

Made Stronger Through Fasting, Pt. 2

Ronald Weinland

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We're continuing now in the new series entitled *Made Stronger Through Fasting* with this being *Part 2*.

As it was mentioned last Sabbath, prayer is an incredibly powerful tool that God has given to us, yet fasting that's coupled with prayer becomes even more powerful so that we can be strengthened in God all that much more. So that should be something that we would all desire, and all want to have, and all want to practice at different times throughout the year.

Fasting empowers our prayers and then the strength of God's spirit in us. So again, something we should all desire to have and want on a regular basis in our life.

At the end of *Part 1* last Sabbath it was mentioned that we're going to have a Churchwide fast for the weekend of May the 25th. In other words, it can begin Friday or whatever, Saturday, Sunday, in through there in your period of time, whatever that might be, and that means we can join together in this fast within any period of time from that Friday on. I also want to mention that although I'm going to go through some things in Leviticus 23 that talk about fasting, that some have asked about the twenty-four-hour period. It can be a little bit more, it can be a little bit less, or whatever.

For those who probably shouldn't be fasting or shouldn't be fasting very much, sometimes people feel guilty that because of their age and because of health issues and so forth, it's a matter of whatever you can do and you're the only one who can judge that and not to have a guilty conscience about it between yourself and God. God knows exactly what situation you're in and to push yourself too far to where it becomes a health issue for you isn't a smart thing to do. That's not the purpose of fasting.

So again here, mentioning Atonement. We know much about fasting because of the Day of Atonement. It tells us a lot about the purpose of it and what is to be accomplished because of it. God gave very specific instructions about that particular day that's an annual Holy Day. We observe that day with fasting and He makes it clear that it's very exact in everything that's said here. So, we're going to go ahead and read through some of that as I mentioned here, in Leviticus 23. So, in Leviticus 23, which lists the Holy Days, we're going to go through that which is about the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 23:26—Then the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying, Also, the tenth day of the seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, or your life. Again, that particular word there we understand what it's about and what God desires of us, what He's told us that we need to do. It's a matter of no food, no water, and so forth for that period of time, which is a matter of a choice to afflict our life because it's not normal. You want to eat. You want to drink. Almost as soon as you started your fast you're thirsty. That's the way it works. That's the way the mind works.

...you shall afflict your life and offer an offering made by fire. So again, that is a matter of sacrifice. The expression here “made by fire” for us we understand it’s trial, it’s hardship, it’s sacrifice that’s involved. God is telling us we need to sacrifice self, our own ways, our own desire because our desire is to eat every day, is to drink every day. So, we’re to learn from that process on a spiritual plane. They couldn’t. The Israelites couldn’t, but we can. What an awesome thing that we can do that.

...offer an offering made by fire to the Eternal. So again, it’s something we’re offering up to God. What? Self. Ourselves. We belong to God. We want God. We desire God. There are things we do in response to what God has said that help us to draw closer to Him because we want God in our life.

Verse 28—You shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement. That’s the Day of Atonement, not on a regular fast. You can do whatever, in that respect, other things. You don’t do generally a lot of other things, but you know, there are people who at times, at their work they started it in the morning and so they’re working that day and then putting more into things that they have to say in their prayer. But it’s a matter of denying self. It’s a matter of still going through that process of learning the lessons that are there and wanting to honor God in those things and drawing closer to Him.

And so, yes, a person can do that. Certainly, if a person is not doing that there are other things that you can be involved in that you might not normally do on the Sabbath. It is not a Sabbath when it’s not the Day of Atonement. It’s not a High Day. It’s your choice. Now, it might be the weekend that we have the fast because it could be on the weekly Sabbath, part of it, or all of it. That’s up to us.

It says here, **you shall do no work on that same day, for it is a Day of Atonement to make atonement for you before the Eternal your God.** So, “to make atonement,” an expression we should understand for us is about reconciliation. It’s about understanding what this process is all about in the first place in the sense that it’s about making us right individually before God. We want to be right before God. We want to draw closer to God. We want to make sure our lives are being cleansed, that we are repenting as we should be, and so forth. That’s all a part of it.

So, it magnifies those elements, the need for repentance, the need to draw closer to God, the need for prayer, and so forth in our life, making us right before God through, again, the covering of sin, which begins with humility. Because we have to repent of sin, we have to be willing to do that and humble ourselves and acknowledge the wrong in our minds, in our thinking, and so forth that come through that – or in our speech, whatever it might be.

Verse 29—Any person who is not afflicted on that same day shall be cut off from his people. Now, this is a powerful statement because it goes very deep into our lives throughout the year. It’s not just a matter of the Day of Atonement. It’s what’s to be learned from and gleaned from the Day of Atonement and from this process of fasting, what it’s all about.

So, it's during this entire time for atoning, if you will, in this reconciling process that's on the Day of Atonement that one must seek to be of a humble spirit. That's a part of it. Although Atonement is an annual Holy Day of humbling ourselves, we're to humble ourselves before God every day of our life. It's not something we just do once a year.

You know, on the Holy Days, Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, we focus in on some very specific things. But on a special plane, those things are not just things for that period of time; they're for the entire year that we're to carry with us that we're to apply in our lives as far as a relationship with God. So is the Day of Atonement and this matter of humbling ourselves before God.

Verse 30—For any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. So, bringing out here again a spiritual principle that we're to understand. In this particular case here what can we glean from that? Something that's done on that specific day, but when you think about what it's talking about, "to do your own work," which obviously is about every Sabbath and every Holy Day, we're not to do that, but it's accentuated, it's magnified more in that respect here if we understand what's being said. "Our own works," "our own ways," we're not to do.

Just like the Sabbath. Our own works, our own ways, there's a lesson in that, that that's really something we should be applying spiritually every day of our life. We're to do God's ways. We're to focus our minds, our thinking on living God's way of life, not doing our own thing. That's the lesson we carry away from that even though on that day we focus on it more just like the Day of Atonement.

"That person I will destroy from among his people." So again, very powerful if we grasp what that is. If we do our own ways during the week after we've kept the Sabbath, the weekly Sabbath as an example, and we go back out in the world and in a day or two we're right back, we're not really striving to repent and change and draw closer to God, there are lessons in that, that we aren't able to do our own ways.

We can't just do whatever we want any way we want. We're to live God's way of life seven days a week, week after week. Otherwise, what happens? If we don't do that people get cut off from God. That's what happens every time someone leaves, every time someone is disfellowshipped from God's Church. They started doing their own ways. They want that more than they want God and God's ways. That's exactly what happens. They don't want it. It's too hard. It's restrictive. Whatever is in the human mind.

Because the truth is, the reality is, they want to do something different! What is that? What is that that's different that people want to do when they leave? That's mindboggling that that can enter into the mind. But if a person gets weaker and weaker over time this is the result. If people are fudging here and there, drifting here and there, letting down here and there, in time this becomes more the norm. In time, because they're not, in that respect here, doing God's ways, focusing on God's ways in the way they should, instead focusing more on self and what self wants after a while, they're so weak spiritually they can't even see it anymore and they're gone. Incredible.

These are lessons we're to learn. I marvel that God is blessing us and helping us to focus on these things in ways that I believe they never have been in two thousand years because of where we are in time and because of what we're getting ready to go into. And so, we're blessed to see things and grasp things on a spiritual plane that God is giving us understanding of for a purpose. It's going to be for a purpose. But it's an awesome opportunity to be part.

You shall do no manner of work; this is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls, your lives. We learn that from the Day of Atonement, and we're supposed to carry with us that same attitude and spirit into the rest of the year. We need to humble ourselves before God day-by-day-by-day, acknowledge what we are, look to God for help.

If we're relying on ourselves that's not humility. If we're not praying day by day that's not humility. We don't grasp, we're not exercising the fact, "I need God! And without that help and without asking for it I don't have the help day by day that I need that I must have to conquer and fight this fight." Because this fight is every day!

That's the thing that makes everyone different in the Church of God PKG who is spiritually at one with God in that respect, who is striving to live with God, before God, in spirit and in truth, is this matter that this is deeply in the mind. You know you need God and you're willing to fight this fight to the end.

I think of Jeremy's split sermon here recently in talking about is it short range for us, moderate, for a while, or is it to the end. Is it for all time? If that's in your mind it makes a difference in your thinking! That's the way it should be in us. There is never going to be a point where it stops. It's to the end . . . until it continues on. That means our change or death, whatever it might be. But that's our determination, this is what we're going to live. There is no doubt about it.

It shall be to you a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your lives. On the ninth day of the month at evening... Well, we understand what these things mean. On the ninth day of the month at sundown, what is that? It's the beginning of the next day, the tenth, which verse 27 tells us that's what we're supposed to do on the tenth. "And on the tenth day," of that month, "the seventh month." Awesome, that's when it starts.

And so, it gets very specific here and just mentions the ninth so that we really get it, sundown. Atonement is one of the main areas where it talks about this time period from *bane ha erebyim*, from sundown to sundown is the Day of Atonement, in the tenth day.

We understand that with the Sabbath, it's from sundown to sundown, but God spells it out on the Day of Atonement. That phrase then becomes very important in Leviticus here as well where it's talking about it here when it mentions Passover and it says, in essence, "It's on the fourteenth day, *bane ha erebyim*,"

between the two evenings. I've mentioned this before, what an incredible thing to understand what God says. He's very specific about how we're to do things.

For a long time we didn't understand that because we had certain things that were still connected to Judaism because at one time in the beginning, which is understandable, this process of God revealing truth to us, it was this concept, this idea that surely the Jews have a better understanding of the Old Testament and the Holy Days and Passover.

And they do, compared to Christianity and those who translated the Bible. You can see that very easily later on. But when it comes to relying on them, well, you can only go so far. Yes, they know about the Holy Days, they know about the calendar. That's one of the truths that was given, that basically there were certain things of the Old Testament, the timing of things that was given to the Jews to keep. It's not something we have to worry about because they're very meticulous. That's what they're known for in that respect.

And so, we follow that process of the calendar. But again here, to understand *bane ha erebyim*, that it's between the two evenings. We used to think that word was like it's translated sometimes in the Bible as twilight. What is the twilight? So, it was so important that people keep Passover, we thought, in the twilight of that day, on the fourteenth, starting at sundown and then to a period of time where that mysterious time, when all of a sudden, it's just totally dark, totally black outside.

That's not what it means at all. It's not the word for twilight. That was a sick, perverted, disgusting translation. Yet it's messed up a lot of people's minds when you talk about Passover. To me, God's word is exciting when we're given more, when we're given more understanding of things like this that drive the point home. It's a simple thing – sundown to sundown.

...from evening to evening, you shall rest in your Sabbath. So again, we're to learn what God instructed in the observance of Atonement. God has taught us on that day. Many of the things that I've already mentioned here, the process of being reconciled to God, of what we have to go through. It brings in other of the Holy Days, frankly. It's about Passover. It's about coming out of sin. It's about repentance and so forth, of things we must go through, a willingness to humble ourselves because it takes it to that next step then of afflicting ourselves, of realizing that you have to fight this to the end.

It's a matter of telling self "No." So often in life, "No, this isn't right." "No, this is going to cut you off from God if you indulge in your own carnal human nature. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," if we give into that.

And so, we're told to afflict our lives with fasting, being without food and water, and we're to learn the spiritual importance of that, that going without that, as I mentioned last Sabbath, it doesn't take too long on a physical plane to say, "I'm getting weaker," by the end of your fast. And if we don't get that message, if you've never felt that message in your life, go on to the second day.

It's going to hit you at some point that you really need food and water because you're getting weaker. Our bodies get weaker. There are people I know of in family that go through things that sometimes by the end of the day of Atonement, any time of fasting, they've got a splitting headache, they're not feeling well. There are people who throw up. Because it's a hard thing for the human body; it's not a fun thing to do.

"Oh, fasting, I just love it!" Well, who really loves it? Well, we love the result, but let's be candid, I don't like to go without food and water. It's not natural. If we can grasp that on a physical plane, what our bodies are like, our minds are like, we're to apply this spiritually in our lives when it comes to living God's way of life. You have to fight against self to yield, to submit to God.

To submit to God's government takes that kind of attitude. To have respect to the office. Because we still have things happening from time to time, Sabbath to Sabbath, where something comes out that someone has spoken to someone ordained in a way that reveals they've got a rotten, stinking attitude! Why is that? Almost demanding, expecting that something is owed, and then treating with disrespect someone that gives them an answer of something they don't like. Well, goes down to human nature. It has to be fought against.

Because if those kinds of things come in directly toward God's government what are we like toward God the rest of the week? I can tell you it's not good. If we don't understand that, that's sad. Because if we don't see God in the picture within His government we don't see it within the Church like we should, of how we think about each other. There is sin in there. It's got to be gotten rid of.

So again, without spiritual food and water that God desires to give to us if we just ask, we come to a point where we just get cut off from God and don't even know it, don't even know what's happened, and we will die. What a horrible thing to die spiritually.

So, to be of the right mind, to want to go before God daily (as in prayer then), seeking His life to dwell in us, requires that we choose to afflict our human nature, that we understand the need, that we say no to things that interfere. Maybe just putting things aside, not even considering it.

Now, the word "afflict" I think is good here in Leviticus 23 because it's often translated as "humble," and that ought to drive it home even more so. To afflict our lives means to humble our lives, to be of a humble spirit toward God. It's one of the greatest battles we have. I hope we understand why. Because it's the opposite of pride, and pride has been the most destructive force within God's Church in the last two thousand years. Pride.

Because pride leads to everything else. Pride leads to following through with "lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes." It's pride, deceiving oneself thinking we can do it, or we can justify it somehow, or whatever goes on in the human mind sometimes. Pride is a desire of self being elevated toward God, which we

don't even grasp on a spiritual plane, but even among one another oftentimes we have those battles in life.

So, the lessons are there that we are to afflict ourselves before God and choose to battle this to the end. To understand that we're to battle this to the end, that's an awesome thing.

Turn over to Deuteronomy 8:1. So, humility is a matter of choosing God, a desire to obey Him in all things. **Deuteronomy 8:1—All the commandments which I command you this day you shall observe to do so that you may live.** What an awesome thing!

I feel so bad for people when they make wrong choices, but it's their choice, and you can't make anyone choose something different. You can't make people choose the right thing to do. That's an individual thing that God gives to every one of us, our own responsibility, "so that you may live."

You think, what a simple thing that God says, "I have set before you this day life and death." And how many in the Church have really, really, really through time grasped that or really, really, really believed that with all their being? Sadly, in time it shows that we can deceive ourselves and choose the other, unwittingly so sometimes even. To me, that's a horrifying thing. That's why we have to keep on top of things and ask God for continual help in realizing the dangers of a carnal human nature. That's a matter of being watchful spiritually, on guard spiritually.

Choose life and death. Really a no-brainer if we really believe it, if we really grasp it. Well, life, who wants to die? And yet we understand even on a physical plane everyone has to die. As a whole, that's the way it's been for the last six thousand years. Everyone goes through this process. No one escapes it. There'll be a very few at the very end at Christ's coming. They're going to be unique in time. Amazing.

Choose life. So simple, but it's not. But it requires the things we're talking about today. It requires this close relationship with God through prayer. It requires that we receive of His life to live and dwell within us, of Him and His Son to live and dwell within us, and to understand that's why His Son died in the first place, so we could be forgiven of sin, so they could dwell with us. So simple.

So, it says here, **that you shall observe to do so that you may live and multiply.** It's not about just of numbers, it's about us. God's way of life in our thinking, in our minds, in our being. Fruit that can be multiplied in our life and grow in our life more so because of God's spirit.

...and go in and possess the land which the Eternal has made an oath unto your fathers. So, we understand that that's not about a physical land, as a whole. That was a part of it that they were to have on a physical plane, but it's to teach spiritual lessons from and to understand about God's Kingdom and what our goal and what our desire is, to be a part of God's Family.

You shall remember all the way which the Eternal your God led you all these forty years in the wilderness. God says don't forget it. The lessons that are there, there are so many in that forty years

about human nature, about the way we are, about God's intervention, about God's mercy and God's patience when we do have a right desire.

...who has led you these forty years in the wilderness to humble you. Same word as "afflict." To humble you, to afflict you for a purpose. There are things God did there for a purpose, to prove you, to put you to the test, to see what you would do. God already knew what they were going to do. God knows the mind. He created us. He knew exactly what the Israelites would do under those conditions. It's just human nature. Without His holy spirit that was the only way they could respond.

So, they saw things on a physical plane and believed on a physical plane certain aspects of what they had experienced. They believed they went through the Red Sea, but what did that mean? Nothing spiritually. What did it mean?

Because as soon as they were on the other side, "This isn't a nice place to be, desert all around, no water..." Murmur, murmur, murmur. Because when you get thirsty? "God brought us out here, He delivered us from the Egyptians," they said, "to die in the wilderness." We should be able to see that human nature. It's in all of us! It's just human nature. God knew they were going to complain.

So, it wasn't that God didn't know this and He's going to put them to the test, to prove them, to show. No, it's to show us what human nature is like. It's to show us what the carnal human mind is like even after seeing miraculous things, seeing what happened when there was a separation between what was happening to them in Goshen and what was happening to the rest of Egypt when they were going through these trials of the plagues that they were. They experienced some in the beginning and then God made a separation, and He protected them from all of them.

Then the last one, killing of the lamb, putting the blood on the doorposts, and Passover night and all the firstborn of Egypt, and all the animals, all the firstborn, they all died. But not the Israelite families. They were protected. God beginning to teach something that people hadn't known before, Passover.

Abraham didn't know about Passover. Noah didn't know about Passover. Those things weren't given yet. They didn't grasp and comprehend what that was all about. The Israelites didn't grasp and understand what Passover was all about. It was a period of something to observe at that point in order to be brought out of Egypt, but there were certain aspects of things they couldn't observe until they came into the promised land. Incredible!

...to humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart. So we can see what the heart is like. Doesn't take long to murmur against God. It doesn't take long when we want something different to turn against God. But we don't necessarily put God in the picture. Who did they put in the front? Moses. "Look what you have done! You have brought us out in the wilderness!" It wasn't a mind of an attitude of thinking God is real and God is all powerful and you better watch your mouth of what you say about God.

We should be fearful of things when we find fault and say something about God. Yet people do. They just don't know it when they say it toward maybe some truth that's been given, toward the ministry, whatever it might be that's there in a battle. It's just human nature. So, we're to learn from that.

I used to be very early in the Church and we'd go through the Holy Days there and go through stories about Moses and about them coming out of Egypt and I'd think, "Man, hard-headed!" It was hard to grasp that they were that bad! After going through the Red Sea it's like, "How could you be that way as soon as you got on the other side?" Then in time you learn, "Mmm, we all have that same human nature." They're not the ones that are just hard-headed, stiff-necked, and so forth. It's just our human nature. Without God's help, it can't be changed, it will always be there.

We've been so blessed to see we can change. We don't have to stay this way as human beings. Incredible!

...to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And for them, most of all it was "or not." Because over and over again on a continual basis they did not.

So, there was a portion on a physical plane depending on the leadership they had all the way through time there and the kings and the prophets and so forth as to whether or not they kept things on a physical plane because that's all they could grasp. And so, we have the history of Judah separating from Israel and then seeing what happened there. But it's all physical.

Verse 3—So He humbled you, afflicted them, humbled them and the response wasn't very good again here. It goes on to say **and allowed you to hunger,** to be hungry. God could have provided anything and everything for them, just like all the quail, birds, whatever that came in there in the camp. Anyway, God can provide anything at any time for anybody, but God wasn't being kept in the picture and God wasn't at the forefront of their minds, and obedience to God wasn't at the forefront of their minds.

God allowed them to go hungry. Then what did they learn from that? Well, then they started crying out, "We're starving. We need food! We have no bread! We have no grain! We have nothing!" So it says, **and He fed you with manna.** So, that was God's help to them, gift to them in that respect, to feed them with manna forty years. But you have to follow a certain process here.

They had to learn the hard way that you have to go out and work for it. He's not just going to give it to you on a silver platter. You've got to go out and you've got to work for it. You've got to do it God's way if you want to live! They never learned that lesson, as a whole, except the fact that they knew they had to have it, they had to save it and go out and work to get it or they're going to go hungry. So, that's what they had to go through.

They'd go out and it'd be on twigs of things and so forth out there and they would gather it. They were to gather a certain amount and no more. Then there were some who tried to gather more, and they learned it doesn't work. It gets worms and smells putrid. Anyway, you know the stories. You can just go

back and read some of them. It's amazing the human nature that's there, what people will do because they're supposed to save, what, a quart, whatever it is. "Let's take a couple. Let's get a couple." Human nature. People get greedy. They learned that doesn't work.

God worked with them, very patient with them, but it was all physical to bring them into a physical subjection to government, to Moses, and so forth. But it wasn't a great conviction of the mind truly as what it needs to be, which God has given us in the Church.

Again here, he says, **So that He might make you know that mankind does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Eternal does mankind live.** The lesson wasn't for them. They couldn't see that. They couldn't grasp that because this is a spiritual thing. It's for the Church. We're to learn from those lessons of things that have happened for that first four thousand years that are recorded in scripture.

We're to learn from those physical examples of the spiritual lessons that are there that God intended. Because they're all there, and we can grow from that. We can learn from that. We can glean from that. And just like this one here, that's what God desires us to understand. This is how we are able to live. This is how you're able to grow. This is how you're able to survive, not just in physical life but on to have life evermore. And not just for that but because you're convicted it's right. It's not just for the sake of being selfish and wanting to live forever, it's because you agree with God. That's the bottom line. That's what it has to come down to.

Because God even judges that. Because sometimes people just want to save their own flesh. We had people come along early on in some cases who were interested to a point in time and then when nothing happened in 2012, they're gone. I understand that. But was that the reason for them being there?

Exodus 10:1—Then the Eternal said to Moses, Go into Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants. What an incredible thing to understand how that works, to understand how the heart can become hardened. It isn't that God makes people have or respond to have certain choices to God, it's a matter that under certain conditions this is what human nature is going to come out doing, in that respect.

And so, there are things that God allowed to happen to Pharaoh where no matter what took place plagues came and then he would humble himself enough to ask for Moses, to have audience with Moses, and ask Moses to take away the plague. But then what happened right after that? He became harder because his attitude was so – I don't even know how you describe such a thing, really.

The carnal mind can become so ugly and want its way so badly and hates that there is something else interfering with, in his case, his authority, that he was greater than God. And so, God would just show him again and again and again, "You're not greater. These are things that you can't control. These are

things outside of your power.” That’s why Moses understood, especially toward the end there, and really understood it all along, but his life was in peril to go before Pharaoh on a regular basis like that.

He said, **Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants that I may show these signs of mine before him and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son’s son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Eternal.**

These stories just grew through time. They continued on through the forty years. They continued on into the promised land. They continued on through the kings, the reign of the kings, and so forth, and more and more stories that could be passed down so that people could understand there is a powerful Almighty God and these things have happened to them. They had all this knowledge. But again, it was only for a physical thing.

So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, Thus says the Eternal God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? He wasn’t about to, so much so that he went into the area of the Red Sea and all of his army and God killed them all. Incredible.

He said, **Let My people go, that they may serve Me.** So again, the hard-heartedness, the hard-headedness. The thing is we have to learn from that we all have human nature and even with the impregnation of God’s spirit we still have human nature. And we have choices in that. Do we really learn from these lessons? Do we really want God? Do we really understand that the bread of life is something we have to have every day of our life? That we have to be nourished every day?

The physical examples are there to teach us the spiritual, that without God we’ll begin to drift, we’ll begin to fall away from God, we’ll begin to lose what we have in our minds to where we can come to a point where we don’t even believe the truth anymore. This happens over and over and over again, certain people at times will hold on to certain things that they want to do or think they need to do and do it a different way. It’s the same thing whether you lose it all or whether you do it that way! Incredible!

Carnality, human nature, our human nature, selfishness, is evil, evil, evil. It fights against God. And especially within the Church, by this time we should all understand that. But I’m here to tell you not all do yet. But it’s going to come to that when it’s all said and done.

Becoming strengthened through fasting in the spirit of truth requires a strong focus on the need for humility, to humble ourselves before God. Which means to say no to self, to learn to say that, and to ask God for the help to stick to that because you can’t do it on your own.

You might want to be determined to do it in certain things in your life and change certain things. There are certain things I’m focusing on right now. There are certain battles I’m having because I want self refined more. That’s the way we should be. And yet this human nature, you know, God, no matter where we are in growth there are things that God’s going to reveal to you that you don’t see yet.

And when He shows you certain things about your human nature and reveals more to you and then you realize this battle and then you find yourself tripping in it and you realize, “I have to have God’s spirit.” And this is something we should always grasp, you need God’s help to fight that, to fight this. The more God reveals to you the greater or the more, in that respect, you just have to keep fighting. You have to keep fighting until this is over with.

We’re the ones, as I mentioned earlier, said it in a different way, but we’re the ones who must persevere. To have the name Israel, that’s what that’s all about; you persevere to the end. You keep saying no to self. You keep doing things even if you don’t understand them all the time. Even if a truth comes along and you don’t really understand it, you do it.

That’s how we learned in the beginning. That’s how we grew in understanding, if we grasp the process of change, is by doing it, by obeying God, that you begin to see and agree with, you’re able to come into agreement then with God with God’s help.

That’s what it’s all about, becoming at one with God, agreeing with everything He says. And where we don’t, well, you keep doing it and in time God will help you to see it. But sometimes people are impatient. You can’t be impatient. In time, God will give us everything, everything, everything. Everything. Some of that isn’t until we’re changed, obviously, but we keep fighting and growing until we can come to that point of birth, being born into God’s Family. And so much is about humility, getting rid of the self, getting rid of our way.

The Sabbath is to teach us that. Don’t work. Don’t do your way. Do it God’s way. That should carry over in the rest of our life day by day.

So again, becoming strengthened through fasting in spirit and in truth requires a strong focus on the need for humility, the ability to grow in humility. The ability, something you want to grow in. Again, getting rid of self, getting rid of doing things our way.

Ephesians 6:10—Finally, my brethren, be strong, or become strong, it’s a process, **in the Eternal and in...** So, how are you strong in the Eternal? You better be in Him, Almighty God, in Christ, for them to be in you. So, we have to have them living and dwelling in us in order to be in them. That’s the process. It starts with that, our desire to be repenting and changing and growing and fighting and crying out for God’s spirit and asking to dwell in us, “Dwell in me.” And then because of that, we’re able to dwell in them. That’s the process. We’re able to continue on in the Church, to dwell in the Church of God, to dwell in Christ, to dwell in God the Father. And if they’re not dwelling in us, we will not long be around. Now, “long” could be a year, two years, three years, five years, whatever. But eventually, it all comes out, especially now.

So, this desire to be in God, a desire that God be in us, it should be our life.

...and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God. I love this because this shows this is a battle. It's so simple. It's about a war and it never ends. It never ends as long as you're in God's Church because this is the only place you can learn to fight against self. It's the only place you can conquer self and the wrong thinking that comes into the human mind that's based on selfishness.

Because that's just the way we're created. We were created to be selfish. Some say, "That's not fair." Well, that's the only way – that's the only way to create Elohim – that you have to come through the choice yourself, of understanding how sick, how evil the human mind is, to understand how sick wars are, fighting, jealousy, envy, drama, and on and on it goes. To see how those things do nothing but hurt and pull down mankind.

Only with God are things made right, to be able to grow in peace, to be able to grow in love and God's love and God's mind toward others in His kind of love. Because ours is still selfish by nature. We have to have God's kind of love in us. That's the way.

Again here, what an incredible thing to understand it requires battle. Not just persevering to the end, but persevering because we're fighting. You're not going to give up the war. You're not going to surrender. You're going to fight to the end. That means to the end, literally, even if it means our death. So be it! So be it! Because what's on the other side is forever and ever and ever into time.

This isn't what it's all about. This temporary physical life is just where we have the opportunity if called and when called to learn these things, that life isn't about this, the selfishness, "What I want, the way I want it," and "I don't want someone to tell me how to do it. I don't want to have to obey certain rules" and so forth.

Well, they lead you into being at one with God to where there is no law. It's the way we are, of one mind with God in Elohim. We don't have to have the Ten Commandments. That's for human beings. We're not going to have to have different laws. We're going to know the right way that we're to live. We're going to know what to do and how to do it because we're at one with God. We have the mind of God. It's just automatic. That way is peace, that way is fullness of life on a scale we can't even comprehend as human beings. But we experience a taste of it from time to time and we latch on to it. Awesome!

"Put on the whole armor of God." It's not a matter of a suggestion, it's a matter of either we're doing it or we're not. This requires a close relationship with God. It requires prayer. It requires fasting. It requires a desire to be in agreement with God, to go through whatever it is we might need in order to be refreshed from time to time, whether it be on the Sabbath and Holy Days, but also on our own from time to time, whether it be listening to a sermon, reading something or just keeping up on everything that's there in front of us and asking God for help to live it.

Put on the whole armor of God. You have to ask for it. These aren't physical things, they're spiritual. ... **that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** What a horrible thing when we don't, if we

don't grasp that sometimes we're attacked, that sometimes we have things thrown at us. Sometimes things come into your mind that are not of your mind, but they're in your mind, and you have to say no, and you have to fight against it.

There are beings that know our weaknesses, and that's what they're going to throw at you. That's what they're going to do as they come at you, and they're going to amplify what is your normal thinking or wrong thinking. They want to amplify that weakness, whatever it might be. And so, they throw things at you, and those are especially times to understand the need to draw closer to God, the need to fast. Because if we're getting weaker, which without fasting throughout the year at different times, you're going to get weaker. You can't help it.

If you've been able to continue on and you haven't been doing those things except on the Day of Atonement it's only because God's had mercy upon you and has a desire to work with you and to bring you through that, and to bring you to the point where you're able to see and make choice then of these kinds of things we're talking about in a greater way in your life spiritually.

"To stand against the wiles of the devil." So, we need help to fight against even the spirit world that's out there because they seek to attack God's people. They seek to lead astray God's people by the battles that they throw at you. What's that scripture we read every once in a while we can be so thankful for?

"Because greater is He that is in us than he who is in the world." It's about God being in us because that's our strength, that's our power. It's God. It's not us. We have to rely on God for the strength and the help to fight the battles that are there, to be able to say no successfully.

We go through things. I knew this year, I've said it already, there are certain things I had to battle during the Days of Unleavened Bread starting with Passover. I knew it wasn't normal. It wasn't me. It wasn't my thinking. It's not what I think in that respect, but I was being bombarded. I knew where it was coming from. So, you have to cry out to God to say no, "No!"

You know, God allowed Christ to be bombarded. He was bombarded by Satan for a period of time in ways that we can't even begin to grasp! With tremendous power, he stood his ground, said "No." "No." "No." "Get away from me." That's the battle, whatever our carnal human nature is, whatever it is you're working on at any moment in time.

So, no matter where you grow and how long you grow, these things will still happen to you in the Church of God. They will happen to you.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness, basically as it's talking about here, **in the spiritual realm.** So, you're not just fighting against this.

Self is enough. I mean, this here is a battle, and you have to have God's strength and God's help continually in you in order to fight against self, our own selfishness. But how much more? God lets us

experience that. We're bombarded by things at different times. Sometimes we're not. That's the most dangerous, when we're not for a longer period of time, and then all of a sudden, you're being bombarded by something, and you don't realize it and you succumb to whatever those battles are. That's why we have to be on guard continually.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God. So, it's up to us to humble ourselves. To do this is a matter of humility, it's a matter of realizing, "I need help; I need God's spirit."

So again here, **the whole armor of God so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.** So, evil day? Well, in this world every day is evil. It's just everywhere around us. We're just bombarded by it. Whether it be things on TV, whether it be things in music. Whatever it is in the world, it's just everything is going in a wrong direction and it's getting worse and worse and worse, and we're bombarded by those things.

If we could just grasp and see it even more so, one of the reasons these things are so powerful now is because of the human mind and how people are choosing wrong things and allowing weird things to rule in their lives. A demonic world loves that. It's fuel. When they can stir that up more and more in the world they have more power to come at you. That's the way it works. Because it's spirit.

So, these beings today have a lot of power. They had a lot of power in the days of Noah. Any time people turn more from God, away from God, the more power in that respect they have, they're able to exercise. It's a real living thing.

So, in Ephesians it goes on, **verse 14—Therefore, stand...** We want to stand in God's way of life. We want to stand for what's right, stand strong in God's way of life. We have to ask God for that help. But He's telling us how to do it. This is all so clear. but it's a matter of doing it.

...having girded your waist with truth. It shows the importance of going into battle that God has given us, that He's given us the truth, the weapons that are held there or whatever it might be, everything that is there to reinforce or to strengthen you. God says to do it here with the truth first and foremost. That's your power, your weapons that are there.

I've mentioned that many of times, that the truth God's given to us is our strength. There is a lot of power there. All the truths we have, that's our strength. Being at one with those things, agreeing with those things, that's God! And to agree with them, the mind of God. You can't be in agreement with all of them without help. The more we agree with them, the more we really see them.

It's like we can go through scriptures at times, and we can go through things, and all of a sudden we see something we hadn't seen before. It's that way in the truths that God has given to us as well. We are able to continue to pick up on them, to see certain things and how they fit together, and on and on it goes. It's the building that God is creating.

Stand, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. So, it's something we have to put on. That means it's a choice whether we do it or not.

"The breastplate of righteousness." So, how do you have that because none of us are righteous? God makes that really clear. We're not righteous. We have carnal human nature. As long as we have carnal human nature there is going to be sin. That's why we have to go before God and ask for forgiveness of our sins through our Passover Joshua the Christ, so that God will live in us. So that Christ can live in us. So that we have that spirit in us on a continuing basis.

It's through the truth that God's given to us. We've already read about that. And because of the truth and the way of life that God has revealed to us, we have made the choice to do it. Even sometimes, as I said earlier, even if we don't understand it, some parts of it, we strive to do it. And then in time, God will give us the rest. That never changes. You continue to build upon that, the truth. We can't get it all at once. We can't see it all at once, it's something we grow in. It's an awesome thing to understand.

So, "have put on the breastplate of righteousness" because that comes from believing what God gives us, and because we believe it, we strive to live by it. That's what God attributes to us for righteousness. Awesome! It's not because we are, it's because we hear what God says and we do it. We want to do it His way. We made that choice. Whatever we're given, whatever we're told, we're going to do it. We strive to do it. We pray for help to do it, and God accounts that to us for righteousness. Beautiful.

"Put on the breastplate of righteousness." A lot of power and strength in that. Why? Why here? Because it's talking about in many respects here what's in the heart. We understand that's a matter of what's in the mind, but it's how we think and the way we think, being merciful, striving to live by love, striving to live in kindness toward others, and on and on it goes. But it's protecting the innermost part of our being. And living by the truth helps that to grow within us.

...and having shod your feet. In other words, how are we to walk? So, God shows us. **...by being prepared with the gospel of peace.** So again, we know the way to walk that produces peace, but you have to fight against self to do that. There are times you have to say no to certain thinking that comes into your mind, to not let it develop there, not let it fester, not let it become bigger in that sense. Well, you have to fight against it so that we truly have peace.

Above all, take to yourself the shield of faith. Well, that's tied in directly with this thing of righteousness, the breastplate of righteousness. It's this matter of the shield of faith. It's like having extra there, a shield, not just the breastplate, but now you have a shield to protect your whole being. God has given that to us, and He says it's a matter of faith. So, God gives us what to believe. He gives us the truth. Then by the very fact we choose it and ask God for help to do that constantly we're living by faith and it's a shield to our lives.

...with which you will be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. So, all the more so to do what God says, to fast, to pray, to want God in your life, to seek to repent of any sin that's there, to clean up our life.

I think about what this Holy Day season has been doing, and so much of it in so many ways it's a matter of some of the kinds of battles that are there that we seek to fight them and seek to be able to live by what God has given to us.

Let's go on to **verse 17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying always...** That means as it says in other places, without ceasing. Praying always is that process. It has to be a daily part of our life. Praying without ceasing. **...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.**

So, it's a matter of something that has to be done on a spiritual plane that's a matter of something we grasp and comprehend that it comes from God, the strength and the power comes from God, and we want to draw closer to Him.

...be watchful to this end with all perseverance. That word again, persevere, to live up to, to be Israel spiritually. **...and supplication for all saints.**

Well, I can tell I'm starting to battle a little bit so I'm going to surprise you all – probably not – but anyway, I'm going to close this sermon here because this room is really getting to me and I can tell I'm struggling a little bit more with some of this, and the headache isn't getting any better.

So, we're going to quit a little early today for that very reason, and I'll just have more to speak on next Sabbath and the Sabbath after that. Well, not next Sabbath because you have a prerecorded sermon.