

I almost changed sermons here today because of all the things going on in the world right now but it wasn't to be. It is important that we are watching the news, that we see what's going on in the world. It's very easy to sometimes get accustomed to what's taking place and we shouldn't, we should understand that things are just building up more and more, and one of the big things to understand that really hit me in a strong way this past week was what hurts people the most. In many cases, especially in the western world and the scattered nations of Israel, is the pocketbook, money. When you get into power, politics, the economy, things of that nature, those are the things that sober people more than what sometimes physical things do. And I think that's interesting that that's how God is getting people's attention in the beginning, and will be getting their attention more and more here for where we're headed.

You can watch the stock market sometimes and you still have to shake your head thinking, "What on earth is going on?" How they can go up like they do at times when there's bad news, even though it did come down some this past week. You look at the condition of the world... it's just barely holding on and in the proper time things happen very quickly and we need to understand that, that things can happen overnight, literally. We've seen it over and over again. But thinking along those lines this past week, of all that's going on – I have different ones that forward news to me at times (and please no more from different ones out there), I have a couple of really good sources of individuals that continue to keep me supplied and I appreciate that, but really bombarded this week with things that are going on in the world when you look at the economy, when you look at what's going on in the Middle East, when you look at what's going on in Europe, when you look at what's going on in Greece, Spain, Portugal, the U.K., with the dollar and so forth, it really is awesome in the sense of seeing how things are coming together, because as Johnny has said so many times, "We have a front row seat." And so we are able to observe these things, we're witness of these things.

We know they're going to come to pass and to me it's an incredible process just watching it take place, seeing what it takes to bring mankind to humility, because they're not humbled right now. People are not humbled in any fashion or form unless people have lost their job or unless they're having difficulties out there. Pride is very, very powerful, very strong and able to hold on until it can't. And that's what it has to be brought to, to where it can't.

Today we're going to begin a sermon series and there's only going to be *Part 1* here today, obviously, because next Sabbath as I mentioned last week, we'll be going into sermons on Pentecost, covering the subject of Pentecost, and it'll be several sermons, three at least most likely, and after that then we'll come back to this particular series here. So it'll give you plenty of time to digest this one for sure and then we'll refresh everyone's memory on some of the things we're covering here today and continue on with Part 2 sometime after we return to the U.S.

For today's sermon I'll be giving you the title right from the very beginning here. It's entitled, *Perfection – Part 1*. And as I began to focus on the subject and the purpose for this sermon being given I couldn't help but think myself, again, "Where do I begin?" It's a very unique subject and where it's heading and so forth and sometimes it's a bit frustrating asking the question, "How can I give the complete depth that can be given to everyone because of what I want to convey, because of what I see God giving me to

convey, to preach about?" And especially in this end-time here because we have so much information, because we're moving so rapidly, because God just continues to give us more and more and more so there is that bit of frustration because we're at all different ages in the Body. I can't convey this fully to all of you who are new in the last few years here, in the last two, three, four, five years here, four years, whatever – that there are things that just take a lifetime to come to see and those things I cannot give you in the same way that some who've been around for a long time will be able to see and to discern, because there's so much that is spiritual in nature as to how we live our lives, as to what is taking place in our lives, as to what God is doing...and it takes a long time to learn those things, to become a part of us. It's just exactly like the parallels in physical life and learning; someone who is 6 and going to first grade, they can't go to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and someone who's in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade is not able to take college classes, because there is that which you have to build upon to get where you're going.

And so, if nothing else in some of this, if we can grasp that there is always so much to grow in, so much to continue to learn of God's way of life, to be inspired in God's way of life, and never to come to a point like the Church did because of Laodicea in thinking we were *rich and increased with goods!* I look back now at what happened in Laodicea after Mr. Armstrong died and see the things that happened in the beginning era of the Church, of Laodicea there, and what happened by the time we got to 1990 and the watering down of things that began to take place and a little truth chipped away here and there and it just continued to grow and escalate; and how we truly believed, because we felt like, at that time in the Church, we had received so much. And we *had* compared to times before going back and looking at things that the apostles had.

We knew that Mr. Armstrong (if we thought about it), was given so much, we had 18 additional truths that God had given to us after Sardis, and all that magnified that as well, and then finally him coming out with the book 'Mystery of the Ages'. *Powerful things* that God had given to condense, but yet in a fairly good sized book, and make it read in a logical manner, a process there of showing what God has been doing through time. It wasn't all the way there, but we didn't know that then; but we felt like, and that's what began to happen in spirit and in truth in God's Church...everyone was affected by it... we began to feel we were rich and increased with goods. It's a dangerous, dangerous, dangerous spirit, it truly is. It tends to cause one to begin to drift and coast. It begins to cause one to think that we are there, in that sense, and matured and spiritually mature. The reality is that never ends; it'll continue on into the God Family. God has been revealing that, that as we begin in the God Family it takes time to grow there, there's a maturing process that will go on into *eternity* in the God Family. And the more we learn the more magnified God Almighty becomes!

I've been dumbfounded by that and I hope you have over the last couple of years, or however long it's been; to understand, to come to grasp more and more how little we do know and how great and how mighty God Almighty is! We have *no concept* of how great God is, and yet He's giving us a better ability as we grow to see that more and more. And frankly, the more you learn, if indeed we are stirred up in spirit, if indeed we're not becoming lukewarm, if indeed we're hot and on fire and zealous for God's way of life, we're going to be able to acknowledge how small we are and how much we need more and more of God's way of life. And I'm thankful for that because that helps to fuel humility, it strengthens humility and helps to get rid of pride.

On the way up here today I was thinking, marvelling, how God can use someone like me – it blows my mind! ...or you! How He can look at us as human beings for what we are, so puny and so small, but He has such an incredible plan to bring us through this process...and it's a marvel. I know what I am! I

know my weaknesses! I *hate* them! “Sin is ever before me,” like David said, and it is before you as well if you see your human nature, truly, all the time. It’s there! We see selfishness and the more you grow the more you’ll see it, truly!

So what an incredible thing, this process that God takes us through, to grow, to mature, and to grow in perfection. Far, far from perfect, but to grow in perfection compared to what we were when we started, when God called us, when God began to call us out of the world – so very *imperfect* in every way, going more and more in a direction that leads to *imperfection* and problems. And then when God calls us *we bring those problems into God’s Church!* My life is still a matter of problems that I have that I learned in the first 19 years of my life! The mind that is already set – it’s set! It truly is! When God calls you, your mind is quite set in the way you think...and the way you think is selfish.

We’re selfish human beings! ‘The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’...and yet God has an incredible plan to free us from this, to take us from that. That we have to go through that, I marvel! The more I grow, the more God gives us to see, I truly marvel at the awesome process whereby God’s spirit can connect with, attach to, a spirit essence that He’s given us in our mind with the ability to think and reason as human beings, and then that life, that begettal that begins to grow, something new in life begins to grow, and as long as we’re in this human life we have this battle like Paul said in Romans 8 and in through there.

But what an awesome process! Why God created us the way He did so that we *can* be changed, transformed as it talks about. It’s an awesome life to live, truly is, what we go through, to marvel at the awesomeness of God, the love of God. And the more we see of God’s love the more inadequate we see as ourselves and the kind of love we have as human beings. Even if we’re able to taste of God’s love we’re still so puny in it, we truly are. Thank God He has a plan! Thank God He has the kind of patience He does and has exercised it for well beyond 6,000 years. We think with mankind and the context of 6,000 years, but it goes way, way beyond that in ways we can’t even begin to comprehend.

So again, seek to receive whatever you can. Seek to grow. Seek to learn. Seek to draw closer to God. Ask for help to be stirred up in spirit more and more and more as we enter this last phase that we’re going through right now.

Over the past two months I had some questions asked of me and even comments made to me that have revealed to me the necessity of addressing this subject as God gives it, as He inspires it, and we won’t get to the crux of some of that until Part 2; but again, this sermon’s subject is very broad and yet it’s so very narrow.

Let’s turn over to Hebrews 5. There is only one person recorded in scripture who ever attained to the truest qualities of perfection - Jesus Christ. He never sinned. He *never* sinned! He never misspoke. He never spoke mistakenly, never in error, never incorrectly, never inappropriately, never rashly, as we do as human beings.

**Hebrews 5:9 – And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him;** And so you read scriptures like this and you think of the world that talks about ‘Just come as you are’ and ‘they are not commandments to obey’ and so forth, and yet Jesus Christ continually pointed to them, that there is that which we are to obey in how we live toward God and how we live toward one another, and over and over again the things that He spoke, the things He taught.

There's a lot stated here and it'd be good to look more deeply at what is being said. And again, we're going to come back to most of that in the latter part of this sermon series, or possibly even some of that today in this particular sermon. But again...**being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him;** never sinned in this human life. It's hard to comprehend for us to have a mother who is physical, to have a father who's God Almighty. We can't fully grasp that. We believe it to understand the process, to understand what took place, to understand the life – we grow in that, we mature in that through time. And a lot of that is an understanding of things of what it says in John about the Word and the Word made flesh. And it would be good to turn over there; John 1:1.

Difficult to grasp and comprehend things that are spiritual in nature because we're not spiritual in nature. We are able to partake of that nature, we're able to partake of the being, the life, the mind of God as He gives us of His holy spirit once we're impregnated with His spirit, and we're even drawn by His spirit before we even become impregnated with it, before we're baptized. And so God begins to draw us, He lets us see certain things that we otherwise couldn't and we begin to then have a desire, we begin to make a choice, "This is what I desire. I *want* that life! I *want* that mind! I *want* to be in unity!" And the things we go through that lead us all the way into baptism and then continuing to grow through a lifelong process of yielding ourselves to God, of crying out to God, of hungering, thirsting after Him, after His Word, after His spirit, something that can never cease, something that can never begin to level out.

**John 1:1** – Jesus Christ was made *perfect* by God. That's what it's about. We go through a process being called when we're very imperfect and God taking us through a process of becoming perfected. **In the beginning was the Word**, 'in' or 'at' - the word that means 'the origin'. We can't comprehend things like that. There's just so much we can grasp.

**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God**, meaning that it was God's Word, **and the Word was God**. Incredible how we at one time used to read this because of a different concept in our mind and because we hadn't been shown the depth, the greater depth of what this was all about. Again, always growing, always maturing, always learning more about God, God revealing more of Himself to us.

**The same was in the beginning with God**. It's God! **All things were made by Him; and without/apart from Him was not anything made that was made**. So again, just a unique way of saying something here in words – '**without Him nothing was made that was made**'. God created *everything*! We went through that in talking about some things in the Feast sermon, discussing some of the things about a spiritual creation, that that's where God began and began to create things that *they* can see, the angelic realm, that which is spirit... I can't comprehend that! And then God gives physical things to describe some of those things and even gives physical things to describe some of the angelic beings. I can't comprehend a being with four faces. I can't comprehend a being that has wings like that. Man tries to make such things in movies and Hollywood and so forth, tries to give a picture of some of those things. We can't even begin to comprehend the glory, the awesomeness, the majesty of those things in that creation of God's - and then, all for a purpose, as we talked about in those sermons over and over again.

**Verse 14 - And then the Word**, the Word, the revelatory thought, the being, the mind of God; God Almighty! Because what's in our mind, that's what we are. It isn't a matter of your physical body. What makes you who you are is what is in your mind, the way you think. So we're in this vessel, we're in a body, it's an awesome thing to grasp, to comprehend the life that God has given to human beings, to give to us, and once we die there are going to be those who are going to be resurrected, whether it be in

a spirit body or back into another physical body – another body but it's that *mind* that makes the life what it is. It's an awesome thing!

And here the very mind of God in a unique way was placed in the womb of a woman to begin to grow, in a body that began to grow physically, but a mind as it was developed and then that was born and began to think and to reason. There was that spirit that was there working, moulding and fashioning; and at a very young age Jesus Christ could talk to learned men, people who had studied God's word in the Old Testament who were supposed to be great teachers, and ask questions of them, confound them, dumbfound them by the conversation He had with them, because there was that which He just knew, that which was in His mind, in His being that's hard for us to grasp and comprehend. And then He finally came to the point, as we discussed as well not too long ago, how that He had to be baptized, because for Him it wasn't enough, for Him there had to be more – even in that physical body – to come to a point where a life in a very unique form began to develop and grow on a spiritual plane in a greater way. Things that are difficult for us to comprehend.

And so... **the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,)** the *only one* who could ever be like that, the *only one* who had such purpose throughout the entire plan of God, that was to fulfill the things He was to fulfill.

...and it says here, **full of grace and truth.**

Let's turn over to Matthew 5 because God reveals to us that we are much, *much* different. We are fully human at birth. We are very *imperfect*. We have sin and a sinful nature from the beginning. Jesus Christ didn't, we do. Incredible difference! And there are things that God's going to give us in time.

**Matthew 5:48** – and so we're told, Jesus Christ said **Therefore be**, or as it is in the Greek, **become...** which is a *process*, it's something that doesn't happen instantaneously, it's a process of perfection, of growing in perfection. **Be/become perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.** So we're to grow and become more like God, to come more into unity and oneness with God in our thinking. It's a very powerful thing, this thing of coming into unity and being in unity, becoming of one mind with God, of one purpose with God –no disagreement in the way God leads and guides and directs us, no *question* about how God leads and guides and directs us. Because we question sometimes, we doubt sometimes, we're that way as human beings, we can't help it, it's just the way we are. We fight and we struggle with those things. And in that process we are able to be perfected.

It's just like the awesomeness of the blessing of forgiveness of sin - that every time we repent we are able to grow in perfection; we are able to grow in character. Every time we acknowledge that God is right and we are wrong, every time we *see* where we're wrong, every time we see our nature... and the more we grow in that and grasp what our nature is like the more we *loathe* this nature. And then we have another battle, one that I have to battle probably in a stronger way than I've ever have in my life, the more you see human nature, the more you see your own nature, the more you see the contrast between the way of God and the way of man sometimes it becomes more of a challenge to think right toward man, truly...to be patient with mankind. And so we learn through that process as well, to understand, like Jesus Christ said, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." That was said for us, okay? '...they don't know what they're doing.' It wasn't like God didn't know that. God created us, He knows our mind, He knows the way we think. These things are said for our benefit so that we can learn from them, to understand and to grow. And we do through time. And so we have to

be careful what we expect of others and what we expect in the world around us, what we expect sometimes of one another in the Church even. We have to be careful of those things and to exercise love and patience. And that's where a greater understanding of love comes from, and God reveals those things to us as well.

So again, to grow in perfection. I think it'd be good to look at the definition here as we're using it:

Perfection – the quality of something (in this definition) or of someone that is as good or suitable as it can possibly be. The process of becoming or making something (or someone) perfect. Somebody or something that reaches the highest attainable standard.

God is perfect; *perfect* in every way and we're to become like God? ...grow in perfection? We're talking about the Word, the mind, never being like God; no one will ever be like God. Jesus Christ can never be like His Father. None of us in the God Family, once we're part of the God Family, can ever attain to that life, that mind, that being, that power of God Almighty, nor His Son because God made Him unique in the Family for a great purpose for eternity. God says though, we're to grow in perfection; and that has to do with the mind and the way we think.

**Matthew 5:43** – let's notice some more here of things that Jesus Christ said - **You have heard that it has been said that You shall love**, which means to show love toward; how we think toward, how we act toward. **You have heard that it's been said that you shall love your neighbour**; now this is a quote from Leviticus 19 that goes on to say, 'You shall love your neighbour *as yourself*.' And you see, we can read something like that, and people tend to read things like that, and we can in the beginning of our calling read something like that and we don't grasp that we can't do that. You are *incapable* as a human being to love your neighbour as you love yourself. You can marry, the one you should be the closest to in life by every standard, by every measure, and you still love yourself more. That's the way we are because of selfishness, 'lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' as human beings that's so deeply ingrained within us. We're to grow, and that changes through time.

Two people, as they live the way God has given them to live, build a bond and a unity and a oneness, have the potential for doing that and that is awesome indeed, that teaches something far greater beyond this human life of a relationship, of a unity, of a oneness that we're able to grow in in God's Family with God, with Jesus Christ, with one another, that goes beyond human thinking, human reasoning. It's by the power of God's spirit and the power of God's mind.

So it says, **You have heard that it's been said you shall love your neighbour, and hate your enemy**. Now this word 'hate', it's used in so many different ways and so often by context is the only way of truly understanding, but not in the way we generally use the word 'hate' as far as the English language is concerned; 'to loathe, to detest, to despise'. And yet sometimes our actions reveal some of those kinds of thing if we're not careful. But it has to do with *how* we love, but to love less, sometimes that's how it's used, 'to love less by comparison' in other words, or sometimes by context here 'to fail to love', or as it is more correct here **and do not show or exercise any love toward your neighbour, don't show love toward your enemy**. Don't exercise anything, compassion, mercy, whatever.

There are things that came about in matters of war and so forth with the Israelites and expressions that they developed and had over time that wasn't a matter of something that God said by any measure, but it's something that people began to speak of or talk of amongst themselves as a part of life in dealing

with human tragedy and how people treated each other and how different ones, whether it be Gentile, non-believers if you will, and that's why some of the attitudes sometimes of Judaism and others around them, the separation became so strong, because they *knew* how those of Judaism thought toward them and through time that developed into something that it shouldn't have.

**Verse 44 - But I'm telling you to Love your enemies.** That's a toughie; to love those who are against you, to love those who want to do you harm. "Father forgive them because they don't know what they're doing." To not take offence by it because you understand something that goes beyond normal human relationships. Because in the world what we'd call 'normal human relationships' is not what we have when God begins to call us. When God begins to call us He tells us to change those relationships, to begin to think differently, to begin to act differently toward one another, to begin to live by His laws and how we're to treat one another and think toward one another, and treat one another. And sometimes that becomes quite a challenge for us (as I said at the beginning of the sermon), the more we grow sometimes the more we have to battle with some of those kinds of things – but indeed the more we can grow in those things as well, mature, becoming perfected.

So He says, **I'm telling you to love your enemies**, or to show, to exercise love toward them in how you treat them, someone that's against you. Sometimes it doesn't take a whole lot sometimes to set us off as human beings. I've used the example of driving; you can do it going down the highway. You can do it when things don't go right wherever, in companies, in business, when you're shopping... the way we can treat others if we're not careful. We can get on their same level. Do you do that? Do you ever find yourself, catch yourself getting on the same level with others, doing what they do because it's just human nature the way people treat each other? You can get caught up in it and *you are expert* at it in one respect, because you know where it's coming from. *You know what* they don't know! They're just caught up in the way people treat each other.

I can generally tell what people are doing as they're travelling down the highway just by the way they're driving, because I've been there, I've done that. I think, "I know you... that was me, still is sometimes." So we have to fight those things! But they're not fighting anything...oh they're fighting you, in a grocery store, or at the shopping mall, or in your business wherever you work, some of the things that go on sometimes and the little battles, the continuing battles, the way people are. It's a sick world in the way people treat each other!

So He says, **I'm telling you to love your enemies...** there's supposed to be something different in the way we treat people around us, not just people in the shopping mall, not just people while we're driving, not just people on the job and so forth, but even individuals who despise you, who look down upon you, who don't like you. And we get to experience that in God's Church! You can learn *real fast* what it's like...and it's referred to as 'entering into the sufferings of Christ' scripturally. You begin to understand what it's like to live a way of life, the things that Christ learned *because* it was His mind and nothing else was, but to obey God. He learned what it was *like* in human life that no one wants God, no one wants this way of life - what it's like to suffer from that! That's what it talks about in scripture and we learn that as well. He lived it *perfectly* toward others, we don't. Sometimes we respond in ways or act in ways that we shouldn't toward others and look down upon others. We have to be on guard to live the way God says we should live toward each other, to truly love each other, to truly have a desire to see everyone come through this *horrible, wretched* life. To want to see everyone come through it!

Just like in the world and the things we have to see happen in the world. I am *appalled* to think that it has to be so horrifying, that it has to be to such a degree to bring people to repentance, but its God's righteousness to do so. We have come to see and understand things about God in a very powerful way and it's a beautiful thing to be brought to humility. It's not a beautiful thing to see people suffer, it's a horrible thing – but there's a purpose behind it when it's a matter of what God is doing at this end-time, as an example. And so there's so much we learn and so much we grow in when it comes to becoming perfected.

**...bless them... I'm telling you to love your enemies...** in other word, to exercise, show love toward others even when they don't toward you, even when they say things about you or do things toward you. And sometimes that can be within the Body; sometimes it can be in a family: someone says something, does something, doesn't exercise love toward the other, and sometimes because of that there is conflict and hurt feelings. Oh do I sometimes hear about hurt feelings that people have! ...because of human nature getting in the way, mistreating someone else, hurting someone else, to the point of people brought to tears – even in a Body where we're striving overall to live what is right. We still strive with this thing of being imperfect! We strive with our own human nature, but I thank God He's given us what He has. And so we strive to nip those things in the bud, we strive to make them right; we strive to do what is right.

**...bless**, and this word here means 'to speak well'; 'to speak well or right', or whatever it is, 'to/toward others', toward them who **who curse you...** That's *incredible*! To speak well toward others who speak bad toward you? ...who tear into you? ...rip into you? Whatever it might be? Oftentimes you'll find when you come into the Church it's in your own family, it's with the ones you've been the closest to because there's a spirit in the world and sometimes people don't even know what they get caught up in, that wants to get at you, and so they stir up an attitude and a spirit that's there fermenting and makes it worse toward you. And it shows how much a spirit world hates and loathes God's way, but it also shows what selfish human nature's like – it hates God's way!

And so not only are we to 'speak well to/toward those who curse us,' you should *always speak well* toward one another in the Body. *How much more* should we speak well toward those who are brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ? It's a very tall order, truly is. It's very powerful what we're being told here, and so it should cause us to stop and ponder and think about how much more important it is then, even within a Body of people striving to live right, to speak well toward one another. That's why there's really... I fight difficulty, I fight a battle there, I have to fight a battle there when I see people not speaking well toward one another within the Body. Spiritually you need a 2 X 2 up the side of the head! Because that's just *insanity, really!* On a spiritual plane that is *absolute insanity* that we do those things, and yet we do because of human nature and this battle that Paul talks about. But boy we need to conquer and overcome those things and desire... *of all people* to have the greatest desire to those whom God has called. Everything else should be foreign in our minds! We should be *for* one another, striving, and the more we see that, the more we should strive to live God's way of life for the benefit of one another within the Body! And yet we fall short! We're to struggle and to fight and to seek to grow and become closer.

It goes on to say **...do good to them who hate/fail to love you;** just because someone fails to love you, to show *you* love, doesn't mean we are to react in kind – because that's what we generally try to do as human beings. On the contrary, you have to do *more!* Otherwise what more do we have, what do we have that's of God?



**...so pray for them who spitefully use you, and persecute you;** We should pray for one another. Sometimes within the Body people have difficulties or battles or hard feelings toward one another and yet that should never exist, and we should obviously pray, pray for each other in those circumstances let alone others here, it says, **but pray for them who spitefully use you and persecute you.** Hopefully that isn't in the Body! But we're supposed to do this just in the world, brethren, because of who we are, because of the power that God has given to us, because of a unique calling that God has given to us.

**That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven;** and so if we're yielding to God... and the more we yield to God the more we're going to strive to live the way God tells us to live in this flesh; **for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.** He doesn't just give that which is special to those who are striving to live His way of life, on the contrary, sometimes it's healthier and better for us that we go through various kinds of trials and hardships and struggles. But it says, **He makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust,** on the evil and the good.

**Verse 46 - For if you love them who love you,** think of the Body, the Church, a Family, families, God calls families sometimes, sometimes you're called by yourself out of a family; and so it can be a family, it can be the Family of the Church that's larger than just the physical family who is in the Church, for in this case here, **if you love them who love you, what reward,** it's a word that means 'worthiness of payment'...**what reward do you have?** What good is there in that which is easy to do? What have we done if we just love those who love us?

**Don't even the publicans/the tax collectors do the same?** They're looked down upon just as they are today. You know the world has always been the same way, but especially back then because when they came to your door and asked various things of you and came to take parts of what you had away from you, a lot of those doing those jobs weren't very well liked, and some of them developed certain ways about them that weren't likable either, and so they had a certain reputation. So in the time of Christ, those things are talked about and talked down upon in the way they were seen in society. And so He asks here, **if you just love those who love them, what good do they have? Don't even the publicans,** those you look down upon and despise as a whole in society, **don't they do the same thing?**

**And if you greet your brother only, what are you doing that's more or better than others?** So if you're just giving a greeting to those who are in your circle, what about someone else who isn't? Do we greet them? Even something like that that's simple. There's something different (I don't know if I should bring this up or not, I don't want to cause problems between certain regions of the country), but let's just say in the South as compared to the North – I won't separate it by the Ohio River or anything like that, foolishly so, but just by the deep South and the deep North, okay? There's a difference in people as a whole. There's something because of something that has been passed down in part of Manasseh that wasn't passed down the same way in the other part of Manasseh, and some of it has to do with some very basic qualities – of teaching children to respect their elders, to say 'Yes Ma'am. Yes Sir'" You don't find that in the North too much, but you find it in the South, the Deep South. It's just the way people are taught. That's the way they grow up and there's something about that that there's an openness, a friendliness in the way people greet each other. You get in the North, especially if you think of large cities like New York or some places and the people tend to... if you say "Hello" there, it's like "What do you want?!" It's like you're out to get something. The eyes are shifty, "What do you want?!"

Down south, that's just the way it is. You go into a grocery store, you go through a line, you go into a gas station, I don't care where it is, and as a whole there's a difference between the North and the South in some of those things. Do all of you know that? Agree with that? Understand? There is a difference in communities and regions. But you know what? I appreciate it when people are friendly, when someone greets you in a hallway and they have a smile. It makes you feel good! There's something about it, there's a friendliness there that can help to put you in a better attitude.

Now, would to God that I could always do that toward everyone I meet, but I don't. I wish I could all the time; and I enjoy it more when I'm able to do it on a more constant basis, which isn't all that constant sometimes depending on what I'm going through. And I'll be candid with you, the last couple of years because of where we are in time, the stress, the pressure, just to be candid about it, it's not been easy, it's not good, it weighs heavily. Sometimes I feel like I've got a tonne of bricks on top of me and because of that sometimes I have to fight then how I react or act toward others because of...I guess you call that stress... and yet it's what we're going through in the age we live in, and there's a lot of that in the world today. I've talked to a lot in God's Church who feel that, they *feel* it, it's out there, and it comes at you. And especially because of what we know there is stress related with those things. And so how we deal with that depends, decides oftentimes how we are toward others, how we treat others as we come across them. And so it's something good to exercise – being kind to others, just greeting others.

But how much more... and that's a show of love, if you will, a show of care and concern, "How are you?" Not just as a habit and you don't care and they could say some really bad things to you as you go by and you don't even notice what they had to say because you really didn't care what they had to say. But someone who cares, you're greeting someone and it's a pleasant thing. And generally if people are in a better mood like that it's because they are in a better mood and that can rub off. But *sometimes* some of us just go around *gloomy*, and *on guard* and ready to *pounce* and just not very happy.

So He's saying here about loving others – how much more in the bigger things of life when you have different dealings with people, different situations where it requires longer than just a passing greeting, when you have some back and forth with it, maybe at work or whatever, whatever your job is and your interactions with people and you experience a lot of selfishness from people. Sometimes it can put you to the test and sometimes when you've dealt with certain people in society.... I think of some people who deal in complaint departments. What a tough job! To think you can deal with people in the complaint department day in and day out; or returning items if something doesn't work... and some of these people are not happy, you watch them. And when you have to deal with people like that day in and day out that's got to wear on you. And to have a personality that is able to be chipper and kind on a continuing basis? That's a unique person indeed.

**And if you greet your brother only what are you doing more or better than others? Don't even the publicans do likewise? Therefore be/become,** again a process, **perfect** – see, that's where it is to lead. These are the things being discussed when Jesus Christ said what He did, **grow in perfection**, be different from the world. We can't be like the world so we have to think about those things, even in the small things of life in what we do; thinking about others, exercising love toward others – and it can be in the smallest of things because the reality is if it isn't the smallest of things it's not in the big things when it's needed, because it just has to do with the way we think and the way we treat others, the way we talk to others. And so those are things we have to pray about and ask God for help to live. You know, *God is love*. There is just a way of thinking and a way of being that He is. That's why He exercises so

much incredible patience with us. That's why He's so gentle with us as He is – so merciful with us. He truly is! And I hope we see that and understand that!

So again, none of us is perfect. We're far from it in this human life and we all have sin continually before us, we truly do. I don't care who you are. If you don't understand that you have sin continually before you in how you think and how you treat others, if you're lacking in your ability to love others... well, a lot of room for a lot of growth then. We have to constantly be forgiven of sin in order to continue in a relationship with God and with Jesus Christ and in true fellowship with one another. Because sin affects our ability to even have good fellowship, healthy fellowship with one another.

So again, as none of us is perfect... I am not perfect and you are not perfect...then we must all go through the same process of being perfected together, don't we? It's a process, and not expecting things too much of one another. Sometimes we can do that within the Church. If you're not careful we can expect more of others than we do of ourselves and that's not a healthy thing, it truly isn't.

Again, just focusing on some of these things that God said about becoming perfect. That means changing, growing, repenting, becoming something different than what we are, being *so much* different from what the world is, seeking to be *far* different from what the world is. **Ephesians 4:11 - And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints,** there is a process whereby God moulds and fashions us, whereby He teaches us. And the beauty of the Sabbath day where God gives us a particular day where we are able to be moulded and fashioned, to learn how to live better, to learn about God and the things He wants us to receive in order to *change* in our life and grow in our life, to become more mature, to go through this process of being perfected so we can be born into His Family.

**For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,** in other words, of service/of giving, **for the edifying of the Body of Christ until we all come in the unity of the faith,** it's always about this process of becoming more at one with God in the unity of belief and what God has given to us, the present truth, whatever that present truth is, because it's been different for all ages. What Noah had was different from what Abraham had as a matter of understanding and promises and things that God was revealing through time. Moses? Far, far different from the days of Noah and the days of Abraham – just continuing on through time, a marvel through time of what God has been doing helping us to grow in perfection to become a part of His Family.

And so again here, **edifying of the Body of Christ until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,** in other words here, into one who is perfected, man/woman - it's not a matter of sex, it's a matter of the individual whom God has called, **unto perfection, unto/into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:** We're to strive for that, we're to seek that, we're to seek to have that same mind in us that was in Him, which was what? The mind of God, the being of God, the way of God, the thinking of God, the love of God.

**Verse 14 – so that we are no longer as children who are tossed around and carried about with every wind of doctrine,** so even there God says His desire for us is to have unity of what we believe, to be in unity with Him, to have oneness with Him. I've lived in the time when the Church was so awesomely blessed through Philadelphia – incredibly blessed! But in the midst of that time I saw a lot that wasn't a matter of unity, of individuals who had their own freedom to think as they wanted to think that was different than what God was giving to the Church, and those battles that went on in churches, the

battles that went on in congregations in the ministry and so forth through time, and yet God had such patience with us and we had, in a sense, a relative type of peace at that time. Many didn't realize what was going on. I didn't realize some things were going on to the degree they were because of the way God protects us and blesses us.

And so God's desire for us is – **so that we're no longer children who are tossed around and carried about with every wind of doctrine and the trickery or the deceitfulness of men/women**, because it's in both as human beings; **and cunning craftiness**, in other words, the stronger we become, the more at one we become with God the less these things can happen in life. And I have seen so much of that! ...so much of this kind of thing take place; deceitfulness in doctrine, a desire to get something in, people, individuals within congregations who would say something that was in disagreement and talk about certain things and want to get people into certain conversations; and then that would spread into other peoples live and they would spread it to someone else and after a while you have a horrible infection. It's incredible what we go through in God's Church to grow, to mature, to become perfected. But God gives us certain tools and abilities so that we can be perfected, so that we can yield to Him and truly come through this process.

**...by trickery and deceitfulness of men, by cunning craftiness/deceitful masterfulness...** some have even come in times past into God's Church who can be very deceitful in a masterful kind of way, which is sad. It's *horrifying*, but it's happened! I think of an evangelist who was incredibly deceitful in this way, intellectual and came across as intellectual spiritually and he wasn't spiritual at all! He did incredible damage to the ministry because he was a teacher at Ambassador College and taught many, many, many, many, many ministers many, many, many bad things that weren't in unity and harmony with what Mr. Armstrong was teaching – **cunning, deceitful masterfulness**, at what he was doing.

**...whereby they lie in wait to deceive/mislead/lead into error; But speaking the truth in love/agape/God's love** – that's what epitomizes what our life should be like always, at all times.

**...speaking the truth in love.** We think of doctrine when we think of this oftentimes, speaking the truth in love, the truth, the doctrines of the Church, being in unity and oneness with all the doctrines, but you know what a big portion of this is? It's what we say to each other. The truth. Is it the truth? Is it the way of truth that God says we're to live toward others? Is it a matter of the truth of God's love and how we're to love each other? Is it a matter of the kind of conversation we're to have? Is that the truth we're talking about or do we want to just be doctrinal when it comes to the 18 Truths or the 50 Truths or whatever is out there? Sometimes when we go through things like this we don't think about 'the truth' that God has given to us of some of the most important that exists – how we treat each other, how we talk to each other, how we think toward each other. Because how we think toward each other determines how we treat each other, truly does. And that determines whether or not we're living *in the truth*, whether we're being truthful before God.

I don't pull too many punches when it comes to relationships in God's Church, especially now at this stage of the game, and in different kinds of relationships within the Church. Especially... I'll just say it because I deal with this from area to area to area from time to time... even especially so within marriage. *Of all places...of all places* that should be the place where our conversation is the *best*, and too often it is the worst, or reflects the worst in our nature of how we can treat someone who is so close to us in life. And this just exists in life. And we need to understand in God's Church these are the things that are spiritual; and how you treat each other within the Church, how you talk to each other within

the Body! Because these things pop up *always!* ALWAYS! From area to area to area of how we treat each other, of how we talk to each other.

Just recently learned of someone else that had to be put out of God's Church – a wife – not the husband in this case. Hate to see that happen! ...but there was a lot of problems before it ever came to this point in time. A wife who's no longer with us, a woman. I hate those kinds of things and I think, "You had everything going for you; the way of life, the truth of God, a family to begin to live, to grow in, to learn God's way of life, to exercise God's way of life toward each other." And these are the things that determine whether or not we're *of* the truth, if we're living in spirit and truth. Because you see, it's easy to talk about how we're to be, or to agree with certain kinds of doctrines and so forth, but you know what puts us to the test? This sermon! Growing in perfection! And so much of that has to do with how we *speak to each other*, how we *treat each other*, how we *esteem each other*, lift each other up instead of tearing down – looking up to and admiring the qualities of one another. And maybe we don't admire them enough or say them often enough toward each other and being thankful for each other in the Body.

I'm thankful for the variety in the Body, truly. We *learn* through this but we struggle, don't we? You learn through that to love people because of the struggles they have. Do you love people? ...not looking down upon them, but love them because you know what they're going through because you've gone through it? ... Or something akin to it and you understand it, you hurt for them? Because if we don't hurt for each other, how much do we love each other? When you see someone suffering - it doesn't mean you let it go, or that you excuse it -but to have compassion on one another, to be merciful because of those things? ...but still dealing with the truth and God's way of life?

I've said so much right there that, again, it's several sermons....

**Verse 15 - But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ:**

It's amazing how God gives to us, as I'm thinking about some of this, from time to time to time, different sermons with a different focus of a word, or in this case here if we're looking at a sermon title. If you go back and look at many different kinds of sermon titles you will see a common weave that God has given to us through time. Because so often when we go into and we talk about relationships... because this is what this way of life is all about. 'Perfection' - that's just one of many avenues of addressing something and focusing on a specific thought or thinking or expression that God is giving to us to help get into this mind in a deeper way, to recognize what it is we need to address in life and become more deeply convicted of God's way of life and convicted of things that we're doing wrong so that we'll repent and change those things and not want them to be there.

Because these are the spiritual things of life. It's not how much time you spend in prayer, yet you should spend time in prayer. It's not about how much time you spend in bible study, yet you should spend time doing that... or listening to sermons, how much time we spend in doing certain things. It's *what you live* toward others, especially those who are the closest to you, because it's in the little things! It's in the little things day in and day out of what we live toward one another that reflects an overall thinking in our mind, in our being, about where we are and where we're going that determines our spirituality, if you will, our place in perfection, where we are in our growing in perfection. It reveals things that are imperfect that have to be repented of and what it is we need to change.

**Romans 12:1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by/through the mercies of God,** the mercies of God, to focus first upon something here that God has given to us – mercy! ...**that you present your bodies a living sacrifice;** Now there's a series. What did we cover? That it takes sacrifice to love each other, of what you have to fight in your own human nature in order to love each other. Quite often God has us look at and examine these things, because this is what it's all about. It's about our relationships, it's about our thinking toward each other ...**that you present your lives a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** Absolutely! We're called! We're begotten by the spirit of God in the mind. He's given us of His mind, of His being, and now we yield ourselves to that process because we want to grow and become more like Him, and we find these changes and these battles that have to take place.

It says, **and be not conformed to this world:** Don't be like the world, don't blend in with the world. *I hate this world! I hate everything that exists in this world that makes this world what it is! I loathe the spirit of this world,* I truly do. *I loathe it* with all my being because it's all wrong from the top to the bottom! It's wrong! Everything that's there! It truly is! ...that's established in our society, in our world! It's wrong! *We are blessed* to have the opportunity in time here to begin changing it – *everything!* How everything is used, like a computer, it's an incredible technology but it's so abused and misused in this world! Gives a whole new expression of 'twitter-pating'. Now they have the word, 'twitter, twitter, tweet, tweet', whatever that is. I think, "Give me a break! Give me some distance in life too!" Everywhere you are in constant communication with everybody anywhere in the world! I think we need a bit of a break from some of that. We need to learn how to interact with each other, not on a machine. Sadly people are more comfortable with dealing through a machine with other people, communicating with each other through a machine with other people, becoming more distant with people. It's safer, we think. I'll tell you, we've got a lot of changing to do in a new world, things that are going to be changed. I can't wait!

...**a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** God has called us to change, to become something different. Do you see things and you long for the changes that are going to be able to be made, that you can be a part of to help make this a better world and a happier world for people to live in? ...**and be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind,** of how we think. And a part of that process is seeing what needs to be changed. Most of my training as a minister, the vast overwhelming majority of it that God has given to me, is to see the things that are wrong that aren't of Him. And that's the way it should be toward our nature, or toward the human nature that we see, that we see the things that are wrong and we should say, "That's not of God and I don't want anything of that to be a part of me! I loathe it! I don't want it! I reject it!" in our thinking. So many things in learning in the ministry, of how people are worked or dealt with or things that people have done that are wrong and the politics.

I came to hate politics! I've known about democrats, republicans and things that happen in the world in as far as the government and governments are concerned; but I have a lot different feelings toward them now than I used to have because of what I experienced in God's Church. I learned what politics is like in an environment where it shouldn't exist... in God's Church! And so God manifested the spirit that's wrong that's behind it and the things that people do on a spiritual level, on a spiritual plane that's so wrong, and because of becoming convicted of that I see it now in a way that I couldn't before and I *loathe* anything about it! And I *see* how *ugly and evil* it really is and why it can't exist in the future! There is no place for it! And so we learn things that way and we should in sermons like this as well, in relationships, that we should loathe the things that we see wrong that are maybe in family or on the job

or in a congregation, of things that have happened that should never have happened. And no matter what anyone else does we always have this to look at first and foremost [self]. What do you expect of others? ...or do you expect it of yourself. No matter what anyone says or does toward you, to you, it's about you first and foremost, of how you live toward others.

**Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you might prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.** How do you do that? You prove something by doing it, by exercising it, by changing something and putting it to the test and living it and experiencing that. I've been blessed to do those things in the ministry. I have learned much through time in things that I wouldn't have had the opportunity of otherwise; things about mercy alone, patience, love.

**...that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say unto you through the grace given unto me...** Grace - that's how we start learning, I'll tell you. We must learn how God deals with us first! It's like the example that Jesus Christ gave of two individuals; here there was an individual that had more goods, more wealth and he went and presented his case, if you remember the story (paraphrasing this), to the individual he was indebted to and put himself before his mercy and asked for a longer length of time or time to be able to repay and so forth and the individual was forgiven of his debt. But this individual then who was wealthier had someone working for him who had debt toward him and he wasn't willing to treat him that way, he didn't *learn* how he was treated, he didn't benefit from that. And those examples are given to us in God's way of life, in God's word, because we must first grasp how God deals with us! If we can't see the reality of what God is doing with us, of how He deals with us, then you're not going to be able to pass that along to others! If you don't grasp the *patience* God has had with you, you're not going to be patient toward others; you're just going to live in selfishness. If you're not appreciative, thankful and grateful because you see it and you see it because you thank God for it – *thank God for your mercy!* I thank God for His forgiveness when I sin, that I can continually come before Him and ask for forgiveness of my sins. I *marvel* at the patience and the mercy of God! He doesn't count, He doesn't keep track, He doesn't hold it against me, it's just gone. That's an awesome thing!

We on the other hand, as human beings, we tend to remember... "Well, I remember the last time he said that..." And after a while we can become, in how we think toward others and how we respond to others, not good. Always on guard, always learning, always learning about the grace of God, the mercy, the patience, the love that He exercises toward us, and then if we really are learning that you can't help but exercise it toward others...you just can't help it! I'm not as quick to correct as maybe I was at one time, in the sense of not giving someone ample opportunity over and over again candidly, to repent, to turn. Other times you have to deal with certain situations so we can learn and so we can grow. It's something we grow in, and the reason I've grown in those things (and I'm just sharing that with you), is because I've seen how God has worked with me and through time I have learned to pass that along to others – patience, mercy, giving time, giving more time, sometimes maybe too much time. I'd rather err on that side than on the other, if you understand what I'm saying, in how you work with people, in how you deal with people, how you deal with certain situations in life.

And so the mercy we show, the patience we show, if we understand how God has worked with us...and yet there are times that God has to intervene in our life to stop, to bring an end to certain things. But we still have the ability to repent, don't we? ...and place ourselves at God's mercy seat...but first we have to be able to see it. If you don't see what God is doing in your life, what He's given to you, if you

don't grasp that then you're not as likely to be showing that toward others, you're not going to be learning from it like you should be.

**So I say to you through the grace given unto me to everyone among you, not to think more highly than you ought to think of yourself; but to think soberly according as God has dealt to everyone the measure of faith.** So again, sometimes because of thinking too highly of ourselves, where we see ourselves, where we *think* we might be, or where we *think* we are, we can tend to expect more of others, and then if we understand that in kind determines how we actually treat them. If you expect more of others there's a certain way you're going to treat them and it isn't generally with mercy, it isn't generally with patience, it isn't generally in a spirit of forgiveness or forgiving. Always guarding ourselves, always asking God for help to change, to become something different.

Awesome things we learn as we understand how God has worked with us, that we learn to work toward others. We're understanding then when people have trials, we're understanding then when somebody's going through a fault, a weakness, a sin. Instead of throwing our hand up to our face and gasping, "They did *what?! ... God's Church?! How can that be?*" And we're ready to put them out, we're ready to... "How can they be a part with us? I'm not going to have anything to do with them because they're like that! How could they have *ever done or said* such a thing?"

Everything human beings can do we can do too. You think you're better than that? Put into a certain environment, certain conditions in life.... Sometimes we think we're really good, sometimes we think we're doing really well in life, and sometimes we think we have really attained to a certain level of growth and maturity and we see others as not quite there, not to that same level, and... But there's an attitude we have to be careful of in the midst of all that, and that's when someone sins. You know what I feel when I see people sin? I hurt because I know it brings hurt and pain. See, it's not a matter of wanting to see someone smacked up the side of the head, although at times that would be healthy for us so we could see what we've done. But it's not a matter of that toward someone else; it's an understanding that they're hurting. Whenever anybody has certain sins in their life, I don't care what they are, I hurt, I truly do. And if you do that you're not as quick to judge in the sense of condemning. Do you understand what I'm saying? You're not as quick to condemn. I hate to see suffering, and sin causes suffering, you can't help it, something that's said to someone else... I don't like to see people unhappy, and sin causes people to be unhappy, it causes suffering. I don't care what your sin is, I don't care what it is you've done, your secret sins, the things you pray to God no one ever finds out about in your life in your thinking and whatever you've done in your life. Sad how human beings are in this world today.

How would you like to be King David? I've thought about that. I've thought.... every sin I've ever committed? ...or the *big* sins in life that are out there for everybody to see? How would you like that? You remember the time when Jesus Christ wrote in the sand and all of a sudden individuals changed their attitude? I don't know what He was writing but I can only begin to imagine at that particular point in time, that particular time of life and so forth that was there, and people who are so ready to condemn. I think of one woman who had great admiration, love and respect toward Him who was a harlot; and yet I would dare say if I were back in the time of Philadelphia (not going to talk about now) and someone came into God's Church who was known to be a harlot, that there would be people who would so look down upon her.



But that isn't what God looks at, of what we were, but of what we can become. And when we respond to God and we want to be something different regardless of what we've done in life... we've all made mistakes. We've all made mistakes, we've all had sin, and we still have sin in our lives.

And so if we really see ourselves and see God and understand how God looks at human life, it's the potential of what we can become, and the family that we are, and that we understand when someone stumbles or does something wrong that we're willing to have compassion on them; and that is in the context of being repentant, if they're repentant, and if they're not it has to be dealt with. You can't just wink an eye at sin like what happened in Corinth. Horrible environment! I can't imagine that kind of a world at that time... well, I can, but the way Corinth was and the people who lived there and the kind of society it was and Paul was there working with them and how a certain thing was brought into the Church that would so blow your mind in the kind of adultery and fornication that was taking place, especially in a couple of people's lives, and how it was dealt with, how Paul had to deal with it and work with it and eventually the man in 2 Corinthians was brought back and repented of what he'd done as he wanted to change.

Our ability oftentimes to be able to forgive others... I've known of, because of going back all the way to Philadelphia, of things that lived in the Church, I think long term in that respect and I saw things that happened that were passed along in families and between families and between people in the Church and between relationships, some things that because of events that had happen, some people could just never forgive; had a hard battle ever forgiving and forgetting things that they felt had been done to them. Well, that limits our ability to grow in perfection and to grasp and understand how God has worked with us individually.

And so the next time you're maybe a little quick to judge someone else and kind of have that attitude of putting your hand up over your face and being aghast at how someone could do a certain thing... just remember yourself and your own sins and the mercy and the patience God has with you in conquering and overcoming. One of the things that I am deeply concerned about in my life right now is because of what we're going through, is that I don't become hardened. Things that you're going through right now, the longer you've been in God's Church, you can become a little hardened if you're not careful, and you've got to be careful that you never let anything like that ever happen to you in the sense of how you think toward the world around you and others around you. And because I'm able to see that God's blessing me in fighting some of those things. But I see some of those things happening in people's lives and we have to be careful that we don't allow ourselves to become hardened because of what we've been going through and because of the length of time some things that we've been going through it. It's been a long battle, those of you who have gone through it, those of you who've been around for a long time, those of you who've been through Philadelphia and through Laodicea and the apostasy and so forth. We've been through a lot of battles but we have to be careful how we think and we never let those things happen inside of us, but that we cry out to God to be merciful, to be patient, to be filled with His love.

**John 17:14** – Jesus Christ said, **I have given them Your Word**; Man, did He ever! He *was* the Word made flesh. Incredible! Everything He spoke was from His Father. To me that's a beautiful thing, an awesome thing, what He gave there in John 14 when He said, "The words that I speak to you, they're not My own, they're the Father's." Didn't come out of His own reasoning, His own thinking, His own ideas – everything was from God because it was perfect, because everything from God the Father is perfect. And the more we have of that mind, the more perfection that's there, the more beautiful it truly is, the

more beautiful life is. **I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them**, awesome, doesn't love them, fails to love, will not love, **because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**. I'll tell you what – maybe I'm adding too much as we go along here in some of this, but as you grow... in the last several months this has hit me in a profound way greater and greater and greater. There is *nothing* in this world... we have no part of it! I *loathe* it, every bit of it. I hope you do! I hope you're growing in that! The ways of this world, the ways of mankind, that it's like what Lot did, he vexed his righteous soul day by day because of what he saw, but what he was focused on was a kind of a narrow area in one respect, but it was about society and a part of how people were treating each other in a perverted way. Everything we look at in society today, whether it be in government, the shenanigans that go on, the *lying* that goes on, that comes out over and over again, the things in business and corporations. I don't care what it is, it just makes you sick! And so it helps to drive home the point we're not of this world. We have nothing of this world in us, and what we do have in us we need to get rid of.

**Verse 15 - I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil and from the evil one...but from the evil that's in this world.** And so that's what God does, He blesses us in fighting it and fighting it and fighting it and conquering it a little bit here and a little bit there.

**Verse 16 - They are not of the world;** We begin to learn that immediately when we're first being drawn and called. We begin seeing those in a limited way in one degree, but yet we begin to see it and we grow in that and we continue to grow in that *until our change comes*. **They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them**, set them apart, set them apart for holy use and purpose, **Sanctify them through Your truth: Your Word is truth**. And again, because of the context of this sermon I am drawn back to and it's a profound thing to understand that it's not a matter of knowing doctrine, it's not a matter of knowing all the truths that God has given to us, which are indeed awesome and give us strength and boldness and confidence to continue to forge forward, of things that God has given us that we see, that we know that others can't see and we long for the time they can see it (especially those in the scattered Body), and we have that great desire for them. But the biggest thing here is about how we live. It's about love, it's about how we treat each other, and that's the truth of God, the power of God, the Word of God, the mind of God, the life of God, the peace of God that has to do with what brings peace.

**Verse 18 - And You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.** And so we're called but we're still out in the world. He doesn't try to separate us from it or to protect us from it. No, there's a protection there, yes, but we have to mingle with it to learn what we must learn. We have to live in it to learn the things that we have to learn. If we're taken away from it, taken off to some planet, taken off to some remote island somewhere, taken off to Ambassador College... You know when I was at Ambassador College I was in an area of protection, it was almost a little fake in one respect because of the age we lived in. And then if you go back out in society there's this abruptness, but it was healthy, it was good, it gave you a taste of what things can be like and more of what some things will be like in the future when everybody's of the same mind, everybody you come in contact with day in and day out, of the same mind, the same values. It's a beautiful thing! But I grew more in the world. Does that make sense? I grew there in learning and understanding of certain things but I grew faster and grew more by experiencing the world, by living this way of life and seeking to prove, like we read in that scripture earlier, you apply, you live this way and you reap the results of it, you become more deeply convicted of God's way of life.

He said, **And for their sakes I sanctify Myself**, He set Himself apart for a special purpose. And everything He ever did, all through His life He sanctified Himself, set Him apart for holy use and purpose always in His life. There was no other thinking there, even to death, although He asked God "If there be any other way..." Because He was still in a physical human body.

**And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.** That's what sets us apart as different, not just the 50 truths. That definitely sets us apart. We know we were scattered. It sometimes boggles my mind to look at certain things out here and to see the body that's been scattered out there. And some of the most basic things, like I brought up in the last post, that they can't acknowledge, that we've had an apostasy, and because of that those who have any thinking at all in that, believe that things must be much farther up the road because they have to become much larger than what we ever were in order to have an apostasy that's bigger, so it can be called 'the apostasy'. And that's a horrible thing to not understand!

I don't care which of all those truths you want to look at, the greatest has to do with how you live toward each other and how you think toward each other, truly does. How you *talk* to each other, or how you talk about, or should not talk about each other. You watch your words that come out of your mouth when you mention someone else's name and you talk about their life and how you talk about it? You have to be careful that you're not condescending, that you're not judging, the expectation that's *more* than what God says it should be.

**And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they might be sanctified through the truth. Neither do I pray for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word;** What a beautiful thing that this gets to be passed down generation to generation, and except for the sluggish time through Sardis, and then God had to inject life back into it by calling Mr. Armstrong and the things he did. But there is nothing more exciting to me today than to see new people whom God calls that are able to grow and you're able to have fellowship in different areas from time to time with those whom God calls; and that's an exciting thing of being able to share the truth, that they believe the same thing, that they come into the same mind, that you're able to discuss things, that you're able to discuss, to me, some of the most exciting things, of the process of how God calls you and draws you and the marvel of that miracle that takes place when your mind is opened up to the truth.

**Neither do I pray for these only, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word:** that there's nothing more exciting than sharing God's way of life, and we get to do it into eternity in time with one another.

**That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us:** again, it's how you live! God is not concerned about doctrine. With Jesus Christ, if you understand what I'm saying, it's not a matter of what He just knows and so for us, it's great that we know what we do, it's great that those things give us boldness and strength and confidence and so forth, but it's what you live, it's about the Family. It's not about human family either, because you see, human family is filled with things that are not good. We learn that, don't we? And those are the things we have to battle! Jealousy, envy, whatever... things that happen.

I'm going through some things looking back at Abel and Cain and you think, "From the very beginning! Why Cain did what he did?!" He became jealous of his own brother! ...and they had everything! God gave them *everything!* They had everything before them, a kind of world, a beauty that you haven't

seen – because you see, over the few thousand years the world has gotten worse and worse and worse through time, and even though they had to go out and till the earth and the ground and so forth, the world was so much better at that particular time than what it is by any measure today. Incredible! And so we learn that human families and life and what we experience in this physical life, even within the Church, we still have selfishness and we experience that. And God wants us to understand that so we can reach out for something better, for something greater when that will never exist because we see those things hurt, they cause sorrow and suffering and pain, and so we reach out for something better – the truth, to live the truth toward each other, love toward each other.

**...that they all may be one in us as You are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.** What a profound thing, that in time people are going to come to a greater conviction of what is true and right just because of the Church. You need to think about that one.

**Verse 22 - And the glory which You gave Me I have given them;** what glory? *What* glory? The truth, the mind, the spirit that is able to grasp that mind; and that's what we have through Jesus Christ if you read the rest of the story, which we'll cover on Pentecost.

**And the glory which You gave Me, I have given them so that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one...** What an awesome thing! Never jealousy, never envy here, never a desire to have something more than what is there because there's nothing more there. God gives us everything.

**...I in them and You in Me that they may be made perfect in one;** so we're perfected. The more we become at one with God in unity of mind and spirit, and yes, we're tested and tried in those things, in doctrine first and foremost as to whether we are 'at one', whether we agree, whether we're in unity, but you're really tested when it comes to your relationships and your relationships within the Church, within the Body. **...I in them and You in Me that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them,** now that's to that love... **and know that You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.** It's about Family, it's about relationships. We get tired of hearing that sometimes – family, relationships.

I wish I could do things better. I wish I'd done things better. I wish in my own family, in the Church of God, that I had done things better. I wish I could have loved more. I wish I could have said more often, "I love you" to my own children. I'm learning to do that more and more all the time as I grow, to tell those things more often. People need to be told those things in the family, "I love you." It's hard for us to do sometimes as human beings, truly is. I grew up and was raised a certain way and so to me one of the most exciting things as far as affection and a show of love, one time was just to shake my own father's hand – in the Church, once we were in the Church. See? The things we grow up with sometimes in life and learn and have to grow in to come to better understand.

And that's why Mr. Armstrong talked about how it's going to take three or four generations to get rid of so much of the way of this world and to live better toward one another. Our ability to show love, our ability to communicate love – it's a difficult thing for us as human beings. There are times I wished I have a far greater ability of communicating with people. I have a battle in that just as you do. You find it easy every time you come through the door of talking to each other all the time and knowing what to talk about, knowing what to say? I find it challenging, I always have. And some probably think, "Oh, it

just comes natural.” Yeah, right, well... the better you know me the more you know that’s not true, yeah. We all have to work at it. We’re human beings and we have weaknesses!

We grow in learning how to express those things to each other as time goes along, and that’s what’s exciting about God’s Family. We’re getting closer and closer to that and we’re going to be able to share this more with the world. And finally when we get rid of this stinking, filthy world out here and begin to set things right, the ability to express love, in a right way toward each other, in a balanced way, in a sound way, in a true way, it’s a very beautiful thing and that’s what God’s desire is for us because God’s love without all the human entrapment of selfishness, ‘lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’ is a beautiful thing. And that’s what God is helping us to get rid of, be perfected in His love.

I marvel! This subject is such a profound subject if we could only see it. I’m very inadequate in being able to convey it, to express it. God gives me what He gives me but it’s what He gives to you through the power of His spirit to receive what you’re able to receive that counts. That’s what it’s all about. Certain words are able to be spoken – I wish I could speak more, in a better way, and I’m limited in what I can convey, thank God, because it’s really God’s spirit that does it in the first place. And so He gives to us, wherever we are in our lives, the ability to receive spiritually what is being said and to be moved by, in a profound way, just like these verses here.

How many times have I gone through John in the Church of God? How many times have I gone through 1 John 4? I have been through this so many times I can’t tell you! I love them! I love what it says here! I find it *dumbfounding* that John is the one whom God gave more to, who lived the longest of the apostles; that some of the others *never grasped* what was given to John and what he wrote!! Do you know that? That Peter, James and others didn’t *grasp* because it hadn’t even been given yet, what John wrote here in the book of 1 John. Things about love, agape, and a soundness and a balance in a few chapters, in a few words that are so powerful, they truly are, and yet God waited until a particular point in time, a moulding and fashioning of John to bring him to this point to be able to give this through him. And I am so thankful these things are written there, truly; they’re profound! And every time I go through it I learn more.

Chapter 4 – how many times I’ve read this and every time I go through it I learn a little bit more.

**1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:** You know who this is written for? For the Church, not to the world. This has *nothing* to do with the world... ‘try the spirits’. And so this is an awkward thing in some respects and in some respects it’s not, there’s wisdom, there’s perfection that we can grow in, in astounding ways through understanding what’s written here. And love to be exercised in profound ways because of things you see and can perceive that others may not; but you have to deal with it properly before God for what you do see.

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:** Is this from God or is this from human nature? Does this reflect something that’s coming from God or something that’s coming out of a human being because it’s just human nature? There is that divide there and we have that within us. Paul said we have this struggle! And not everything that comes out of us is from God, not everything that comes out of us is inspired by God’s spirit, is it? It won’t be until you’re born into the God Family, and then everything that comes out of you will be a result of God’s spirit, of total absolute unity and oneness with God. As long as you’re in this human body you have imperfections that we conquer, seek to conquer and overcome and we seek to grow in perfection.

So it says, **don't believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many...** this is a biggie... **false prophets are gone out into the world.** It's an awkward translation. I've learned more by going through it this time than I ever have... '**false prophets**'... 'Pseudo' is the word here that's used, 'false or lying' prophets... which has to do with inspired speaking. All of us, once you are brought into God's Church, through the power of God's spirit, whenever you ... and in our conversation with each other and things we discuss, hopefully there is that which as we yield to God more is a matter of what comes from God than from us. There are times that you are very inspired by some kind of conversation you get into, perhaps discussing something about a sermon or something you've heard or something happened in your life that week or something that happened to you that you learn a lesson from and you're able to share it with somebody else – whatever it might be. Things that happen to us in life, things that we see happening in the world and God is inspiring us to be able to see it, because the world's not seeing what's going on out there. Some people see certain things and they're getting mad over it to various degrees, but we see things and a picture of everything fits together and why.

And so God is telling us, *within the Church*, that there are some things that are not true that sometimes have come out of others. Now, because of the length of time I've been in God's Church and because of what we went through, I've seen this magnified thousands of times. Because the Church is smaller today you haven't seen that very much – thank God – and yet God puts you to this charge to be wise in all relationships, to love with God's love, but to be wise in life. And so it goes and gives admonition. God is getting the Church prepared to go through the next 1,800 years - 1,900 years, and so things are written here to help the Church through what is coming through time. Now we're getting close to the end-time and different things are affecting us and so forth.

...**they're gone out in the world**, this is better translated **many false prophets have come forth out of the world.** It's not a matter of going *into* the world. God call us! This message is to the *Church* and it's about those who are in the Church, and there's a test here that God is saying that we are to live by in our lives in how we think and what we judge and what we discern that's either from God or not from God, and He's saying this is within the Church. In the world it's easy! Something that's Protestant, something that churches teach, we know that's all a bunch of gobbledegook and trash and fit for the garbage bin and everything else that's out there. That shouldn't be a battle, although it became a battle for the Church by the time the apostasy came around because of the Protestant spirit that was coming into it. But as a whole, for people in God's Church it should never be a battle.

And so it's an admonition here, a warning of what's coming out of the world into the Church. It's awkwardly stated here because how do you translate something into English that you don't understand? It was difficult. I can't comprehend why... well, I can... these things are translated into English – that's why the world doesn't see so much of what's out here, they can't because it takes God's spirit. And so this admonition is being given to the Church about that which is true and that which is false and things that would take place in the Church through time. Would to God we could have seen these things throughout the period of Philadelphia and on into Laodicea very clearly so, but we didn't and we couldn't as we should have.

And so again, it's more correctly translated here that **many false prophets**, speaking of what comes out of us, of what is spoken and inspired...that there are some things that aren't inspired by God, that it's pseudo, it's false, it's not of God's spirit. Sometimes it's a matter of someone's ideas and opinions and thoughts and things that conflict with the truth and the way of God that aren't in agreement and unity

and oneness. And that's what this is all about. Its being able to discern that difference and being wise in understanding what all this means and what the admonition is here.

Goes on to say here in **verse 2 – Here is how you can know the spirit of God:** now, I've heard this so many times, I read it long before the apostasy, I believed these things before the apostasy but I wasn't as sharp as I should have been when I went through the apostasy, to be able to pounce on certain things that were taking place, because you'd ask certain questions... "Oh, no, no, no, we're not going that way, we're not teaching that..." So there's a lot of cunning sometimes in this false stuff.

**Hereby/here is how you can know the spirit of God,** in other word that which comes from God's spirit, **Every spirit that/who confesses that Jesus Christ is come/is coming in the flesh is of God:** So again, we've gone through this many of times. It's awesome what it's saying here though! And so it's showing by how you live, by what you live, by what you say that comes out of your mouth, either shows that it's coming because Jesus Christ is coming in you or not. That's the bottom line of what it's talking about here. It's not having anything to do with past tense about Jesus Christ coming or anything in the future tense about His coming, His returning to this earth. It has to do with His coming into your life – present progressive as we've talked about in times past. If you're not cut off from the spirit because of sin Jesus Christ is living in you, He's coming into your life. This is what it's discussing here.

**Every spirit who confesses,** acknowledges by what they're living, that it's *evident* that Jesus Christ is living in them; everyone who does this **...is of God.** 'Confesses' in the Greek word here is a compound word '*homologeō*' [*homou* - *logos*] which means 'one or the same Word' – Logos. It's like the word Logos. Logos was God, the Logos was made flesh. It's the Word. 'One Word,' the *same* Word. Awesome what it's saying here. Confesses? It's what it shows, whether something is indeed '*homologeō*'. A lot of my preaching has consisted of the need to be of this mind – the same mind, the same Word, the one Word - to be of this. And the point of all this is that either we are doing this, living this, or we aren't. Either our actions, our words, everything reflects that, or it doesn't. And this is *exactly* what we're being told. I never knew that word was there until now. I didn't know that's what it meant till now.

And so again, it's something that is sometimes translated 'to acknowledge or to admit, to agree, to speak the same thing'. There are things of God's spirit that reflect whether it's coming from God, coming from Jesus Christ, whether Jesus Christ is in it or not; and it's really so simple, so basic and we'll come back to that in the next sermon as we continue on.

So just a little bit to think about, to meditate upon as you go through some of these verses and think about what it's saying here, because it really drives the point home the more you learn. Isn't it amazing? You add just a little bit more to what God has given to us, and each time it drives the point home more and more and more, and as you will see in this particular context of what it's talking about, *it's all about the ability to love one another, how we love one another.* It has to do with *our actions* that speaks a whole lot louder than anything we know up here in our mind.

~~~end