

The title of the sermon today is called *Clean or Unclean*. When we hear these words we automatically think physically, therefore we think about foods which are clean or unclean as God outlines in the Bible, as listed the book of Leviticus; because that's what we think. And when we're first called that's one of the truths that we actually begin to understand and see; the need to eat clean foods as God outlines in the Bible, and we are quite diligent about that. And normally you can tell a newly called person, a converting person, is because there's a great emphasis on not eating unclean food.

But in reality clean and unclean foods are only a pointer to a much greater spiritual concept. So this pointer for a newly baptized person... it's about a balance, a focus; and as a person matures in the Body of Christ clean and unclean foods becomes less of an issue, not for the fact that they're eating unclean foods, but you automatically just don't eat pigs, prawns and other things, you just don't eat it. It doesn't even enter your mind to do it and the mindset is just completely different, it's not a worry.

Now for a newly called person, that's where a person goes. So it is like leaven or unleaven; there's a difference between the two. So beginning to understand the intent behind the words 'clean' and 'unclean' we need to know what that definition is. So if we look at what is clean we'll automatically see what is unclean. Something in the Hebrew language that is 'clean' – 'it is pure, it is not contaminated, it is not polluted'. So it's clean, and God designed clean foods for the body so that we would not be contaminated or polluted. Another word is 'pure', something that is pure. So the opposite to 'clean' is 'unclean'. To be 'unclean' means – 'to be polluted, to be defiled'.

Mr. Armstrong used to explain this physical concept about the way God designed the human body and he'd use a car, an automobile as an example. For example – the maker made a car and designed it so that it would function, fire on the cylinders *IF* you put the correct fuel into the automobile, which was petrol. So if you put petrol in the petrol car the cylinders will fire and the car will function. Well, it's our human bodies, if you look at it in a physical level. God designed the body in a particular way so that if you put clean fuel in, clean foods in balance, not overdoing one or the other, your body will function; it will not misfire. So that's how Mr. Armstrong explained clean and unclean.

Now you don't go and get a brand new car, pay 30-40-50,000, drive it up to your tap and fill it full of water. You would think that person's lost it! ...because you're looking at a physical level – you know that car's not going to work, obviously. Well, it's no different than our bodies, that in time if you put the wrong things in to our body then our body will not work the way that God designed it, and sometimes it takes a long time for the body to change and react to a particular thing.

When we look at clean and unclean often also we have this very defined definition on the physical level; no pork, no prawns. But we could pollute our bodies in other ways, for example diet Coke or Coke with aspartame. Now, if you drink too much of that your body can get affected, but we don't think, "Oh, that's unclean!" We're very narrow in our definition. God did not design us to pour chemicals *into* our bodies, and they're not listed in the Bible: it doesn't say, "You shall not take chemicals into your body." So it's about balance and moderation, about wisdom in using these things. Nothing wrong with having some of those things, but in excess it can cause our bodies to break down and for some people a little bit can be too much. For another person, they can get away with it for a long period of time. But in time those chemicals will react to the body and the body will stop to function the way God designed it.

So the concept that God put forth in the Bible, something that He created, is the concept of opposites. When it comes to matters outlined in the Bible, we have to look at this concept. Opposites are clearly defined in God's word, they are *spiritual* concepts, spiritual principles and they do not mix. They are opposites and they do not mix.

We know many of them and we can look at it in the physical realm; positive versus negative. Now that's a frame of mind. It's a frame of mind; so a positive, looking at the positive side of something, or looking at the negative side of something. And there is nothing wrong with looking at the negative side of something because it's about consequences. So people can be very positive and in that positive it's a cause and effect, you can look at that and say look at the negative side, "Yes, if you put your hand in the fire you will get burned." So you're looking at a negative side of things. That's fine. We should consider the negative, the *impact* of something. All too often when we sin we don't see the *impact* of the negative of sin, we just don't see it and it can take years before we begin to see the impact of sin. The impact of sin in our life toward others is that we *hurt* ourselves and we actually hurt others. But that's a spiritual concept that sometimes we don't see.

So some of these things that are opposites...and I'm going to go through these and explain briefly what some of them are. God created the east from the west and that implies a distance, they're further apart. So, how far is the east and how far is the west? They are the complete opposite, they're in totally different directions and you can't go that far to the east or that far to the west... they're further and further apart. Just like God's Church... we are that far apart from the world, but they believe we're insane; and we're actually further in another way from the church that's scattered, that's still asleep. We are moving *further* away from their position. So they are opposites.

God provides us terms that we can see so that we can begin to understand this principle. For example; God says *He* is holy; God is holy, and anything that doesn't have God dwelling in it, or separate from it, the opposite to it is you're unholy. So it's holy versus unholy.

The opposite of to love; God is love; the opposite to it is hate. So when we say God is love, God has outgoing concern for the benefit of His creation; but something that's opposite to it, there is no concern for the benefit of a creation. So when we demonstrate love to another person, we're showing concern, Godly concern to another; but if we're in sin we cannot show Godly concern, we actually show concern for ourselves, we'll protect our image. We're concerned about ourselves; so they're complete opposites.

It's the same with clean; something clean is something pure, and something unclean is something that is polluted.

There is righteousness and unrighteousness. There is faithfulness and then there's unfaithfulness. There is give, there is get. There is life and there is death. There is the immortal, there is mortal; which we are. There is incorruption and there is corruption – decay. There is light, which is what we learned about during the Feast. There is light and there is darkness; it's the opposite. There is truth...

I'm going through these quickly because they're a study in themselves but I am wanting to show that there is a clear distinction between the two.

There is truth, which all comes from God (truth comes from God), and there is error. There is good and there is evil. There is humility, which comes from God. We look in the world and say somebody's humble. *No one* is humble unless they have God's spirit dwelling in them. God gives the gift of humility. Now in the world, in a human level, yes, there are people that don't see themselves in an elevated way, but they don't have Godly humility. Only God can give true humility which is the ability to think in truth; to think correctly about who we really are. And from this Feast we should be able to see ourselves with God's spirit in a humble way...our true value.

So people get confused. I remember I did... I was in the Body of Christ, I'd been baptized and had the laying on of hands and because of a particular course that a company wanted all their people to attend, I had to attend it as well. I'm not into these definitions of people and trying to put them in boxes as the world through psychology does – put you into a personality box, etc... try to avoid that. But I had to do this particular course, and they also have a lie factor on it trying to work out who you are. So they're trying to say, "Well, if you've got a particular type of profile or personality you could be a good manager, or you could be this, or you could be that. They're trying to define you, put you in a box. Well, someone with God's spirit...it should be different; and to my surprise it did come up (and I learned something from this as a lesson for me) and they've got quite a... when I filled it out, because I didn't lie... I deliberately set out, I will not lie, I will not fudge any aspect of this question using God's spirit. I'll be honest about what I see myself as; whereas the natural mind won't. They *can't*! They want to paint the best picture possible! So it did come up and they have what they call a lie factor, and it was one; whereas the majority in the group were up in the 7's, 8's, and 9's. So they were a bit shocked by that.

And I realized straightaway it wasn't Wayne Matthews. I realized that God was with me and that's what happened. So a one came up and they said, "Well, we're really a bit shocked about... we're not quite sure because really this indicates that you could have lied more than what this has indicated." And I said, "Why?" What it came up as was they said, "Well, there's an aspect of humility in this, which as basic humility is a lowliness, a lowness..." True? It's a lowness. They call humility a lowness. But I had this extreme *boldness*; and they just couldn't work it out. How can you be humble and *bold*? Because in the world, you see, a humble person's not bold, are they? They're rather a meek person in the corner. But I had this *boldness* and this boldness is this *confidence*. And what they couldn't see... I could see it. What I could see, it was God's spirit because I was bold and confident of *who I am*; not because of what I am, but because of what God is *making me*! And I can be confident in the truth. So I can be bold! Yes, I can go up and say, "No, you're *wrong*!" You know how other people, "Oh, well, you're..." I had a confidence to say, "No, that's wrong, I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to do it!"

So there was many a time where because of God's spirit you become isolated because they can't work you out. You're bold! You're confident! ...and you're humble, you don't have this great opinion of yourself... but you're bold! So they really did struggle with that test and I learned a lot from that.

So the opposite to humility; and humility really is the ability that God gives to see our true value. And that's why we can be bold. So we see our true value because we see we have a mind that's hostile to God and we see that! We don't get depressed about it; we see God's plan and we become *bold*, confident! I know that I'm going to sin today! I'm not going to go and beat myself up about it, I *know* I'm going to make mistakes. I'm not going to beat myself up about it; I know that's going to happen, but as soon as I get the chance I'm going to repent... I know. I'm bold because I've got access to God the Father through Jesus Christ! *Why wouldn't* you be bold? Nobody else has it other than those that God has called. So can you see the difference? I can be humble because God has revealed to me what I really am. What's my true value? Well, really I'm nothing. What am I? I only exist because God allows

me to exist. And how great a blessing is life itself? It's amazing! Just life! Having a physical life without a calling from God is in itself a *marvellous* blessing! And yet when you're called by God words don't describe the blessing of a calling. *Now* I can be bold...bold for God's way of life because I know where I'm going, I have direction because God's told me the direction.

So now I can walk confidently and boldly because I know where I'm trying to get to with God living through me; and I know I can't get there if I cut God's spirit off from me by sin. So therefore I know, boldly, I can repent! You accept it. You head forward *boldly* no matter what the sin is. And when you get into the unpardonable sin it's a *wilful* rejection of what the truth is; a *wilful*, deliberate... you know, "No, I do not want this!" And when we sin we know we can go to God and it's a marvellous blessing. And therefore you can be bold; you can be bold everyday when you wake up. You don't have to get depressed about what you are from your background, or whatever; no, we just move forward, keep repenting.

Pride is when we lift ourselves up. It's self-deception. Pride is actually self-deception. We deceive ourselves and misplace the value that God has placed on a human life, because we take it to ourselves and build ourselves up *against* God, really.

So when we see concepts of opposites, they are very clear. Leaven versus unleavened. Circumcision versus uncircumcision. Now, instantly we think as soon as we say circumcision, normally the mind goes; circumcision-physical. True? Eighth day circumcision and all that. But that's a concept that God put out on a physical plane that points to a spiritual. The physical pointed to the spiritual. So this is not necessarily about the flesh, although that's what God in the Old Testament did. Now it makes no difference whether you're circumcised or uncircumcised on the physical level – makes no difference. It's about the heart! An uncircumcised heart is something that's against God. A circumcised heart is where God has called you and He's working with you and it's about the mind. So that's the difference between the two and you can see it; they're complete opposites. You're either circumcised or you're not; physically and spiritually. You're either circumcised, called, placed in the Body of Christ, repenting of sin, or you're not! They're complete opposites! You're either one or the other.

So before man was placed on the earth God had already defined what was considered clean or unclean, and the opposites were established before *anything* spiritual or physical was created; so they were established.

So let's turn to **Mark 1:21- Then they**, talking about Jesus Christ and the disciples, **went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at His teachings:** talking about Jesus Christ; **for He taught them as one having authority**, so this is boldness. There's a boldness and a confidence. God! The boldness and confidence comes from God; it's not of ourselves what we are. ...**and not as the scribes. Now there was a man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out:** so here's a definition; 'unclean spirit'. So there are, technically you can look at it, clean spirits; those that are for God - and the unclean. Now it's not talking about a spirit that's dirty. Do you know what I mean? That's physical. Unclean means sin dwells. So clean is no sin, and unclean is where sin dwells. And here we have an angel that is unclean; God has defined it as unclean, *polluted*. It's a polluted spirit, the mind is polluted. A spirit, an angel, a messenger that has sin. Pride motivates it. It is unfaithful, it is leavened, it is opposite to love, it is hateful. You can see all the opposites.

Here a rebellious spirit or spirits are deemed as unclean. In other words, they are polluted character. They are in opposition to God's way of life. When Satan and a third of the angels rebelled against God, they became unclean by that rebellion. They are in opposition to God and in fact are opposite. They are opposite! They are polluted and therefore can pollute. That is something to consider. They *are* polluted and therefore *can* pollute. Now we'll look at some scriptures if we have time that'll clarify this principle about a polluted situation, can actually touch something clean and when the polluted touch the unpolluted, the unpolluted gets polluted. It's like the clean... something dirty touches something clean, the clean becomes dirty.

So *we* are clean if God lives and dwells in us and we haven't got sin. We become *unclean* because we make ourselves that way through choice, but also the unclean is trying to make the clean, us, unclean. That's Satan and his demons broadcasting; the unclean *trying* to make the clean unclean. It's a spiritual principle and hopefully we'll get to those scriptures. Mankind is unclean when they have sin living in them.

Verse 24 – and saying, so this spirit cries out... Let alone! What have we to do with You Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know, and that word 'know' is 'see'. He 'see's', it's a spiritual concept... **who You are, the Holy One of God.** They *knew* He was the anointed Messiah, the Saviour for all mankind; so they knew that Jesus Christ was clean. They knew that He had been appointed and that at a particular time He was appointed and would be *their judge*. They knew that. They know that in the future judgement would happen and that they would be judged, with a judge over them. There's going to be a final judgement and they knew who this person was, that Jesus Christ walking on the earth – God dwelling amongst men that was a judgement. And here they say, "Oh, okay... we know who You are." So they knew what was going on. They knew about the Messiah.

Verse 25 - But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quite and come out of him. And when the unclean, in the moral sense here unclean in thought and life, when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. So here it is; an unclean spirit obeying... you know obedience has no choice actually, has no choice. And we should learn from that – that God has all authority. God has all authority in these matters.

Verse 27 – Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even unclean spirits and they obey Him. They obey Him. This reveals that God has complete control and authority over the spirit realm. Nothing can resist God's will and purpose. Something we can learn from that, the lesson, *nothing* can resist God's will and purpose. The unclean spirits, or rebellious spirits, are subject to God's great power and authority.

Verse 28 - And immediately His fame spread throughout the region of Galilee.

Angels that remain *faithful* and without sin by contrast are considered clean. So you can see an opposite there. From this scripture we can also see that to be spiritually unclean we are in a state of sin, or unrepented sin. So there are times when we are clean, and we're hopefully going to get to some of that. We are clean, but we can become unclean again, but we can also become clean again...that's a process. That process is simply the process of repentance.

Mark 3:10 – And He healed many; talking about Jesus Christ; so that as many as had afflictions, pressed about Him to touch Him. So here is the physical desire to get healed. Now here is somebody

that is healing by touching, they just touched Him and sometimes they were healed. So people sought this physical healing; but we brethren, should be seeking for a *spiritual* healing. We should be pressing towards Jesus Christ, God the Father through prayer, *seeking* to be healed spiritually in the mind. And sometimes it's not until we have a sickness that we then cry out as God says through the ministry, (in James), that we actually then 'press' on God for a physical healing; because we're physical and we *need* healing, but we do not see so clearly the *need for the healing of the mind*. We just don't see it. We don't see the urgency! These people travelled for miles trying to be healed physically. Some would climb up in trees just to see Jesus Christ because they were looking for something – they weren't looking for the spiritual. They were *not* looking for the spiritual, they were looking for physical. How much more should we be looking for the spiritual healing, because God has given us the gift of being able to 'see', and to see the need for the healing? How much more should we be pressing towards Him?

Verse 11 – And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out saying, You are the Son of God. But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known. So the unclean spirits here clearly knew who He was and what God was doing.

God is holy, therefore God is pure and everything that God deals with is pure. To be spiritually clean means there is no sin. To be spiritually unclean means there is sin. God and His law are holy, pure and clean and we know the scriptures that cover that. *Every* word of God is pure; therefore, (just logic), if we want to be pure, (because we're not pure, we're defiled)... if we want to be pure and clean and every word of God is pure, we have to be washed by the word. God's word has to enter our minds to purify us, to cleanse us; because God says that *every word* of God is pure. The law is holy and the commandments holy and just and good. So it's a way of thinking; it's a way of thinking and the way of thinking is to think like God – to have God's word dwelling, living in us – we then become pure.

We know that the law reveals sin. It also, therefore, reveals what is pure, clean versus the unclean. So the 10 Commandments and God's law actually reveals what cleanliness is versus uncleanness. And you can go through the 10 Commandments and look at those. So somebody that doesn't keep the Sabbath in spiritual intent, which I must add – in its spiritual intent and all things that go with that...someone that keeps the Sabbath in God's Church with God dwelling in them, living in them, are considered clean – because that's what the commandment says. 'Keep holy the Sabbath day.' You keep it holy, separate, clean. But for someone to reject the Sabbath and its intent, why it was created for us, we become unclean – clean versus unclean.

So hopefully from that we can see the real difference between something: when we first think about clean and unclean we think physically, it's just normal. "Oh, has that dish got pork in it?" ...and then while we eat the clean meat, we gossip about somebody. That's what we're like! And I know, I've been in restaurants myself and I've said, "Oh what's that, what's that..." And you go through all this trouble. It's all clean – everything's clean! And then sometimes you've seen, well, accidentally, cause the world tends to want to do you a favour, they add a little bit of bacon on the top – sprinkle, sprinkle, sprinkle... or a few prawns jammed inside, and we're all "Oh there's prawns! ...and there's pork! You can't touch *that!*! ...but did you hear about John? I'll tell you about John... blah, blah, blah..." I'll tell you, we are just *so physical* and yet what does God look at? He looks at the heart, the mind! So that was all a waste of time! You avoided the pork and the bacon and the prawns, which you're commanded to do. You're *commanded* to do that... but it pointed to the spiritual; and *then* we lie and exaggerate in the conversation. What a *futile, stupid* exercise about worrying about the physical. We should have been worried about the spiritual – that's what we should have been worried about because one points to the other.

Let's turn to Ezekiel 40. These scriptures take us to a time in the future, the Millennium and beyond, and they reveal something about the priesthood. And as we go through this we can see from what has happened in the past to where we're going in the future and what God talks about as far as the ministry. And there are lots of lessons for us individually as ministry, and also as members of the Body of Christ. In Ezekiel 40 it shows us a time when Ezekiel was in a vision. Now remember, this is a vision that Ezekiel is having and we'll start in **Ezekiel 40:2 - In the visions of God He, talking about God, took him into the land of Israel, and set him on a very high mountain, on it towards the south was something like a structure of a city.** So this is a vision of the Temple; and remembering it is a vision and there are descriptions in here that are spiritual things being, trying to be communicated at a physical level so the mind can grasp it, because otherwise we can't grasp spiritual things. So it's got to be transferred into clean and unclean – and we can understand that, if you can understand where I'm going. It's about taking something spiritual, trying to describe something and put it into a physical term so the brain can comprehend it.

Ezekiel 44:4 – Also He brought me by way of the north gate in the front of the Temple: so here we have a description which is pointing to spiritual; **and so I looked and behold the glory of the Eternal filled the house of the LORD: and I fell on my face. And the LORD said to me, son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears,** now, we can do this on a physical level, but it's more important on a spiritual level – to see with the eyes, in other words, to see in the mind. You can be blind and still hear this message and see it. And you can *hear* it because you understand it. The hearing is in the understanding. **...that what I say to you concerning all of the ordinances of the house of the Eternal, and all its laws; mark well who may enter the House and all who go out from the sanctuary. Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD; O house of Israel, let us have no more of all your abominations,** let's have no more of that!

Verse 7 – When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in the flesh, they're talking about unconverted; *unconverted*, it's a mindset – unclean; **to be in My sanctuary to defile it,** so anything unclean in the House of God has to be taken out. True? Because it's symbolically pointing to sin. **...defile it, My house, and when you have offered up My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all their abominations.**

Verse 8 - And you have not kept charge of My holy things: but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you. See, here there were roles appointed to the ministry; 'to take charge of My holy things'. Now what is a holy thing to God? ...for the ministry? It's the Body of Christ. It's the members of the Body of Christ. *You are holy IF God dwells in you* and that the responsibility for the ministry to say, 'you want to deal with My holy things...' because it's God who appoints the ministry for the purpose of service. But we want to be very careful, talking to myself, about how we *handle* God's holy things. I don't mean to call you things, but that's what God implies by this. You're set aside for holy use and purpose. You are holy when God lives and dwells *in* you; and how much more when we're dealing with each other? We are dealing with God's holy things! We need to be very careful about what we do. Imagine criticizing and pulling down something that God has said is holy... when we talk about each other or pull each other down. How proudful is that? We need to be very careful.

Verse 9 - Thus says the Lord GOD; No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in the flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel. So in other words, sinners cannot enter. There is a need to repent daily. We know that sin cuts us off.

So take this example about prayer. If we have unrepented sin and we're not willing to repent of it, and then we enter the Holy Place, God's sanctuary through prayer, (because we have access to God's throne), God says, "Well, there's not supposed to be a foreigner or uncircumcised in heart..." (in other words the mind isn't being changed...) What's the point? Because God is not going to hear that prayer. God will not hear that prayer. We need to be in a state of repentance! And that's why it's so important on an every day basis, is one thing; is to ask God for the gift of repentance because God has to grant repentance, God's got to give it, God's got to show us what's wrong in here, in our minds – everyone individually. *Everyone individually* – it's an ongoing process to be able to see what we are and God reveals it progressively.

I know in times past in talking to some brethren that I said that, "If God ever revealed everything about me at once..." You'd just collapse in a heap because you can't cope. You *cannot* cope! But when you first come into the Church, the Body of Christ, well you're not... things aren't that bad are they? Because we don't really see, *really see*, what we really are yet. And over time as we mature we do see more and more and more and in the end we abhor ourselves, like the apostle Paul said. It's disgusting what we really are. It really is bad! The way we think, the way we do ... especially our motives.

And one thing that over time that I have learned about myself, was my ability to impute a motive. See, when we have motives we should look at our intent – why did I say that? Why did I do that? ...and you examine it and say, "Oh, I actually said that because I was lifting myself up in the conversation." The bird was 'this' big, for those at the Feast... 'it was *this* big!' Exaggerating. Why do you exaggerate? It's because you're lifting yourself up, you want it to be better so that people will be impressed, that's why you do it. But that takes time to see and you learn in the end that you're to watch every word and why did you say it that way, why did you react that way. Because that's what repentance is about, it's an ongoing process.

But there's another sin that is often unrecognized in us – God reveals it over time. And that's something called 'imputing a motive'. So what we do is we see a situation and then we impute a motive of why that person did it. That's what we do. It's called imputing a motive. So we say, "Oh, well they did this because..." as if we know. *As if we know!* We've become judges... because you see, we *know* that's why they did it. We know that they did that because of this... Imputing a motive. Yet, that motive could have been very genuine; God could have been in that whole action and here we are standing back and saying, "Well, I know why they did it!" We impute a motive. How disgusting is that? True? But that is actually in our ability and we do it. We don't even think about imputing motives to others – but we do. And by imputing a motive to others, other's actions, thoughts, words or whatever, we lift ourselves back up there because you see we become *judges*. We *judge* them...because I know why they did it – because of this... but we've got no clue whatsoever – *no clue whatsoever!*

I remember one time when I was covering this particular topic, that is, somebody saw *me* going into a night club at 4:00 in the morning. Automatically people impute a motive – yes? That's yeah... minister in God's Church going to a nightclub, 4:00 in the morning... you impute a motive. "Whoa!" Little did they know that an emergency had occurred. I was going there to pick up my daughter. See how easy it is to judge? How easy it is to judge and impute a motive on somebody and we haven't got a clue what we're talking about. It's dangerous, dangerous, dangerous stuff because we can't afford to be judges.

So sinners can't enter in to the sanctuary.

Verse 10 - And the Levites, talking about the priesthood, the ministry, **who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols; they shall bear their iniquity.** They shall pay their penalty.

Verse 11 - Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, as gatekeepers for the house, and ministers of the House: so here then it's talking about something that's going to happen. There's a role of service, but it's not in the sanctuary – they're going to be gatekeepers; different roles. ...**they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifices for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them,** to serve.

Verse 12 – Because, why is this happening? **Because they ministered to them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity;** and that's what happened in Laodicea. Laodicea should jump out for those that have been awakened and *lived* through Laodicea because the *ministry* who was supposed to be the *teachers*, followers of God not of men, followers of God... Paul said, 'As I follow Christ *you* follow me'. But when it came to being under pressure, the ministry was an issue. Many stayed in jobs *for money*...and guess what happened? It caused the house of Israel, the people, the brethren who were supposed to have been fed by the minister, cut off – starved to death. The brethren started to starve. So here it says people then started to follow the minister.

We had this discussion during the Feast about Laodicea, because to those that haven't lived through it, it's somewhat like... Well, how difficult was it? It was *difficult*; because you had three choices. "I grew up in a Church, the Body of Christ, the Church of God and believed that the leadership were of God and therefore everything they said came from God. And that's what I believed and I've checked it with my Bible." Not every single thing that was said was always 100% accurate because some of it went to the physical; you should have brown sugar not white. Just shows you where you can go – righteousness in honey versus brown sugar versus white or no sugar...that's where you're a spiritual giant if you're having honey!! Just slightly off the par, but that's what happened in aspects of certain parts of the Church.

But this is about an unfaithful ministry; that brethren have to make a choice. So here we go – the Sabbath is done away with and it's not as if it's just the minister that's saying it – it's the *leader* of the Church that God had placed under Jesus Christ to lead His Church, to feed and teach – and he gets up and says, "The Sabbath's done away and so is tithing." Now, how difficult is it for a member in the Body of Christ sitting there Sabbath to Sabbath to hear this? You'd built your foundation of your life for 20-30-40 years on it and now it's taken away. Three choices! "Well, I stay here because this is God's Church!" We follow the organization and the man...rather than follow Christ. That's one choice. The other choices... you go, "Well, huh, obviously if it's wrong we're going to have to abandon it all! It's obviously all rubbish because what I believed is gone!" The rug from under your feet has been pulled and now what are you going to do? Confusion. Or you say, "Well, no, I proved the Sabbath to myself..." and there's a difference between proving the Sabbath and *proving* the Sabbath – let me assure you of that because you can grow up in the Church and never prove the Sabbath. Have you proved the Sabbath? God's spirit convicts you of the Sabbath; but you can sit down and prove it. With God's spirit you can prove it and on a physical level spiritually prove it.

So then you can say, "Well, I've got to do that and I've got to keep the Sabbath and Holy Days. God's word is true and I know I'm not to eat unclean foods and da-da-da-da... therefore, what am I going to do?" There's a church over here that's preaching against it, another third have gone off and said, "Oh, you're all insane! It's all rubbish! Go back into the world." Back to where they came from – dog returning to its vomit is what God says it is. OR you try to hang on but you're confused because

amongst the ministry there's no leadership per se; because the ministers are divided! So out of all of them is there any that are wanting to follow God? It was confusion. And of course God had a purpose in that. And then God raised up Mr. Weinland, brought him to a point, brought him through and the Church was re-established... because we had to go to sleep. But just think now if that happened – not that it *will*, because there's only one time in the history of God's true Church that is has happened, as it was prophesied in God's word. It's exact and it won't happen again. But just imagine you'd have to make a choice. It's very distressing... *very distressing*.

Well here God says the ministry has accountability; they have accountability because *they* went to sleep and they couldn't feed His Flock. The ministry became unfaithful.

Continuing on in **verse 12...therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them, says the Eternal God/LORD God, that they shall bear their iniquity.** Now if you go through the book '2008 – God's Final Witness', the 5th Thunder, which we are approaching to happen is this very scripture being fulfilled. They are going to *pay* the price, be held accountable; and if you look at the battle with Elijah you see the outcome. God has already ordained the outcome and you can go through and read what it is in the book. And it's part of this business about, 'Well, that's what you did and now you will pay a price,' and the price for the ministry is they *will not* enter, those that are still asleep that will be out there doing whatever they are doing to their ability, they *will not* be part of the 144,000. They will *not* be part of the 144,000. In actual fact, if you read the book, they face death, to be resurrected in the 100 years – that's what they face because the judgement has been made, and God's word is true here about what happened.

So we soon face, as outlined in the book, the battle of Elijah on a spiritual level; and some part it's actually been taking place – it's actually been taking place all this time, but the fulfillment of the rest of that is about to happen.

Verse 13 - And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priests, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place: because they're not part of the 144,000; they will *not* serve God's Church going forward in the thousand years; they're not going to be allowed to do it. **...but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, of all its works, and of all that has to be done in it.** So it requires a resurrection, and that requires a hundred years for it to go forward.

But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept My charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, those faithful, **they shall come near to Me to minister to Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood, says the Eternal: They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near to My table, to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge.** So they are prophecies to be fulfilled.

Drop down to **verse 23** – so this is the role of the ministry in the sense of being a teacher; but it's not about going out there and giving people lot's of advice and teaching, teaching, teaching. God appointed at this end-time an apostle and we have been so blessed that here, in the main, one voice; that we can have unity and consistency, and God revealing *truth* through an apostle. And the role that God has appointed an apostle to; **and they shall teach My people the differences between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern,** which is to think it, think about it, to think it out, **between the unclean and the clean.** So now decisions have to be made.

So the ministry teaches what is clean, God's ways versus the unclean, the worlds ways. And we should be able to discern what is clean and what is unclean. God's word is pure. God's word is clean and God gives you His holy spirit, and me His holy spirit, to *discern* spiritually what is clean. So now, hopefully, we can see that when we get into it about a bit of bacon on the top, it's no big drama – you pick it off. You just pick it off and don't eat it because you want to obey God. But how much *more* important is it the way we live, the way of life we live?

And don't get me wrong; I'm not downplaying God's law about clean and unclean foods, but it's about a balance. We've got to be balanced in these things and not take it to an extreme and then not check ourselves spiritually. Spiritually... are we clean or unclean? That's *far* more important to God, *far more important* to God.

So that's what's going to take place; **they will teach My people the differences**, because there's a difference, there are opposites to things.

Physical matters reveal a spiritual attitude. So often a person's attitude can be seen. I know in my grandson I can *see* what he's thinking. How's that possible? Well, God's spirit – I know attitudes when I see them. I know *thoughts* when I see them because I can look at his face and I can tell you *exactly* what he's thinking; and he's a young five year old and he can only think one way. True? I know he can only think one way. He can only think what's best for him, and if he does something nice to me, (not putting him down, we're all the same); if he does something nice to me *I know* he's trying to get something back because that's how *we all are* if we grow on a physical level, 'carnal minds hostile to God, not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be'. We're trying to get something out of it! Whereas God's spirit flowing through us, it's God that does the works, God's flowing out to the benefit of others and people benefit and we are *not expecting ANYTHING in return!*

And I *will* explain something; I'm not getting very far in my notes but that's probably a good thing. I want to explain something that happened during the Feast and there are lessons in these things. The particular environment was all the children were out in the park and the Mr. Whippy van, which is an ice cream man, came along and the music was playing. In Australia when you hear that music you know ice cream is coming and everyone got excited. So we ran down there and I did say, "Well, I'll buy them an ice cream." I bought the kids an ice cream. Then we were out at a meal and I said, "Play the game with your children about different things and one of the games was you had to be quiet; there was a reward at the end of it and you weren't allowed to speak for 5 minutes. So that's wisdom. So the kids all stayed quiet for the 5 minutes, which was good, and we played a couple other games and I said, "Well, the reward is an ice cream," and then we bought them an ice cream at the end of the meal. And one of the children in a loving way came up and said, "Thank you Mr. Matthews, for the ice cream." And I said, "Well, in actual fact, I didn't buy the ice cream, okay? God's church bought you the ice cream."

So then I had to explain and I went on to explain to some people; when those things happen at a Church funded meal, the Church didn't provide the meal, because you see, God provided the meal. And that's the lesson in this. The glory goes to God; the glory doesn't go to Wayne for buying the ice cream, "Thank you Wayne..." No, the glory goes to God because God through tithes gave money... you tithe, people tithe, brethren tithe; God's money – it is God's money. God places it into the church and then the church uses it as God sees fit. The ministry make decisions, Mr. Weinland makes decisions and that's how it goes. So in reality, there's no credit to the church. God provided meals, God provided the ice cream. There's *big lessons* in that in life; and I was hoping that eventually when that subject came up

again that parents will be able to say, “Well, in actual fact God purchased that ice cream for you.” That’s a spiritual concept – true? Physical with spiritual connotations behind it.

So physical matters reveal a spiritual attitude. Spiritual matters are more important. We must know or come to know what is holy and what is unholy based on God’s word, not our own thinking; not what we think is right. What is clean and unclean spiritually? That is the important lesson of unclean and clean foods.

Ezekiel 22:24 - Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed, nor rained on in the day of indignation. So there’s no relief. **The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey;** in other words, destroying...destroying God’s people, *causing* God’s people to forsake Him. How terrible is that? *How* terrible is it that a minister of God would preach in a way that would *cause* members to forsake God. But that’s actually what happened. They were destroying!

Now, we have to be careful that we do not destroy God’s people. Members of the Body of Christ *can* destroy; we can destroy through words, we can destroy others through gossip. Now I’ll admit that there have been times in my life when I’ve heard one side of the story, and because that’s how it goes, you listen to the story and in the end because you hear something about somebody else that you build up an image about this person. That’s normal. At one particular time Chris and myself talked about it. We actually didn’t want to meet the other person because you had this image. But, you go forward. We met the other person and we realized how *stupid* we had been by listening to the first person; by making judgements, imputing motives and doing all these things. Because when we met the other person we saw they were of genuine heart and sincere. Yeah, they make mistakes, but they were repentant. So how dangerous is it? We can destroy each other by saying things about each other. And those things may be true, they may be true! But it doesn’t give us the right to pull somebody else, tear somebody down and affect somebody else; because we can destroy somebody else and their view of another member of the Body of Christ.

The tongue is a powerful thing! There are lots of scriptures about the tongue, and it can’t be controlled, it is unruly and evil. But you know what it is? It’s connected to the brain most of the time and that’s the problem. When it’s not connected to the brain, in other words thoughts haven’t been thought through, we lash out and say things unknowingly, and then we repent of them when we realize it. When God reveals it to us we repent.

...they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. They’ve destroyed people’s lives! Spiritual widows.

Verse 26 - Her priests have violated My law, and profaned My holy things: they have not distinguished between the holy and the unholy, they couldn’t distinguish between Passover on the 14th; ...hmmm, we’ll put it on the 15th, be there on the 15th. Now that’s *profaning* a Passover. That’s disgusting, but that’s what has happened; **nor have they made known the differences between the unclean and the clean, they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned amongst them.** It’s God that is profaned amongst them because the people are saying the wrong thing, God’s not glorified! ...polluting Sabbaths, saying it’s done away. They teach that Sunday is clean... shocks the mind, doesn’t it? They teach lies and say they are clean! That these lies are the truth but they’re not. They deny truth and call the truth unclean. The truths that God has revealed to the Church, 57 Truths, the majority of these revealed truths, to the scattered church, people out there that are asleep and the world in

particular as well (they don't care), they call what we believe unclean, not from God, whereas we say it's clean, it's holy.

Physically clean hands means they have been washed and are no longer polluted. So we're going back now, back to the Pharisees and certain things that we do. Now we should have clean hands. We know health wise God instructs us to wash our hands, to be clean. There's a reason for that – health reasons; but it also points to spiritual.

So *if* we've washed our hands, our hands are clean – they're no longer polluted. Physically unclean hands are those that have not been washed. In other words, we're touching dirty things and there are germs that dwell on those hands. Unclean hands can touch something and therefore make something else unclean that might have been cleaned; which we talked about. There's something clean, you touch it; with your unclean hands you touch it. In the Old Testament there are many scriptures regarding when somebody dies; if you touch the body you have to be out of the camp seven days and on day three you can do a particular ceremony and day seven. It's all pointing to something spiritual.

The term 'clean hands' can imply a genuine sincere motive. So it's something physical, but it actually points to something in the spiritual realm; it implies if you're clean you're a genuine, sincere person, you're genuine and you're sincere, God's spirit dwells in you. 'Unclean hand' implies insincerity. So an unclean person is someone that's not sincere, they're liars basically. When you're not sincere you're lying; firstly you're lying to yourself and then you lie to others because you're not sincere, you're not genuine, you're not who you should be with God's spirit dwelling in you.

False doctrine is unclean. Why? Because it pollutes the mind and it makes something clean become unclean. So within the Body of Christ, the Church of God, we need to be careful not to allow something outside. We had some conversations during the Feast and I said that, "Unless you've heard it from Mr. Weinland..." because we can make contact with people and people have a lot of ideas. New people coming in the Church have a lot of ideas; but unless you've heard it through a Church sermon, a *sermon*, and unless it's in writing in the truth in the website don't go there. Because we can overanalyze lots of things... what if's, and maybe's, and potentially, and what if... don't waste your time. If you've got God's spirit, God will reveal to you what you should be doing when you should be doing it. Stay to the trunk of the tree, stay where God is!

And this came up in relation to study. There's dangers in studying outside what God is giving because when you look at it God is teaching us as a people and He's taking us in a direction, down a certain path. So surely we would study what God is giving through sermons... get our Bibles out and study where God is taking us with those. But if we go then and say, "Oh no, I'm going to go into the sacrificial system and all the bulls that are done during the Feast period... starts with thirteen on the first day, goes down and there's about seventy bulls and..." That is insanity!

God is saying, "Follow Me – this is where I'm taking you, these are the truths I'm giving you, this is where we focus."

And we say, "Oh no God! I want to learn about the seventy bulls! I'm over here studying this." We are not in tune with God's mind!

God is directing the Church *through* Jesus Christ, *through* an apostle and a prophet... *surely* we would follow that and not go off on some strange thing on the outside and then get into conversations among ourselves and say, "What does it mean when you sacrifice thirteen bulls and two goats and..." *What*

good is any of that going to do, because God's not in that!! That's not where God is *leading* the Church! We follow where God leads through Jesus Christ. We *stay close* to the tree and don't go off on all these tangents, these things. They're irrelevant in the scheme. When God wants us to understand the sacrificial system in a lot more detail, as Mr. Weinland has said, God'll give it to us; but He'll give it to us in a certain way. *He will NOT give it to us through our OWN personal studies!* Because that's not how God works.

God doesn't give truth to the Church that way, He does it through a structure; and if we go off on tangents looking at other structures we're going to lose our way. God uses the flock as an example; it's sheep, which we are. Sheep: we should follow, we should follow the shepherd. When the shepherd goes that way we follow. But if we want to straggle on the outside with other strange things and, "Oh, I think I'll look into this topic here... let's look at this particular one..." We go off on the outside.

Satan is like a roaring lion. He's not a lion, but his *nature* is. His nature is he's trying to devour. Well, you don't devour something in the middle of the flock do you? It's impossible, you can't. You devour the straggler at the side who starts to well up his own concepts of what *he* thinks these things mean. That's dangerous, dangerous, dangerous! Stay close to the way God is leading the Church. Stay close to the truth, stay close to what's clean. *Don't touch* the unclean because you will get polluted.

So the real purpose of physical washings was not understood by the Pharisees, because the washings pointed to something spiritual. So Matthew 23, talking about ceremonial washings.

Matthew 23:23 - Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Now, hypocrites is double standard. We can be hypocrites – double standard; say one thing, do something different – come to Sabbath services, got the suit, shirt and tie, all dressed up, nice hairdo, looking good... go home, "Whew! That day's over! I got through that one! I didn't get exposed!" No, we should be consistent; we should be the same no matter where we are – God's spirit flowing through us.

...hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith: they're all gifts from God; and we're had sermons back previously, which you can go back and go into those, about justice, mercy and faith – something we live, something that flows out through us. All these are spiritual attributes or attitudes that come into the mind from God's holy spirit.

...these you ought to have done, in other words, tithing, **without leaving the others undone...** justice, mercy and faith. **Blind guides, who strain out a gnat,** which is a small insect, **and swallow a camel.** Now you can't see, you're blind; you don't even know where you're going. You're worried about this little thing here... this little thing here, meanwhile, gulp, a big camel goes down because you're worried about the little weenie insect.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, so you wash it all around the outside, **but inside.** He's talking about inside the mind. They can't hear this... **but inside the mind,** so we all look good at Sabbath services, but inside the mind there's *garbage* going on... *garbage going on* because during the week we're *filling* ourselves with it. And we come and we're just... look, the outside of the cup is beautiful and clean, good suit. **...they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! You cleanse the inside of the cup,** the mind, **and the dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.** See, it's got to start in here. It all starts in the mind, in the thinking. We

cleansed that. How do we cleanse it? God's word! God's word cleanses us; God's spirit flowing through us will cleanse it. So washing the outside... it's just an outward sign.

Verse 27 - Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You're acting it out! You all look good in your robes and your walking around in the temple... looks good, but inside its disgusting what's going on in your brain. Everything you're doing is selfish! You're out there putting money in the bowl, "Look at me, I'm giving this... Look at me, look at me, look at me!" It's like the story of the widows mite; she gave everything she had. They gave so that they could be seen. "Ah, look at him! Look at John! Oh... you've given all that money! Ah, and don't you know it...ah... Look at him, isn't he good?" Meanwhile, go back home and their marriage is a *disaster* because they treat their wives *disgustingly* at home, because it's all appearance.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you are like white washed tombs which indeed appear beautiful on the outside, looking good, looking righteous, **but inside are full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness.** Polluted! Spiritually polluted!

Verse 28 - Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy, double standards, **and lawlessness.** They don't follow God's ways in the mind. You might keep a Sabbath on the outward appearance, but inside you wish you weren't here, you're just waiting to get out of the place because you just want that sun to go down so you can do what *you* want to do. It's about a way of thinking. So it looked like they were eating clean food for the wrong motive, that's what it was. Eating clean food for the wrong motive. Why? They're not concerned about the spiritual, but the physical.

Ephesians 5:24 – so this is going into something about the Church. **Therefore just as the Church is subject to Christ, so let their wives be to their own husbands in everything.** This is talking about a spiritual matter. So **as the Church is subject to Christ,** in other words we follow Christ, we follow the *clean*, the pure... we don't wander off; **so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.** Spiritual! It's *spiritual!* Because this has been misinterpreted that wives should do everything their husbands tell them. No, that's not true, that's not what it is saying. Suppose that a husband says for example, "You're not going to the Sabbath today." This verse doesn't say, "We're subject to everything!" It's *in Christ* that you do it, it's in Christ. It's something that has to be pure and righteous. So God says to go to the Sabbath, the wife goes to the Sabbath. Husband says she can't go... No, we're subject to Christ, just like the Church is. We do what Christ says, where Christ is leading us.

More importantly, **verse 25 - Husbands, love your wives,** now to love a wife means we will sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of the wife within the law, within Christ, what Christ says to do to love a wife. In other words willing to sacrifice, outgoing concern, willing to deny the self some of the things we prefer to do. **Just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for Her;** so as Christ sacrificed *everything* for the Church, for us, that's what a husband should do – everything. It's important, it's a mindset.

That He might sanctify, or set aside for holy use, **and cleanse Her with the washing of the water by the word,** it's talking about Jesus Christ; **That He might present Her,** which is the Church which God dwells, **to Himself a glorious Church, pure and clean, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that She should be holy and without blemish.** So we are spiritually clean if God's spirit dwells in us. Our body is the temple of God's spirit. Our body is the temple... so here it is; God's holy spirit dwells, connects with the spirit of man, therefore the important thing to God is... the mind. But the

responsibility to look after our body which carries the mind is very important, hence clean and unclean foods.

So if we eat unclean foods and become ill we are *not* looking after the temple of God. Because you see, chemicals and things like that affect the mind and you can't think clearly. When you're sick, I don't know about you, but if I ever get ill I find it difficult to study and pray, I do. It's just that I don't, can't feel well, I can't think straight and therefore the responsibility of a healthy body is important because we are the temple, we carry God's mind around. This is God's dwelling place, and eventually we're changed to spirit for eternity. This is where God will dwell. This is where God *wants* to dwell; an embryo, begotten but not born. It's a wonderful picture; hence the responsibility *is* to look after our bodies.

So, God's word is clean, it is spiritual food and we must be washed by the word. It cleanses the mind so that we can think differently; that's the purpose of it.

Only God can establish what is clean and unclean both physically and spiritually. So this same principle applies to something holy and unholy, or what is light and what is darkness; and we heard that during the Feast, which will be expounded on as we go along. The spiritual Body of Christ, the Church of God, must strive to remain clean; and that is done by ongoing repentance. If a part of the Body becomes unclean and it refuses to be washed, to repent, it must be cut off. Laws of purification apply to physical in the Old Testament, but also spiritual. There are laws of purification, certain things that have to happen.

Numbers 19:11 - He who touches the dead body of anyone must be unclean seven days... because they can pollute. He must purify himself with water on the third day, and on the seventh day, then he will be clean: but if he does not purify himself on the third day, and on the seventh day he is not clean, in other words spiritually he has *not repented*, its unrepented sin.

Whoever touches the body of anyone who is dead, and does not purify himself, pointing to someone who repents, **defiles the Tabernacle of GOD;** where God dwells. So that's what we do! Unrepented sin... we defile the Tabernacle or the Temple of God. *WE ARE* the temple of God... unrepented sin defiles it, hence the need to continue to repent. **...that person shall be cut off from Israel: he shall be unclean because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him,** in other words he hasn't repented and forgiveness hasn't been given; **his uncleanness is still on him.** So, repentance *is* that cleaning. **It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean.** So, if we have sin dwelling in us, unrepented sin, and we start to communicate with other members of the Body, what can come out? Something unclean because that's unclean, because if God's cut off, He's no longer in us, He's no longer dwelling.

So let's just say we are unclean because of unrepented sin and we communicate something about God's word to the person – sounds clean. But do you know what? For us it's unclean because we did it for the wrong motive, we just haven't explored it. See, because something unclean is unclean. Something unclean that hasn't been forgiven, repented and forgiven, it still remains unclean, it's not washed and therefore whereas we can talk the talk, but it's all in vain because we're taking something to ourselves. Could be that we're lifting ourselves up, "Can't you see how spiritual I am?" ...talking spiritually. No, only God can do good, only God is good (scriptures, "God is good.") God living *in* us does the works." ...flowing out of us for the benefit of others. So we have to be careful we aren't unclean. And if we are unclean and we touch something that's clean, we can actually pollute it.

Verse 22 - Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening. So we can affect others by our attitudes and words, we can.

I want to go down now to Matthew 18. This gets into an area which has to be enacted within the Church at times. I just want to cover something else. This same principle about being clean and unclean also refers to disfellowshippment in the Church. So someone that will not repent of a sin, an obvious sin in the Church and has the potential to *pollute* something that's clean, (in other words pollute other members of the Body) has to be dealt with by the ministry: it can't remain. ...Unrepented sin, wilfully not willing to repent. So sometimes the ministry, God's Church, has to sever somebody, put them outside of the camp (the principle is), because they're unclean. And until they're clean they can't come back in, same as the Old Testament scriptures. They could not return until they were clean; in other words they cannot return until they have repented – and it's *obvious* repentance. Words are cheap sometimes. Obvious repentance has to be seen of true repentance.

A person can be disfellowshipped from the Body of Christ if they are no longer in unity with the teachings of the Church of God. They are willingly unclean; they've made themselves unclean.

I know during the Feast we had different discussions and one of them came up about taking correction. Now there's two ways the mind handles correction; and normally we go generally the wrong way. So somebody comes up, generally it's the ministry, or ministry being corrected by the ministry, that the mindset, if it's not correct, can take it wrongly. See the first mindset is, "I'm about to receive correction." And you know it because your attitudes wrong anyway. And then the person starts to correct you. Normally the pride gets in the way and the bristles stand and you're hearing but you're *not hearing anything* because you've already justified that this is correction and you don't really want it... puff, puff, puff... that's the mind. The other way is; this is the true mindset, a godly mindset, "Someone is coming to me that loves me and is trying to help me. They are sacrificing and they're trying to help me so that I can grow spiritually so that I can *remain* in the Body of Christ! Shouldn't I listen?! They are trying to *help me?!!*" So there's two mindsets. So whenever correction does come your way, and it will, and it comes through sermons... God corrects us all individually, and I say individually, through sermons and *you know it when you hear it!* And I think you'd all have to say very true! Because God's spirit convicts you. "*This is for me! This is for me!*" Well, if ever the bristles start to go up and you start to defend yourself – justification – if you start to defend yourself in your mind then just switch to the other mindset. "Someone, (God... He's the someone) God is trying to help me! God is trying to support me, help me into a new mindset so that I can be given life everlasting, given a gift from God." God wants to give us life.

So remember those mindsets whenever you think corrections coming; I'm not talking in the world necessarily, but it probably applies to the world as well, but here in God's Church, coming through God's servant to us we should remember that this is God trying to help me. And if you have that mindset [wrong mindset], just switch to the other... it's for *our* benefit. All this is for our benefit. God wants to give us something; and yet in our pride sometimes we get the bristle up because we already know we're right.

So to not be in unity, not to be in the truth is sin. Sin causes a person to be cut off from God's spirit and therefore they are cut off from a relationship with God *and His people* in whom He dwells - brethren. Therefore disfellowshippment is done out of love and concern and is intended to be corrective causing one to reflect and to change, *repent* of the way they think so that *reconciliation* can be made. That's the

reason. A separation takes place with the *desire* to have reconciliation, that's the motivation. Correction is given for a motivation to bring in unity with God. Correction; it's the way we look at it. Reconciliation with God and God's people.

A person that chooses to leave the fellowship of the Church of God disfellowships themselves and therefore the members shouldn't desire to associate with the unclean. Logical isn't it? When you look at it it's logical. If someone's out of the camp and is unclean and polluted, why would something clean want to go and touch it? What can you get from that? Something that's unclean is going to make *you* unclean. There's a danger. That's why we have these things.

So this principle of unclean and not touching something unclean is really a *spiritual* matter, it's a spiritual matter. Something that's clean is in the Body of Christ and has God dwelling in them.

Matthew 18:6 - But whoever causes one of these little ones, so we've got a new person, a new member in the Body of Christ that has just been baptized, spiritually new in the Body, **who believes in Me**, they believe the truth; and if this person, or someone else causes them to sin, **to stumble in the truth, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he was drowned in the depths of the sea.** Now that sounds dramatic doesn't it? Isn't that dramatic? Well guess what? It is! Spiritually it is! So if we've been around 2 or 3 years, we're actually new; we're a new one, but when somebody's just coming into the Body of Christ, that's what it's referring to, a baby, somebody very new; we want to be very careful of what we do and what we say; and don't take it to ourselves that we think we know everything and start *preaching* to a new person. That's pride! That *is* pride! The only reason we start wanting to dish it all out to somebody else is that *we* haven't got it! We've lost our way! God has instructed us time and time and time and time and time and time and time and time again there's one way He works; and now He's working through sermons and the website. And to go outside of that is presumptuous! It is *sin*! And if we start preaching to new people and dumping it all... what are we doing? *What are we doing?* Dangerous. And you know, Christ says, "You know what? It's better if you go and put a millstone around your neck and throw yourself in to the sea!" Get rid of you! Because you're not fulfilling the purpose of why God called you.

God called you to be in unity *with Him* and the Church; and God has told us clearly the way to stay in unity; to stick to the sermons and *stick* to the website. There are roles within the ministry at times, when appointed, that they do have to give council and council people and give instruction. But if it hasn't been given, don't be presumptuous and take it. And that applies to members of the Body of Christ – don't be presumptuous and take an authority you have not been given by God because that's what it is – presumptuous.

Verse 7 - Woe to the world because of offenses! In other words, enticements to sin. **For offenses must come;** because that's our nature; **but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!** Doing that in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, is dangerous. *Woe* to the man who gives out that offense...

If your hand or foot, part of the Body of the Church of God, **causes you to sin, cut it off;** this is not about physically severing parts of our body and plucking out our eye because we've looked at something we shouldn't have done; it's a spiritual principle. ...**and cast it from you:** in other words you fight against your own sin. So *if* for example something's entering the mind through the eye, the TV program you know you shouldn't be looking at, it doesn't say you are to rip your eye out. No, you turn the TV off, you cut it off, you sever it; that's what you do. You sever it, that's what it's talking about severing; you sever what is causing you to sin. If you're walking down the street, like here just a minute ago, more mature

lady walked into the room and her skirt (well, I don't know whether I'd call it a skirt really, it was really short and it was very hard because you noticed it quickly)... see, you have two choices; I could *rip* both my eyes out or you turn the head away and you think, "I don't want to see that, I don't want to see it..." because it looks disgusting anyway, but "I don't want to see it, I don't want to see it, I don't want to see it..." And then as you bring your head back around the room you just sort of kind of have to look a bit higher, because it's the Sabbath, you don't want to do it. That's what this is talking about; and you sever the thing from you.... it's up here, it's in the head. You need to sever it. It's not about cutting things off our body.

...it is better for you to enter into life, which is what God promises, **lame and maimed**, in other words you've got to take the action in the mind, **rather than having two hands and two feet and be cast into everlasting fire**. Basically it's talking about the second death. It's better to work on the mind, battle the mind, do it all now so that God can give us life.

The point being that we are to remove our sins from ourselves by repentance. Okay? We're to sever sin from our lives; that's what this is about. Meaning, we must wash ourselves with God's word to be clean. Only God's word reveals sin. *Only* God's word reveals sin and that's a conviction of the spirit in the mind. The Church must also remove unrepented sin from its fellowship. It must cleanse the Body to ensure it remains clean. Now that's a responsibility of the ministry, nobody else. And there *are times* that you may not be aware of certain situations where the Church, the ministry, are instructed to turn around and say to somebody, "It's better that you have two weeks at home." They're not necessarily disfellowshipped; they've already disfellowshipped themselves... because they can't have a relationship with God or the Church because they're not spiritually minded, they're in sin. So there's no announcement that says, "Oh, such and such is gone." No, we give people time. Sometimes you say, "Just stay at home for a while and have a couple of weeks." And then they work with the ministry, then they reappear and most people don't know what's happened. But normally it's quite severe, it's an unrepentant sin, it's quite wilful. And you pray that God will grant them repentance because that's the last thing you want to see, is somebody, your eye removed, because that's what's part of the Body. You don't want to see your foot removed because it hurts. It hurts when you see what a waste. It's unfortunate but we don't get depressed and mourn about it – free moral agents have choice. It's their choice. If they don't want to repent of sin it's their choice and there's nothing *I* can do about it, nothing *you* can do about it because it's the relationship between them and God.

Verse 9 - And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you: it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, so we are to avoid those things that cause sin.

Matthew 15:7 – Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. So it's not about just talking the talk, it's about a mind and the way we live because of a mindset, that God's spirit convicts us to live this way. **And in vain you worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**, or the traditions of men. It's vain worship. There's one way to worship God and it's in spirit and truth...in *spirit* which requires God's spirit, and truth. If it's outside of the truth it's not true worship.

Verse 10 - And when He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; so a bit of bacon that accidentally goes in with the Caesar Salad...actually it's not wilful, it goes in... "Oh, I'm defiled!" No, that's not what defiles us, because God's looking at the spiritual. So **not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but comes out of his**

mouth, so it's not what goes in, it's what comes out, **that defiles a man**. It's what we say, and we can give pollution.

Then His disciples came to Him and said, Do you know the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying? They didn't really get it at all. **But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father has *not* planted, will be uprooted.** My sermon purpose is not to cover that one... **Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind.** So they're blind spiritually, they can't see or comprehend, and what they're doing is leading other blind people down this path. A blind leader and he's got a rope behind him and all these other blind people are hanging onto the rope and they just follow blindly, because that's the only way you can get around. **And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into the ditch.** It's talking spiritually. Eventually the leader will go blomp... down the big cliff and all the rest will just follow because they just keep walking because they can't see where they're going. Now, this is talking spiritually. They're blind spiritually and therefore all the other people will just follow them because they're spiritually blind as well.

Then Peter answered and said, Explain this parable to us. Because of course, they're physically minded still. "What are you talking about blind people leading blind people? Blind people don't lead blind people?!" **So Jesus answered, Are you also without understanding?** Still without understanding, caring about the physical. **Do you not yet understand, that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart/the mind; and they defile a man.** In other words, it's the *motive* of why we do what we do and why we say what we say. **For out of the heart/the mind, proceeds evil thoughts, driven by pride, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, and blasphemies:** now if you look at the adulteries sometimes we can say we don't commit adultery. Well, adultery spiritually is any relationship outside of what God ordains. So physically it's the same. *Any* relationship that is outside what God has ordained (husband and wife) is adultery – sin; spiritually the same. *Anything* outside this relationship with God, anything we put before God; our work, money, whatever... is adultery, spiritual adultery because we're having an unlawful relationship with something else, a priority. We're engaged in a relationship. That is adultery spiritually.

Often we think, "Oh, adultery's just physical." No, adultery's spiritual and we're all capable of having that adulterous relationship with things in the world because we don't have a relationship with God.

These are the things which defile a man: it's spiritual things; that's what defiles us, **but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.** So there's times when there's no water to wash your hands and you eat fish and chips or a burger – not a problem; it's not defiled. It's not about your hands – it's pointing to something else.

John 15:1 - I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away: now, just look on a physical level. You've got this vine, you've planted it and the branches come up and it doesn't bear any fruit. What good is the vine? What's the point of it? You rip it up, true? It's worthless. Well, spiritually it's the same thing. **Every branch in Me,** Jesus Christ is to live and dwell in us; but if it doesn't and we cut it off, **and does not bear fruit,** we're taken away, we're unclean, we're cast out; **and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes,** so as we allow God to live in us and we *think* the correct way, God living in us, we get pruned, we go through a trial. Pruning's a trial. I've pruned vines in my careers at different times for casual work and different things; you have to count two buds. In old wood, two new buds - cut, some do three; but if you want more fruit you cut harder. So you want more fruit off a vine, you cut harder because there's sap that runs through it (symbolic of

God's spirit) it buds; now if you've got 10 buds you can only bud so far. But if you've only got 4 buds, all that juice going through... buds and you get beautiful grapes. The harder you prune sometimes the better the fruit is. Same with us; the harder you're pruned the chances of more fruit is greater. Because God working through you, you can produce fruit. And the fruit we're talking about is Galatians 5:22 – love, joy, meekness, gentleness – fruits of the spirit; it's a spiritual matter. So *you* imbibe in the mind of God *more* because of what's happening – God living through and in you. **...so it bears more fruit.**

Verse 3 - You, talking about you in the Body, **are already clean**, so we've been cleaned, **because the word which I have spoken to you**. So the truth; we are clean if truth dwells in us. God's word washes us clean; we're clean. To be clean is to have God's spirit dwelling in us, so we are unclean when we are cut off from God because of sin.

Verse 4 – Abide in Me, and I in You – so it's about a relationship, it's about being *in* Christ, being *in* the truth. So when you're in Christ we *believe* Him; and someone that doesn't *believe* God the Father and Jesus Christ, they're not in the truth. So someone that doesn't believe the 57 truths is not *in* Christ, they're not in the vine.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branches cannot bear fruit of itself, we can't do it ourselves, we cannot produce Godly character by ourselves. And someone without God's spirit sets out to obey the 10 Commandments – it's all physical. **...unless it abides in the vine; neither can you unless you abide in Me**. We have to stay close to this relationship. **I am the vine, you are the branches: he who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing**. So regarding good works – you can't do good works unless God lives through you and your mind is changed so it has an outgoing, flowing spirit of God to the benefit of others. And if we do not have God's spirit and we perceive we do a good work, it was selfishness; the motive was not right, it wasn't from God. God's way is outgoing concern for the benefit of others and that's something we grow in and learn and mature in, and that's done by examining motives. Because sometimes we do things and we may give something, and then somebody doesn't say thank you and we say, "Well, that wasn't very good, they didn't say thank you." Well, that wasn't from God.

If we expect anything in return it was not from God – it's something we did. We said, "Boy, they're unthankful!" God gives to His enemies, 'puts rain...' the Bible says. God just gives. So we have to be very careful that sometimes we might think, "Oh! Boy that person's unthankful!" Well, boo hoo! With God's spirit flowing from you, don't expect anything in return from humans – then it is of God, the glory goes to God! God gave it *through* you to that person to their benefit and you are just a vessel not expecting *anything* in return... *ANYTHING* in return. And it often reminds me of birthday parties. Birthday parties are the same, it's when people give gifts, and then they say "Ah, next year I've got to give them something." No, you don't. If you give somebody something, don't expect anything in return *ever*. That's how God works.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. (Verse 7) - If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, it's talking spiritually here, **and it shall be done for you**. And what should we be asking for? The fruit of God's spirit; spiritual things. We want our minds healed, that's what we should be asking for, "God *heal my mind* of my selfishness, *reveal to me* my sins."

Verse 8 - By this My Father is glorified. All the glory always goes back to God – always! **That you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.** So how do we know we're disciples? Because we follow Jesus Christ; that's what it is, we follow those things.

Verse 9 - As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you: abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you abide in My love; this is about the *intent* of the law, the motivation behind it, **just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.**

So we are unclean if we have unrepented sin. We are clean once we have repented and God forgives us. We can repent of sin and God will not forgive us. I need to explain that. We can take our sin to God... and God will *forgive us as we forgive others*. Key! So if we're holding ill will to somebody and we go to God and say, "God, forgive me for lying. Forgive me for this...forgive me for that..." meanwhile in the back of our mind we have dislike, or *ill will* to another member in the Body of Christ or in the world, and you say, "Forgive me Father."

God says, "Hey! Whoa! Get off your knees! Go back and clear up that situation and you forgive them." Because you're not allowed to not forgive anybody, no matter how horrible they are we have to be forgiving... "When you've done that, then come here and I'll forgive you." So it's a challenge for us.

We are clean if God dwells in us. God desires that we be transformed from being unclean to clean; and only God has the power to achieve it, which is like we heard at the Feast. *Only God has this power* to make us clean. *Only God has the ability* to forgive. Only God has the ability to forgive us of our sins.

II Corinthians 7:1 – Therefore, Having these promises, therefore behold brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So in other words, let's continue to seek God diligently to be healed, to heal the mind so that our sins can be forgiven.

Let's *diligently* seek God in our life through repentance. Let's diligently ask God *for* the gift of repentance *and* for the gift of humility so that God can be *in* us and living His life through us.

~~~end