

Obedient to God's Rest – Pt. 1

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Split Sermon

Thought I'd just mention before I do begin this that several times...I know after the Feast, toward the end of the Feast and at the Feast, after the Feast and even this week here and last night some of us got together. Asked the evangelists to come up here to the room so we could discuss some things in preparation for the ministerial meetings here and been hit very strongly by the sense of the Church needing to understand in a very great way how blessed the Church is that we have three individuals to support, to help in the way they are, the three evangelists that are unique in their backgrounds, their make-up, and so forth. To me it's exciting because you see how God works, how He moulds and fashions the Church and how He works with everyone to do what He's doing and the messages definitely reflect that and their work reflects that and to me it's very exciting. I feel immensely blessed to have that kind of help, guidance and support and everything else that's associated with that.

So, I hope the Church understands that. I know you *don't* fully, just to be real candid with you – I know you *can't* fully because it's a spiritual matter and to the degree of where we are, how God has worked with us, how He moulds and fashions us is to the degree we see and understand things. It's like sermons we receive; it's like the subject matter we just received in the last 4 Truths that God has given to us.

One of my great concerns is that so many people are not going to be able to grasp that these are *new Truths*, very *powerful* new truths and candidly those are going to be built upon in a very powerful way into the future in ways that we can't even begin to comprehend yet because they are not just a foundation, but kind of a building of a bridge of jumping forward into other matters that God is going to reveal to us in time. They set the stage for that because there's *much* to be given that's contained in those things. It's spiritual in nature and there really is no end to it. If you understand the last truth, there's no end to it, it's awesome beyond understanding and that's the problem; as we grow spiritually, we're able to

grasp things on a spiritual plane depending on where we are and how we've grown and you can't get from point 'A' to point 'B' until you're there. It's just a process of growth.

It's even like within the ministry and the ministerial meetings we're going to have – we're going to receive information that's given in varying degrees because of where we are spiritually; and it takes time to grow. And again, a person who is 5 can't be 10, a person who is 10 can't be 20, and a person who's 20 can't be 40 in experience of life. However, some people who are 40 are still 20... but anyway, that's another matter! But the point being, spiritually it works the same way, it really does and it's just exciting; the growth, the process God takes us through.

The title of this sermon is *Obedient to God's Rest*. We're going to go into Hebrews 3 today talking about some of those things where God leads up to chapter 4 talking about a particular rest. But the context is so important to understand, of what it means to be obedient. I think it's interesting here the things that Johnny just went into talking about being faithful stewards of things that God gives to us, being faithful to God's word. It becomes even far more important once a person is ordained; faithful to what God has given to us. But in the Church, when God brings us to a point of baptism we're to be faithful to what He gives to us and that has to do with obedience to what He gives to us... *everything* He gives to us and sometimes we don't, or we are not able to put it all together and hold on to it like we need to.

Let's begin today picking up this story flow in **Hebrews 3:1** - it's setting the stage, talking about **Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling**, which when God calls us, we're all blessed to partake of that calling; an incredible plan that God has for us to become a part of His Family. And we're told to **consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all His house**. So again, Hebrews is addressing a context, talking to the Hebrews, talking to those who had a particular background in Judaism and so forth and striving to help them to grasp then the things about Jesus Christ; but referring back to Moses because they felt a very strong connection with Moses, obviously, and built

him up in a way that they didn't even really comprehend. But yet, so much of their problem was accepting the Messiah when God sent *Him*, who was far more important than Moses.

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who has built the house has more honour than the house. For every house is built by some; but He who builds all things is God. Awesome, awesome to understand that; builds it all, sustains it all. **And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were spoken;** so we're all to be faithful in whatever God has given to us, faithful in our own lives, faithful to those things that God has given to us, in other words, as a part of the construction of a building that God is working with, and toward others within the Body. And when we're given other responsibilities within that, even more so.

But Christ as a Son over His own House; whose House we are, IF we hold fast the confidence of the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. A lot is said there...**IF** ...that big IF. I couldn't help but think when I was listening to the first sermon given today, and thinking about different ones who are no longer with us, different ones who have left since the Feast. Some who've had to be put out since the Feast; others who are yet to be put out...disfellowshipped or suspended because they're not faithful to what God is giving to them, because they're not holding onto... this ***IF you hold fast that confidence*** that God gave you in the beginning. *I don't like doing that!* I don't like having to make decision and choices about people and telling them, "No, you're not being truthful, you're not being honest, you're not being true to God. You're not even being truthful to yourself! And you're being disobedient to this way of life; and you won't change! You're severed; you're not to be a part with us anymore. You can't drink in anymore." But they don't grasp what they've been blessed to drink in of; and the games that sometimes people play. People come along with some strange doctrines, some strange ideas because they're not holding fast to what God gave to them, crying out to God for guidance and direction, for help to *drink in* of everything that's given. Instead they go out and drink some kind of trash and garbage and swill and eat in the garbage bin thinking that they're strong enough spiritually to go elsewhere to do that.

I think of all the time, 40 years, of seeing this in God's Church (over 40 years); but seeing this in God's Church where people think that they're strong enough to do things that God tells them, "No you're not! Don't do this!" And so people go do it. I'm dumbfounded sometimes. Going to address some of this in the ministerial meetings, that how often people come up and want to talk about other publications, or other things of our past even, to pass along to others, new people who come along; and my constant reply is... and my constant answer is...and what I've told the ministry over and over again and that they're to tell everyone else out there and yet... new brethren will come along, younger brethren will come along and think that they're doing good by encouraging someone else to read something in the past. And I've said, "No, no, no!" *EVERYTHING WE HAVE ON THE WEBSITE IS MORE THAN YOU CAN DRINK IN! ...and it's what we need today because it's timely for NOW.* And new people aren't able to digest or discern or understand things that we haven't had fully balanced in our past. And so sometimes you can *do far greater damage* by suggesting someone read a particular publication, even of our past, that isn't fully balanced today. It's not for today! It's not *timely* for today! We don't live 40-50 years ago! What was given then, God gave to them, inspired then...not yet fully complete.

It's like anything else we've gone through. But people still try to push other things on other people not realizing how much *harm* that they're doing. I see the harm; I know the harm, because I've seen it for so many years in people who stumble and trip. And yet we continue to insist sometimes not to be *obedient* to what God gives to us at a particular time in our lives. Things change. We change. We grow. The Church grows. And so we need to listen closely. I thank God we don't have recordings of things going back to the 1720's... or the 1850's during the Sardis era. Some people would be pushing some of *those tapes* and saying, "*You've got to listen to this... and this was given in the Church of God by... and you need to listen to this that was given back in 1855... It's GREAT stuff!!*" Think, "No, the Church was *dying* then! The Church was *losing* things then! It was barely holding on!" And God was judging those who were there at that time according to what they had at that time. People back in 1960 were judged according to what God had given them at *that* time.

You're being judged today by what God has given you now and by what God tells you. And sometimes we don't understand how important the little things are; and by going off base and doing something different than what we've been told again and again and again does massive damage.

If you can't be faithful in the little, God isn't going to give you more... it just comes to a screeching halt. It's like putting on the air brakes and coming to a quick rough uneasy stop and you *lose* what you had.

IF you hold fast the confidence of the rejoicing, you can't rejoice unless you hold fast to what God gives; you can't rejoice unless you obey and are obedient to those things that God gives and do it the way that God says to do it; because if you do things the way God says to do it there's something automatic in that. With God's spirit you're going to rejoice!

You're going to be excited! You can't help it! But to *be excited*, to *be on fire*, to be *alive*... it's a spiritual matter. So rejoicing would just be an automatic thing; it's not something you can work up. Just like we're told at the Feast of Tabernacles – you're to rejoice, we're commanded to rejoice; so you have to think about that and pray for God's help to rejoice and to be pleasing in His sight. It's not something you can get up in the morning and say, "Today I'm going to rejoice!" Now, that's good; but hey, it's a lot more than that because it has to do with what you believe and how you think and your prayers and your relationship with God.

If you hold fast the confidence of the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Whatever that end is, whenever your end comes. You never know when your end is going to come. We've had some die in the Church since the Feast; had a funeral this past week over in Virginia. Individual died after the Feast. Individual that we saw in New Zealand, crossing a road a few days later in the evening in New Zealand, hit by a car – another hour or so and he was dead. Life ends. For him, for the other gentleman; things happen... and your end comes. And so whatever that end is, whether it be our change for some in a few months up the road – that's not really an end, it's a great beginning; but it's the end of the struggle in this human body. And so again, **IF you hold fast**; *IF* you put God first; *IF* you seek to obey God and do things the way God says to do, *IF, IF, IF, if*... but it's up to us, that big IF, whether we will really do it or not.

Wherefore (as the holy spirit said, Today if you will hear His voice, now very *specifically* this is about the Sabbath! This was *said* on the Sabbath. This was *given* on the Sabbath. It certainly has to do with every day that we hear; but primarily we *hear*, we have the ability to hear what God gives to us because He set that day aside on the Sabbaths, annual and weekly. So that's the primary time we hear, have the ability to hear what God gives to us. Certainly we can study, we can do other things during the week and we're able to hear, but the primary time of *hearing* and being able to be tuned into what is *timely* for us is every Sabbath – *timely*... timely.

Because that's what God is giving you right now. What we're hearing today, what we've heard in the first sermon, or hearing in the sermon now, is what God desires us to drink in today. It's a few weeks after the Feast and this is where we are in time today and this is what we're to focus on *now*; it's timely for us. Every Sabbath is timely for us. That's how God works and moulds and fashions us. And if we yield to that process we *grow*, we move forward.

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. It's easy to become hardened.

Human nature, apart from God's spirit, *will become hardened*; it's the way it works. Things will happen in your mind, can happen in your mind if you don't stay close to God and continue to ask God for help, for guidance, for direction, for correction, for help to repent of the things you need to see to repent of on a daily basis.

So it says, **Harden not your hearts**, because it has to do with your hearing. Hearing has to do with practicing what you receive. It's like what we heard in the previous sermon, 'when He comes, if He finds you *so doing*', the word in the Greek means, 'practicing, living' it, whatever He gives to us. If we're so doing what He gives to us. Powerful! And that's what it's about, if we're *practicing, living* what has been given to us. And so it has to do with the hearing, our ability to hear and whether we're putting into practice... not just enough to hear the words. That doesn't mean a whole lot! It has to do with what we do with it once we are able to receive it into the mind.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; the word means ‘to be deceived’ in the Greek. **They’re always deceived in their heart; and they have not known My ways.** So again, the ability to be deceived... it’s an easy thing for human nature. It’s so easy to justify ourselves as human beings and be deceived; that’s our natural state, that’s the choice because of the distortion and perversion of human lust; ‘lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’; and it keeps us from grasping God’s ways. And so for us, even *with* access to God’s spirit.

So it goes on to say, **So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.**) We’ve talked about that rest, that peace that God desires for us, and to be a part of that and the process of growing that it takes in order to enter into that in time. And certainly even for the Israelites, a type of rest that had to do with obedience, but also in a partial way, for what it meant for them to enter into a new land, if you will, a Promised Land and so forth. There’s going to be greater rest in that than there was in the wilderness in all the struggling and fighting and battling that was taking place and what God had planned for them to do... the more you receive of God’s way of life, the more of God’s Government you can have in your life, which has to do with living by God’s will and doing things God’s way, that governs. If we chose that to govern our life the more rest we’re going to have, the more at *peace* we’re going to be with those around us and with God.

And so God has that plan to share with us, to bring us into more and more of that rest; but we understand the ultimate end in God’s Family – the objective, the aim of it all.

Verse 12 - Take heed, brethren, so this is to the Church, to those who have God’s spirit, **lest there be in any of you, and He calls it, an evil heart,** I’m inspired by what God has given to us, to be able to have a focus at the Feast and even before the Feast, of all the things that God led us up to in order to better receive the messages that were there, to put greater emphasis on certain words. ‘Evil’; to understand there are certain things out here, that evil should just be repulsive to us... just by the word itself and what it can be applied to then in life – what evil really is then. And everything that *opposes God, is not in agreement and won’t come into*

agreement and unity with God, is evil. It's evil! And we need to see it with that kind of mind to where it just turns us off because it's so repulsive to us, it's just *evil!*

And so in *relationships* and things we do and how we treat each other... I think, "*When will it end?*" Well, not while we're in this human body. □ ...and that's the answer. When people can't get along, "*When will it end?*" It won't! ...as long as we're in a human body. It won't end in the Millennium. *It won't even end in the Great White Throne!* ... because when everybody is resurrected they're resurrected into a world of great peace...but you know what? They were the same as what they were when they died, when their life was taken; and for the overwhelming vast majority of those billions... their nature is rotten. Babies, young children... they get a new start. They get to have an influence upon them that's awesome! But those who are older...if the last thing they remember was wielding an axe about the same time somebody else was wielding an axe and took their head off... and they were fighting in war and had hatred built up in their hearts and minds for whatever it was over, religion or whatever else... when they come back and they have a body; there is still going to be that same fighting and sick perverted mentality that they had before. It's going to take a long time and a lot of work to work with people like that; to help them to change.

So sometimes in the Church of God, with everyone who has access to God's spirit, who hopefully were truthful when they came to the point of baptism and did not lie... everyone who has access to God's spirit that has the ability to live at peace with one another – I'm blown away... (but I'm not blown away), week by week by week by hearing of problems and people who can't get along and people who are fighting and people who are bickering...and it's frustrating! Human nature's frustrating! I'm frustrated with my own human nature; but I *really* get frustrated sometimes when I think about how many sermons we had on peace... hmmm. How many sermons did we have during the Feast that applied to things of peace and getting along, and then after the Feast... for people to have problems?! And to be *nasty to each other and to argue with each other, to fight with each other?! To be nasty to each other?! Where does that come from? It's evil. It's evil!* It comes from the mind of Satan. Whenever any of you do those

things you're yielding yourselves to the mind and spirit of Satan. It's *evil!*
And yet it seems like we have such a *battle* with that, of understanding that in our relationships, how we treat each other is so important, the ability to *quickly* be able to say, "I'm sorry, I was wrong!" It's such a hard thing for human nature to do; and yet that's what's spiritual, that's what determines whether or not we're really spiritual. It's not by all the understanding we might have.

Human nature – *it's evil!* ...and the more you see how *evil* it is, the more you won't want it to come out of you, the more you will want *God* to live through you, to come out of you, that people be able to see a right spirit and a right mind...and not the evil.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief; that word means 'being faithless', because belief has to do with faith. ...**an evil heart of unbelief**, of not being faithful, that's what it's talking about...**in departing from the living God.** Obviously if we begin to do things that are not right, and that heart if we don't repent and don't make the changes we need to and we get to a point where we begin to be bitter... I've seen so many situations where people become offended by something, they become bitter by something and they become jealous about something in somebody else's life and think things are so unjust that they get to a point where it just starts eating them up like a cancer. And after a while the reaction becomes more evil, and as time goes on, that will consume a person to where they become so justified in being *evil* and doing wrong because of the things they see are "so wrong" within the Church or in other people's lives... **they depart from the living God.** And so that's a choice.

'*IF* you hold fast the confidence...' it has to be to the end. I pain inside when I hear people become deceived by some false doctrine, when people won't repent and they continue to justify themselves, have been told over and over again this isn't the way to do this... this is the way, walk you in it; but they won't choose to 'walk you in it', they justify what they're doing and even use God's name and scripture to back up their thinking. There are others who just give into the pressures, perhaps the family, if all the family isn't a part of something... and they just get tired of the fight. "It's too hard,

it's too difficult." And so they go back into the world and I think, "You have no comprehension of what you've given up."

But exhort one another daily – to encourage, to help each other, to be there for each other. We're a family and we should love each other as a family and treat each other as Family, and be thankful to be around each other as Family; and *work* on our own nature in order to make those changes, so that we can become a stronger Family, to encourage each other – especially while it's called 'today', especially on the Sabbath day because that's the primary time we have to be able to get together– if we have the ability to get together that's going to be the day we can do it more than other days. And even if you're alone, you have a telephone, and you can call someone, you can spend time in fellowship on the Sabbath with others in God's Church by talking to them. And it's good sometimes to remember some of those who aren't able to be together with others on the Sabbath.

You know, it's easy to forget if you're in a group of 30 people, 40 people, 100 people... whatever it is, whenever you're meeting together for some place or some time; it becomes a little easier sometimes to forget about those who are out there by themselves, and yet if you met someone at the Feast and you know they're by themselves... encourage them. That's a part of exhorting one another while it's called 'today', to give that encouragement, "I'm here. How was your week? Yeah, mine was lousy too, I'm glad it's the Sabbath."

"Yeah, it's a reassurance. Yeah, we're all in the same battle. It was a *lousy* week! Normal battles – yeah, yeah."

"Job?"

"Yeah!"

"Sick world!"

"Yeah, I'm so glad when Friday came..." Isn't that an amazing thing. Even last night, I was *so glad, so thankful* ... I don't know what it is about Friday; but I'm so glad when we finally get there, no matter what you're doing or not doing and you get there and you can enter into God's rest.

But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest at any time any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It's a powerful, powerful thing! It's more powerful than we are...that's why it requires God's spirit to stay on target, to stay focused, to be able to see

where we're going, to be able to keep moving forward; requires the strength of God's spirit to be able to do that, because otherwise we will deceive ourselves through time, we will justify ourselves through time because of sin, by not doing things the way God says to do it.

For we are made partakers of Christ, I think back to a person who was once an elder who was removed from being one. An individual who was told, like all the Church was, to get off Facebook. "Whoa... Facebook, that's a personal decision, I can choose to do that or not to do that..." But you know when it comes from the Church, through the Church, and if we see God in the picture and that God is telling us, Jesus Christ is inspiring us as a Church to protect the Church saying, "This is not a good thing for people to be on, it's unhealthy." Now you can say, "Boy, that's *his* opinion." I've heard that so many times in the past; Mr. Armstrong... "Well that's the way he sees it...but he doesn't understand this situation and he doesn't understand that..." and yet what's omitted in the picture is God, is Jesus Christ and the inspiration of God's spirit when we're told things. So it's a matter of whether we listen to what God has given to us and realize maybe there's something here I don't fully grasp and don't fully comprehend and maybe in time... maybe it won't be till the Millennium, but in time I'll understand it. And so we do it.

So even after I told people to do that this individual was still trying to get other people to sign up on Facebook. Think... "How on *earth* can you do that if you're ordained? How can you do that if you have God's spirit in you...?" And yet anyone can. People can deceive themselves into thinking that they're justified in what they do. So God doesn't look kindly upon such things obviously because it's divisive, it's against His will, it's against Government.

Government has to do with doing things the way that God says to do it. Sometimes that word can be a nasty word to some. I remember when everything *blew up* in Worldwide and the Church was scattered all over the place and people became sensitive... there was a time there when people didn't like to use the word 'government'. They chose other carefully phrased words because it kind of took on a bad air about it. But you know what? Our lives need to be governed. We *need* that in our human life; and

the reality is if we understand how it flows from God and how it works, then that's a blessing to us. Now if we compare it with aspects of man's government, the misuse of government and we call it government, then it's not God's Government. Everything else that's not God's Government is just wrong and it should be easy to deal with and to handle properly. We need God's Government in our lives, to govern our lives, to do things His way, according to His will. It's too easy to justify and be filled with the deceitfulness of sin.

Verse 14 - For we are made partakers of Christ, to share with Christ and God's plan and in that inheritance and with the God Family and the things that are in front of us. It's so incredible! **We are made partakers of Christ**, to share with Him; that's what God desires – to *share* everything He has in and through Christ, **if we hold**, that IF again, that great big **IF we hold**, hold onto, grasp hold, keep a hold of it, **the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end**; that's why I tell people over and over and over and over and over and over again *keep at the fight*; it's in the fight.

You can't quit fighting! The day you quit fighting is the day you've given up and you're not being steadfast, you're not holding onto. This human nature requires a battle; it's a battle every day. It's not meant to be easy.

The transformation of our minds, of what God is giving to us comes through battle, entering into the battle and continuing to fight. That's why the examples are given, especially by Paul, in examples of putting on the whole armour, of the battle that we have to fight because it is a waging of a war that's far greater than any physical battle. It's a spiritual one, it's of the mind, and yet people give up and give into and throw the riches away so easily; we do sometimes, it's heartrending, it really is.

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. You don't give up until it's done!

While it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Don't do what they did, on a spiritual plane, that they did physically; don't do those things. **For some, when they heard, did provoke: howbeit not all came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was He grieved those forty years?** So it's telling a story here of what took place; **Was it not with them who sinned, whose carcasses fell**

in the wilderness? It's an awesome thing to understand the power of God, to grow in that, to become in greater awe of it. The more you're in God's Church, the more you're in awe of the power of God. Just like this last Feast here; to grasp, to comprehend God. It's so hard for the human mind; and that's why there are things like evolution that exists out there, because it's too hard for the human mind to grasp that God put it all out there and created everything. It's just too hard for the human mind on a physical plane to believe that's possible – there had to be something else... let alone to think and comprehend that not only did He *do* it all, but He *sustains* it all. It exists because He exists. It continues to exist because He causes it to exist; and that's something that the human mind can't even begin to comprehend. And yet... to grasp that something... all those hundreds of thousands of individuals that were in the wilderness that forty years that couldn't come into the Promised Land. They died because of their disobedience, because of their disbelief. And so God let those who were younger come on into the Promised Land.

And I think of the Church... something that God showed fairly early on, that there are those, because of what took place, that God is only calling a Remnant back out of that nightmarish mess that took place. We sinned far greater than Israel ever sinned. What we did before the apostasy, every one of us who was a part of it, was far, far, *far* worse in magnitude than what the Israelites *ever* did because we had God's spirit and they didn't. We had God's spirit in us and they didn't. We had access to the throne room of God and they didn't. Only the high priest could even go into something that physically represented the throne room of God once a year on the Day of Atonement; and here, in God's Church we're able to go in before God at any moment, any time. So our sin was so far greater. And to realize that none of them, as a whole, except those that God's going to continue to awaken here, still a small Remnant in comparison to the whole, are not going to be able to go into the Millennial period, let alone the Family of God. They have to wait a thousand years. They have to die first.

And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to them who believed not? Now that word in the Greek means, 'but to them who disobeyed', because again, believing God and living by faith is a matter of obedience. It's a matter of obedience to what God gives

to us. Small things, little things – yes. Little things like Facebook, which really isn't little before God, and our response to it and our reaction to it.

So everything we hear, they're not about little things. Some things may seem to be little to you and maybe not so important and you think, "Well, yeah, but in this case here, I can go ahead and do it." And we justify whatever. And yet if you do it in little things, you're going to do it in bigger things. It's a frame of mind; it's a way of thinking.

So if we don't strive to be faithful in everything, and in the little things especially – because it has to do with a form of thinking, it has to do with, better said, a *pattern* of thinking. It's a pattern of thinking, and so if our mind is in subjection to God in the little things, because of a pattern of thinking we follow, because of how we look at it and analyze it, "This is from God, this is what God... I want to do what God says... I want to do it the way God says. I'm not going to fudge from that, I'm not going to make any justification, I'm going to do it exactly that way..." And if you do that in the little things, you're going to follow the same pattern in the more important things; or at least the potential for doing that is far greater; or a time of greater trial in your life. If you're adjusted to, if you're in tune to, through God's spirit, a pattern of how you deal with matters out here, then when something really strong and powerful and more meaningful in your life comes along – you're more inclined, because of God's spirit and because of *living* that way, of *practicing* that, to have a great victory in your life because you're following in a certain pattern.

But on the other hand, if your pattern has been kind of sporadic and you're not doing things in the way you should and how you should do it – like being faithful in tithing, not just to be faithful in it, but to make *sure* that it's done properly week by week or month by month. Sometimes people think, "Well, I think that's what it was..." and they send it in. What was it? Do you know? If you don't know, the rest of your finances must be a nightmare too. Anyway! We need to know what's going on in our life to be faithful in everything. And so when a real trial... and if we're following that pattern, when a big trial comes your way what are you going to do?

You're going to make the wrong choices and very likely it's going to mean your end. That's what happens too often.

People who won't put God first, in your family, with a mate, with unconverted mate, with unconverted children, with unconverted parents... If you don't put God first on a continuing basis and stand up for what is true and right so that they understand God comes first... "When the Sabbath comes, it's the day I honour God! It's the day I set aside! I'm not going to do anything that's going to, in any fashion or form, pollute God's Sabbath and my relationship with God on the Sabbath. God comes first. I love you, but I must be obedient to God; and that doesn't affect my love toward you... but God is first in my life. And if you love me, you'll understand that."

And if a person doesn't understand that and they want you to do something different on the Sabbath or on the Holy Days or in a Feast time and you give into that and you put them first... oh the damage and the destruction I've seen over the years; year after year after year in God's Church when those things happen... because they happen, because people don't put God first! They'll put someone else first.

I think of the apostasy when it took place, The primary reason that people went with other groups in other places, or went to a group at all was because of friends, family, relationships. *Not* because they were *convicted* of God's spirit, "This is what I believe in my heart and soul and being, this is what I'm supposed to do before God!" No, it was because somebody else did and it was a little more convenient that way. God must be first in your life! And it's a blessing in your family when everybody else knows it. I've always known that about my wife – God is first! She's *always* ...I can say it with absolute 100% confidence – she's *always* known that's my mind – God is first. That's healthy in a relationship.

Now it's a blessing when both are able to be together in that; but if they're not, you must still do what is right in whatever it is. Your job: your employer needs to know, "I love my job. I want to do a good job, I work hard at this to be a good employee, but God comes first." You're going to take off, you're not going to fudge with the Sabbath, you're not going to even *contemplate* it, you're not going to do that with the Holy Days... God comes first. And if they don't like that then auf wiedersehen, dos vedanya, whatever other words there are for bye-bye; "I loved it here, but... I'll find something else – God'll bless me somewhere else." And you might go through some hardship, but hey, you put God first.

The same thing in family. If a mate doesn't like something you're doing because it has to do with the Sabbath say, "I'm sorry, but I'm doing this. If it bothers you I feel badly about that, but that's your battle. I've got to do what I've got to do." And it's amazing when people do that how blessed they can be; and when they don't and they fudge with it, how it just continues to be a cancer in their life.

So...with whom was He was grieved for forty years? Those who had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. And to whom did He swore it that they should not enter into His rest? But to them who didn't believe, to them who disobeyed. The same thing is true with us on a very spiritual plane and that's what the point of all this is.

Let's notice what it means to disobey here; **John 3:36**, just to read the context; this same word - **He who believes on the Son has everlasting life:** the world, the Protestant world, you read scriptures like this and you're really struck by the reality that they can't even begin to understand, to believe, to know who Christ is and so... because the reality is the only way you really see who He is, and what He believes and the plan of God that's contained in Him; that He is our Passover and all the other things that are there... the only way that you could do that is because there is that power of God's spirit dwelling in you. That's the only way you can see.

He who believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he who believes not, that word 'to disobey', that's what it means, 'believes not, to disobey'. **...he who believes not the Son shall not see life;** so belief in what God gives and the truths that came to this world in and through Jesus Christ that we're blessed to have, that the Church is blessed to have, is a matter of obedience; because it's about a way of life, it's about how you live your life and so forth. Not a nice little platitude, not nice little stories about Jesus Christ and His life and being in a manger and all those things – it has to do with what He taught and believing what He taught. We understand that, those are very basic. **...and he who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.** So in other words, has to pay for his own sins because he will not obey God, he will not yield to the process.

Another one here in **Romans 2:1**; let's catch some of the context here - **Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are who judges: for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself**; now we all have to judge. There are situations we have to judge; am struck by this and thinking about this even within the ministry and the ministerial conference we're having right now this weekend... and thinking about how that we have to work with situations in the church where judgement is required and how we administer and how we do things; and obviously the vast majority of that has to do within working with people. And so we have to talk about situations that have come up or existing situations; and sometimes that's hard for some who are ordained to deal with some of that, because there's this concept of mind about talking about a certain situation and so forth. Well, there's a *big difference* within administering God's way and working to learn and understand in how to deal with situations within the ministry of God's Church in order to help, in order to serve; because that's what it's about, it's about how to help people in God's way of life and how we can become better at our job. It's a wholly different matter when people are out here within the Church talking about people's problems because they like to *gossip! Totally different!* And we should be able to separate that in our minds and make the separation and make sure we're doing it the proper way. But we all have to judge. In your families you have to judge. There are a lot of things I've given in sermons about judgement. So this is dealing with how you judge in the sense of condemning someone and lifting yourself up and some of those things that human beings do so easily.

Going on; **for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself**; in other words, if you're condemning someone, you're finding fault with... it's not for the matter of helping, it's this gossip type of attitude of finding fault and lifting yourself up and condemning someone because you're more righteous. It's like you're (gasp) "How can they do that?!" And sometimes we can be so indignant about what someone else has done in life, like, "How could they have ever done that?" And yet we do things we don't even begin to comprehend; and by even doing that and participating in that and telling others about someone else and spreading gossip about someone else's weakness or whatever it might be – we condemn ourselves because

we're involved in hatred and murder that's worse than what the person did so often. Human nature is such an amazing thing; it's so easy to find fault with others and miss the greater thing in our own life, that here we are *murdering* someone... that God condemns far more greatly than so often what the individual has actually done that we're condemning!

For you who judge another do the same things. But man oh man is it hard to sometimes see because we just don't see it ourselves. We don't see sometimes the swill and the garbage and something we said that comes out of our mouth toward someone else, how we treated someone else, someone in the world, whatever it is... we don't realize sometimes the power that's there and how much worse we are then when we do those things.

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them who commit such things. Things will get straightened out in God's time and God's way; and everything in its order. Nobody gets by with anything. **And do you think this, O man, who judges them who do such things, and do the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God?** It's so easy to find fault with others, so we have to be very careful of our spirit and our attitude. It *better* be there for the purpose of helping and serving; and that means we have to obey God meticulously so in how things are handled.

Or despise you the riches of His goodness and the forbearance/tolerance and longsuffering; in other words, the way that God treats us, works with us. Do we grasp it, do we understand, do we let that work with us? That's why I love the word 'grace' that's used in the Greek language, because when we understand the grace of God – all the things we receive, the forgiveness, the patience, the mercy... it's not something we are to receive selfishly from God – it's something that's to live in and through us toward others. God wants us to have the same mind and the same spirit toward others, to learn to be merciful to others, to learn to be patient with others, to learn to be forgiving always towards others and on and on it goes. It's tough to do sometimes in this human body. **...not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?** By how we conduct ourselves and how we live mercy we can help others and treat

others and work with others to help them. It can help them in their growth and their understanding of what Family is all about.

But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; so again, talking about our hard hearts, the way we are sometimes, and the longer we resist the harder it is to repent. That's how it is with human beings. **Who will render to every man according to his doings:** according to his deeds, according to his practice, how he lives his life.

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: so again, 'patient continuance', there's a lot said there. You need to be patient in how you live God's way of life and how you work with others and treat others and just like I said, after all the sermons about peace and all the sermons given at the Feast and everything else that's done... and to realize there are still those battles that go on out there; and to know that's the way it's always going to be. And we have to be careful then how we work with others, that we continue to do it God's way, in patience, in mercy, and so forth all the way through. It's just that sometimes those things are a little exasperating and they're heartrending because sometimes they do so much harm within the Body; and then there's times you have to become a part of it, you have to become involved in it in order to help people to stop (hopefully they will stop). And so that's a part of the process.

Dealing with problems is not easy; when you're a parent and you deal with situations in children's lives and you come home and you're tired from work and there are things that maybe happened in school or things that happened at home or whatever and you have to deal with them. Sometimes it's easy for people to get to a point where they don't want to deal with it anymore and we shirk the responsibility, we throw it aside and we don't want to have to deal with something because it's unpleasant but that's our life. That's our life. It is by getting involved in those things and continuing to do it patiently, because it's for the help and the benefit of others; and we will grow and we become stronger as a part of that process.

But unto them that are contentious, and, here's that word again, **do not obey**, now it uses it as it is in the Greek language, 'who do not obey', this matter of 'to believe not'; so it has to do with what you believe as to what you live by, as to what you obey. **But to them who are contentious, and** as the word is used here, **who don't believe...** because if you don't believe what God has given to you, you're doing something a different way, if you're contentious, then you certainly don't believe the way God says it should be done and you're certainly not obeying it so they're synonymous with each other in how they're used in the Greek language here. So belief, being faithful to God, has to do with obedience; to be opposite of that is to disobey, to be unfaithful to what God has given to us.

And that's so much of what Hebrews 3 is about, it's about this matter of believing everything the way God gives to it and to strive to live by it, to do it – and to *obey* what God gives to us in the *smallest* of things because nothing is small. Sometimes we deceive ourselves into thinking well, that's a little thing, that's a small thing, it's unimportant, or it's not a *big* thing.

Yeah, yeah, it sure is. It's the pattern of your thinking; it's your mind you're messing with sometimes. You've got to be careful that you follow the right patterns that God chooses and the way that God chooses, yielding to the process the way God says to do it. If you do it in the small things, the little things that you think are little... they're not little because it's about your mind.

But unto them who are contentious, and do not obey, who do not believe the truth; who do not obey the truth, who do not believe the truth... what is the truth? Everything we're given Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day; all those things that we have the ability to study and go into on the website and read or listen to. That's the truth that God has given to us at *this* time, at *this present* time; because some things will change as we go along. God's going to give more. In the Millennium, there's going to be a lot more given and there's going to be a greater refinement. And the more refinement there is the greater the truth, the understanding, the power that's there.

But unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth; but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, that's what awaits a

person. **Tribulation and anguish, unto every soul of man that does evil,** and that word; how often is it used in scripture like this... **who does evil;** and so often we just don't realize that the problem is us, we don't recognize as human beings what carries the definition of evil – everything that's opposite of what God, different from what God says and how God says to do it, of how we should think, of how we should live – the *little things* so often in our lives. They're not little; they're *evil*. Anything that's different from the way God says to do it is just evil. And if we can grow in that understanding, and the more we can grow in it, the more you'll be repulsed by it, the more you will not do it. Why? Because it's repulsive to you. That which is *evil* is repulsive and you won't want to be a part of it. **Tribulation and anguish, unto every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and of the Gentile.**

There's a lot to digest in what we've been given in both sermons here today. It's a matter of being obedient to God's rest because the rest we're able to have, the peace we're able to have *with God*, between us and God even, has to do with striving to do everything, the little things, and obviously the big things, but so many of the things that we consider to be little and small in our life, that sometimes people think to be insignificant or too small to be that concerned about or worried about, are not small at all, rather, they are awesomely important!

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