

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread we started a sermon series that carried us through the Passover season, and today we are going to complete this final part of this particular series with this being *Part 4* of that series that's simply entitled *Sacrifice*. A lot said there, truly is. I am still in awe often now in prayers and so forth when I'm thinking about some of those things concerning sacrifice, as to what God gave us to understand about His. We haven't thought in those terms in times past because God hadn't revealed to us to understand all that He has gone through for so, so long to give us what we have, to give us the blessings that we have. And not just talking about those things that He gave in and through His Son and then His Son gave because He came to do His Father's will and that was His mind and His desire to do so, to fulfill those things as far as sacrifice, but then we come to what we are to address in our lives and it's a matter of sacrifice, but it's different because of human nature. God's way – that's just His way. It's His mind because it's based on agape, love that comes from Him. It's His being; it's the way He is; a great desire to give, whatever the cost is in order to give something far greater. And that's what His plan and purpose is for what He's creating as far as the God Family is concerned.

We're going to review a few of the highlights of what we have gone through, what we went through on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread in the last sermon here; and it's important that we review some of this because it's important to have this context in our minds. It's important that we glean what we can from these scriptures because the subject matter here is deeply important for all of us in God's Church.

Though we are continuing on in an end-time and things continue to intensify, it is nothing compared to what they're going to be at some point, whenever that is, whether it be at the half-way point, next week, tomorrow, at the end of this period of 'Time', we don't know, but we have to prepare *ourselves*, and that we be of a right spirit and a right mind, that we're continually growing and yielding to what God is giving to us; and that's what's so important.

Let's go back to John 13 here and take a quick look. These things that Jesus Christ taught on that final night, the greatest of lessons, the greatest of teaching that He ever gave was given on that night, and it was a culmination of all the preaching, all the things He had told the disciples through that period of time that He was with them, that short time; but on this final night He gave the most important, the most intensive, the most powerful things ever given to mankind. It's important that we not just learn them but that we also come to understand what they were all about, that we *live* them. And that's been the challenge in God's Church for a long, long time obviously as far as our human nature is concerned. But as we have grown we've been blessed to see these things in a deeper way and God wants us to see them in a deeper way, but He also desires within us that *we understand sacrifice* and that we be willing to do that *more* now than ever before in our lives, truly.

John 13:34 – I give unto you a new commandment, That you love one another; now that's *always* been there, part of God's law, how we're to love each other, how we're to love God. That's what the commandments are all about. But this one here in a very unique *context* because now greater power is being given *to the ability to accomplish this!* Before this, mankind did not have the ability in the same manner *to fulfill this* because man is *incapable of keeping God's laws*. We understand that! And only a few through time have been blessed to be able to receive of God's spirit being worked with individually by God, to be able to more fully live this toward others, but not having all the scriptures, not having all

the *teachings* that Jesus Christ gave, or that the disciples were blessed to give to the Church later on. In the Old Testament they didn't have those things! Truly! *Awesome* to understand that. And then awesome to understand what Jesus Christ is saying here, because He says, **AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.**

That's the new commandment – not just to love one another which is expected of us in life when we come into God's Church, but He says in a very *specific way* what that commandment entails: **AS I HAVE LOVED YOU; that you also love one another.** That's powerful if you can understand it, if you can drink it in. It's a spiritual thing because it requires God's spirit. That's why He's getting ready to die as the Passover. That's what He's getting ready to fulfill, so that they have the *ability now* to do this, so that they have the ability to live a sacrificing kind of love – because that's what this is all about. It isn't just a matter of brotherly love, it's a matter of something that *has* to come from God because the source is God's spirit and we have to rely upon that. And those are the things that He said, 'Pray about this and what you ask of My Father He will give it to you.' Anything in this context! Not 'anything' - your wants, your desires in life in the world – that's not what this is all about! It's about what is made possible through Jesus Christ and that creation that's within us, that's growing as God moulds and fashions our minds.

I hope as we go through these things and as we continue to grow in the short time we have remaining for those that are a part of the 144,000 and for most of you, you have a lot of time remaining (because you're just getting started...it's a lifetime process), that we come to grasp this far more deeply and understand how *awesomely blessed* we are, truly; how *incredibly blessed* we are as God's people; what He's given to us, what He's done in order to give to us, and of the things given here on this particular night, and instruction.

Let's turn over to Ephesians 5, and again be reminded of it, because even though we've read these things last week, *hopefully* you're able to build upon them even more now, to understand the impact, the *importance* of what God desires us to live and what it requires as far as our human nature is concerned. Giving up something that we desire as human beings that we want to hold onto, that we then sacrifice it, that we *give it away* because we don't put the *value* on it any longer but we put the *value on something far greater* and we're willing to *give* for that, whatever it takes. Because that's not normal for human beings; human beings can't do that of and by themselves.

You have to cry out to God for His spirit to accomplish these things. You have to *want it with all of your being*, to cry out to God for it with all of your being, to *desire* that your mind and your thinking be right *especially in relationships to one another – and that whatever comes out of your mouth about anyone, that it fit this parameter, these truths, this way of life of what God is giving to us!* We're a Family, a very special Family. We're to be a Family far beyond a physical kind of family. We're to live that and God desires us to pick that up a few notches because that's what's required of us as we grow; and we've been blessed to grow a lot in a short period of time with what God has given to us.

Ephesians 5:1 – Therefore be followers, again, that word as we talked about 'being imitators'; in other words, 'to follow the example of'. It's all over there! We're to follow the example of Christ! We're to follow that example that God has given us in His word, of how He thinks, of who He is, of what His word is, His Word, His Being. So it says, **Therefore be followers/imitators of God, as dear/beloved children; and walk in agape/love.** That comes from God. You can't do it without God's help. You can't do it if you have sin in your life that's unrepented of! That's why it's so important to repent of sin, so that you can have this, so that God can give it to you, so that God can grant you the blessing of growing in it and having more of that mind. And the more you grow with that mind the more peace you have, the more

that you have of what God started with in the beginning – peace. Willing to sacrifice that for a greater purpose when He gave free moral agency, free will to spirit beings, knowing exactly what they would do; doing the same thing for mankind, willing to sacrifice peace. And I marvel at how God moulds and fashions us and has given us sermons before we got to this point about Jerusalem, about peace, about what God is building, of what God is *restoring* to His Kingdom, to His Family. And so a lot of self has to be gotten out of the way, a lot of *evil* self, because self, selfishness, is evil. This world is so filled with evil.

I'm dumbfounded over the past year how much more I can see evil than what I could before. Sin, selfishness, *evil* in human nature, evil in this world. I think of a program that as we were flying back Johnny told me about that I could find on the little monitor they have on the planes when you're flying overseas like that. He said it was very informative. 'Inside Job' - kind of a documentary type of film but I hadn't seen it. And after watching that – dumbfounded! Maybe not 100% accurate in everything, maybe slanted a little bit in some parts, but it didn't even have to be slanted for what it contains; the evil that's in politics, the evil that's in the banking system, the evil in those who control corporations and economic matters as far as the way this nation and the way this world is going. All the *shenanigans* and all the players involved...if you haven't seen it, I'd encourage you to see it. It'll blow your mind! It'll help you to understand more deeply that *you don't want anything of this system to remain*, that that's *why* these things must come to pass – because everything about *Babylon, confusion, greed* – because these things are based on greed!

Today – dumbfounded! I listened to a little bit of news just this morning; can't take too much of it anymore, listening to some of these economists and some of these different ones that watch the trends and the stock market and the things they're saying! It's all motivated by greed! They don't want to know what's true and what's been happening or what's happened in the past! It's like, "Bury it; put it behind, we're going forward! Nothing's going to stop us! *Everybody should get in on this! Put your money back in the stock market!*" And that's why there's going to be a bigger crash when it happens. The next time they can't stop what started in 2008.

I'll tell you what, looking back at that time and remembering some of the things that happened in that time, it was very clear that there were people who were very fearful. The President at that time was very fearful. You heard it; you could *see it* coming through in things that were being said by different ones in government at that time. They were fearful that everything was going to crash; the dollar was going to come to a screeching halt. And look at what we're doing now?! It's insane! ...and it's the kind of *insanity* that's based on *greed*!

And so God desires us to be able to *see*: There. Is. Nothing. Worth. Saving. Nothing! Everything in this system, in this world, is backward, upside down, twisted and distorted, whether it be in religion... of all people we should be able to see it in religion. We do! Everywhere you look, in the scattered body, in the church that was scattered, absolute massive *confusion* and blindness – *absolute blindness* that's out there. Just has a *slight* resemblance of something from the past because of certain things that people go through the motions of as much as the Jews who keep the seventh day. They don't keep the Sabbath; they keep the seventh day. They don't understand what the Sabbath is all about! They don't understand a 7,000 year plan of God; they don't! They don't understand in the last thousand years here that Jesus Christ is to come; the Messiah is to come and rule the world. *They don't understand that!* You do.

So if there's ever anything out there you think is worth saving - things in the movie industry or the music industry - it's just as bad as the confusion of religion; it has to be made right. Those things in themselves, like the internet, it's not wrong, it's how it's used.

So we must have a burning desire within us *to live God's way of life* and to understand that if we're not sacrificing to do it then something's wrong with us. If we're not sacrificing to make changes to love others, to swallow our pride, to *repent* of sin, to *flee* from sin, to *get away* from sin – like the Days of Unleavened Bread teach us - to hate and loathe it because it has a hold on us! Because it does! That's what you're coming out of! That's what God is freeing you from through Jesus Christ!

And walk in agape AS Christ has also loved us, and has given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. That's what God desires to see in life. That's what pleases God. You want to honour God? You want to please God? You want to show love toward God, to God? Sacrifice yourself then, sacrifice your will. That's what Jesus Christ came for, so that we could 'do God's will', so we could live this way of life fully and completely – as much as we are able to in this human form. Powerful scriptures! Powerful understanding! Powerful knowledge! ...but it's got to be lived.

We can't remain the way we are. We can't stay the way we are. We have to make changes. So what are the changes we have to make in order to love others more? You know what you have to do to love others more? Every one of you, I don't care *who* you are, I don't care *how well you think you're doing things at this point...* they're not by a standard that God says we can attain to! We can grow much, much more! I don't care *who you are*, you have sins to be gotten rid of. Because you see, the inability to love others more is because of your selfishness, and that's what we have to sacrifice. You have to learn what it is you're holding onto, what it is you're being selfish about, and you have to be willing to sacrifice that part of self that keeps us from loving others *more*. We can love each other *more*. We can grow in our ability to love one another *more*. Starts first of all in the home and then it branches out to the Body, of how we live. It must be in spirit and in truth in our lives, truly.

So again, the definition that should be more deeply imbedded in our thinking of sacrifice: 'to forfeit, or give up one thing for another thing considered to be of' and let's just put another word in there, '*far* greater value.' Because there is no comparison to what we are giving up in our lives compared to what God is granting us that we can attain to, that we can have, that we can experience in life that comes from Him. There's really no comparison – no comparison that can be made. But for us it's a struggle as human beings; and sometimes it's a big struggle because we don't really know our own minds and that's the problem. We have to cry out to God for help to see ourselves, for help to see ourselves in a spiritual mirror. Where are we *truly* at this stage in our life? What is it that must be gotten rid of? And *then* to love God, a desire...not just a willingness to give up those things of this life, because you *don't* value them anymore. Whatever trouble, whatever sin, whatever weakness that's there that hasn't been surrendered, that hasn't been conquered, it's because there's some value that we're placing on it that's greater than what God is offering us. And that's idolatry, and adultery – spiritually.

And so that's why it's very pleasing to God when we're willing to put that on a fire, because fire's trial and sometimes it's hard and difficult and we have to fight like mad, we have to throw our lives into it and cry out to God until we have a greater value, in every way, on what God is offering us and giving to us.

John 15: reviewing a little bit more here now what He said just a little bit farther into this than as He was talking to the disciples about His Father being the vinedresser; He was the vine.

John 15:7 - If you abide in Me, IN ME; if we dwell in. And we understand what that means to dwell in, to abide in, to remain in, to continue in, to live in Jesus Christ – it means that there must be no sin. It means that we must be repenting of sin; it must and it does mean in every way that we're crying out to God to help us to see those things that we must repent of so that we come to hate and loathe those things that we put too much value upon that are evil. Selfishness is evil; it's just *evil!* It's *evil*, it truly is, that which is inward, sucks in to self, greed, it hurts! It *always* hurts others and it hurts the one who does it; and those are spiritual matters that we come to learn through time.

If you abide in Me, and My words, the words of God, the Logos, the mind, the being of God... **If My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will...** Again, that's in accordance with God's will, with what He's telling us here through these verses all the way through 13-14-15 and 16, these chapters; **and it shall be done unto you.** You want to grow more spiritually? You want to see more of self? Ask God – He'll help you to see self. It's not always going to be pleasant. It's good to ask that He do so in mercy and patience...**and it shall be done unto you.**

Herein is My Father glorified, God's glorified as we live this way. This is what's pleasing to God. It's that unity, it's that closeness, it's that Family, it's that which we experience in the best of times that we have together in fellowship, when we have the *best* of times in fellowship, when there's nothing in the way, no bad feelings, no begrudging others, no jealousies, no envying, no wrong emotions, no wrong thinking towards one another, but a total clearing of the way and just thankful to be able to be a Family together with Jesus Christ and God the Father in peace. Awesome! We don't *always* have that consistently *all the time*, but God wants us to have it *more* so it's more consistent, to continue in, to abide in, to dwell in, because only then as we're abiding and dwelling and living in God and Jesus Christ can those things be dwelling and living and being consistent in our lives more and more and more.

Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; It's God's great desire because the fruit comes from Him; it's a product of His holy spirit in our lives. As we yield to it fruit can then be produced, fruit that's pleasant toward others that others are able to receive from us, through us. **...that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me,** He knew how God loved Him, His Father. He knew the sacrifice, He knew the mind, the way of God His Father through time; **so have I loved you:** sacrifice... **continue,** that same word. It's a beautiful word because it can be translated in all these ways and it has all these meanings. **...continue/abide in/ live in/dwell in/remain in;** all these words that are used in the King James Version here for the same Greek word. They all have great meaning. **...continue in/abide in/live in My love;** Live in! It's something we're to live toward each other, toward God. **...live in My agape.**

Verse 10 - If you keep My commandments, and referring back especially to the one we just read, John 13:34 above, 'a new commandment'. **If you keep My commandments you shall abide in My love;** that's how we abide in, live in, by this mind that understands the importance of sacrificing that which we would normally hold onto as human beings because we have something we put a far greater value on that we want, that we desire. It's just like when it talks about in Hebrews about those who were faithful before God, that they were willing to give up *everything in this world; they were pilgrims and strangers in this world!* This past week I couldn't help but have that hit me in a very powerful way! *That's what I feel like! I'm a pilgrim and a stranger,* as far as how scriptures are used here, meaning someone who doesn't *belong* to this country, or any country. We are Ambassadors for Christ, of a *different* country, a *different* world, a *Kingdom* that comes from God; and we're to be good citizens wherever we are, but our citizenship is from God. And that gives you *strength and confidence and*

boldness and power! It's *not* in this world and it's *not* in this world's system! You're in God's hands; you belong to God.

Wherever we are, whether I'm in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, doesn't matter which country I'm in, we seek to obey the laws as long as they don't conflict with God's. But I believe more than I've ever believed in my life, because of things I've had to go through and learn and things I'm seeing more powerfully than ever before, and just like that 'Inside Job' movie I was telling you about - how *evil* and how *corrupt*... They are *corrupt, lying people* that are *evil* in things they have done to this world because of greed! They don't care *who gets hurt!* They don't care *how many* people are destroyed as long as they get their big chunk of the pie! And that is perversion and sickness that is so evil, truly is. I loathe this world; I loathe the ways of this world, not the people in it. Sometimes people misunderstand; it's not the people. Everybody's deceived, even those who are doing it. They're all deceived.

I look forward to them being freed from Egypt. I look forward to them receiving what we're blessed to receive, deliverance out of Egypt, spiritual Egypt. The ability to begin to *see* for the first time their greed, their wrong minds, their wrong thinking, to where they come to *abhor* their thinking and how much *hurt* they have caused others in life, because that's what each one of us has to come to. We have to come to understand the hurt we've caused others when we haven't gotten along with, when we've had arguments and disputes with, and all the things we sometimes have with other people in life; and we come to see it's not everybody else's fault, it's our own first of all that we need to correct and make right and live right before God.

What is more precious? What is more powerful? What is more meaningful in life than to live right before God, truthful before God? Nothing's to be compared with it. Nothing's richer in life than that.

Verse 11 - These things have I spoken to you, so that My joy might remain in/dwell in/live in... joy that comes from peace, fullness of life that comes from true peace that comes from God; a fullness. This is talking about a joy and a *fullness* of life that's rich, rich in relationships and closeness that we begin to experience in this life in fellowship. And there's so much more beyond that, so much more. ...**and that your joy might be full.** Happiness, joy, richness in life that comes from keeping God's commandments, and especially what we're focusing on about here.

This is My commandment, That you love one another, isn't it amazing over and over again, **This is My commandment, That you love one another AS I have loved you.** Over and over again – powerful!

John 15:13 - Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. It's what we're to be to each other – friends beyond any kind of other friendships that can ever exist in life. Closeness, a willingness to sacrifice *self* for friends; that's what we're to be doing to each other in life in the things we go through day by day, in the way we think, in the way we talk toward each other about each other, about others – all those things that are a part of this – very powerful indeed.

And so it's a powerful message over and over again. Let's turn over to Philippians 2. It's been important to review these things because there's so much here. I could just sit down right now and what I've given is so important and so powerful by itself, so difficult to fully grasp and drink in what's contained here. These verses here alone, something we can continue to grow in and grow in and grow in as we grow, truly. So it's been important to review these again because they are the *heart and core* of understanding this sermon series, understanding the things that Jesus Christ gave on that final night. We're going to continue on to see what it means to 'live' in the context of sacrifice.

Philippians 2:1 – Therefore, if there’s any consolation/encouragement in Christ, indeed there should be, by all means, in our lives, and if there isn’t then something is wrong with us, with me, with whomever, as we speak to ourselves, as we talk to ourselves and read through something like this. If there isn’t that encouragement that we receive, especially in this season of the year as we look upon it, that we’re *encouraged by* those things that we grasp that we have in and through Jesus Christ that continues on with us as we grow that becomes stronger in our life.

...if any comfort of agape; comfort! That we experience that comfort! Do we love that experience that we’re able to have together? That oftentimes is probably received in the greatest way during a period called the Feast of Tabernacles. We probably have the ability, the opportunity, to experience it more at *that time* than any other time in our life because we get to spend more time with each other in fellowship and we get to focus more on the messages that God gives to us day by day by day and because we’re *not* focused upon this world; and we’re able to escape a little bit more out of Egypt and to hold onto that much more of God that’s of far greater value. And because of that we experience something that is mighty and powerful in relationships.

...if any fellowship of the spirit; that’s what we’re talking about here! That’s what we receive, that’s how we receive these things in our life, this agape, this experience that we have together. You can’t experience it from the world but we are to experience it from one another, with one another. And we can to the degree that we’re coming out of sin, that we’re making our lives right. And if any one of us, to the degree we hold onto sin, then we’re holding back and we’re not able to experience that and others can’t experience that with you to the degree that God *wants* that to be experienced, because sin holds us back! It moulds and fashions your *ability to fellowship* and to give! That in itself, if we could grasp that on a spiritual plane, is more... I can’t place a value on it. Wish that everyone could grasp that to this *deepest depth* – what was just said...and we do as we grow, but we have to grow and we have to fight.

...if any bowels of mercies, because you see, it takes sacrifice to have these things! It takes sacrifice on our part in order to experience these things! ‘Bowels of mercies’ – that means in relationships, in how we *think* toward each other, because sometimes *we don’t tend to be so merciful* to each other, *sometimes we allow things to come out of our mouth about one another in the Body of Christ that should NEVER come out of people’s mouths! NEVER!* ...that so dishonour God, *because every child that’s begotten of God belongs to God and we judge? ...and we judge God’s servants? ...to condemn, to find fault, to tear apart, to tear down? Family builds up! Family encourages! Family is there to defend!* Do we all have sins and problems? Yes, we do. But do we have patience, willing to extend mercy, *desirous* to extend mercy and hoping....

I look out over a congregation and I know sin is in your lives! *Big deal!* I believe because you’re here today that you’ve been asking God for help to conquer and overcome those things; some growing at faster rates than others, some still dealing with certain sins. I know that! *And you haven’t even told me what they are and in some cases I know what they are!* But the desire is mercy. The desire is that we’ll conquer and overcome. My great joy is to see people grow! My great joy, as I mentioned all through the series, is when we travel from area to area, to see the growth in people’s lives! That’s what Jesus Christ is talking about! That *joy* that comes from those things that have to do with growth and what we see in each other.

What should we see in each other? Not what is right now, but what is to be. How do you think God Almighty can put up with *this?! Self! Myself? My weaknesses? My slow learning...because we learn*

slowly. I've been going through this a long time and I'm looking forward to a big change. I've had it with human nature, with myself. ☺ I have a hard time expressing that, but I'm ready, I desire with *great desire*; there's nothing I want to hold onto, not a thing in this physical life in the sense of physical human beings, in the sense of this world...but to embrace what God has given, to receive it more fully.

So our joy comes from what we *see* – members of the God Family, the growth. I *know* it takes time to grow and we're *willing* to give that to each other, and to *encourage* each other in that. It isn't always that way. It's not always that way. Sometimes we just have a hard time *forgetting* what others have said or done. Shouldn't be in us at all. A willingness to put everything behind and move forward together in God's love, in God's Family, forgetting the things that sometimes offend us and that hurt us. The reason they hurt us, if you're hurt by something, something to do with your *selfishness*. That's why you're hurt...something to do with your selfishness that you haven't come to understand yet. Why we get offended? ...you know, people sometimes write me and want me to forgive them. I don't know how to tell people I don't hold anything against you. There's nothing. You don't ask me to forgive; I don't have anything to forgive if I don't hold anything against you. I understand what their sentiment is, I understand what they're saying, but when that's totally God's and Jesus Christ's and you know that... I'm just thankful that they see something in themselves that helps them to have a better life, because when you conquer certain things in your life and you see something you've done wrong and you change, that's where the joy is! It's the joy of coming out of Egypt! What could be more joyful? ...more rewarding?

I know sometimes that in the ministry, throughout the many years, that there are times that people haven't felt comfortable around me because it's like maybe you're holding... and I know what they're thinking, they don't have to tell me...because they're not quite comfortable with me yet about certain things that they've done or they think I still remember events and that I hold that against them. You don't know me; that's not the case. God doesn't treat us that way. God doesn't work with us that way because He *sees* what we're going to become. It's about His *Family*! And to get from here to there is a *giant* struggle; it's an incredible battle of life. And if you've been down that road and you know what the things are your joy is when you see others conquering and overcoming and making growth. Isn't that what we desire in each other? To see each other succeed and make it and not want to see individuals suffer because of certain weaknesses or proclivities of things that we have to battle with because you understand those things take away from the joy and happiness of life when somebody has a weakness in a certain area of life, whatever that weakness is. Doesn't make the weakness right, doesn't make the sin right when you slip and fall, but if you keep fighting the fight and continue to repent that's what it's about – never giving up the fight, and seek to put more zeal and more desire into it. And that's where we sometimes...that's an individual thing and what we put into it is what we're going to receive out of it, and that's what we should desire for each other.

But to say something bad about another individual? To tear down someone else in the Body just for the sake of blabbing, just for the sake of the tongue wagging, just for the sake of having some kind of communication? I don't want to hear it! God doesn't want to hear it! God knows! God knows what our weaknesses are! He doesn't need someone chirping and saying, "So and so – did you see what they did? Did you see... yeah.... blah, blah, blah, blah, blah..." That's what Satan did. He's done it for so long to God's people. "*Ooooh* just take away your protection, your hedge around him and see if he doesn't curse you God! That's why.... because you're protecting him!" No, what happened with Job has happened with all of God's people because all of God's people have had weaknesses and he's been up there pointing them out. That's why he's called 'the accuser of the brethren'. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah... don't be like that! *Don't be like Satan! I don't want to hear it! Do you want to hear that about*

other brethren? ...about somebody's weaknesses and what they've done and where they've stumbled?
Now, sometimes in the ministry there are things we have to work with and deal with, but the desire is to get on past this, the desire is to go beyond, the desire is to conquer and overcome, the desire is for one another's good.

...any bowels of mercies... about mercies that we show each other, that we're ready to be merciful to one another, that you're ready to extend mercy to your mate, to your child; that you're desirous of doing that to your spiritual brother or sister...**then Fulfil My joy**, it goes back to this; **that you be likeminded**, of the same mind, likeminded with Jesus Christ, likeminded with God, in agreement with God's way; **having the same love/agape, being of one accord**, that's why these things are so important, to be of one accord, to do things in unity and oneness, to do things the same way in the sense of God's way and that which God has given the Church, certain things to live by and to do in how we have a better Body, a stronger Body, a more unified Body **...being of one accord**, in other words, with one another, with Jesus Christ, and with God.

...of one mind. What a beautiful thing! The more we become of one mind...to me that's been an awesome thing to see that God has given us more and more of within the Church. It's something that was *powerfully* lacking through Philadelphia, and now we're able to have it in a greater way because of the size and because of the technology and because of things of that matter, how God has blessed us to function at this end-time, and because of the motivation of those things that we are at the end-time. So we're very blessed indeed, what we're able to share with each other.

Verse 3 - Let nothing be done through strife, this word has to do in the Greek with 'selfish ambition'. That's where the 'strife' comes from. **Let nothing be done through selfish ambition...** so whether that's in our relationships, how we treat each other – selfish ambition. Sometimes within the Church, within the Body – not to get something from others...sometimes that's a matter of being lifted up. We don't want that! We're a Body, we're a Family; no one is better than anyone else! **Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or vain glory**, because it's about self, to lift up self, that self be magnified. What God gives us magnifies us. What *God* gives to us magnifies our lives, lifts us up in life. It must come from God! God is the source. **...but in lowliness of mind**, it's how we think in our minds.

...in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than self. Now this is totally misunderstood in Traditional Christianity, and we're going to read a scripture in Romans 12 in a little bit that was totally misquoted in the Royal Wedding. Made me want to puke because I think, "What a *sick thing!* *Fake!* *Unreal!* *Without God's spirit!* Just quoting words to the benefit of self." That's what human beings do because they don't know anything else, because they're in bondage. **...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than self.** So again here, this is not a matter of something that is fake. It's something we live in how we think because of how we think about each other; that it's not a matter of trying to elevate ourselves above others, it's the opposite of looking down on others, of judging others, and feeling ourselves to be 'better' than others, that our ways are 'better' than others, that I am 'better' than others and that we measure these things amongst ourselves.

Philippians 2:4 - Look not every man on his own things, it's about his own interests; in other words just being selfish, being inward. Don't just look at your own things. So, **do not look/focus on your own things, your own interests, your own desires, your own needs**, in other words, it's a different kind of thinking, **but on the needs of others, the interests of others.** In other words, if there's a choice of something to be done do you have to have your way or are you willing to sacrifice in order to see someone else more fulfilled and happy because they're able to receive something here that will make

them happier; and so you're willing to sacrifice because your joy is in their joy. Do we understand things like that? That we're not so focused on ourselves and our desires and what we want to do and how we want to do it and so forth, **but focus also on the things of others.**

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, in other words, **the mind of God**, which again is reflected in agape, love, those sacrifices of God.

So we're to live our lives in a very specific manner that's reflected in sacrifice, that we're to exercise in our life. It's something we must exercise, it's something we must make the choice of and pray to God for help to accomplish, because that's why Jesus Christ died – so that that life could live in you, *that* spirit, *that* mind so that you can do these things. And then as you pray about them then God is anxious and desirous to *give* this to you.

Romans 12:1 - I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, it's by the mercies of God that we're able to do these things, that we have such opportunity, because of what He sees in us; not of what we were when He called us, not fully in what we are now, but the changes that are taking place in our mind now because of that spirit dwelling within us, because of the impregnation of His spirit in our mind and He sees that growing and that desire He has for it to grow more and more because He sees what it's going to produce. He sees the end result; and with Him it's absolute, with Him it's accomplished if we continue to make the right choices and continue to yield and desire what He's offering us.

...by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, a living, or lively sacrifice. That's how we have to live our lives as human beings because to fight against self is a constant battle; it's a constant matter of choices we have to make. We have to make choices all the time! It's a constant choosing! We didn't just make an initial choosing and say, "Yes, I believe this way of life and I want to be baptized!" It continues on from that moment on – *constant choices*! Constant choices of what we yield our self to in this physical life or what we desire to get rid of and repent of and what we desire from God – choices when things happen in our life, when trials come our way or just different situations that come up that try us, that test us indeed as to how we're going to respond to someone, how we're going to talk to someone, how we're going to *treat* someone – always fighting this human nature, this selfish nature that's within us...so that *we're comfortable* and content...and if we're not comfortable and content then we kind of do sometimes what babies do. Pitch a fit! ...because I want to be *comfortable*! And if it means at your expense, I better be comfortable. If I'm not comfortable, *you're* not going to be comfortable type of thing.

...that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, this is what's acceptable to God, this is what's required! That's why Jesus Christ gave that new commandment, '*...as I have loved you.*' It requires sacrifice! **...which is your reasonable service.** That's what's reasonable! That's what we've been called to! This is just the way it should be day by day! **And do not be conformed to this world:** boy, if we're rubbing shoulders with this world and we're in agreement with things in this world...and sometimes by rubbing shoulders with it too much that's so much of the battle right there, it rubs off on us, we're able to drink in of it through different things that are out here, constantly being bombarded. We have to be careful! Now, we can turn off the TV and throw it out the window and watch it break if we want – doesn't solve your problem of and by itself. You still have certain things about your human nature you have to come to deal with and work with. God left us in this world for a purpose and a reason, that there are things that we have to make choices in as to what comes into our minds, what we agree with and what we disagree with. That's a part of *growth*! If we take all the trials

away there won't be the same growth... There's wisdom and a soundness of mind as to what *you* can deal with in your life.

I went through this so long ago with music when I came into God's Church; years and years and years of fighting with things of music because I knew how it affected the mind and the reactions in people's lives because I lived it. And people that try to say otherwise, I knew they just didn't understand. One person can hear one song and not sin; another person can hear the same song and sin. Amazing! One person can watch a TV program and sin; another person can watch the same one and not sin. Growth, choices, agreement with God, disagreement with evil. It's in the world.

...but become transformed by the renewing of your mind; we go through that at Sabbath services. We hear things, but then we practice it, we take it away with us during the week and we should strive and seek to practice it, to live it, the things we've been hearing in this season (and now past it but still at the end of it) in these sermons; a desire then to live it and crying out to God in our prayers, that this is what our prayers are about so we can live it. We pray about things and as we receive a certain diet we pray about those things we receive so we can implement them into our lives. That's what drinking it in is all about, and eating of it is all about. That's what it means to 'eat of the Unleavened Bread of Life', to hear it but not just to be a hearer only and then walking off. Not like the world where they go and listen to something for 10 or 15 minutes and bored to death at that and then not have much at all that they can really use in life in any fashion or form that makes their life better. We receive a strong diet that God gives to us, that we can take away and *pray* about then and seek to implement, because I'll tell you what, you're going to have those opportunities. And what we're going through in this series, you have opportunity *all the time* to put these things to practice, to live them, to think about them, to fight, to battle.

...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, it requires sacrifice; **by the renewing of your mind,** because the renewing of your mind is a constant matter of choices, of rejecting things that are wrong and holding onto what is good; constant choices **...that you may prove,** watch what it says...**so that you can prove;** It's like the example Jesus Christ gave of someone who goes out and buy's a couple of oxen who are trained to work... you know, to get behind them and say you're ploughing or whatever in a field and you go out to *prove* them, to see how good they are, how much they can produce. A farmer takes out a new combine, a new tractor – he's excited! I've been down that road! It's always exciting to get something bigger and better and that does a better job, and the excitement of being able to see what that new machine can do. It gives an excitement to them because they can produce more; they can do more (hopefully a lot more because it costs a lot more). That's what we do. We go out to prove it. This *works*; we begin to taste of it. You enter that battle and you begin to feel the *fruit* of it, the *results* of it. That's what it means to 'prove' God's ways.

He says, **prove Me now herewith,** doesn't He? In one little command alone...and it's what we put our value on. And as we grow, you know what we put our value on more and more? This *mind* that's in the pages of this book that come alive with the power of His holy spirit. Powerful! Awesome!

...that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. '...and to do Your will O God'. He took away the first so He could establish the second, the doing of God's will, so that we can do God's will.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every person that is among you, not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think; that requires sacrifice; because I don't care who it is in life, human

nature thinks too highly of self, of our opinions, of the way 'I' see it, of what 'I' think is best, not measured by God's standard in judgment and righteousness. That's why God says to judge righteous judgment. Better be sure it comes from Him through the power of His holy spirit.

Sometimes I give time to make sure that I'm not responding by how I'm thinking about something, or my first reaction to something. Have someone that sent an email in about something here recently, in the Church, and it was an elder...and doesn't understand that by something they said they found some fault with something that wasn't healthy for them spiritually. And so I've given time to be certain of the response and the reply and whether it should be given. And we all grow in things like that. Sometimes we do things that aren't smart. Sometimes we say things that get us in trouble. But you know what? When someone comes to you and tells you, 'this is the way, walk you in it,' then we can walk in it and we have a better Family then as a result of it, because we come into greater unity.

And so when you judge matters in your family, when you judge matters within the Church (which you have to do), make sure it's not a reaction from you, from your nature or the first reaction you have, but cry out to God so that you can *know* this is the right thing to do and this is the way it *must* be done. There are times when we *must*, because of responsibility, do some things. You can't just turn your back or turn away from certain responsibilities. That's why the scriptures are so important (it hasn't been applied much in God's Church in times past) to go to your brother alone. Not many have ever done that through time in a very good way, because it's human nature, it requires sacrifice, it requires God's love.

So, **not to think of yourself more highly**; make sure that it's God's judgment because it's right with God. It's a matter of seeking to be humble, to be of a teachable spirit. In other words, sometimes to learn from others; is there that in here that I need to learn from? You need to ask those questions. Is there that which I can learn from and grow from in this and what am I supposed to do, and how am I supposed to do it, and what does God say? You better be confident that things come from God.

...but to think soberly, sober minded, patient, not so quick to judge – because we tend to do that in how we treat each other; husband to wife, wife to husband, parents to child, child to parents, and on and on it goes, brother to brother, sister to brother, brother to sister. Sound judgment – **but to think soberly**, has to do with judgment here, it means 'sound judgment'. That's how we're to think, with sound judgment; and the soundness comes from God, balanced and true.

...according as God has dealt to every person the measure of faith. So it has to do with the truth that we have and our living by it that we're able to grow in our ability to judge as God judges. We learn from God, we learn from Jesus Christ, we grow in those things. This chapter's filled with admonition that requires sacrifice to fulfill as you go through the whole chapter here. ...sacrifice to fulfill in order to accomplish.

I want to look on down to what I mentioned about the Royal Wedding, a statement that was made. Let's go on down to verse 16, just to show you how simple things are sometimes so distorted and taken out of context by translators, by religious teacher's, and then people that belong to those.

Verse 16 - Be of the same mind one toward another. Well, first of all what mind? What is that same mind we're to be of toward one another? Well, 'let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'; Philipians 2:5 that we read earlier up here.

Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Now that's a putrid translation if you take it the way the world does, truly is. And most translations translate it a whole lot worse in the Protestant world. It's pathetic, it's sick, it's perverted, it's twisted! So many things are twisted in scripture of things that God has said and told us how to live life.

But then it goes on to say, **Be not wise in your own conceits/your own opinions.** Because that's what we tend to do because we believe our ways are what's best. Husbands and wives, so often it's *our* way, it's *my* way, which doesn't have anything to do with God's law and God's way, but certain things about life or whatever it is, we think our way is the best. And then sometimes within the Body, in the Church, that's what happens there because our way is the best and so and so just doesn't *see* a better way. "Oh if they could just see what I see." Human nature really is sick when it's selfish!

In the wedding this portion here was quoted in the King James, 'Mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate' – the words that are chosen there are just wrong words. 'Condescend' is not in the Greek language, this is not the word, but this is how man looks upon it and what he thinks and what he thinks he's doing. And you think of the perversion and the ignorance in it; it's just mind-boggling because in essence here...this was quoted from (from what was stated there), it was quoted from the English Standard Version that says (in that ceremony), 'Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly.' It's kind of an oxymoron. It's kind of backwards. Oh, you're not to be haughty, so associate with the lowly. Who are the lowly? Everybody below you. So what are you? Haughty. I mean, how sick is that? What a sick, perverted thing because they don't get it, people don't get the most basic things here of how to treat others! And this is how people do...they condescend! "I can lower myself to be able to associate with someone less than me because really I'm quite a bit above them." That's the way we think as human beings so often!

And so if someone's going to live a so called 'Christian life' this is what they do, they lower themselves because they're so high up there anyway, and you're able to associate with people that are 'less' than you. And this is a noble thing for you to do? You pious, puffed up toad! That's what it really is! I hope you understand what I'm saying here, what this verse is really saying, and sometimes if we don't go back and do a little digging... something doesn't quite sound right; we ought to go back and say, "Well, this isn't... What do you mean? If you're doing that you're really saying that you're really quite haughty and you're going to remain haughty." Sick, sick, sick, sick, sick!

Let me read another version. The NIV says (same attitude), 'Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.' Kind of comes from a mindset of those religious leaders that did a lot of the translating back in the 1600's; different classes of people and there was this one class... they *knew* they were the 'upper class' and they knew these other were just... they were 'peons', they're servants. "To talk to them is almost beneath me!" That's how they were treated through time. Amazing what has happened through time! Don't *ever* treat another human being *that way*. Don't *ever* treat another human being in life without dignity and respect as a human being, as a potential son of God. Don't *ever* treat another human being that way! Don't *ever* think yourself to be better than, higher than, others! That's just perversion and sickness and it comes from a very sick being.

So in this verse here, 'Mind not high things but condescend...' and it's not the word here 'to men of'. 'Men of' isn't even in the translation, it's not even in the Greek. So you kind of begin to get a little bit of the understanding here when you realize the word 'men' isn't in there, 'men of', and you just read it there, 'Mind not high things but condescend to low estate.' It's talking about what *you* need to do! It's talking about *your* mind and how *you* think! If you're up here, 'hoity toity' (or whatever the word is),

high and mighty, it's better that you put your mind down here where it needs to be and see yourself in reality, of low estate, lowly, and realize this up here isn't what you want. It's distorted thinking about self. And so we need to see ourselves in reality for who we are and what we are.

So, it's simply saying, 'Do not be high minded.' 'Don't be haughty.' It's the message throughout the Bible! It's the message for the Days of Unleavened Bread! *Don't be PUFFED UP!* That's what leaven does, it puffs up bread. God says don't be filled with a bunch of *hot air!* ...the old joke about Texans. Oops, I've got to be careful... ☺ *Unconverted* Texans... that when they die you can bury them in a matchbox because they're filled with hot air.

Puffed up, filled with a bunch of hot air – that's what we are as human beings – we're just puffed up! That's the way we see ourselves! So this is saying, 'Do not be high minded or haughty...' And this word 'condescend'? It's really a word that has some incredible meaning because this really should say '...but be led with a lowly spirit, be led with humility.' In things you do? Be motivated by, be led by...not haughtiness, but humility. That's what its saying. That's a proper translation! Because the word 'condescend' is not a proper translation from Greek at all, it's a word that means 'to be carried with, or led with, or led away with'. That's what it's talking about. It's beautiful! Beautiful when you understand certain things. When some things just don't sound right (and there are things like that through the Bible that), because the translators didn't understand God's plan and because they had this attitude of mind and how they thought about other people and so forth. It's an incredible thing to see how much has crept into this book even. Things about the trinity – it's filled with it! Prejudices! Things that are said about a trinity.

Let's turn over to **1 John 3:16 - Hereby we can perceive the love of God**, in other words, it is God's love, but Jesus Christ who lived that sacrificing love toward us in what was accomplished, **Hereby we can perceive the love of God**, showing the source here, **because He**, it's about Jesus Christ, **laid down His life for us**: in other words, as a sacrifice. It's God's love, a sacrificing love. We see that in a better way than we've ever seen it and Jesus Christ had that mind; and He says we're to have that same mind in us, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ.' What mind? Logos, the Word of God, the mind of God, the being of God! What an awesome thing that we have that measure of life up here! It's beautiful! The more of it that's there the more exciting and the more meaningful life becomes, the richer life becomes.

...**because He laid down His life for us**, over and over again here – sacrifice! **And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren**, for one another. Sacrifice! Not getting our way, not allowing ourselves to be lifted up by someone else and especially someone else's weakness at a particular moment in time or mistake at a moment in time or whatever it might be. But on the contrary, love, a desire to see everyone come through. It's a beautiful thing when we're able to continue in this and continue to go in the same direction together and grow in this way together, to experience everything we're experiencing together.

I don't look at just the present. I hope you don't! I hope you look at the future! I look to the future and I think about being able to share this with God's Family when they're resurrected and we're all resurrected together and the things we're going to be able to share together, and I look forward too because you have opportunities, those of you who are younger, that are going to continue on into a new age. You have opportunities that are awesome, because you're going to be well known by those who are resurrected. The others won't know you, they haven't seen you grow, they haven't seen your life, they haven't seen your struggles, they haven't seen those things that you have sacrificed. They'll know.

But to think the opportunities that await us, the blessings that await us just because of a different age and because of relationships? I treasure this relationship we have now, but I treasure more what's coming. I can help more than I can now. I can encourage more than I can encourage now. I can do things then in a more powerful way to your benefit that I can't do now. Hope you understand.

And so can many others with whom you associate with in God's Church who will be changed when Jesus Christ returns. Now that's truly an awesome thing of and by itself if we grasp and understand it. Of all ages, of all times, the awesomeness of the blessings we have before us. And I look forward to that! I look forward to being able to spend time with different ones of you at a time when I don't have this human nature, and the benefits that come from that for both sides, a unique fellowship that we're able to have. What an awesome thing that God's granted us.

So again, Jesus Christ set the example for us and gave Himself *willingly so*, to sacrifice His life for God's purpose according to God's will in order to love us and we're to do exactly the same thing toward each other in like manner. We're to follow the same example and sacrifice in order to love each other. That's how you love each other, it's through sacrifice. It's a beautiful thing. He lived a totally righteous life, a totally full righteous life; we don't. And so we understand sacrifices apply to us in a very unique way even more so.

1 Peter 2:1 - Therefore laying aside all malice, all ill will, wrong feelings, **and all guile**, this word here having to do with deceit. Sometimes we deceive ourselves and sometimes we think ourselves better – and we're deceived in those things when we think that way.

...and hypocrisies, in other words double standards sometimes of things we know we should be getting rid of and we're not, or that we should be fighting against and we're not really fighting too hard.

...and envies, there shouldn't be any envy toward anyone else in the Body...or in the world.

...and all evil speaking, this word here in the Greek having to do with 'backbiting', because evil speaking is backbiting, is spreading things and talking about things that we should strive to protect and keep private, to protect each other, to help each other to grow and conquer and overcome and to have that kind of love for each other. That's what family does...especially God's Family.

...as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby: always being fed, always desiring whatever we can receive from God, from the smallest to the greatest. **If so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious**. Filled with grace, mercy, kindness, sacrifice, to us; and we're to be the same toward others. That's why I mention at times here, we are to learn from God how God treats us and has worked with us. And that helps us then in turn to work in the same manner with one another. I've learned much about mercy from God, and because of that I've learned how to be far more merciful because of what God has given to me. Forgiving? Absolutely!

To whom concerning as unto a living/lively stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, You so also, as lively stones/living stones... that's what it's about, 'living stones', lively, filled with God's life, **are being built up**, as the word should be here...**are being built up**; it's an ongoing process of a structure. And so there are some of us that are going to be a part of the first part of that structure, that are being added at the end here to fulfill it, to complete it. There are others who are going to be added later on because God is still building; He'll be building throughout the Millennium, just

like He's been building for the last 6,000 years; it's a continuing structure that gets larger and larger, greater and greater.

...you also as lively/living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, where God can dwell. We yield ourselves more and more to God dwelling in us, where that love is able to come through us more and more to one another;

...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, it's what it's all about, *spiritual* sacrifices, a willingness to give up carnal, physically motivated minds, and life, and thinking, for that which is spiritual and enduring... and *enduring* through time.

...acceptable to God by/through Jesus Christ. That's how it becomes acceptable to God, our sacrifices coming up before God, because it comes through Jesus Christ and what He has made possible that these days that we just went through have pictured and give to us.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he who believes on Him shall not be confounded. We believe what's said and we live it, and God says we're not going to stumble; we're not going to be confounded. We're going to be able to be focused, confident, bold, strong.

Unto you therefore who believe He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them who stumble at the word, that's the problem, people stumble at God's word, something is said and they don't like that. They don't like to hear that Easter is false and Christmas is false and where it all came from. "Oh, but it's about a baby...and it's so nice and it's so good to be able to give gifts to each other. We understand He wasn't born at that time of year, but it's such a nice thing to do to each other." And they don't understand when you disobey God and you twist and distort things about God and you paint something different how evil that is before God. And so the world just doesn't like that word.

They don't like to think that God would *require* people to come before Him on a *certain day* of the week to worship. They want to have their own freedom to do their own thing, to go and bow on the ground with their heads bobbing up and down on Fridays, or Sunday doing what they do. Sick, sick world! ...or Monday's doing what they do – everything twisted and distorted out here. The farther it gets away from the Sabbath just the worst it gets. And the world doesn't like to hear it, doesn't like you too much when they know what you think, that you believe that, that you hold onto that.

"Days of Unleavened Bread?! Boy, you people are weird! You can't eat what?! Can't have bread? You're just kind of weird." Really, the world thinks that. You're just all kind of weird and they don't like it because they don't understand it, they don't see the beauty of what it's about. They don't realize that they're like the hot bread that just came out of the oven all puffed up, haughty, proud. They're blind to that! And you look forward to the day that they can see that so they can be flattened out – really. Don't be high minded, but be led by being flattened out. Flatten it out, get all the air out. It's like a big ole steam roller, just let it roll over me, get rid of the hot air, let me be a flat piece of bread, unleavened. It's what it's about!

...a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence... and so it's why it says over and over again, we should expect the same from the world, how we're treated. If God's own Son was treated this way how much more all others who live this way that follow Him. ...**whereunto also they were appointed.**

Verse 9 - But you as a chosen generation, beautiful scriptures here because it starts with a chief corner stone, it starts with Jesus Christ, it starts with the one who makes it all possible; what we have because of in and through Him in life and that relationship as our elder brother, our High Priest. And so it talks about us then, **you are a chosen generation,** chosen people – that's what the word is, **a royal priesthood,** something that God has given to all of us. If we really grasped what God has given to each one of us we wouldn't try to lift ourselves up more because what we have is so incredibly powerful and precious and awesome in this world, that the world doesn't have. And how few have ever had it through time? Very few, but it's hard for us to grasp that.

...a holy nation, a peculiar/special people before God; special to God because we're the ones with whom He's working right now. The vast majority, through time obviously, overwhelming majority, He's going to work with at another time. Then they'll become precious at that time because of the process that's going to be working in them when they're able to begin to have sins forgiven through the Passover, because they've received that into their life. And those who live on into the Millennial period... I'm amazed by some of the things that people are going through right now and things that people are seeing more right now. You know what God is showing in a very powerful way? Why things have happened around us sometimes? We're able to see human nature and how quickly people are ready to bounce right back into pride; and we see in a magnified way why it must happen over and over again with such power and such severity to bring people to their knees. That's how obstinate mankind is! That's a horrible thing! But what a blessing to be humbled, whatever it takes so be it; whatever it takes in your life to humble you, so be it, whatever you have to go through. That's how we should think.

...a special people to God, that you should show forth the praises; and this word means a lot here in the Greek language because it's a word that means 'the virtues, the character, the moral excellence'. That's what we're to show. That's what is to be shown through us. That's what Jesus Christ showed to the world fully and completely, that moral excellence, that character, that mind, that being, that thinking and that excellence in every way, that *virtue* that's of God Almighty toward mankind. And that's what we're blessed to live in our lives that's to come through us and other people experience with us because of how we treat them, because of how we talk to them, because we're different in how we try to resolve issues and our willingness to say, "You know, I shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I slipped. I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have treated you... I shouldn't have said that to you. It was wrong on my part and I'm really sorry for that." Because you see, other people in the world don't do that. They don't humble themselves to accept the blame and the responsibility for things that are said wrong, in a wrong manner, done in a wrong way. And so people can learn, even when you make a mistake, that you're different, that you're unique, that you *are* special. As far as the world is concerned you're a unique person, someone that they can be friendly with.

...that you should show forth...do we grasp how incredible that is that we can 'show forth', that we're blessed to be able to 'show forth the virtues', the mind, the character, the moral excellence, **of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.** I look forward to the time when people can obtain mercy. They have to go through a lot in order to attain it, but so be it – that's blessed and that's God's love and that's God's mercy. And I believe that we've become far more convicted of that in the last two years...and probably in the last month, than we ever

have in our lives; and there's great spiritual understanding and growth and maturity in that and being at one with God, understanding God's *righteous* judgments, and that they're based on love and mercy from God, truly.

Let's pick up the context now in 1 John 3 as we read earlier a verse from there. Let's go back. Beautiful thing what God did with John, how God worked with John – absolutely beautiful. All the things that the other disciples had lived through, had worked with; things that God gave to Peter to write and how He moulded and fashioned him and the experience God gave to him, the things he wrote that we're able to benefit from. The things that were given to James. The things that were given to Paul when he was called a little later there, the very one who consented to the death of God's people, who consented to the death of Stephen; he was the one who gave approval and nod for Stephen to be killed. He was the one in rule, in authority, that gave his approval to put him to death. Amazing! And God worked with him in a very powerful way. A man who had a great deal of education, but when it came time for his conversion He was able to work with him for a period of three years and then sent him out as an apostle. *Powerful* what took place there. And then in all the writings of what God took him through to learn from. We can learn from, as time went along how He worked with the different Churches there and things that happened to him, how his mind was being moulded and fashioned, more being given to him so that he could give more, so that as he wrote different books of the Bible God was giving more and more and more to give to the world to understand what God was doing with all the world, with all of mankind, not just the Jews but with *all* mankind. Powerful!

And then I think about John and how an initial witness was given about things that happened in the very beginning and then later on as he grew and was the one who lived the longest. The others had died, John was the only one remaining, and God took him through a period of time to see all these things that took place in His Church, in God's Church, and brought him to a maturity and a spiritual depth to give us things that built upon, that added to what Jesus Christ gave on the night that He spent with His disciples before He died. This is what God gave to John to magnify, and they're written in the book of John, but they're *magnified* when he came to see them in far greater depth in this book, 1 John. Powerful, powerful all the way through from beginning to end, but let's pick up a few verses here because there's incredible insight, inspiration, understanding that we can glean about how we're to judge and how we're to measure things and what is really spiritual in nature.

Sometimes we think by doing certain things that it's spiritual. And indeed, we should sacrifice, we should do things, we should seek to be involved, we should seek to give wherever we can give, and sometimes those things have been misunderstood within the Church, things that people could do, things that were done. We can think that praying for hours in a day, listening to ten sermons a day... I don't know, whatever it is, we can feel like that's spiritual. What is *spiritual* is what we *do with it!* What is *spiritual* is what it gives us in our life so that we can live it! It's the *living* that reflects what is *spiritual*. And so if we go through all of that *and we still don't change the way we live toward each other then it doesn't mean much!* *What good does all of it do? What good does fasting twice in the week do?* ...as it's addressed in this book. What good does it do if people fast twice a week and they don't get it? ...and study God's word over and over again and go through the scriptures? It benefits when you're able to live it, and 1 John is about how you live it. 1 John reveals who is in God's Church and who isn't in some cases. 1 John reveals to what *degree* sometimes that we're *in the Body*, and on and on it goes; or what must be addressed in our life.

1 John 3:11 - For this is the message you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Now, John knew that, he wrote it already. He wrote it back in John 13, 'a new commandment I give to

you that you should love one another as I have loved you.’ And so he’s referring back to what he wrote earlier, to what Jesus Christ gave on that night. **Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one**, that’s where his spirit and mind were from, that’s what he was yielding to, not to God, not doing what was right, **and slew/killed his brother. And why did he slay him? Why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.** People can *hate* so much something that is right when theirs is wrong, and so often that’s where things come from. There is much to be learned from what it says right there about human nature and about the way we think. But we don’t generally tend to think that it goes so far as to kill somebody! “I would *never* do that!” we tell ourselves. If you’d been there you’d have done the same thing. If you’d have been his brother, you’d have done the same thing; at that moment in time and for what was given, you have the kind of nature that can do that, you do. And if you don’t see it in yourself, how far the human mind can go and what the human mind can do...?

Human minds can very easily, for what is considered to be a noble cause, go out and kill a lot of people and justify it; say it’s okay because it’s for a ‘good’ cause so we can have more oil... oh, we don’t say that! Sorry! So that we can give peace to another part of the world that really should probably be – get this – be obliterated. Oh, I’m going to have people out there love me on this one. It would be far better, that if the containment could be confined to Afghanistan, to obliterate it with atomic weapons. That would be merciful and that would be love. It’d be love in a great big way to this world. It would accomplish a lot more and it’d be far better for everyone.

Now, give them an opportunity first...destroy your crops, plant corn, plant wheat, plant cabbage, plant broccoli, plant something that people can benefit from in life; but to produce ninety some percent of all the opium of the world? That’s going to stop or you die. That’s a choice you’ve got because you’re killing our people, because we have a lot of people over here who are greedy, we have a lot of people over here who are selfish, by the millions, who snort.

In that movie ‘the Inside Job’ people who have talked about, people who are...I believe one individual who is a psychiatrist too, or an advisor, but I think it was a psychiatrist leading people on Wall Street, talking about how a problem for a lot of them is {makes noise of snorting into the nostrils}...putting little white stuff on the table and then just snorting it up and then going to work representing a lot of people out here. Amazing! A lot of people in politics who {makes noise like snorting into the nostrils} like to get high. And so why don’t we stop the opium travel that’s killing people? We’ve got a large part of a population that is homeless because we’ve allowed these drugs to just come into our country that we could stop. We have the power to stop it, but we don’t do it. Hypocritical, liars, greedy, because of something that they’re getting out of it. Don’t kid yourself. Sick, sick world that we live in; it is. What would be merciful? It’d be merciful that we not have a nation that produces more than ninety some percent, I can’t remember the exact figure, ninety three percent or whatever it is of all the heroin, crack, opium, everything that’s in the world that floods into Europe, that floods into the United States, that floods into other countries even, that comes out of one nation.

And so we send people over there to die for the wrong reasons. It’s sad! Do you think it’d be merciful? Sometimes we don’t understand why God destroyed certain peoples, instructed, “Destroy them all.” Sometimes we don’t understand why God destroyed the world and started all over again. We think, “Boy, He’s a pretty harsh God.” If we think that way then we don’t understand God, we don’t understand the love and the mercy of God; because God can resurrect them in a new world where they can finally have peace, and joy, and richness in life in families, but they can’t in the one they’re in. And those people over there never can, and we can’t give them peace; and if we give them any kind of

measure of peace whatsoever... well, we can't, that's its problem; controlled by warlords, and our leaders know it, and we play these games and we lie *to preserve our own way*, whatever that is.

You understand why it'd be the merciful thing that a nation of people be destroyed to give a greater peace to this earth, where we wouldn't have so many homeless people in this country? Do you realize a lot of homeless people in this country come from drug problems? ...you know the lives that have been ruined because of drugs that we could stop? Sick, sick... and that is what God is going to clean up, thank God. I hurt when I see people begging, when I see people hurting. I think, "What a better world when they're resurrected, or if they're able to live into a new age and to be healed of the things that have so imprisoned them." They don't have a *chance*. It's bad enough being imprisoned in this world, in this world's ways, but when that's got a hold of you because of things you've gone through in life, because of things you've experienced...even the trafficking of people, girls, little girls and women; high traffic volumes into the tens of thousands that are captive because of drugs and other things. Just that area alone is so sickening! And do leaders know it? Do people know it? Absolutely!

How much is done to stop it? You know why they don't? Too many leaders profit from it and too many leaders participate in it. That's another thing that came out a lot in that movie, how many people, even as business expenses, families, husbands who have these.... I guess it was actually a general here in Ohio that got the reputation for it. 'Hookers'; General Hooker. I don't know if you know that or not – a confederate civil war general that was from Ohio. He's buried in Cincinnati! Well, you know it's going to be quite a thing when he's resurrected and realizes the name he has – Hooker, and what has happened because he had so many that that whole trade got to be known as that name...they're 'hookers'. Incredible!

Anyway, these people who have prostitutes and smoke and snort coke and all the things they do. We live in a really filthy, filthy world and sometimes we're so secluded from it we don't grasp how evil it is and the mercy of God to get rid of certain things so we can have a better world. That's why we have to go through what we have to in order to have a better world. But man doesn't think that way because we have different standards.

1 John 3, talking about Cain and Abel, says **Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.** That's what we're to do. It's just a given, we should love one another. That's what we should exercise toward each other; not anger, not resentment, not bitterness, not envy, not jealousy, not cross words, not taking something behind the back of others and discussing people's lives and things about their lives and all their troubles and trials and everything else to the point where it degrades or tears down their weaknesses and so forth.

...because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in/remains in/continues in/lives in/dwells in death. It's amazing! Powerful what it's saying here. If we don't exercise what we know to be right toward others and we refuse to love someone then God calls it something else in the book, in the writings of John here, He calls it murder. That's what He calls it, very plain and simple; and we have to understand things being that bad, that that's the spirit, the spirit of Cain.

Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and the problem with human beings and the problem sometimes in God's Church is that we can read something like this and say, "I don't hate! I don't hate anybody in God's Church! I don't hate someone else!" But the things we do say otherwise sometimes. And what we say to someone, how we treat someone, how we talk about someone, say the exact opposite. And therein is the problem – because this is spiritual. **...whoso hates his brother** – in other

words, refuses to love, to forgive, to extend mercy, patience, time, forbearance...that's what love is, extending those things to one another because we love one another. The opposite is "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah... did you hear..." We mention someone's name and all of a sudden – give them.... Wire the mouth shut! I don't want to hear anymore. God doesn't want to hear it! It's an abomination to God!

...whoso hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Isn't that what we want? We *want* eternal life...we *want* God and Jesus Christ to be abiding in us. That's what the message was that Christ gave to John back in John 13-14-15-16-17...was why He was dying in order that the holy spirit could come so that now because of what He did... He said, 'the words I speak they're not Mine, they're the Fathers.' Everything I've done is from the Father because He abides in me and I abide in Him; and now you get to experience the same. We'll abide in you and you can abide in us. Not only that but you are to do so, to live in, to dwell in, to abide in, by the power of the holy spirit that's now going to be made available to you because you can be forgiven of your sins through Me. That's what He said. Powerful!

Hereby perceive we the agape/love of God, because He laid down His life for us: speaking of Christ His Son, **and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** For one another.

But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need...now sometimes we just get caught in the physical. It's just like when Jesus Christ said, "You must eat My flesh and drink My blood." And a bunch of disciples that had been following Him quit following Him because that was cannibalism to them; you're not supposed to drink blood, that's wrong in the Old Testament, you're not to eat somebody's flesh, that's sick – so they couldn't follow, because they didn't get it. And so sometimes people look at this and say, "Oh, if you have this world's good..." It's about helping people out; it's just a physical thing. It can be a physical thing but it's much more than that.

What is the good? What is the only thing that's good? God. God's Word. God's way. God's truth. And if you have it can you give it to others? We're supposed to; that's what you live toward others. You give that to others; forgiveness, mercy... if you have it, if you've received of that good that God has given to you can you give it back? Grace; that's what grace is. See, we receive the grace from God, the forgiveness, the patience, the mercy, all the things we receive, but sometimes if it stops here then it's not producing its fruit, it's not producing what it should. Grace is supposed to live through us to benefit others; mercy, patience, longsuffering, kindnesses, all the things that are from God, so that it can then work through us to others. That's what it's talking about. And sometimes when people are down and hurting and different things happen, that's when they need that the most – support, love, kindness, affection, acceptance, mercy, patience, acceptance, *mercy!*

...and sees his brother have need and shuts up his bowels of compassion, can't feel compassion for someone... you haven't been down that road, you haven't sinned and had a problem and a difficulty and a battle that you've had to fight and overcome? You don't have battles in life? You don't have things to repent of and be forgiven of? And if we do, if we have God's spirit, how can we not have the same toward others? There's no other way! It's what it's all about! We can learn from that and extend that then to others; that's what we're to do. But if we **shut up our bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love/the agape of God in us?** And that's the problem; see, because they're foreign to each other. If we don't have that compassion then the love isn't flowing, God's love isn't working there. But if it is then we have a different response, don't we? We're sharing our good, the good we receive from God with others. That's how God works; it's sharing. It comes from God through His Son through the Church to us and out to each other and to the world – that's how God is doing it.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; see, it's not a matter of reading, studying about it; it's not a matter of talking about it in talking a spiritual talk, **but in deed/in doing**, is what this means, **and truth**. Because it truly lives within us and because it's true in our life and because we're truly living it then in doing it toward each other; and that's what this is all about.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. There's a confidence and a boldness in this because you *know* who you are, you *know* your weaknesses, and so if you're able to extend these things to others, you know it doesn't come out of you. You don't take the credit for agape, mercy, patience, and love that's able to live through you toward someone else. You *know* the source is God! You're able to taste of it, that it's good and that's what you want and that's the joy and the fullness of life and you want more of that. And so there's a boldness there that you're living the truth. You can be very confident when you *know you're living the truth, when you know the truth* and you're living it. That's what faith is; and there's great boldness with the greater the faith is. It's the exercising of what we believe. Faith is all about the exercising, the living of what we believe. It's not enough just to believe, it's not enough just to have the words, it's not enough to talk about it, it's the living of it.

For if our heart condemn us, because that's what happens; we don't have confidence, we don't have boldness, we hold back, we're not able to throw ourselves into God's love and how it's expressed to one another in that boldness and confidence in relationships and so we kind of hold back and sometimes we're sheepish and sometimes we do certain things and we don't have a confidence or a boldness in our lives in how we look at each other and deal with each other, because it's like those sins are there and somebody might know... it's not that, it's just something in us. It's hard to describe that. The reason I know it is because I've had it happen in my life; I know we all have. If we understand that about ourselves then we can understand and comprehend and understand how it happens in others.

The greatest wisdom of a minister is to live that and know that and learn from it, conquer it, and then see it in others and have compassion and mercy upon each other.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Indeed, God knows, and in the Church we know He knows. **Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.** Boldness within God's Church – in a right way, not haughtiness, not being lifted up, just a strength of spirit. **And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.** And so in other words, if we're not able to live this, if we're not able to do this toward one another then we can't deceive ourselves, and that's why we're held back and that's why we have certain problems and a continuation in some sins in our life, because we're not yielding ourselves enough to the very thing that God says we're supposed to yield ourselves to. I hope we understand that to the depth of it's being; but I know we do in varying levels.

And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, who sacrificed for us, **and love one another AS He gave us commandment.** It's about sacrifice over and over again. **And he who keeps His commandments dwells in Him**, If we're able to live those things it's because we dwell in Him and He dwells in us and we have a greater confidence and boldness then in the Church, in our lives, in what we're doing, in where we're going. **...dwells in Him and He in him.**

And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the spirit He's given to us. So we know these things are made possible only by the spirit that God gives to us and the repenting that takes place in our life so that His spirit can continue in our lives to benefit others, to be a blessing to others.

We have so much more we could cover. Let's just pick up part of it in chapter 4.

1 John 4:7 - Beloved, let us love one another: for love/agape is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. So again, this ability to have this kind of love is because of the holy spirit that's given to us. **He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.** And I hope in this series we've learned more the *kind* of love, in a greater way than we have in the past. It's one thing to understand what Jesus Christ gave to us and be deeply moved by that, by our Passover, and have that relationship – it's another thing to take it deeper and farther and come to understand God's love and what He has done for so long now; a sacrificing kind of love, and to understand that's what we're to live. It should just be the way we think and the way we are, but we have that added portion there because of our human nature. And that's what's well pleasing to God – is when we're willing to sacrifice self.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. It's a beautiful picture. What an awesomely beautiful picture, to understand Passover, to understand the meaning of why He died. It's not just for the forgiveness of sin; that's a beginning. And it's a beautiful thing to be able to be forgiven of sin! But the *greater thing* is *why* we're forgiven of sin...so that the Father and the Son can dwell in us and we can dwell in them.

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