

We're doing a kind of informal bible study Sabbath service type of arrangement here today going into some of the things in the book of Romans preparing for what was given this past Sabbath here that starts out in Romans 7 on the subject, the sermon series entitled 'The Body of Christ.' Anyway, was just explaining here how that Paul... sometimes it's difficult for some people to understand some of the things that Paul has written because he's addressing both the Jews and the Gentiles and especially in the book of Romans he's writing to those in Rome and that presented some of its own difficult problems as well because Rome is the headquarters of all the oppression that was taking place in that part of the world at that time anyway and it was kind of like Jesus Christ going into Jerusalem toward the end; it's not the most pleasant place to visit and it wasn't the best place for Christianity to get it's start.

We were talking about how that oftentimes then Paul, if you don't understand the background of some of the things Paul is addressing and what he's talking about, it's difficult to understand what he's saying. But he's addressing some things of Judaism and some things of the Gentiles and trying to give a balance to both and Laura was just bringing out how that even the last time... what was it Trumpets the last time we were here... not the last time, but the time we were here for Trumpets when I started speaking to all of you that were here I had a difficult time because all of a sudden it hit me; there's no one that has a history here. There's no one that goes back into Worldwide; because generally I'm addressing things having to do with our past because it all ties in, it all fits in together. So that was rather unique for me just to have a group that was totally new and that changes then how you're going to focus on a particular subject matter. And so I had a difficult time because I wanted to address some of the things having to do with our past as well and it was a little harder because there was no one there to talk to specifically. I had to think about it in my mind about where they were. So again, that's a unique experience too because you're coming in at a point in time where when everything that's happened in our past you read it like the book of Acts; it's like it just happened, it's a fact, it's the way it is; but those of us in the Church who experienced it – we're carrying along, in some cases, some garbage, some baggage or whatever from our past that's a little bit difficult to come out of or to change or to address.

So anyway, I thought it'd be good to start here. We'll start right here in the beginning of the book of Romans and just address some of the things that are being said here so that by the time you hear the sermon that was given, the pre-recorded sermon, 'Part 1' of 'The Body of Christ', thing's hopefully fit together even a little bit better for you. But going to pick up some things that really aren't even covered in that sermon but I thought it'd be good just to get a bit of a background here for Paul and what he's doing.

Verse 1 - Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, and so again here, whenever I read something like this it hits me in a unique way because of a job God has given to me as both a prophet and an apostle. Some

people, even in our past, had problems with me talking about being a prophet. Its like, “Why do you have to tell anyone you’re a prophet? It’s like you’re lifting yourself up or bragging about it or whatever and you don’t have to tell everybody in the Church you’re a prophet.” The reality is, no, that’s the job. You have to do that; you have to set down the credentials of what God has given to you so that if people are listening and they believe it this is going to have an impact upon them. If they don’t believe that then they’re not going to grow and they’re not going to learn and listen. So that’s what God has us do. He has us tell people what our job is, how we’re sent to them and that if they accept what God is giving to them they’re going to accept that leadership or the ones through whom someone is being taught; and if they don’t accept that then there’s a big problem from the very get go. They’re not going to grow; they’re not going to receive what’s being given.

So Paul right away tells them, “I am an apostle...” I was called to be an apostle separated unto the gospel of God, in other words, the good news that God has given. So he’s showing this is my job to go out to teach this good news that God has given to me. (...which He had promised before by the prophets in the holy scriptures.) So everything that was given as far as that good news was just fulfilled in Jesus Christ; “All the things that Jesus Christ taught,” Paul said, “Now I am to continue on. All those things that were given in the Old Testament, I’m continuing on and teaching now. This is the job God has called me to do.” Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, the Messiah, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; so again, it’s showing here that there’s that lineage that came from David in order to fulfill the scriptures to be the Messiah, to be the Christ. He had to be of a descendant of David. ...and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. And so again, it’s just setting the stage here, that it’s all about Jesus Christ, the message here He’s giving and that He was resurrected from the dead.

By whom we have received grace and apostleship to the obedience of faith, is a more proper translation of that; to the obedience of faith among all nations for His name. It’s interesting here the way it’s phrased here in the Greek, ‘to the obedience of faith’ because it has to do with things that Paul is getting ready to teach here. There are Jews that are in this area, mostly Gentiles, but there are Jews that he’s addressing and so many of the Jews are coming out of a past where basically when it came to the law they believed that they were able to be saved by or that their strength was by their ability to keep the law. In other words, their righteousness, they believed, came from how well they were able to keep God’s law, in other words by the term that’s used as ‘works’, by their ability to keep the law. This was their idea of... they were righteous because of how well they were able to keep God’s law and Paul goes through the story and telling them, “You can’t keep God’s law. Everyone sins; everyone is guilty of the death penalty. If you try to be saved by works you’re up the creek, you’re going to be put to death eventually in time.” That’s what’s God’s penalty is for sin because everyone sins. No one is able to keep the law perfectly; no one can be righteous all the time; it’s impossible to live that way of life.

And so he says there’s an ‘obedience to faith’. Faith is a matter of something that God gives to you that you believe. Faith is how you live because of what you believe. Everything you’re doing right now, everything that’s taking place right now because of where we are in time, especially for us. I think of different times that we’ve

addressed things that have happened to us in the Church. It doesn't matter what that period of time is, so much of it has to do with what God gives to you. Do you believe what God has given as far as a Sabbath, the Holy Days, the plan, the entire plan of God, and if you believe those things then you change your life accordingly. Just like the Sabbath. All of you came along. There are things that you had to do concerning the Sabbath; of not working on the Sabbath. Those are choices everybody has to make. Of not working on the Holy Days. People have to make those choices. And so there's 'an obedience to faith'. In other words, God gives you the ability to believe and understand His plan and purpose; He gives you the ability to understand what the Holy Days are about and if we don't want to honour Him in those things, and we don't observe those things – then we're not obedient to what He's given us to believe and He can't mould and fashion us then, we're resisting Him. And so there's an 'obedience to faith' that's not talking about an obedience to the law here, it's an obedience to what you are given to believe. Yes, you're to obey the law, but it has to do with what you believe. It's based on your conviction. And that's what Paul is starting to point out here.

So again here, among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ; and so he's letting the Romans know, as all of you, you're called of Jesus Christ. You're called by God and you've been given to Christ and so God has personally in each individual's life, called you. It's an awesome thing. You can't give this to anyone else. God opened up your minds so that you can see and understand these things and you go and try to talk to someone else you learn very quickly on as you're being called; you can't do that, you can't give this to anybody. You want, you wish your family, every one of your family members, everyone of the people you work with, or whatever, or people that are your friends that you've grown up with, or whatever... your neighbours, of people you're close to and have close friendships – you wish they could see and be excited; you want to share this with them; and after a while some of them aren't even your friends anymore, some in your own families – after a while they're not even your own friends anymore. We find that's what Jesus Christ even said. Sometimes within your own home you find they've turned to be your enemies because they hate the truth, they hate God's way of life. Without God's help, without God's spirit, without God bringing someone to humility most people are going to show a bad side toward you because they're not going to like what you're doing, they're not going to like the changes you're making. You're changing, you're becoming something different, someone different than what they knew in the past and this is a threat to them, or whatever. There's something there that causes problems. Sometimes people don't have the same problems, and it depends on the other individuals of a family and so forth. So all of you have experienced some of those kinds of things. You can't come into the Church without experiencing some of it.

So again, you are the called of Jesus Christ, God has opened up your mind, but He hasn't opened up others around you and you can't give this to anyone.

Verse 7 – To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, again, showing that when God calls us He loves us. We're the beloved of God. He's not pouring out His love upon others in this world yet because this kind of love has to do with a relationship. He's called you to have a relationship with you, to give you the opportunity to begin to know Him and to have a relationship with Him. We start in a process where we have our own personal private prayers

with Him, things we go through that are personal or private of what we're fighting and conquering and overcoming and He's very much there, wanting us to come through it; Him and His Son. And that's the purpose He's called us. And through time He's only called a few. In the first 4,000 years, it's really awesome to understand God Almighty worked personally with just a few people. There weren't a lot of people. And then finally when the Church began and all of a sudden there were 3,000 in one day that were drawn in to begin to be worked with on a greater scale than had ever been done in times past because of the process whereby people could be changed and saved. But before that it was just one on one. You look at Abraham, you look at Abel, you look at Noah and David. David was the only one for a time. There were some others around that were there, Nathan, but very few in even during his lifetime that are mentioned.

So it's a relationship God's blessed us to have with Him; that's what's exciting about realizing He's getting ready to call millions now into a relationship. So just like in times past; the first 4,000 years only a few people in time. That whole book; there aren't many listed in here who are part of the 144,000 and most have come then in the past 2,000 years and now we're getting close to a point where that's going to be multiplied again that much more into the millions. So again, what was just onesies, twosies and over 4,000 years; all of a sudden turned into a few thousand then in the next 2,000 years and now getting ready to turn into millions. And then when we get to the Great White Throne billions upon billions; but everyone has to be called and God works with each individual through the power of His spirit. An awesome thing to understand how that God can work with so many at the same time if that's His purpose and plan; He can work with...because of His power, His might that we don't grasp.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and so 'grace' he's saying, blessings of being able to be forgiven, favour, mercy that God is giving to you. The word 'grace' sums all those things up. It's the process that God works with people and the mercy, the favour, the help, undeserved favour because it has to do with the word that means 'undeserved favour, pardon'. We don't deserve what God gives to us.

First, I thank My God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. So this was unique. The people living in Rome... every area that Paul wrote to; the Corinthians were a unique people, Philippians were different in some of the things, those in Thessalonica; they were different. So he addressed different things in different places. When we travel people are different in different regions of the world and we have different characteristics a lot of times and so those are dealt with in different ways. The Romans were known, especially because of where they lived and God called them out of that environment that was oppressive right there at the headquarters of the Roman Empire and the oppression that was taking place that came right out of Rome. And so he's making it clear here that your faith, the example that you're setting by your response to what you believe is powerful and other people in other areas are speaking of it. And Paul's saying, and I talk to people about it to be able to share with them that encouragement of what's happening in Rome with brethren who are out there.

For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. And so again here, his desire for those in Rome and it's not like today. We can travel, and God's blessed us so we can travel from area to area and be in an area generally two times in a year, most areas, sometimes three, sometimes four – but again, back then it was a long, long time in some cases; months and months or years before Paul would ever be able to get back into a region and be with some of the people and them to be able to have that personal relationship but when he did go to an area he stayed for some time as well, and so quite unique the travellings of Paul and how the Church grew at that time.

Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. So it shows what was in Paul's heart. He desired to go to Rome and be with them. He was sending them this letter and showing that here by prayer, by making request his desire was to be with them knowing that was their desire as well. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established. Now, sometimes when people get (this really struck me last night when I was going through some of this) that sometime when people go through and they talk about gifts, when Paul speaks of these things, they think more of (because some things are taken out of balance and not what is intended by the scripture anyway) miracles of speaking in tongues, which is a gift which has to do with languages, the ability to communicate with people of other languages if it's necessary that God inspire someone. But most people today don't understand what that means because of Pentecostals; but it just has to do with the ability to...just like in The Netherlands when they went through the book, both books. In the beginning they started focusing more on a word by word type of translation, where you can't do that because something in their language you have to know the sense of what's being said in order... you may have to change a lot of the words. You may not be able to use the same words; you may have to use a lot of different words to express the thought of what's being said; and that's what they had to learn how to do. And that's a gift when it comes to the truth because most things in the world you can translate word by word; but not God's word. God's word you have to understand the spirit of it, what's being said, what is the purpose of what's being said and so it's a totally different approach but you have to have God's spirit to be able to do that. And so it's a gift if you're able to be able to talk to someone in another language to convey to them that spiritual intent of what's being said. And that's a gift. But the gift Paul is talking about even more so is what he desires to impart to them. What is that he's going to do when he's going to go there? He's going to preach. He's going to teach. He's going to talk about the Old Testament primarily because the New Testament hadn't been written yet. So as a whole, he's going to be talking about scriptures in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ that prove Jesus Christ is the Messiah, all the scriptures that Christ fulfilled. He's going to talk about the things Jesus Christ taught as well before His death and after His death. So he's going to be teaching things, but to what purpose? The same purpose we have Sabbath services – to help us to grow, to impart a spiritual gift to us so that we can hopefully change, so that we can hopefully...just like this new series we're going into right now. It's for the purpose that we can see ourselves more clearly so that we can change; because that's God's desire – that we don't stay the same way as we are, that we repent and make changes in our life and that there is something that maybe we can see in ourselves spiritually that we couldn't see before – something we see in God's plan that we didn't...

Just like sometimes we get very excited when we see something we didn't see before, just like this last series we went through. I was excited by what God revealed about the lamb on the 10th day; had to be set apart, and never really known fully what that fulfillment was or what it meant until God showed in this particular series here that that's the very day that Jesus Christ was anointed. The oil was poured upon Him by Mary and it was the very day then that He went into Jerusalem on the colt, on the Sabbath day, on the 10th day He was set apart, that He was the Messiah, that He was the Passover and in a very powerful way. So really incredible some of these things sometimes. So that was inspiring to me and to me that was a spiritual gift. When you come to understand something that you didn't understand before about God, that's a blessing, a spiritual gift that God has imparted at a particular moment in time so I was blessed to be able to impart that to the Church; and that's inspiring.

And so this is what Paul is saying, "I desire to come to you," basically to do the things he's doing everywhere, to preach, to be able to impart to you, to your understanding something that will be a gift to you spiritually that you don't have right now. And so that's what he's talking about here.

That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me; and that's just what I explained before even getting to this verse here. Even the thing about the lamb on the 10th day, I was inspired by that, it was belief; something God gave me to believe, to see, that I didn't see before and yet I was able to pass that along as a teacher, to be able to show and then if people picked up on that they were blessed by the same thing. And that's what he's saying here; that I may be comforted together with you. So I'm comforted in, I'm encouraged by that truth that God gave and it's a blessing then when we all do it together.

It's like 2005 when we had the sermon series about Jesus Christ not having eternally existed. That was a big thing for the Church; not for new people as a whole, because that wasn't hard for them. When you come along and you don't know anything from the past; but if you had a past in Worldwide and you've always believed that Jesus Christ and God the Father eternally existed together and this comes along and says, "No, Jesus Christ didn't eternally exist." That was a big thing; that was a hard thing for people to address. A lot of scriptures began flooding into their minds; but God during that Feast, slowly but surely, people were comforted by the truth, along with me, along with one another; and that was exciting. One man I remember, I'll remember from here on out; it wasn't until the Last Great Day when I went through the sermon about Melchizedek that he came up to me; and even before that...actually it was the day before that and he said... It was basically a kind of a 'kiss off' in one respect. It was like his wife and him always loved us, think highly of us, but they weren't seeing this and this was basically going to be it; and he was very kind about it, very gentle about it. But then when he heard that sermon all of a sudden he could see it, he understood it, he came to understand what was there; but had to wait until the 8th day. He had to wait till the 8th day; but it wasn't until the 8th day that he was comforted, because before that he wasn't so comforted; he was in turmoil because it was a breaking point for him that he wasn't going to be able to remain in fellowship. And so it's much better then when we see it at the same time or during the same period of time so we can be happy together, rejoice together and stay together as a Family and grow together as a Family

and this is exactly what Paul is talking about...that I may comprehend together with you by the mutual faith; meaning it's something that's mutual, we share it together. It's something that God's giving to all of us in the way that God works and if we're all able to share it together... there've been things that have happened ever since I've been in the Church where sometimes there are people who can't share.

I think of Hawaii. Two times during the time I've been in the Church since 1969 that ministers came along who were not able to have that mutual faith, where they didn't agree with something Mr. Armstrong was giving that was new. Like in 1974 when Mr. Armstrong was addressing Pentecost. We used to believe before that, because we didn't know, we thought that Pentecost was on a Monday. Much of the Jewish world observes it on a Monday; different factions of it, and we had believed that it was to be observed on Monday, not understanding... no, it's always to be a Sunday, how you count the wave sheaf that leads to a Sunday. And so there were people who weren't able to share in that faith, that belief; because it's a belief first. It's what you believe. The faith is then you act upon it. There were those who had a faith that it was still on Monday. That was their faith; it wasn't faith from God because it wasn't the truth, when Mr. Armstrong finally gave it, when God gave it to Mr. Armstrong to give to the whole Church there were those who accepted it, we had a mutual faith, a mutual belief, the same belief where we rejoiced together. It was exciting, it was inspiring; but there were others who couldn't and so they left.

Just like Hawaii here – whole church was gone. Washington, D.C. area, hundreds of people. The minister over there didn't accept it and the whole church went with him; so they didn't have that mutual... so that hurt. When people don't see the same thing, when they don't have the same belief where we shared it together, we've been able to sit down and grow together; when someone doesn't have that it hurts, when you lose someone that's in the Body with you who'd been coming to Sabbath services for a time. And just like the excitement, there are different ones that I think of, one on another island here in the beginning thought that they were coming along; I think one of them is, but one of them hasn't. You would know them. He's gone by the wayside; it wasn't fully cemented in him, maybe never was, I don't know, but the point was there's that excitement in the beginning that you're able to share the same belief together and when you can't it hurts. It's frustrating.

And in a marriage when two people aren't able... when they start sharing it together and after a while they can't share it – that hurts. It's not a mutual faith; you're not comforted together anymore. On the contrary, it hurts, it's like a stabbing pain; but you go forward doing what's right and look forward to the time hoping and praying, in time, whatever that time is, whether it be during the time of trouble that we see, whenever it begins to come, or that they're able to change and be able to live into the Millennium, or if not God knows what time is best for everybody; if it's the Great White Throne – so be it. And everyone has to resolve themselves to that. If it's not until the thousand years are over...because everybody during the Millennium is going to die anyway; you're going to live and die, just like people have for the last 6,000 years; just what is unique now is people who were called for a specific purpose of being a part of 144,000, they're going to have their beginning in eternal life when Jesus Christ returns, but the rest still have to die; just like the previous 6,000 years of people have. But then there's going to be a great resurrection at the end of 1,000 years like there was at the end of 6,000 years where those of

you who've been in the Church, who've changed, conquered and overcome, will be able to be resurrected at the end of the 1,000 years. And then there's going to be a great physical resurrection. It's incredible to understand what God is doing and how God is doing it.

So anyway, verse 12 again, that is that I may be comforted together with you; encouraged in other words, strengthened, inspired, together along with you by the mutual faith both of you and of me. So it's something we share when God gives us the truth.

Now I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purpose to come unto you (but was left here (hitherto)) that I might have some fruit among you also even as among other Gentiles; in other words this word up here 'was left hitherto'; it means 'restricted or hindered from coming to you personally' that I might have some fruit among you also. So his desire was to be with them; but different things have happened, prevented him from being able to go there; God wanting him to be in some other area for whatever purpose, but his desire was to be there.

Verse 14 – I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; awkward words that are used here, but basically those of Gentiles who are non-believers, from different regions...both to the wise and to the unwise; so his desire was to all the Gentile world, that as many as/whom God would call that they would be able to share in this way of life. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. So he understands that in his travels he has to go to different areas and there's a purpose that God has in being with different groups of Gentiles in different parts of the world; but his desire is still to be able to go to them eventually and share with them.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Now by this he's not saying the Jew is better; but he's showing that this is where God started. God started first of all with the Jews; in other words salvation was offered first to the Jews. That's why Peter and the original 12 apostles, the disciples there – their work was to go out to the Jews as a whole, to Judah, to those who were of a Jewish background. Later on Peter began to go out and talk to others of the scattered tribes of Israel even; but first of all it was to the Jews. And then Paul understanding his calling as an apostle was to take it beyond that then to take it to the Gentiles; and so he's just making a comment here. The reason I'm mentioning this is some people have difficulties with some things because they think, "Well, it's because the Jews were better." ...or whatever. It had nothing to do with that, it had to do with how God was working with mankind and how it starts and how it builds.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; in other words a process of growing, ever growing in faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith. And so Paul is setting up the whole book here and thing's we're going to go into in this series you're going to be hearing about that we live by faith. That's how God judges us. God... it's a unique thing and if you can understand Judaism and how the Jews thought; and some

people in the Church have been this way. I knew of a minister who basically... his mind was it's how well you keep God's law is how you're being judged and he gave a sermon one time and I don't remember the exact... I think this was the whole thrust of the whole sermon was, "How long can you go without sinning? How long," in other words, "can you obey God? Can you go a day, a week, a month, a year?" type of thing. It's like you can save yourself, you can be more righteous the longer you can keep God's law. Now, we're to strive to keep God's law, but that's the wrong motive; that's the wrong direction to try to draw close to God. You should strive to obey God, but because of what you believe. It's to act upon the things that God has given to you because you agree with God. You don't do it just because it's in scripture and if I can keep this law, or I can obey God in this certain area that I'm going to be better. No, you want to be convicted of the law, that it's right.

The series we're going into right now; it has to do with relationships – because everything is based on relationships; how we live our life with others, how we live our life in our relationship with God, how we live our life in relationship to one another and how we think about each other. And if we come to believe what God says about relationships and act upon it because of our conviction of our belief (which is faith – what you believe...if you live upon because of what you believe, that's faith) then that's what God accounts to you as righteousness and that's the right direction to travel when you're trying to live this way of life, or want to live this way of life. It's not because you can do this on your own ability; the reality is when it comes down to relationships people can't/aren't fully convicted of... it's just like going to your brother alone. How many people in the Church, when there's been a dispute or something... if it's a husband or wife – they need to talk it out. They need to...individuals need to be able to say, as a whole if they're both of the same mind (now sometimes it's a little difficult and different when somebody's not of the same mind) but if people are of the same mind, or two brethren in the Church (we're talking about brethren; whether it be husband and wife or whatever...) and we've had a conflict, we've had some disagreement, first of all a person needs to want to go to them with a humble attitude because you want that relationship to continue on without problems, without bad feelings; the ability to say, "I'm sorry." ...the desire to make peace. Some people just won't do that. Sometimes people in a family... I've known of parents in life, families in life in the Church who were too proud, I guess it is; filled with pride, to be able to tell their own children that they were wrong in some of the correction or something they said to them. And you've got to be able to say, "I was wrong in how I did that." But that's a hard thing sometimes for human beings to do – to say, "I was wrong in what I said, I was wrong in how I said it..." whatever... and if we believed God when He tells us how to do these things – that we need to go to someone to be reconciled to them, to have peace with them – if we did those things, that's what living by faith is. But sometimes we don't do it because we're not really convicted that that's the right way to do it.

So he says, the just shall live by faith; by what God gives to us to believe.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and all unrighteousness of men, who hold/hold back/suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And whenever it uses the term here 'wrath of God' he's talking about sin and that if we are unrepentant of sin that's what we have upon us, the wrath of God. It's the judgement of

God, the judgement of God upon human beings who won't repent is the death penalty: that's what 'the wrath of God' is about. We have to pay for what we choose to do. Every one of us is responsible, we can't blame anyone else, each one of us is responsible for the choices we make in life and especially when we come into the Church. God has blessed us with the gift of being able to be forgiven of sin and if we don't continue to repent of sin on a continuing basis, whenever we do sin, because we want to do what's right; we want to be right with God, we want to live what is right and we're asking God for the help to do that. If we don't do that then sin is over us, the wrath of God is there – in other words the death penalty is still over our head.

Because that which may be known of God is manifested/revealed to them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things, then he goes into here talking about, again, the background of the world, what people were called out of, especially the Gentile world; For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, in other words should be obvious, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; the righteousness, the power, the majesty of God, so that they are/should be/they may be without excuse. And so again here, scriptures that are used that show that even mankind in the world – people have rejected God because of selfishness; that there are things out here that we should be able to clearly see the power, the might of God, but we don't acknowledge it. People don't really believe it. It's an amazing thing that people can look out here and recognize, "Now, if God made this, made everything that's on this earth, made the universe out there – He's mighty! And because He's given me life and He's given everyone else life, I want to please Him! I want to do what's right in His sight. I want to honour Him. I want what He's offering, what He's giving to us, what He's offering to us." But people don't think that way. It's more like Adam and Eve when they went in the garden and they went through the area of the trees to be in the shadow of the trees; that they thought that maybe God couldn't see them; that they could have their sin, or have their conversations, or have their own things there. No that's not... God knows everything. He knows everything about us. He knows everything that comes out of our mouth, everything that comes out of our mind, everything that human beings do; because that's the power of God. But we don't tend to think that way, we want to make Him be more limited. He's not really like that. It's amazing how human beings are.

Verse 21 - Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; so different times and different periods of time if you want to go all the way back to Adam and Eve and look at them. They knew God, they were the first two on earth, there were things that God gave to them to understand but they weren't thankful. You want to look at Noah and his family; you look at all his family – there are things that they were given, but they weren't thankful, things that they were given to see and experience; the flood itself; and yet when it's all over with they chose not to believe; they chose not to be thankful to God. Instead they blamed God. ...but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. And that's what happens to people. I think of different ones when people are called sometimes and they begin to see the truth of God, God begins to open up their mind and maybe because of the Sabbath or because of the Holy Days or because of tithing...those are the things that generally try people in the beginning. If people don't choose to do the right thing there then God lets them go; He lets them go to their foolish reasoning and their own thinking about things and

people always go off in different tangents and farther away from what they were before. You know when people have the opportunity in the beginning to begin to see, there are choices that can be made that, obviously, that lead us on a continual path that's good and right; but so often what happens is that when people begin to turn against God things happen to the mind that make them worse than what they were when they were called; and their battles become greater. It's a very dangerous state. That's why we have so many out there that so hate us and write the kinds of things they do on the websites; because the individual – most of those out there doing that, if not every one of them, has a past with us. Some of them we know who they are; have a past with us...some of them I put out of the Church because of things they've done wrong – adultery...and so it's like they get caught in adultery, they get found out, they get put out of the Church and they're friends they had in the Church... they can't be with their friends anymore and so they become vengeful; they're filled with hatred and bitterness because they couldn't continue to sin and stay in the Church. You want to commit adultery? You're on the outside looking in; you can't be in the Church. Different things that people do; almost every kind of sin that's out there, except murder within the Church; in the period of the Church we've known some individuals who've done some of those things in life in times past as well. But anyone who commits certain sins, whatever, and if people won't change and repent when they're given the opportunity... because most occasions people are given the opportunity. There are some things so severe that when someone is put out they can never humble themselves to want to council to come back. I think of an individual recently that I didn't even put out; I just told them they could no longer be an elder because of what they were doing. And when my wife and I left I told her they'll never come back; and by the time we got back to our hotel I had a phone call there, "We're not coming back." Because pride is like that; pride... you can't continue to do your own thing and sometimes because of pride people can't humble themselves; and so their minds actually become worse where you can't reason with them. This individual I spent three hours nearly or so, (I don't know; might have been longer than that,) reasoning with him and he couldn't understand simple basic reasoning anymore. He was always trying to justify himself for what he was doing because something happens to the mind; if you continue to resist God your condition becomes worse than what you were before. Why? Beforehand you didn't know about God, you didn't know anything about the truths of God and you could just go on in your own dumb way. That's what we would be... if we weren't in the Church right now we'd just be going along, stumbling along with the rest of the world in our own crazy way – right along with the world, maybe in our false religion, maybe in the Catholic Church or the Lutheran Church or going to temple (synagogue); so people would be doing... but once you know the truth and you reject it – then you've got a different battle that goes on in the mind. The mind can actually become more perverted and distorted because you're choosing to go against things that are against your conscience.

I think of one individual that was put out of the Church that full well knew what they were doing, full well knew this is the truth, that this was the truth of God. I feel sorry for people when they do something like that, make that kind of a choice; because if you reject what is true, what you know, you so distort your mind you're no longer just living in ignorance because you're in the world until God calls you, now you're willingly fighting against, resisting God; and taking in a very perverted way the sacrifice of Christ in a very light way. And that brings about penalties. Best way to describe it; when we disobey God... you know when the world disobeys God we always

have penalties...if somebody commits adultery in a marriage there are going to be problems in that marriage from then on. It will never, never, never, never, never, never, never be the same. Now people can grow and they can grow through that process within the Church; but if you look at the world as a whole, (because of God's spirit and God's help), but in the world it'll never change because there'll always be that thing of trust, distrust. When someone, whichever side, or both sides...there'll always be that thing of trust that will nag a person until the day they die. It's just the way it is.

I don't know if you've known of people like that, but I've known a lot of people like that, but there's that thing of trust. If trust isn't there – what is a marriage? And so there are some things that can be so destroyed. And think about it within the Church then...what happens when people reject God and go against the truth of God; the mind...there's that penalty there in the physical world in life, but how much more when you've known the truth. There's actually a penalty there that your mind can become more distorted. That's why when I've seen things written, or I've seen things that people put on the websites and so forth, some of their websites and their blogs... in one respect I hurt for them; to realize what their mind is like. Their mind is twisted and distorted. They're really perverted; not the same people they were before. They had the opportunity to be something different before but when you go that far you do something to your mind that it almost becomes/can be given to demonism, to that which is demonic, to weird stuff, to weird thinking. And that's what Paul is talking about here – they become vain in their imaginations; their empty reasoning, and when people leave the Church especially; it says, and their foolish heart was darkened, how much worse is it when somebody rejects the truth and goes against the truth. That's why I feel for those who have been a part of the scattering who have resisted for so long the truth about our scattering. You've been around long enough to know and know about all the different groups out here; some of them small, some of them little, all the splinter groups. I don't know...I quit trying to find out after they said there were 500 groups. There is somebody out here that's made it his whole purpose to know how many splinter groups there are out here. Well, the last I ever heard from him was 500, but there's got to be a whole bunch more since that time...what...600-700 out of the Church, the Worldwide Church of God. And you think of all the different groups out there – the longer... there are people out there who still don't believe we've had an apostasy! That blows my mind! How could people think...? You see it! You see what Mr. Tkach did. You see what happened to the Church, the scattering – but they themselves who lived through it – they can't acknowledge that we've had an apostasy! ...that that prophecy was fulfilled...that there was a man of sin. There are people that can't acknowledge that because of what Mr. Tkach did, that he could fulfill those things. And you think, "How is that possible that you could refuse that kind of something that should be so obvious?" ...and yet that's how people think – they refuse that which is obvious.

And this is a part of what Paul is talking about...they became vain in their imaginations and their empty reasoning and their foolish heart was darkened. People's minds get worse. Their mind becomes more darkened to what should be obvious and truthful to them. And the more that people have resisted when God has given them the ability to understand some things the more distorted the mind has become, the more darkened it becomes.

Professing themselves to be wise they became fools. That's the result. When people rely upon their own reasoning, their own justification for things, they actually become worse. There's something there that God has put into motion in law that that's what happens in the mind. The mind becomes worse. ...and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and beasts and four footed beasts and creeping things. And so he's very much talking about what happened to mankind, what happened especially... we can take some of these things a step farther and see what happens even within the Church; but he's talking in a very basic level, on a very physical plane here saying this is what man has done.

Just like this hotel we're staying at up here. You walk through there... there's so much demonism there in some of the statues, some of these gods, some of these gods that have several faces on them, the elephants, different creatures, lions that are made to look like demons – and that's where a lot of the stuff comes from and so they actually... there are people out there... The fat man out there, that one statue, big ole fat belly... I guess Buddha. You look at a statue like that and you think, "Why would anybody want to worship that? Why would anyone want something like that?" A big, fat man overeating with the belly out there showing it – you'd think you'd want to clothe it in a robe at least, but to be sticking way out there...and why would people choose to worship that? It blows my mind! ...or something that's an animal; that looks like an animal... that someone would think that this is their God. It just blows the mind. And that's what Paul is saying here...rather than looking at the world and realizing what an awesome thing that God has given and God has given us life and made everything that's here – people would more willingly reject that. That's why I hate evolution and the idea of evolutionists, because they do the same thing. It's like, "No, it came from some big bang!"

And you think, "Well, where were the laws that regulated a big bang, you moron!"

To have a big bang you've got to have laws, so where did that come from? Where did that start? And where was all that was there to have a bang? ...the elements that were there...where did that come from? But people can't have the most sensible thinking and so they become intellectual in their own right by their own reasoning and they would rather worship and serve what God created than God. And you think, "How can the mind be so distorted, so perverted?" But that's the world we live in, that's the way mankind is.

And so it says, they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to beasts... and so people would rather serve things that look like different men, or mankind, or women. There are these different goddesses out there as you walk through there and see some of these statues. Some of it I can't stand! ...because it's in the world and you think how people are so distorted in their thinking... to beasts and creeping things. Even like snakes... it doesn't matter what it is – people worship everything that's out there that's imaginable. You think of all the God's that Egypt had. That's why some of the things of...even frogs! That's why when the plagues came along and all these frogs were there – here were the god's of Egypt, some of them, because they had all kinds of gods. But one of their God's was in the form of a frog. You think, "Why would you want to worship a frog? Don't you give yourself any more savvy up here than that? You're going to bow down to frogs..." Stupid thinking! And then when God brought all these frogs up there they weren't so excited about frogs anymore so God let them have a big whiff of what it was like to worship frogs...and beetles... scarabs. (I

think that's what they're called – scarabs) I think, “Why...? You're going to worship something that crawls along the ground? A bug? You step on it and you don't even know it?” It's insane... the human mind! And that's the way it is today.

People who've rejected God, especially the truth and they go out here and do strange things – they make it their life's mission in some cases to... they loathe the Church. I think about things that were said about Mr. Armstrong; different groups out there – they hated him so much and it's because of God. It's not because of him; it's because of what God had given and people really hate God; they hate the truth of God. And you think, “Why?” Because they want something different. They don't want this. You think, “This is the very way that gives happiness.” The more you yield yourself to, the more you grow in right relationships with people and obey the right laws – life is better. Look at the world out here... if we'd just obey the most basic physical laws out here of not stealing you'd put a lot of people out of work. The people that came in and put alarms in our house. People that put up these cameras; security that has to drive around all the time in the different malls and different places they have to have security everywhere in the world. Because why? Because people steal; because people do things they're not supposed to do. We put locks on our doors; we put locks on cars; we have locks in the hotel to put your belongings in and then you have warnings that you can't even put it there because, “We're not going to be responsible for what you put in the safe.” ...because people will come along and take things out of your safe too. You think... what a sick world we have. Don't we understand that the more you obey law the happier life is? ...the better life is? But people are perverted; the mind is perverted and only God can straighten it out.

So it says, wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; so God, it says, allowed them to go this way, to corrupt their own lives, to live and experience the penalties of sin. And that's the way it's been for 6,000 years. God has allowed mankind to do that for a great purpose because it's the only way we can learn. It's an awesome thing to understand we have to live this human life to learn that this isn't what it's all about; that this doesn't bring happiness; so that when God does begin to call, then we have the ability to judge righteously, to say, “No, I really; I hate the way of selfishness. I know what it did to my life. I know what it's like to sin and I don't want that. I know what it's like being blessed to obey. That's what I want. I want God's way that brings right relationships, not the way of selfishness.” And it says, He let them go to the point of dishonouring their own bodies between themselves/ among themselves; who change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creation more than the Creator. That's what we've just been talking about; bugs, animals...would rather bow down to them than to bow down to God...who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; in other words He let them do this, He didn't try to prevent them, He didn't try to stop them from it. It even happens within the Church. Sometimes if we're not careful, within the Church and what happened within the ministry is in many cases there's this term that came out about policing and about sheriffing and about trying to regulate people's lives. There's a point to intervene, to stop something happening within the Church; to cause something not to hurt others within the Church; but there is the

other point where God backs away and allows us to experience bad things because of bad decisions. He doesn't try to stop us from making... just like a parent to a child. You can't be there all the time to stop your own child and no matter how much preaching or talking to them, you can't prevent them from making mistakes in their life. Sometimes you can try to have reason on occasion; but after a while... there are times you just have to let go and stand back and let them experience in this world. People make mistakes because there's no other way to help them; they've got to learn from their mistakes, from their error; and until they want help.

So the human mind is an amazing thing. And the same thing with God and within the Church. How can I say this? There are people I know exceptionally well, exceedingly well in the Church; I know what makes them tick because God's given it to me because of experience in time, because of experience through my own life and experiencing things with seeing people in the Church in order to serve the Church and help the Church and know when to become involved and when to stand back; and most of the time it's a matter of standing back. God'll take care of things; He'll bring things to the surface to be dealt with and you stand back and you let people make mistakes because they learn through that. You can't prevent everything in life; you can't make people have peace. Peace comes because people want peace and because they're willing to do the right thing to have peace. And so God lets us experience a lot of bad things in life and He doesn't try to prevent us from making big mistakes. We make a lot of big mistakes in our life and He lets us experience those things so we experience the penalty that goes with it and the hurt and the pain and the suffering that goes with it. And then, through His help, we're able to begin to bring things back on course and make things right and be able to be forgiven of what we've done that's wrong.

And so, again, God allowed them, in other words, in this case here it says, for this cause God gave them up to vile affections; allowed them to go as far as they wanted to go with different things in life, in human life, away from Him...for even their women did change the natural use of that which is against nature. Even physically, and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman burn in their lusts one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of error which was fitting/suitable, in other words for what they did that was wrong. Now, Paul is addressing something here. Paul, in the Gentile world back then, there were customs in Corinth as an example (I can't think of the word, I always get it mixed up here, but there's a word to 'Corinthisize', something like that anyway, it has to do with the word Corinthian;) but it has to do with some of the beliefs of different areas; Ephesus, different things when you go through and you see different things in history of what was given. But Corinth was really bad because in the temple there in some of the worship of the Gentiles there was a type of prostitution that was a part of worshipping; was to do these things within the temple. There were perversion; and some of the figurines sometimes when you go through and you see some of the things that were in Rome and the Roman world at that time; some of the figurines when you go through museums some places...some things are really atrocious what men did with men, men with women and things like that, women with women... because the mind becomes so distorted that people think that's where enjoyment and pleasure is because there are certain pulls of the mind; but if you take that beyond it really perverts and distorts the mind, the thinking of the mind and that's what Paul is talking about here.

He says, mankind... where is the end of it, where is the end of the thinking and how far people will go? One perversion leads to another. There's so much perversion in the world today. It's not done in the name of religion like it was back in their time. Back in their time it was a matter of worship and religion, of what they did that was perverted. Today it's just a matter of lifestyles and so forth and how people... they don't receive satisfaction in one part of life and they'll go to something even more perverted. Where is the end of it? Same thing with drugs and people say, "Oh marijuana doesn't lead to coke or different kinds of addiction." Bologna! The problem with human nature is after a while you've had that buzz for a while, you get the buzz of marijuana or alcohol and sometimes then it's so easy to get some of the other stuff. It's easy; it's not hard. It's easy in society in the world today. In the business world... it's everywhere, different meetings that people have – the stuffs out there. And so people... they go on to another buzz because they're told, "This'll give you something even better! This'll enhance and make it even better and make things better, more exciting to you." And so people will go beyond. So it's not that the marijuana caused it, it's that the marijuana didn't give them what they thought they could have; that there's something out there that's better than even that; so they'll go on to something else like coke or whatever. And people go to different kinds of drugs then and there's no end to it. Things do have a consecutive order of things because it's our nature to go from one thing to another and some people can stop, some people can quit, some people can go to crack and cocaine and different things and not totally foul up their life completely...just fell off their mind a little bit. Some people can't stop because there's that drawing and they just go farther and farther and farther because human nature is so weak that people can't stop sometimes; and that's the problem. It's just like alcohol; some people can't control it. There are some things in our make-up in our body... we're all different. Some people, not because they're more righteous or better, it's because their chemistry is different. Some people when they begin to do that become addicted to things of alcohol; there's something in their genes or there's something in their chemical make-up that even make the battle harder to stop; and so there's a desire that's mixed with the chemicals of the brain that you want more; and if we don't learn to do things in moderation, because of control in life, people tend to just go from one thing that's bad to a thing that's just worse and worse and worse – sometimes till we hit a bottom, whatever that bottom in life is.

Sometimes people hit their bottoms in marriage because they've been fighting and battling and warring for so long that the only way to stop some things is by divorce or whatever. Sometimes they get to a bottom where they so hate what they've been living and doing that they'll actually change and become a better person because they hit this bottom. It's amazing the human mind and how we think.

So again here, all these things that God allowed mankind to do over the last 6,000 years. ...and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge; that's just the human mind – people don't want to retain God; they don't want the truth of God; they don't want what is right – because why? Because they want to do something that's against the law, they want to have their own lifestyle whether it be with sex, drugs, something else, whatever it is in life that people want to do that's different, take advantage of someone, steal from someone else. The greed that's on Wall Street today is atrocious! I'll tell you what, what's just happened...? ...this last week? I can

guarantee there are people that had their finger in the pie because when it's going down there are people who make money, who know how to make money. It's a sick world we live in. There are people who make money when it's going up and there are people who make money when it's going down because they know when to sell short, they know when to... all these things that take place in society; and there are people just waiting to take advantage of others and they know how to do it. It's a sick world because they don't care about... they want to know how much money they can make. They don't care about the people out here who put their life savings into something and lose it all. They could care less! They're just happy they've got more of it, more power, more wealth – hoping they can get by with more. And most of those who are doing that are the most wealthy. They know how to manipulate, they know how to work with markets, they know how to create certain things out here, scares and whatever it might be in order to make more money. Mankind is really sick and perverted. But anyway, wherever you see it you see these kinds of things and people just get worse and worse.

So it says, and even as they did not like to retain God in their own knowledge, because there's something they want that's not right...God gave them over to a reprobate mind. Allowed the mind to become more distorted, more messed up, a distorted mind. The Greek of this word here, 'a reprobate mind' is 'a mind void of judgement'. People get farther and farther away from being able to make sound judgement. It's just like in the society in the world today. You think... where is the ability to reason soundly? I watch people on TV sometimes on the news programs anymore and you think... they don't even begin to see that their reasoning is so messed up, there's no soundness of thinking even. They've got an agenda, they're off on a different tangent and they don't even see how bias they are. I hate FOX, I hate CNN. It's so difficult to find anybody that's objective about anything because they all have their certain agenda and it's like they're imprisoned to a certain kind of thinking; and they... 'fair and balanced reporting'... they're as far Republican to the right as you can get; the others as far to the left as you can get and it's very difficult to find individuals who are just kind of open. Was watching Cafferty the other night, they call it the 'Cafferty Files' on CNN; sometimes he will actually address something and tell it like it is, sometimes he has a bias in there; but at least there are a few out there on occasion that will address something a little bit objectively but it's really hard to find in the world anymore; the world is so perverted, so distorted.

So, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not proper. And I think of all the people who have left the Church, all the people who have such hatred out there; you think they are at war within themselves, their minds are so perverted and distorted God gave them over to a reprobate mind, a mind void of judgement to where people don't realize what they're doing to themselves. You think... "Why...?" Today, people are going to be listening to the sermon; you think, "Why would they want to listen to someone they hate? Why do that to yourself?" And yet there are people out there who so hate because they want to find something to talk to someone else about. "Did you hear what they said today??" They're so anxious to... because they don't know that they're feeling something that's perverted in their own mind and they're so unhappy. I feel sorry for them; they're unhappy. You think... "Get a life! Go out here! Go fishing! Enjoy something out here; don't hurt yourself!" Can you imagine something you dislike you go to it

more and more because you so dislike it you want to dislike it more, you want to find something more about it you dislike and you hate? It blows the mind that people do this; but that's what it is, it's an unsound mind.

...being filled with all unrighteousness, that's what happens in sin, it gets worse, sins in people's lives get worse. The farther away from God the perversion in thinking gets worse. ...being filled with all uncleanness, where people can't see the most basic of things and they become captive to some things then because they can't see past it; because they want something that's wrong. ...being filled with all uncleanness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, hate, in other words, debate, strife, deceit, malignity, in other words, evil mindedness, wanting to cause harm to others, whisperers...in other words people get their satisfaction, their enjoyment... there are people who just enjoy gossip, who enjoy finding fault with other people in their life. Sometimes there are people in the Church who have battles with some of that sometimes because they've lived that in their life too much and because it's the way so much of society is. Can you imagine that an enjoyment is to be the first to find out about something so you can tell it to somebody else? We tend to do that sometimes as human beings. We like to find something bad, something juicy about... "Did you hear what so and so did today?" And so we want to tell it; we want to be the first on the spot to be able to tell what someone in the Church did to someone else, or what their fault is, or what their problem is today, what stupid thing they might have done that was wrong, that was bad. Yes, it was; but to go and tell others because we're the first to see it...and to share that. You think, what kind of a joy, enjoyment is there in sharing something that's bad? That's not good and it doesn't help us if we do it.

So anyway...backbiters...because these things get worse then. It gets the point if people aren't careful here they get to the point where they begin having wrong attitudes and spirit toward others to where they loathe others and are wanting to tear them down and tear them up. Just like I was mentioning here earlier about people who listen to stuff, sermons and because they want to find more 'bad'...that they think is bad, so they can... it's just an empty black hole! ...haters of God, spiteful, people that just hate sometimes what they hear; some truth that they hear. There are certain things that they think; that they found something... this is a juicy thing... "Did you hear what they said today? Oh today he said he's an apostle!" And people listen to that and... "...wonder what he's going to say next week... he's Jesus Christ?" Some people have already said some of those things out there. "He said he's a prophet, he's an apostle... now probably next he'll be claiming he's Jesus Christ." And that's how far people go; it's just they just want to stir things up more and more and more because their minds are that way. ...haters of God, they hate the truth. Come along and find out... I think of some of the things...everything we come out with, it doesn't matter what it is – everything that God gives people will find fault with because it's so different from what they want to believe, or they don't want to accept it as the truth – things about the blessing and freedom women are going to be given...

Who would not want some of the garbage of what happened from the time of Adam and Eve to... to have a freedom given in this world. Who was it here, I have to give him some kind of credit here – obviously we don't agree with what he teaches here, but Billy Graham's son was on TV here recently and I'm surprised that he was

willing. Most people aren't willing to talk about the Muslim world, but he was. Most religious leaders, so called religious leaders out there – they don't want to talk about the religious... they don't want to talk about Muslims and the way they think. And he was talking about how much he felt sorry for the women of the Muslim religion that have to cover themselves up like they do and to live that kind of a life where they're kept down so low and their self-esteem. I thought, "Man... whew!" Probably be a few out wanting to kill him because of what he's saying... but he wasn't afraid of saying that and I have respect of that because there are a lot of people out here who won't do that. Even our own military was afraid to stand up to an individual who had Muslim beliefs because they didn't want to shake and rock the boat and make the Muslim world upset. You think... Give me a break! When people don't grasp and comprehend that religions don't mix. The Muslim world does not mix with Christianity. The Muslim world does not mix with Judaism and Judaism doesn't mix with it; and Judaism and Christianity don't mix together. There's been a lot of wars through the time fought over all these things; people killing each other in the name of religion. Amazing! Even Christians with Christians.

...backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers...so again, over and over again, all these things that make up the human mind and what God has given mankind over to. ...without natural affection, where people don't even have normal natural affection anymore; where in the society in the world we see more and more of that which should be normal and right is not normal and right; where mothers don't even have the right feelings toward their own children anymore in society in a lot of cases; like what would be normal and natural in life. Father's who don't have normal... that's always been a difficult (I think) problem at different times. It's easier, I think, for men to be very selfish and go off and do their own thing and leave the mother to take care of children and so forth; and that's been a part of society anyway. But now even today it's getting worse to where mothers don't even have natural desire to rear their children. And so we have a big problem in society there. And so the world just gets worse and worse.

...implacable, in other words, unforgiving, unmerciful, who knowing the judgement of God that they who commit such things are worthy of death; not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them. You think... How sick can the mind be? But you know, people in the world don't see this... but you can see it. You're beginning to see it more and more; and the more you're in the Church the more you're going to see these things. The opportunities you have of helping to change the world, or have an influence on the world is far beyond what you can comprehend right now, what God is offering... because ... well, we'll talk about that later on in some of the sermon series.

...who knowing the judgement of God that they who commit such things are worthy of death; so God teaches about sin, He teaches us about the death penalty – that if we choose to sin, if we choose to go the way of sin that that's what's over our head; but all these things just mentioned here...shouldn't it be ever so obvious to us that God is saying that we deserve death as human beings for living that way, for going against God. And yet, God in all of His mercy, as Paul is going to bring out here in the book of Romans, has the desire to forgive us of all that,

has a desire to give us time to come out of that – because you don't come out of that overnight. Whatever our hang-ups are, are going to be our hang-ups till we die, in part, if you understand. God blesses us to begin to come out of sin, but we are who we are and the battles we have we're going to be able to fight them and become more refined and better and better as time goes along; but there's still going to be that spirit in us, that mind in us that's very carnal, very human that we're going to battle until it's over with; but that's what God's giving us – the ability to battle it, the ability to see it so we know what to battle, so we can change and grow and become more refined and draw closer to God. So He offers us that, He gives us that and that's what Paul is getting ready to go into in the book of Romans here – that we have the ability to come out of sin, we have the ability to change; just like what Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread picture.

And so it's an amazing thing here how he wraps this up in verse 32 to see that this is what people are like, that people who commit such things are worth of death, but others, it says, ...not only do the same but have even pleasure in those who do those things. And that's the way it is when people want you to do the same thing. If it's a matter of looking at society, having parties, having a certain party life; if you don't do that and if you tell your friends, "No, I'm not going to do that." Then you're ostracised because they want to have pleasure in everybody who's willing to do the same thing, and go to the same... and if someone happens to bring out (and they're friends) and they bring out this little white powder and you're the only one who says, "No, I'm not going to do it." ...it affects people and there's a lot of pressure to do what everybody else is doing; they have pleasure in those who are willing to go to the same degree of sin or whatever it is, but they don't look at it as sin. But they want everyone else to do the same thing because no one wants to have a guilty conscience, no one wants to have anyone around them who is going to make them feel a little bit like..."Oh you're judging me; that I shouldn't be doing this." They want you to do the same thing. And that's the kind of society we live in and that's what God is talking about here. That's how perverted the human mind is and that's what He's calling us out of – to change, to become something different, to stand up to people, to stand up and say, "No, I'm not going to do that." Whatever it might be...to your own detriment, to your own hurt, to your own harm, sometimes to your own financial harm. That's what you have to do when it comes to the Sabbath. If you're working on Saturday you've got to be able to say, "I'm not going to do that." That's the way it is isn't it when we come into the Church. We're willing to stand up even to our own financial harm, to do what is right so we can begin to change.

Romans 2:1 – therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are who judges, so again here, now it's getting ready to go into a part here talking about judgement, how people judge each other, how people can be harsh on one another; for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself. So it's very easy for people to look down upon others; and especially even in the Church; but people do it in society all the time. But people don't realize that when you judge someone else you lift yourself up when, it comes to condemning someone for what they've done, because it says here, for you that judge do the same things. There are things we're guilty of doing. So often within the Church when someone condemns someone, finds fault in someone, begins to talk to someone else about another person – to tear down, to find fault with an individual – themselves are sinning and they don't see it – that they're condemned. That judgement is wrong, we're not to be doing those kinds of things. And so he

says you don't realize that you that judge do the same things... condemn yourself actually for what we're doing.

But we are sure that the judgement of God is according to truth against them who commit such things, in other words, God will straighten things out. You leave things, you look to God, you pray to God, you seek to do things God's way and when it's a matter of God's judgement because God says this is a way to do it then we strive to do it the right way. How does God want me to resolve this difficulty or this problem? And if we strive to do it God's way and not have our own emotions, our own ways of taking care of it or dealing with it in the way... then we can be blessed.

And think you this, O man, that judged them who judged them which do such things and do the same, that you shall escape the judgement of God? Sometimes the very things that sometimes people condemn others of are the very things that they think in their own minds and the way they function and it's a very difficult thing to know our own mind sometimes, it truly is. It can take a lifetime to go through changes and help from God to change.

Verse 13 – jumping on down... for not the hearers of the law are just before God but the doers of the law shall be justified. So again here, a principle here; (I'm not going to go through all these other verses here) he builds up to this principle here, this truth here showing that it isn't enough just to know the laws of God, just like the Jews who, I guess the expression would be, they took satisfaction in that they were obedient to the law and they lifted up the law so high that Paul even addresses it later on; that they were actually worshipping the law more than they were worshipping God. They made the law a God to themselves as though... and he'll explain this as we go along – we'll get into that if we have time here. And so he's telling them that for not the hearers of the law – it's not a matter of, even like for us; just going to Sabbath services or going through the motions or being at a High Day on a Holy Day or whatever it might be and hearing God's word and being faithful in that – isn't what makes us right with God. It's if we do it, if we make changes in our life. If the things we hear every Sabbath; we're responding to that and seeking to change our life accordingly then it's the doers of the law that will be justified. So, again, it's not a matter of what we hear, it's a matter of whether or not we change and respond to what we're hearing and because of what we believe. We believe this is from God, we believe this is how God wants us to address it and we do it because we're in agreement with God.

There are things in my life that I have prayed to God about to help me to conquer and overcome – not because He says no, or not because we know that something is wrong – because the law says it – but because we agree with what God says in the law. Do you understand the difference there? If you just seek to obey something because God has said, "Don't do it." It's another thing totally to do what is right because you agree with God that what He said is true and right. Your mind has to be convicted of what is right. Just to do it because... in other words if you're doing it only because God says, "Don't do it." But your heart... it's still in your heart – then it's wrong...there's still sin there until you're in agreement with God, until the mind is actually changed and you're actually at one in agreement and unity with God, with what God says.

It's like smoking (smoking is a very minor thing, it's a very small thing in the scheme of things in the Church, in the environment of the Church) ...but we ask people, because of love toward neighbour, not to smoke. Some people make a bigger thing out of it than what it's ever intended to be but it's a very small thing; but yet... within the environment of the Church, it's healthier for you if you don't. My father died of emphysema because he smoked. He died a very slow death to where he only had 10% of his lung toward the end. He could hardly breathe; times he'd get choked up and couldn't get out of his own bed for ... I think it was the last 3 years wasn't it? ... couldn't even get out of his own bed for the last three years. What a horrible way to die! Just because...

And what about love toward others? What about love toward my mother? ...toward the children? She had to take care of him during that time period. If he hadn't done those things she wouldn't have had to be imprisoned like that for that length of time. If you've ever taken care of someone because of bad health... its one thing if you have bad health, but if you do it to yourself because of selfishness, because you want to smoke and you just keep doing something that's selfish because that hurts your body...where's the love?

I hate it when I go outside! I loathe the smell of cigarette smoke! Sometimes people go outside and they'll be standing in certain areas and they mess up the outside! I mean, Hawaii is beautiful; and you get these people in certain areas that you walk by and they're smoking and it messes up the environment. I don't like that. Where's the love? They don't have any; they're just selfish "puff, gasp, it's good." And they get that in their lungs and it feels so good and you think, "Oh, give me a break!" Shows the perversion of the mind that we can get caught into something like that at a very young age and generally it starts out because of peer pressure and so forth, kids wanting to be like grownups. I remember one time when I first started it, I tried a cigarette and I thought, "Man this is not enjoyable. I don't like this." I thought it was stupid. I did smoke a couple of cigars once time and I got sick; but I liked the smell of the cigar smoke. But I just thought it was stupid and I wasn't caught up in the peer pressure because I guess there was no one that I looked up to that much that I wanted to be like them to where I wanted them to think good of me because of what they were doing. Grew up in a small town so that didn't matter so much. But a lot of young people, they want to be like somebody else, or looked up to so they'll start smoking and after a while you're addicted to it and they can't quit. Some people can't quit – they become very addicted to the nicotine and the habit; it's just a habit...it's just a dirty habit. You meet people and it's on their clothes.

There are people sometimes, I feel sorry for them when I know they're coming in the Church, they're fighting certain battles and you go up to them and you get close to them and you give them a hug and... it's like it's all over them and they don't realize it's all over their clothes; because see, their nostrils, their nasal passages are seared. They can't smell smoke like I can. I used to wonder about an aunt I used to live with for a period of time.

I was around an environment; she always thought I was smoking when I'd come home at night; I lived in this particular college town I lived in, but she could always tell when I'd been out with different ones. I never smoked, but she thought I was out smoking. (Cause I hated smoking.) But because of the people I was with it was in my clothes. But I couldn't smell it and I was always dumbfounded how she could always tell when I'd been out with a group of the guys – because my clothes were stinking. And I understand that in a very big way today because I've been away from that environment for so long I don't even like to be in that kind of

environment...and thankfully more and more restaurants are getting cleaned up and so forth; and you don't have to be in that kind of an environment. But it doesn't take a whole lot to get stuff on your clothes...I can smell it quickly on people's clothes; and I feel sorry for people. They don't realize that they don't even smell it themselves and how it causes a brother in the Church sometimes to feel badly toward them because some people judge differently and by some of this I just realize they've got a battle to go through and I hope they can go through it successfully. I hope they can get away from it. And so we ask people to fight it, to conquer it, to seek to overcome it for the sake of love toward others and for the sake of your own health, your good health.

If you're willing to obey God when He says, "Don't eat pork." Why does He say it? Because it clogs up your body. He says it's not a good food for you to eat, that's why God said, "Don't eat it. Don't eat shrimp." Why? Because it's something not healthy for your body. Well, I can guarantee cigarette smoking's a whole lot worse than pork. You can do better to be eating pork than you can smoking. So it's a health thing and a principle that's there for us that we should obey. But again, it's so small compared to other things in our life...but it brings up the principles here of some of these things about how even something small like that, of how we don't even understand how it's affecting us, or others around us, how it's love toward others to not do it and so forth.

I really don't know why I went off on that tangent there talking about that one there, but there must have been a reason and somewhere I was going even more so... But a lot of different principles there sometimes about even something so small. But, again, I feel for people who go through that, but it's a battle and it's a battle that they have to have until they're able to conquer and overcome it.

Oh yes, I know why, because of this verse here where it says, for not the hearers of the law are just before God...so sometimes people will quit, not because they agree with it, just like smoking. Sometimes people will actually seek to quit it and not really quit it...sometimes they'll go back to it because they really haven't become convicted up here that it's not healthy for them and it's not love toward others. And until you're so deeply convicted up here – that's what will give you a stronger victory, or an ability to fight the battle stronger, is if you're convicted up here that this is a very unhealthy thing for me. I don't want it to be a part of my body. I don't want to offend others. I don't want to hurt other people in the Church who are coming along who themselves are fighting some of this and they smell it on my clothes... not because of self, but because for them, out of love for them that I don't want them to have to fight that battle toward me. And so when you come into agreement with God that something isn't healthy for you, it isn't good for you, and it's not love toward others to be in that environment...

You know we've had some occasions where some people have come across someone in the Church, they'll come out and they'll catch them – they're outside smoking. That's a very uncomfortable thing. Out of love for them, if you haven't conquered it yet, don't do it around others in the Church – out of love for them. Why cause them to have a battle toward you? So this is a part of a process here of becoming more convicted, not the hearers of the law, not the hearers even of the smallest of things – but the doers. And the doing comes as a result of your being in agreement with God. And the more you're in agreement with God...not just because you're told not to do

it...because sometimes you'll do it for the wrong reasons then; just because you were told not to do it; and that's not the reason to stop something. You do it because you're convicted this is a better way – see? And that actually gives you greater strength then to fight the battle.

So when you pray to God about doing certain things, it's not just a matter that you're doing it just because God says to do it, or not do it. It's like tithing... sometimes it takes time, sometimes it can take years for some individuals to come to understand that this is good. This is a right way, and to understand the principles of it. I'm not going to get into a sermon on that cause I could give a whole sermon on that by itself. But sometimes our nature is that we still begrudgingly do it because it's like God's looking down here... "I'm going to do it because I'm commanded to do it! ...or because somebody might find out and talk to me if I don't do it." And that's not the reason to do it. It's to do it because you understand the spirit of it and why God says to do it in the first place. So again, sometimes if we're not convicted in our mind...and there's a lot of danger in that if we do things just because God says yes or no. The desire is as you come into agreement with God – that's conversion then; when your mind is in agreement with what God has to say.

So all these things setting the stage for some of the things Paul's going to go into later and why he's discussing things in the manner that he is.

Romans 3:10 – so he finally gets to the point here where he builds up to it and he says, As it is written there is none righteous, no, not one. So if you look at the life of human beings no one can live a righteous life. There's no Jew that has been able to keep God's law perfectly, not even one of the most righteous men who ever lived. He wasn't a Jew though was he? No, he wasn't – Job...going way back. Where did I get that one? After thinking about it just a short moment there. But even if you look at the life of Job, one of the most righteous men that ever lived, conviction toward God and toward the laws and ways of God; and looking at him on the outward part, if you just looked at how he lived his life physically, people would have, in every respect as far as the law, he was without fault; but he wasn't righteous because it has to do with the mind. And the laws and the truths of God have to do with what comes out of the mind and how you think and why you do the things you do and why you're motivated. And so the whole book of Job is written to come to understand that Job wasn't a righteous man before God; that his righteousness was his own righteousness, it was self-righteousness. And you can go through a certain routine in life; not because you're in agreement with God, but by a certain standard, to live by a certain standard and that's not what determines what is righteous. It's righteous because you're in agreement with God; and it's of your spirit and it comes out of your mind because you're at one with God and what God says and you come to understand how weak you are then; that when God talks about various things of how to live life we realize we fall short in a big way, we are very lacking and we need God's help in order to live right, in order to think right. We need the help of His holy spirit; because of ourselves we can't do it because we're filled with pride, lust... we're filled with a tonne of carnality and when we come to understand that it's what's in the spirit, what's in the mind that has to change – makes a big difference here. That's why it says there's none righteous, no, not one. In other words, we all have sin; we've all said and done things that are just wrong.

...there are none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. So speaking primarily of the world here first and foremost but we can look at our own lives as well...but there is no one that can know the way of God, understand the way of God, until God begins to draw them. He goes on to say, they are all gone out of the way, they're all together become unprofitable, there is none that does good, no, not one. So as far as human beings are concerned no one does right, no one does good. This is hard sometimes for people in the Church because I think of some that even looked at Mother Therese. It was like... "Well Mother Therese always did good things and she surely was a good woman with God, before God." You think... no she wasn't! She was a Catholic! That's sin in itself because it's a false religion and if you draw people toward the Catholic Church by things you do – that's sin, that's wrong, it's perverted. The beliefs of the Catholic Church are false so that should be a simple one to understand. Did she strive to live a 'good' life in helping others? Yes, that's good, that's nice, it's a good commendable thing; but her life was not righteous, far from it, because it was far from the way of God. So again, mans standards are so wrong when it comes to being right with God.

So he says, there is none that goes good, no, not one, that's why Christ made it very clear. He says, 'there is only one that's good, that's God.' Their throat is an open sepulchre, like an open grave he says here. In other words what comes out of the mouth sometimes and what people say and what really is in the heart of man and how man thinks and it doesn't agree with God, it's not in unity with God and the way of God. With their tongue they have used deceit; the poison of asp is under their lips, when you look at the world around you that's the way society is, that's the way the world is and they don't understand their heart; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Sometimes we don't understand how bad. In the Church sometimes it's difficult for us to understand how bad human nature is, how bad the world really is. Sometimes we don't see the world for how bad it is. That's too bad.

I've known of some who think the United States government is a good government. No, it's not! There's no government in the earth that's good. They're all selfishly motivated; they all do things that are wrong to their interests, to their own end. That's one of the better ones, obviously, that man has ever come up with in 6,000 years as far as different forms of equity and a human kind of justice, if you will; but it's still very unjust. All you have to do is, frankly, just watch a few TV programs and it becomes very clear; court systems, 12 on a jury – you know there are studies that people do of how to sway a jury? There are people that are very professional that sell themselves: if you have enough money, to sell themselves to others to find out the weak points in a jury, how people think, why they think the way they do. They go back and they do a background in their study into their lives and their likings and disliking and what might sway them in a certain way. It's incredible what goes on out here in the world; because man isn't righteous, man isn't just and the laws of man aren't just; and people who do sometimes have a better lawyer, who do have more money they can spend... they get by with certain things that others don't. And there are a lot of people who've gone to prison who didn't do what they did! Where's the justice in that? So we have one of the better systems but it's not right, it's not righteous; it's far from it. It needs big changes in it.

...whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; that's the way the heart of man is. ...their feet are swift to shed blood, to do wrong. Doesn't matter who it is, it doesn't matter what... I think of governments when I think of that...feet are swift to shed blood. All in the name of our standard of righteousness we have people killing people in Afghanistan; people killing people in Iraq; young people being sent off to war to die; people sent to Vietnam to die. Think... What was the purpose of it all? What did we change? What did we give to someone else? What life did we make better? What about all those young people who died who had families, who could have had families, who could have had generations that were following them in life? What happened to all them? Where is the justice in that? Where is the righteousness in that of taking someone away at age 18, 19, 20 and taking their life? ...for your government. What's good about that? It's hard for people to understand that sometimes. It's almost like, "Well that's subversive, that's horrible to talk like that, that's unpatriotic!" Well, if it is, it is because we represent a different country, God's Church does, that's what it talks about in scripture. We represent a different country; we look for a country whose builder and maker is God. That's the way it is in the Church. That's why I'm a conscientious objector; I was when I was 19 when I was called into the Church. Before that I was of the mindset that I wanted to go to the war in Vietnam and I wanted to go as a jet pilot because I wanted to kill as many people as I could. I didn't want to use a machine gun and just kill a few. If you're going to go into battle, why have a puny ole machine gun? Why not have a jet, use a few bombs, really do some destruction. If you're going to kill somebody, if you're going to go to war, do it in a big way! That was my mindset before God called me. That's what I wanted to be, I wanted to be a pilot; and then God called me out of that, out of that stupid kind of thinking and I realize the way of man, the way of war and so forth and realize that it's not about any particular country. It's all mankind...to bring mankind to peace is a different way where people learn to love each other and respect each other and not have wrong prejudice to each other because of colour of skin, or nationality, or whatever it is that people have prejudices about. And God teaches us there's only one way to have that and it's in His Government and His way of life. Every form of government man has ever had is wrong and has done nothing but hurt others, unjustly so.

...destruction and misery are in their ways. I really get upset when I think about Afghanistan. We sent soldiers in there and we made the world a far worse world. They're the #1 producers of cocaine, opium in the world, and we have done nothing...and our government knows it, the military knows it. They're helping to establish warlords to have prosperous crops. Every once in a while they'll go in and have a little bit of a thing to make it sound like we're doing something about it. We're not! On the contrary, we're promoting it and all those drugs that are going into Europe and even coming into the United States destroying peoples' lives, destroying families, killing people. You think... How atrocious, how unjust is that? If we were really righteous we would go in there and level every opium field in the country and take the power away from those warlords, because it's the warlords who cause the problems, who oppress their own people. It's not the majority of the people, it's their warlords, it's the power in the governments and the ones we put up in government that are causing the problems and the atrocities over there. And so many things in the world have been done that way. Every time we've gotten involved in a war... we give weapons to different countries. We've given weapons to different countries. We were over there...

I've known of some; talked to an individual here recently who was in Afghanistan helping them fight the Russians – see... because we were choosing sides. Oh we wanted to help them at that time to destroy, to fight against the Russians because why? Because the Russians are our enemy. And so that's the way it happens throughout Africa, throughout different parts of the Middle East... we have to give them weapons and help different ones. Saddam Hussein... Oh we were Johnny on the spot at one time giving them help with war and weapons...and then he becomes a 'bad man' all of a sudden because of different side that people choose and have in different administrations, different governments and things that people want and things that do have to do with oil and so forth. So we want to go in there now and destroy him because he's the 'bad man'. Kill him and get rid of his 'weapons of mass destruction'. We're so hypocritical! Such liars sometimes...

It really is atrocious how mankind is treated on the earth and what we do on the earth and some of the garbage that takes place sometimes in politics that really is miserable, makes the life of mankind miserable. And I feel sorry for the people in Afghanistan – most of them are very oppressed, very, very poor people and if you really wanted to give them peace it can be done in a different way and not the way we're doing it. It's because we're hypocritical and it's about politics and it's about power and it's about money cause it's about economies and what people are going to get out of it. And the common people, the people that make the world go around are the ones that are taken advantage of.

...destruction and misery are in their ways and the way of peace they have not known. Man doesn't know how to have peace. All he knows is the way of war and the way of oppression, the way of what I just mentioned here, because we don't understand peace, we don't really try to give peace, we don't really try to make people's lives better. We try to give that scenario that that's what we're doing when we go fight a war, "Oh we're trying to give peace to Vietnam; or we're trying to get rid of Communism because Communism is more oppressive and hurtful." Well, you know what? I'm not too convinced, if you really come down to understand it in time, where communism wasn't a whole lot better for China for a period of time than democracy ever would have been. And that's hard for people to understand. There are people who think differently in the world, and function in different ways. It's too bad because they're all wrong, they're all messed up. Probably blows the mind of some people to be hearing this if I put it on the system here.

...there is no fear of God before their eyes, and that's the problem. People don't fear God; they don't even come close to understanding or fearing God and the power of God; and so we can do the things we do. People in politics... you think they have any fear of God? To do some of the things they do? Yet people don't have a fear of God.

Verse 20 – therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, in other words by how well you're able to obey the law, by how well you're able to keep the law. And even within the Church; it's not by how well you do those things in the sense of works or doing the law. And that's what Paul is going through

and talking about, especially toward the Jews. You're not going to save yourself that way by how well you can do it. You've got to do it for the right reasons; you've got to obey for the right reasons. ...for by the law is the knowledge of sin...so again, the law reveals to us sin and where we're not right with God...but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is manifested. So just because you choose to live by a certain... or you do certain things in your life... as an example come to Sabbath services. There are people that come into the Church even... just because people come into the Church doesn't mean their heart is right, doesn't mean their mind is right, doesn't mean they're living righteously yet as far as God is concerned. It's got to be motivated by the right reasons; so that's why it says here...Paul is showing a distinction now between what is righteous and one of just keeping the law.

So he says, now the righteousness of God, apart from the law is being made manifest; but being witness by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is through faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them who believe for there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So what Paul is showing here is that there is this distinction between the works of the law, doing the law, trying to keep the law on your own ability by your own motivation, by your own power, by how good you are as opposed to just believing what God says, believing what God says about certain matters of sin and certain relationships and you're motivated to repent and change and make relationships right is why you're doing what you're doing.

That's what God accounts to you as righteous; and in time everything else will fall into place, you'll become more at one with God in what you believe, but if you just go through the motions of it without a change in heart and change in spirit and agreement with God – doesn't produce the right fruit.

That's why it goes on here to say in verse 24 – being justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And so especially when people begin to come along, or even people who've been brought back into the Church; there have been some people who've been scattered who when they've come back into the Church feel like they were never really put out of the Church; meaning that when the apostasy took place that God didn't really spew them out of His mouth. And that's been hard on some people because the reality is everyone was spewed out of God's mouth, everyone was put out of the Church. I was put out of the Church. Everyone was put out of the Church for a time because God says Laodicea was spewed out of His mouth because we were lukewarm. We weren't doing what we should have been doing and as soon as that happened then – thankfully – we were able to repent; some of us quickly, some have never been brought to that repentance yet, but it's something that everyone has to repent of after a while, but sometimes it's very difficult for people because they don't feel like they've really been doing anything that was that bad, or that was that wrong. So sometimes people think they're living a better life; that they're studying, that they're praying and that God still hears them and a lot of people deceive themselves thinking that just because you go through the motions of praying and studying and going to Sabbath services that somehow you're okay. That doesn't make people okay. All the people who are doing that out in some of these scattered groups out there today are not okay, they're still outside the Church; but they think they're in the Church. And sometimes people who are actually in the environment of the true Church can go through the same thing. Your heart really needs to be right. You've got to be doing this because you really

want it; and that's why I tell people, and especially young people and people that are coming along... you've got to fight for this way of life, it's got to be because you want it and if you're just going through the motions you're in for some very hard knocks in life. You've got to do it because you want it, because you believe what God is offering to you. And so I think of different areas especially and different things that people are going through and realize that they still have to come to that in time; and hopefully everyone comes to that...because you've got to fight for this way, to stand up for what is right and for God to be there for you to help you to fight the battles you've got to be willing to battle too; battle your own nature, battle your own self and seek to change.

Even the righteousness of God which is through faith of Christ Jesus upon all and unto all them who believe for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So again here, showing that we all have problems, we all have weaknesses, we all have things to overcome.

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus, so in other words, nobody's better than anyone else. We all have problems, we all have sin, we can look at the Church whether it be 8 or 800; it doesn't really matter – 8,000 – we can't look upon each other and judge each other and think that we're better than each other. On the contrary, every one of us has problems, every one of us has battles, every one of us has sins we're seeking to conquer and overcome and if we understand the love of God that He has toward us, we'll have it toward one another. And we want to see, as much as God wants to see every one of you, every person change and conquer and respond to that mercy He's shown, that we're able to be forgiven of our sins through Jesus Christ... and that's what he's talking about here, and to grow and to be able to change. And we want that for each other. I don't want to see anyone leave the Body. I don't want to see anyone become hurt or have to have battles. Sometimes I know that people... I back up and watch people have their own battles knowing what they're going through until they quit fighting and resisting against God and resisting God and when they finally come to repentance then they can be helped and we're a Family.

...whom God has set forth to be the propitiation, the payment, through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins. So everything always goes back to the very beginning, how we start this journey. We can be forgiven of sin. Everything we went through in the last 8 sermons here was about the process that Jesus Christ went through so we could come to a point where each one of us could be forgiven of our sins so we could start a process of being different, of becoming something different than what we were in the past; so we don't have to stay the way we are; so that our selfish nature can begin to be changed to that which is unselfish; but we have to have God's help and God's spirit in that and we can't have that unless we continue to repent of sin; every time we see sin. That's why it's a blessing when you can see yourself, when you can see sin in your life. A lot of people don't see sin in their life; they think they're better than that. They don't realize how bad some things that they do that's wrong, how hurtful and how much that keeps them from growing; and sometimes we kind of appease and justify our own mind that what we're doing is okay. No, sin is sin, but if you repent of it, then you can have help from God; because only when you repent of sin is God willing to continue in you and dwell in you and then He gives you the spirit to be able to grow more, to see more, to overcome more; and you become

stronger and stronger spiritually through time. It's a beautiful thing, it really is, it's an awesome thing. Your life becomes better, your life becomes richer in the sense of the hope you have of what God is offering and realizing how close we are now after all the battles that have taken place for 6,000 years, or ever how long you've been in the Church.

...To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness that He might be just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. So, we're all in the same boat and we're all being justified because of our belief – not just in Him being our Passover, but in the whole process of everything He taught, everything that we went through and taught about what He said about relationships and about love toward each other and how we're to treat... we believe everything that He taught, everything that's given through Him, everything that come from God. Everything you have comes through Jesus Christ to you.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded, in other words none of us can be lifted up thinking we're better than others, looking down upon others. If we really understand our human nature then we're not going to look down upon anyone else in the Body, we're going to love them as a brother and sister in Christ. It's a beautiful thing and if you understand it.

So it says, by what law? Of works? No, not by how well we do things, but because... Paul talks in a unique way here because the reality is if you believe what God says and you're motivated to do what is right because you believe what God says, you're repenting because you believe what God says – that you're going to be cut off from His holy spirit if you sin; and so you're anxious to repent. Whenever I sin, I'm anxious to repent, I'm anxious to change. I don't want to stay that way because I know the danger that if I don't repent God's not going to be in me, God's spirit's not going to be there, I'm not going to have the help I need to have; so I'm anxious to repent. And that's the way we should be; anxious, quick to repent so that God will continue to live in us and then we understand it's not because of how good we do things; on the contrary, it's because God blesses us. That's what it's talking about here. We don't have anything to boast about. And yet sometimes we have situations in the Church where people are kind of lifted up by how well they might be able to do things or what they think they might know or know more than others and spiritually stronger than others. Well, the reality is, maybe, if you've been around for 20 years and someone else has been around for 2 years – you better be spiritually stronger; but it shouldn't be something to be lifted up by. If you've been around for 5 years, yeah, you should be stronger. It's like a 5 year old getting into an argument with a 2 year old...that they don't understand the same thing... or, that's a bad one, but you know a teenager, obviously a 13 year old ought to know a whole lot more than a 4 year old. And that's the way it is with us. We should be ahead... but that shouldn't lift the individual up to think that they're better than... on the contrary. "That's my brother" or "That's my sister"; that's the attitude we should have toward each other.

So that's why Paul says, where is boasting then? We don't have anything to boast about, to be lifted up by to think we're better than others. It says, it's excluded; by what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith, because

we're all in the same boat; we all have sin to be forgiven us. We all have battles to conquer and overcome whether you're in the Church for 4 months or 40 years. You still have things to conquer and overcome and we're still fighting and we're in this together and God wants us all to come through it.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Point being is you're going to obey the law; you're going to live the law in a right way when you believe what God says. The reason you repent is because you believe what God says, you see the sin, because you're convicted of it that God's right and you're wrong and the reason you repent is because you know it's wrong. See? It's not because you're trying to maintain a certain standard of righteousness because of how well you're able to work up obedience, how well you can do something when it comes to obeying. On the contrary, it's because you understand that every time that you repent that you're agreeing with God and you're obeying because it's right. And so in other words, you're going to have works of the law as a result of what you believe; and that's the motivation. The works of the law, the obedience should come because of what you believe, not because you're trying to do it yourself on your own power and your own ability. You have to have God's spirit and God's help and if you understand that that's why you know that every time you sin you're going to be cut off from God's spirit and you are going to be on your own doing it on your own. But that's not the way God wants us to go about this, because it's the wrong way. Does that make sense?

We're going to stop there then.

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