of it and they continue to do it or it's bad enough that it needs to be addressed then we're to go to them alone but in a humble spirit. That's the only way to really help someone. Because if we don't go in that spirit we're going to end up doing more damage than doing good. I hope that all makes sense, that we can digest that and understand there's a right way to obey God in this because we're told to do that.

And so, if someone out of love goes to someone and says, "You know, I've seen this. I know this happened. I hate having to do this, but I have to do what I'm told to do and out of love,

care, and concern for you, this needs to be addressed.” And basically, if they don’t then you have another responsibility. It says, “Take it to the Church,” which is the ministry. That doesn’t mean to the entire Church. Because some people used to do that, tell their close friends and others. No, that’s not what... Or take your close friends with you and go back and see them again.

No, that’s not what it’s about. It’s always about the ministry in those following cases.

So, the point is if someone will repent of doing something wrong that’s what it’s about. If someone can be so moved out of someone else’s genuine concern and love toward them that they’re hurt by what they’ve done...

That’s why sometimes even in the world they understand things of intervention, that there are times that maybe if someone has what they call an intervention when it has to do with drugs or alcohol or sex or whatever it might be, and if someone is so far off track in their life and so messed up in their life that they get different ones in family come together and they bring it to the surface in order to hopefully they’ll be moved by that act, that hopefully, they’ll start addressing it, want to address it, want to get help for what they’re dealing with. Well, that’s the world.

Think there is power with this way of life, with what God’s given to us to do something right, to pray to God, to ask God for help to do it in a right spirit and a right mind out of love. To make sure we’re right, because if we’re not right every time it’s going to cause more problems than what it did good. But if it was done out of that meekness of spirit and that attitude of mind we all have weaknesses, we all have things we have to battle, we all have sins, and with that attitude of mind, that humility of mind to go and talk to someone.

And if they see something and then realize, “You know, I’m really sorry. I didn’t realize I was hurting you in this fashion. I didn’t know that I was... It just...” Whatever that moves a person to repentance. That’s awesome. Because that’s what this is about, “Shall save a life from death.” Now, you don’t do it but you’re a part of something because you’re obeying God and doing something the way God says to do it, that if someone repents that’s what it takes to be able to have Eternal life, to be able to continue in a relationship with God. It’s a matter of continual repentance on our part.

But if someone isn’t repenting then there is a problem. But if they’ll repent? So, if someone turns from the error or the wandering of their way... Because that’s what happens, people wander off to do something different. “Will save a life from death.” So, what’s it about? The end; eternal death. So, that means that a person has to choose to repent, and if they’re impregnated with God’s spirit they have that choice and then they repent and then they’re on that road again toward being a part of God’s Family, Elohim.

So, it's an awesome thing that's said here. And that's the hope. That's why if we love one another, we're close to one another, we are genuinely concerned about one another we'll do what we're supposed to do. Because I really haven't seen this done hardly at all in God's Church the way it should be. I'd say ninety-nine percent hasn't been done throughout my history in God's Church, since 1969. And that's a shame because it should have been done.

Anyway, much of James' focus here as we've gone through this has been one of what it means to be saved. It goes back and forth in this process discussing some of these things. And that's God's desire for us. He wants us to be able to receive eternal life or everlasting life, I should say.

There's really a difference in that because we can't have eternal life in the truest sense, if we understand what that means; because that is God alone who's had eternal life. We can have everlasting life, life that never ends from a point then on. So, there's a distinction kind of in the use of the word there.

So again, that's been much of James' focus here, to be living a life that's leading to everlasting life and contrasting that with what also then leads to death, as we just read here. So, it's being contrasted throughout the book of James if we haven't caught that part yet.

So, let's go back and look at James 1, just notice what it says there again. Picked out a few scriptures here that talk about this. And hopefully, these things drive the message home even that much more than in our minds so we can really grasp more fully what it says by the time we get to the thing about healing and anointing which is strictly a thing thrown in for a physical purpose, to grasp that if we're not doing that then we're not doing the rest. That's the whole point of it all. If we're not obeying in that area there then we're lacking in the rest of our relationship with God.

**James 1:19—Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.** So, we went through all that in the sermon, talking about what that means, wisdom that's there. It's about being careful about our response to things when we might normally disagree with something being said. And that's when we need to wait, pray about it, think about it, ask God for help.

"Slow to speak." That means how we respond sometimes because we start talking to others and let others know we're in disagreement by what we say.

"Slow to anger." That's the last part there. Because that's what it can lead to, disagreeing with something can lead to being angry about a matter And that's not God's way of life, especially not God's way of life, obviously, for anyone in the Church who has His spirit.

**...for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.** Shouldn't have to say that but obvious.

**Therefore, lay apart all that is**, as it says here “**filthy**” but it has to do with conduct, wrong choices, wrong judgment. So, **lay aside everything that’s being done wrong**. That’s our goal in life. That’s what repentance is all about. And talking to the Church so that should be our goal and our desire, to get rid of everything that’s filthy in life.

And just like self, if you will, our way, our way of seeing things, selfishness. It’s evil and it’s filthy. And the more we see that the better, the more blessed we really are because then we can battle it. If we don’t see it then what can we battle?

**...and overflow of wickedness or overflow of evil**. It’s overflowing in our lives. It does. Because selfishness is there, because that’s our nature, so it just overflows in life, it sometimes comes out and we don’t want it to, we want to change various things and that’s where we have to pray to God for help. Ask for help, strength to conquer and overcome whatever it is we see that He’s blessing us to see, and then go on to the next.

**...and receive with meekness...** That means teachable spirit - that’s why “slow to speak, slow to anger,” have a teachable spirit. **...and receive with meekness the ingrafted**, or as the word is, **implanted word**. So, God communicates to us, and He wants something to become permanent in our being, in our minds, in our thinking. That’s a part of transforming of the mind, which is a matter of becoming more at one with God. That means we’re in agreement with God. So, we get rid of certain things that are not in agreement and repent and bring them into agreement. It’s a beautiful thing.

**...which are able to save your lives**. That’s what God’s way of life does. The more we grow in that, that unity and oneness with God, the more we’re on the right road, the right track, if you will, in leading to that everlasting life that we desire in the Family of God.

Then **James 2:14—What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says they have faith but do not have works?** So, the point being is I’ve seen this in the Church as well, where a person believes they’re living by faith, they believe that they’re going through the motions in their life of what’s required as far as being a part of the Church is concerned, but not living some of the most basic things they should be living. That’s works.

Because we believe, if we really believe everything that God gives to us, that’s what we’re going to be living and it’s going to be evident then in our lives by that taking place. It’s going to be more evident to others, to us.

And that’s why it says then, **Can faith save them?** Not that kind of faith. It has to be true faith. That’s why, again, the title of the sermon series. Has to be true faith which is based upon what God has given us to believe, that we’re truly living it, that we’re truly striving to live by it, applying it to our lives.



Just like this thing of going to someone alone when there is sin. Not doing it before that. You have to know. So, what's our definition of sin? Well, should be pretty simple. Something that is against the law of God, the way of God. In other words, it's going to be really clear, not something we supposed in our minds that someone should have done this or should have said that or we read something into an action or some words that someone has said. You have to be so careful.

And if they're not and somebody starts going just every time they hear something they think, "Well, I've got to correct that. I've got to talk to them alone." No, you've got to be careful. It's going to be blatant. It's going to be clear. There's not going to be doubt about it. It's just black and white, dark and light. There are some things that are just clear. Sin should be clear to us, absolute, not something we conjure up in our mind by something that's said and we read into what was said and we don't know where they're coming from necessarily because we haven't asked them, "Well, what do you mean by that?" or "I don't understand."

Then chapter 4. So, there is true faith. Indeed, if we live by that, that's what leads to salvation, leads to being saved, leads to being a part of the Family of God.

**James 4:11—Do not speak evil**, again, that Greek word has to do with "slander; speaking against; speaking evil" **of one another, brethren**. Over and over again, there's a way we should talk, there's a way we should think toward one another. And so it said, "Don't do that brethren."

**Whoever speaks evil of their brother and judges their brother speaks evil of the law**. Why? Because God said don't do it. So, that's speaking evil of what God has given us to believe. We're not supposed to do it and that's clear cut. And if we do then and we start spreading something around about someone what have we done? The very thing we shouldn't have been doing.

**...speaks evil of the law and judges the law**. And God is the one who gives it. God is the one who's given His way of life, of how we're to act toward one another, how we're to think toward one another.

**So, if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge**. And that's, basically, our nature. Our human nature is to judge others, to judge things that are being said and put them in some category that's in our mind. And we have to be ever so careful of doing that.

**...you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and destroy**. So, it's that contrast again. To save - everlasting life in Elohim. Or what it leads to because of not repenting which is inevitably going to be death. So, those two things.

**...who is able to save and destroy**. The point being just what we went through at the Feast of Tabernacles. What an incredible thing so many of those sermons and zeroing in on the reality

that two things once we're called, a potential of becoming a part of Elohim, God's Family, and the other is if we don't live it in truth, true, right before God, true faith, spirit and in truth, if you will, if we don't live it that way in time it's going to come out what we're doing. God will reveal it and it ends up one way. If we're not repenting of something that we should be repenting of we have to answer for it. Which way? Can't have both.

**...who is able to save and destroy. Who are you who judges another?**

And then **James 5:15**, again here, **The prayer of faith shall save the wearied.** Again, that word for "sick." But if we're not careful we tie that in strictly to anointing and physical sickness and it's going way, way, way beyond that. Again, that was to learn from, to understand why it's inserted in that area, which we've already covered.

"The prayer of faith." What's that? Because you believe God, and you pray accordingly to those beliefs. And so, just like Elijah, he believed that there was going to be rain, but he had to be persistent about sending the servant back seven times until he... and then he got encouraged again when he saw this, just a hand, if you will, like a cloud just barely coming up out of the... and nothing else. And he believed God and he knew that this was going to be the time. It gave him the confidence he needed. It didn't take a lot. Incredible.

"The prayer of faith shall save the wearied." So, it's about us, it's about things we go through in life.

So, it's not just in something we might have physical. We're to learn from that. We're to understand there's a process there, that God can offer us that or not, or maybe have a length of time that goes by before we might receive it. But it doesn't mean every time we're going to be healed of something that happens, especially as we get older. There are things that happen in life and God lets us experience that, the suffering of human life.

What would it be like if every time we went before Him and every ailment we might have...? We wouldn't grow. We wouldn't learn what we really need to learn from that. But the other things cause us to answer things that we might otherwise have questions about and then we grow in confidence that God doesn't have to answer every time. That it can be good at times when we go through something over a length of time because we believe God that there is something else He's going to mold and fashion up here as a result of what you're experiencing, of your going through it. That's the way it always works.

If God is calling us, which He did or you wouldn't be baptized, and if He's working with us, which He is if we're continuing in this way and striving to live what we're talking about here and having this mind being changed and transformed, awesome to understand this process that we're going to have suffering.

“Is anyone among you suffering?” “Is anyone among you afflicted?” Yeah. Right now there are people in the Church who are going through different things. It may be something physical like that, may not be, other things that hit us and relationships or whatever it might be in life, of hardships of life, hardships of the kind of jobs or the employers or the employees or all kinds of things that can hit us, that weigh on us.

Go through it knowing that God is there hearing you every time you pray about it. Awesome! And we can learn from it. We can grow from it. Because that’s why it’s there; it exists for those purposes.

“The prayer of faith shall save the wearied.” That’s absolute. That means you’re looking to God. That’s what that means, “The prayer of faith.” It means you’re looking to God, you believe God, and you continue to go before Him, and you continue to ask for help. You ask for His holy spirit, you ask to be forgiven of sin, and you ask for the other things in your life that have to do with your growth, your conquering and overcoming, and relationships and all the things that might affect you out there in the world.

**...and the Lord shall raise them up.** What’s that about? Well, again, that’s what we’re looking forward to. It’s not just at a momentary type of thing of being strengthened, which is important, and it’s not about going back to the previous verse about someone who is sick, that they’re promised to be healed.

Because that’s how it was read in times past by many ministers, and many brethren then began to believe that way to a point where it was basically taught by so many that if you’re not being healed it’s because you’re in sin. That’s not what this is about at all. Incredible that those things happened. But we had to go through it to learn. We had to experience that for many years because questions would come into the mind, “Well, how is that?” And then in time, God gave the answer. We had to wait for the answer. And the amazing thing is to know in your mind that God isn’t like that. In the back of your mind, to know that God isn’t like that. There is a confidence there. That you know your own life.

I remember a time a woman was in a hospital. I believe it was a bladder that she was having problems with and going to have removed, whatever you call it, disease, whatever it was. And she felt so guilty because the local minister, whom I was serving under at that time, basically was making her feel that she was committing sin by being in the hospital and by having that operation. And she was just eaten up with guilt. And it makes you ask, you should ask, “Is that right? Is that really of God? Is God like that?” When you know your own life and you’ve been repenting of sin? Something doesn’t mix here. And in time God will give the answer. You just have to wait.

And so, He’s given the answer to so many kinds of things. Incredible, what we’ve gone through. To me, that’s an exciting thing to understand. Got more knowledge, the more

insight, the more truth that God gives, the more soundness of mind, the more balance we have, it's a beautiful thing because it has God in a right perspective of the way God is. The more truth He gives to us helps us to understand God, how He is, how He thinks, what He's given us to see and how to think. Beautiful.

"And the Lord shall raise them up." So, it wasn't about the physical things. It wasn't about her being in that bed and she's going to be promised to be resurrected if she repents of—in her mind not knowing what it is she's supposed to repent of—but she's... So, what she came to was that to believe if she didn't have... To be there in the hospital was the sin. So, in the thinking of things, if she had been healed before that, which she wasn't, then what was that sin? But by the time she got there, she was really in sin because now it's the doctor, the hospital, being there. Anyway, I won't go into that anymore.

"And the Lord shall raise them up." Because it wasn't about physical healing. It's about what God is doing to us. He raises us up as we go through various battles and trials, He gives us encouragement and strength. Maybe not instantly. Just as with physical things, there may be an answer that is no. God can tell us "No, not now." So, it's better to go through something we might be praying for relief from and yet we need to go through it. All kinds of examples we should be able to think of when that has happened in our life.

I think of three years of that. You know, you think, no, it was for a purpose and for a reason. For the Church, for me and for the Church to learn from, and for a future time. Because there are all kinds of examples of things people have gone through in time that are there to be written to help other people later on.

Just like we read the story about Elijah and what he went through. You can go through and read Herbert Armstrong's autobiography and you see God working with him. You can't help it. Awesome! It's encouraging.

So everyone, every individual, you're going to have conversations in the future, those especially a part of the 144,000 and those who are resurrected at the end of the Millennium, going to have all kinds of stories to share in the future with others, others you know or have known, I should say. And to be able to tell them the various kinds of things you went through and they're going to be inspired by them. They really are. What you went through. "You went through that back then?"

"And the Lord shall raise them up." This is the ultimate. If you continue to do what you're supposed to do, you continue to pray in faith, looking to God, believing God, striving to live by what He's given, and pray as we're told to do, then in time, we're in God's Family. He raises us up indeed.

**And if they have committed sins, they shall be forgiven them.** Should be pretty self-explanatory, because we can't have a relationship with God, we can't be raised up, we can't be helped unless we're repenting of sin and to know that we've been forgiven, that confidence that we have. Whenever we repent, God forgives us. It's gone.

So, there are times we feel wearied. There are times... There was that, especially that time when Elijah was wearied mightily so, and God helped him, raised him up, strengthened him.

**James 5:19**, let's continue on. **Brethren, if anyone among you, again, wanders** (reading it again here), **from the truth, and someone turns them back**, again, because of love toward them and of obeying God, **let them know that whoever turns a sinner from the wandering of their way shall save a life from death and cover a multitude of sins.** Awesome, beautiful scripture.

So, let's go into Luke 15 because we need to see how this word is used in other places, how it's addressed, about things that Christ had to say that have been misunderstood about this process in our life, because that's what we're looking at here, and understand some of the spiritual context of what he was saying because a lot of people through time here, obviously, even within God's Church, have not fully grasped some of the things that Christ is saying in some of these parables.

So, let's pick up here in **Luke 15:1** because this all ties in with this verse we just read here in James 5:19 and 20. **Then all the publicans.** Now, these are the Jewish tax collectors for the Romans. So, you know right away they weren't looked up to very well. People weren't really too fond of them, so they were looked down upon.

**...and sinners...** People who are put in that category because who were the others who weren't sinners at that time, in that time period. Well, of course, the one who dressed accordingly, the one who did various things, who were in the mix of the Sadducees and the Pharisees and went through the motions of that religion and everybody else around them knew what their particular slant was as far as what they believed in that particular time period. And exceedingly self-righteous and pious and whatever else might go with the territory.

But those who were not a part of that, who didn't espouse, if you will, especially one of the other (there were other religious groups there too), but if you didn't let others know that? Because others let them know that. You know, if they were Pharisees and Sadducees people knew who they were. And so, others were just looked down upon, you know, in the gutter, you know, especially the publicans, low life. That's how they looked upon them. And then "sinners," low life, you know.

**Now, the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying...** See, they're the ones. **The Pharisees and scribes murmured saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them!** If you're religious, if you're of God, you don't do that. You don't eat with sinners. You don't eat with publicans. They're the low life of life. That was their attitude.

**So he spoke this parable to them, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and goes after that which is lost until he finds it?** This parable hasn't been understood very well, truly hasn't, in what Christ was actually saying here. Instead, it's generally been used, and I'm speaking of God's Church, to say or of saying (and I'm going to be paraphrasing some of this), that if there is, as an example here, are a hundred in the Church and one leave the Church that the greatest concern should be to go after the one that has left and to leave the ninety-nine in order to go after the one that was lost.

Well, that's not what this is saying at all. And basically, that's how it has been looked upon in times past. Not what it's saying at all. So, it's easy to misunderstand Christ in the things he said and even in a lot of the parables here because we read into it what we know at any particular moment in time. And if we don't know the rest of the story, if we don't know other things, if God hasn't given it to us yet then wrong conclusions are going to be drawn. Like the one about healing until God revealed no, that isn't sound, that isn't true, that isn't the way it should be seen and understood.

So again, not so. That's why the first thing to recognize here, that the ninety-nine were left in the wilderness. We ought to know, understand what that means on a spiritual plane, to understand a spiritual wilderness. Is it about the Church? Is it about ninety-nine, a hundred in the Church? That's not what it's about.

It's about what Christ was doing at that time. And everyone in that regard was in a spiritual wilderness. The process was going to begin once he died and then on Pentecost to begin changing that as far as people being drawn out of a wilderness and into the truth, into the light, into God's Church, to be able to receive God's holy spirit, to receive forgiveness of sins first of all.

So again, that should jump out at us first of all right there, just the expression.

Next, it's important to consider the word here translated as "lost." Now, it does have to do with loss, but if we know more about the actual meaning of the word it will help us to understand more fully what's being said here because of how it's used in other places in scripture. And in the Greek it literally means "to destroy; to perish."

So, if you look at one sheep here, as an example, it's in the context of mind here that he's going, in essence here, to help those who are perishing, those who are lost, yes, and are

being destroyed as far as life is concerned and God's plan. And the only way to do that is to draw them, to call them, as is going to happen later on into the Church for those who are going to be drawn to it. But there were different ones throughout, like, Christ's life, and encounters that he had, that some of those at times became a part of the Church. Not all by any measure. But out of the mix of those with whom Christ had come in contact with, some were drawn into, after Pentecost, into the Church.

And they're the ones who are perishing. The whole world, in that regard, is perishing until God begins to call them out of the world. So, Christ is making it clear here "You, the Sadducees and Pharisees..." in essence, they don't recognize that they're perishing. They would never acknowledge that. But others would acknowledge who they were.

Sinners acknowledged what they were living as a whole. They were more open about it. They were who they were. Publicans doing what they were doing, it's very clear, and they didn't go around with these puffed-up haughty attitudes of spirit like the Pharisees and Sadducees by any measure. They weren't like that. They were more down to earth and could be talked to. There are people throughout this world like that, who...

And then there are others who are so haughty. I think of the subdivision we're in. Sometimes we go walking, jogging, or whatever, say hi to someone, and they won't even give you the time of... They just smugly... It's like, "Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? You can't even say 'Hi' to someone?" And it's just an air. There are certain people that have an air about them.

Well, the Pharisees and Sadducees had an air about them that reeked, and they wouldn't receive what Christ had to say in the first place. But others would listen to him. They did. Sinners and publicans, easy to eat with, easy to talk to, and on a physical plane they listened. The rest of them didn't. They never did. No matter what took place. Lazarus, being resurrected from the dead, they wouldn't listen. Instead, they wanted to kill him. That's how haughty they were, how lifted up with pride they were, how much they thought of themselves.

And yet there are so many other people, down to earth, that began to believe he's the Messiah. That's what they were brought to. Now, not on a spiritual plane to come on into the Church. Some were brought along, but as a whole not the majority of those who lined the streets as Christ was coming back into Jerusalem after having been over there two and a half miles away where Mary and Lazarus was and so forth, and then coming into the city and they're throwing down palms and things in the road there basically acknowledging "You're the son of David, your lineage, the Messiah!" That's what they were saying. Incredible!

Not the Pharisees and Sadducees. So, basically, here it's about an understanding of how God works, about how Christ was working, and with whom he was associating because there was

no point in being around the Pharisees. He didn't try to help the Pharisees and Sadducees because they wouldn't hear a thing he had to say. But others were more prone to do so, to listen. Not that all would or that all would be called, but more...

Can you imagine when they're resurrected? Those? You want to know something? The Pharisees and Sadducees are still going to have a battle. Even when they're resurrected. And I believe there are going to be a whole lot of them that can never change.

So, to notice some ways that this word is used here, this thing about being lost, just so we can get an understanding of the use of it. Because this is what he's saying, "They're perishing." "They're going to receive that message more than you will." "The ninety-nine, just going to leave you there, but here is one that has the potential of being helped, of being saved."

**Matthew 18:14—Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.** That's the word. It's not being lost, but it's about what it leads to. It's about the end result. It's about the mind of God. It's about Christ.

And anyway, going on here let's notice **Matthew 22:7—But when the king heard it, he was angry. And he sent forth his armies... I'm not going to read the whole thing but just where these words are used. He sent forth his armies destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.** So again here, "destroyed," "those who are perishing." It's used in different ways because of the context. Lost? Yes, it's a part of it.

You can have a hundred sheep and one is lost out here. But when it's in the wilderness and it's not being taken care of by a shepherd and it's off by itself you know what, it's... The chances are very, very high it's in a process of being destroyed at some point here. It's not going to last very long when it's out there by itself and there aren't trained dogs to help out or a shepherd who is there to watch after them. And if it's out there it's pretty much as good as dead if it can't be brought back.

And these are some of the kinds of contrasts. It's in the context here of perishing, of dying, of being destroyed, and we understand that in the scheme of God's plan so that's where these things are to fit.

**Matthew 26:52—Then said Joshua unto them, Put up again your sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall - and it's not about being lost but it's shall perish with the sword.** You're going to die. That's what it's going to lead to. That's the end result if that's the way you think.

And so again here, just showing how the word is being used here, that it's not... So, that's why when you see the word "lost" you have to take it in the context of what's really being said, of



what's going to happen, as an example, to the one sheep, in that respect, that has the potential of being helped. And the other ninety-nine? Well...?

**James 4:12**, we read this earlier. **There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.** See, that word again. It's God. There are two places, either receiving salvation, receiving God's way of life, changing, conquering, overcoming when the time comes or there is going to be a time when those who are not a part of God's Kingdom are going to be destroyed.

So again, just looking at how the word is used. Let's go on here to **John 3:15 ...that whoever believes in him should not perish...** So again here, it's about this process and it's about being saved from that process. That's why the one in ninety-nine. **...but have everlasting life.** The contrast. Death, perishing, or everlasting light.

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish...** So, that's the context to be seen always when we read through things on a spiritual plane, and we do as a whole. Sometimes we trip in certain areas, like in James and healing and so forth.

**...but whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.** It just drives the point home over and over again. Two things. I think of everything we went through at the Feast. It's along that line. It's about the process of responding, striving to live by what God has given to us or that which in time is going to pay for it. That's the way it's going to be in God's plan. Everyone is accountable.

**Mark 8:35—For whoever will save their life shall lose it...** Well, yeah, but it's understanding what that means. **...shall destroy it.** That's what it's about. It's about choices. So, if we understand the context and understand the use of the word and what it means, then it means more to us when we understand this.

"But whoever will save their life." If you're going about doing things your way because you believe your way is right and you're going to basically save it by what you're doing that's not in alignment with, in agreement with what God has given you as far as the Church is concerned, they're going to end up destroying it. And there are a lot of people who have come and gone through God's Church through time, and some have worked to destroy their lives. Some have literally done it already. That's where it's going to end up, at the end, burnt. Because they've so destroyed their minds.

We can do that as human beings, get to a point where we've so destroyed our own minds, our own way, our own haughtiness that won't repent. Lucifer did it on a spiritual plane immediately. Human beings can do it over a period of time. And the longer that time goes on?

So, this concept that used to be in the Church, that everyone who's ever part of the Church and dies while it's seen, people think they're in the Church, doesn't mean they were in the

Church. Depends on what is true before God. And all those who have left doesn't mean that in the Great White Throne that at that time they're just going to rejoice and be so excited and thankful and going to repent right away. No, there's a reason why they did it before and the mind can become set to that even in the Great White Throne to where it ends up in the same place, destroying their lives. Choices.

It's amazing what people can do, literally destroying their own lives. Things that they can't control. You know, if people's thinking, if they don't live right and they continue to go in a particular direction they don't realize what they're doing to something that is so precious that God gave to us. He gave us minds with a spirit essence in it, and we make choices along the way as to what we're doing and what we're not going to do, and we can literally destroy that process up here if we're not careful.

**For whoever will save their life shall destroy it**, literally. Better than losing it. But yeah, yeah, you're going to lose it, but you have to understand what you're doing in the process. You're destroying yourself.

Even on a physical plane, you wish that people could grasp and understand. You think with all the warnings out there about taking drugs today, that people wouldn't be stupid enough to just even try it because of all that's laced with fentanyl now. You think, what kind of soundness, what kind of reasoning is taking place where the environment you're in, peer pressure, whatever it is, or a desire to escape something and you feel like you're going to have that in order to escape that you'll take that kind of a chance to destroy your life. It's insanity.

There's a lot of insanity that's taken place in the environment of God's Church, of those who have left.

**...and whoever will save their life shall destroy it, but whoever shall "lose" their life?** Well, I like "destroy." That's what we have to do. We have to put to death the old self. That's what it's about, destroying. There's not a better word that could be used because that's what we're told to do. When you go down in that watery grave that old self is to be put to death, and you want to keep it there and you want to keep destroying every time it wants to come back up. That's what our battle is about, it's destroying selfishness and receiving God's way of life more fully, more completely. Beautiful!

"Whoever will destroy their life." So, if we will fight that fight? That's why I love the example of overcoming because it means "conquer." If we fight that war, that battle, and to understand the majority of it is right here, that's where our greatest fight is, it's right here in self, and if we keep fighting that which means to destroy self, selfishness, if you will, and receive God's way more fully.

**Whoever shall destroy their life for my sake and the gospel**, the truth because of a way of life, because we believe it and so we're willing to fight that fight, **the same shall save it.** Beautiful! So, it's by our choice. And God's given us that choice that we can save it. By yielding to Him we will be saved because God guarantees that. He tells us He will save it; He will raise us up if we do live, believe, and then live it, faith, what He tells us to do. So, we strive to do that constantly.

John 12:25. So again, just a little bit of an aside here to see the things that James is talking about and the complete picture and then to go through these various parables to understand how certain things are used at times to teach us the same thing over and over and build it up stronger in our minds.

**John 12:25—Whoever it is that loves their life shall destroy it.** And there are people who just love their life. There will be people by the... probably in the billions upon billions in the Great White Throne who so love their lives, shall destroy them.

**...and whoever it is that hates their life in this world**, selfishness. We don't like self in this world. We know what we're like. We see selfishness around us all the time.

That's why I think some people think I must be a maniac in driving and miss the whole point of what's being said. It's about what's out there and the battles that take place. And when you see whether it be in a mall or in a large group of people or on a highway what people are becoming more and more like, more selfish, it's hard to take. It hurts. It's aggravating. It's agitating sometimes just to have to be in that environment.

And then you're able to see things. You realize why you see it so well - because that's the way we are, that's what we've been working to conquer and overcome. Self. And the more you do that the more you can see it in others in the world and hate it. And it just makes living in this world harder. It's not easier. And we begin to understand it more and we... It's a part of growing spiritually. Awesome!

**...whoever it is that loves their life shall destroy it, and whoever it is that hates their life in this world shall keep it unto everlasting life.** Beautiful scriptures, and especially when we see a clearer context of things that are said. It means so much.

So, let's return over here to Luke now, **Luke 15:4—What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, if one is perishing, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, who are content there, who do not want to leave the wilderness, Pharisees, Sadducees and so forth, and go after that which is perishing until he finds it?**

And that so reveals how God has worked with those who have been called into the Church, giving so many opportunities to so many people to have an opportunity to change, to conquer, to overcome, to no longer have a life that's perishing, being destroyed in the world the way

the world is, and yet sometimes, obviously, well a large percentage obviously, a very high percentage, choose something different, to go back to that which is perishing.

**Then when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.** So, when it's found. Well, when it's ready to be received. And we have to make those choices. And so, it shows the care and the concern that God has to us in to take a lamb and put it on, or a sheep, and put it on your shoulder to carry it. What an incredible example to show God's love to us, that if we'll receive that, that kind of love, that kind of opportunity and relationship in life how incredible that is. Until one won't, when they get tired of being carried on the shoulder and they want something different.

**Then when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was perishing!** Which was lost. Which was perishing. Because that's what it's about.

So, it's this attitude of mind to understand God's love toward us, that once we're able to be worked with, once we are drawn and given this way, the way He wants to keep it, He wants it to be this way, to be in that kind of relationship.

**I say to you that likewise, joy shall be in heaven over one sinner who repents.** Because that's what this is about. "Over one sinner who repents." What a beautiful thing that if we repent and continue to repent... Because it's leading to Elohim, God's purpose for creating us, God's purpose for creation itself. Incredible.

...more than over ninety-nine just persons. Righteous. They are just in their own eyes, righteous in their own eyes. ...**who need no repentance.** That's the problem. There are those who don't need repentance. Those who are in the wilderness needed no repentance. That's the mindset, people that even within the Body, if we don't continue to fight and repent and we see various things...

I marvel sometimes how often I've mentioned some of the most basic of commands that Sardis even had, and people won't repent of it. You think you're just destroying your own life. Can't you turn it around? Can't you humble yourself and repent and just obey God in something so simple, so basic?

That's why it reminds me of what it said back in *Part 3* of the series when we went through (I'll just read it again), **James 5:1-3—Come now, you who are rich.** That's the story. It's those who don't need repentance. They don't see it. They don't see the need for repentance because they've already measured themselves and they see something better than what is really there as far as God's concerned. Because we have to measure ourselves according to what God tells us Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day, and people in God's Church in

times past, which we need to be able to see, became self-reliant, if you will, self-righteous. And that can't be a part with God.

And it says, **You who are rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you.** Because that's what destruction is. You're destroying your life. You're striving to save your life your way, not what God has given, and you're destroying yourself, you're destroying your very being, your very mind.

**Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.** That's what we should see sin like, and self-righteousness and haughtiness like in the same way here, that it's full of holes.

**Your gold and silver are corroded, and they're poison.** That's why I love that word. It's not "corrosion." It's the word for "poison." **And their poison shall be witness against you.** Eventually, everyone has to answer for their choices.

**...and shall eat your flesh like fire.** So, God is very plain spoken. There are two ways of life. One leads to that. Not somewhere where you're constantly being tormented but it leads to a fire that destroys.

**You have heaped together treasure for the last days.** Very strong, very straightforward language.

One more example from Christ. **Matthew 9:9—As Joshua passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him... So, here we go. Here is one who was collecting taxes. Look what he became. Follow me. So he arose and followed him. Now it happened, as Joshua sat at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. So, when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?**

**And when Joshua heard that, he said to them, Those who are well, "whole; strong" as the King James says, "whole," but the Greek really is "strong," have no need of a physician.** Comes from a word that means "needs healing; needs to be healed." **...but those who are sick.** And we looked at this word and how it was used in different places. But here, we obviously can understand the context. It's a matter, again, those doing badly, evilly as we talked about back in James when we came across this particular word.

So, people who think that they're already strong, they don't need God, they don't want God. But those who can come to understand, those who can actually see their need to repent, to see themselves for what they really are, they could be worked with because they can acknowledge it, admit it, and that's what repentance requires.

Again, that word was used back in, I'll just repeat it here, you don't need to look, and we'll go on here in Matthew in a moment, but **James 4:3** where it says, **You ask and do not receive because you ask badly**, "you ask evilly," if you will. That's not a word we normally would use. King James says "amiss," but it basically means out of an evil motivation. So, if people can understand their motivations and understand that's what they are and acknowledge it. But people who think they don't have that and they're better and they look down upon others who are sinning, God can't work with that. They have to be brought to a point where they could be humbled.

That's why I look at this world and you think, it's going to take so much where people will actually start listening. Just, we had a little bit of rumbling... not rumbling but we could see a little bit of attitude change in some people, questioning when this thing in Israel happened on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Didn't last long. Just reflects how people are. And it didn't last long in the world. We can see that. People aren't as shaken. After a while, they want to get back to the norm, whatever that means.

You think about what it means that God has to take this world through, let it go through, the kind of war that's coming. And even then at the beginning of it, the world as a whole isn't going to change. Yeah, there are going to be people who start listening more at that time than ever before but it still isn't... It isn't even close to what is needed to change attitudes that God can begin to work with.

That's why things have to happen in the Fifth, if you will, event, Trumpet, and the Sixth when China and Russia go about really trying to destroy the...going about destroying the world. And if God didn't intervene at that point in time we would end up annihilating ourselves. That's what we're shown. And yet God's only going to let it go to a certain point. But it's enough. And then when Christ starts coming with 144,000 and they clean up a whole lot more, then that which remains is going to have some really sharper ability in the ear to hear what's being said. And it takes all of that to humble this earth.

That's why I think about what Elijah went through. Didn't do much. Didn't last long. And that's been so discouraging throughout time for those who have served God, to see that kind of attitude of mind.

Just like today, we're putting a lot of money into advertising, different areas. Pinterest. We were on Google. Waste of time. Word searches - because they so control that. So we have ads that can be seen now like on Facebook. We are using those. "X" which was Twitter, and several more. I can't think of the ones we're working with right now. But anyway, there are some others named out there as well. So, we're doing that. But you know what? Yeah, people are going on through to it in cases, pretty decent response in the sense of those who are continuing through to the book.

Anything happening? Nope. Because people can't be worked with yet. But we continue to do this for a purpose because that's what we're supposed to do, and that message is supposed to be out there, and seeds are being planted here and there that in time... Just like Christ was doing when he was preaching. There were those who would listen but wouldn't change. There were others who wouldn't even begin to think about listening or changing. And that's the way the world has always been in that respect.

But if we can understand what our human nature is like and what the world is like right now, it's at one of the haughtiest levels it's ever been in six thousand years. Hopefully, we can see that. Because of the wealth of the world, because of the kind of technology that mankind has now compared to the previous six thousand years, to understand we live in the haughtiest times of earth's history. Incredible! Incredible, it really is, to see it through a proper lens if you will.

And it takes a lot to break that so people will begin to listen to the Great God of the universe who's created everything. But even that people won't begin to acknowledge until they're brought down, brought low, and brought to a point of annihilation, to where they'll begin to listen to their Creator God. What an incredible thing. Even on a physical plane, let alone for what He's going to offer them spiritually.

**So, you ask and do not receive because you ask badly, out of a wrong motivation, so that you may consume it upon your own lusts.** That's the way of the world, isn't it? Sadly, too much of that has been brought in in times past within the Church.

So, **Matthew 9:13**, going on here, **But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.** It's not about going through the physical motions like the Pharisees and Sadducees in their own self-righteousness and offering up bulls and so forth and whatever it might be for people to feel a little bit better about themselves. It's about self still in what they did. It wasn't a spiritual thing at all, and it wasn't about God really, in the deepest sense, in so many ways.

**For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.** So again, goes with all these other things we just went through in these parables. They're the only ones that can be worked with. Yet we have to be brought to a point...

I think of what I went through before I was called. You need to think about what you went through before you were called. Maybe your experience wasn't on the same plane and had to happen in a different way and God worked with you in a different way to mold and fashion different things within you. But I had to have a lot knocked out of me before I'd change a little bit of my attitude to where I would listen when the time came.

Because before that if somebody said the things that I heard the night that I began to see what was true I would have said, "You are nuts. You are just nuts. You're stark raving mad. You're...you're some religious fanatic!" I already know that. Incredible. I had to be slapped upside the head, jaw broken, wrecked car - flipped it end over end three, two and a half, three... We don't know how many times it went over end over end. And out of the trash that was there, the junk that was there? Had this nice Mustang convertible and '67 I think it was at that... or '66, and then had to go down to the junkyard and I got \$350, and I was able to go buy a Volkswagen, an old Volkswagen with it.

So, this level of haughtiness and pride that I had before, it really came down a lot. Because when you're a young person like that, 18, whatever, and you're out there and you have this car that is pretty fast and makes some really good noise, and then you wreck it and you didn't have insurance (stupid, stupid), and then you have \$350 bucks left, what do you do? You end up buying whatever you can. And that's about all I could do, Volkswagen. And now you're driving down the road in an old Volkswagen.

And the same ones that were seeing you before when you felt so good in that Mustang, you know, with the music turned up high, which young people think everybody else has to hear it, especially when you're in a convertible everybody has to hear it because the tops down. So, we all go through different things. But isn't it amazing what we have to go through to be humbled sometimes as human beings?

And that's what it's like as far as God working with mankind, working with the world. People have to become humbled, be humbled. And God can do that. He's going to do it.

**So, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.** So, people have to be brought to a point where they can acknowledge, "That's what I am." They have to come to see certain things about God and have some fear there that yeah, God's real. And, you know, when they see Christ and the 144,000, a lot of things are going to change just in people's thinking, and to realize God is real and what God says you better listen. I mean, I am so looking forward to that time, that change in attitude.

You know, WWII helped to change some things on a physical plane. So did WWI a little bit. But it didn't take long. Started the United Nations. Such good ideas and desires, to have nations come together, and then planted it in New York City where there was always going to be control in part and put more money into it than anybody else to keep it going. And it failed. It doesn't mean anything. Even though they put that statue out there that's in Isaiah, beating their swords into ploughshares. What an incredible farce and mockery, the haughtiness of mankind to think "We're going to achieve this." No, you can't. You can't govern yourself.

Anyway, sorry, but I just think about what God goes through with us, the patience He has, and He says, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." It's not about the physical aspects of what we go



through as all, I would say, who have left God's Church eventually have had that physical aspect in their mind. Not spiritual, not from God, but have gone through this thing of doing the things they did for self, for the wrong reasons.

Just like that prayer we read about in James, because you want it for yourself because it's about your wrong motivations and why you're praying even and asking for certain things. And it's about you, it's not about God. It's not about the plan of God. It's not about repentance.

So, He called sinners. We have to see that we are.

So, this was in reference to **Hosea 6:6** where it says, **For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God is more than burnt offerings.** Beautiful verse, really, when we understand it on a spiritual plane. The knowledge of God, the truth of God. Burnt offerings mean nothing. Physical, going through the routine of being in the environment of the Church of God means nothing unless you're living by it in spirit and in truth.

And the majority of who have ever been a part weren't doing that. It's kind of mind-boggling.

So again here, when He says, "Go and learn what it means 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'" it's not just a matter... You know, God is merciful to us. But what He receives back is that we learn to become merciful. Relationships require us being merciful to one another, giving time, giving space to one another, being forgiving toward one another. That's being merciful. Because we should want the same toward us because who are we, what are we? We have our own weaknesses, our own faults, and if we understand these things then we can be and should be merciful to one another.

What an awesome thing if we could embrace that with all of our being.

Anyway, we're going to stop there today and continue on next Sabbath.