

Thought I'd mention that Laura and I truly appreciate the quick response from the vast majority of the ministry who have contacted us by email so quickly here. That's encouraging to see it happen so fast because I know that probably not everyone has even received it yet. This concerns a new program of communication within the ministry that an email went out on Friday about that. And as we've gone along here I see even more clearly by all the responses there why God had us do this, led us to start this new system here. It's encouraging and exciting.

But I'd like to also quote a little bit from what one minister had to say in a response because it spiritually sums up quite a bit of what was said in that email that went out to everyone. He was talking about various things here and then he stated that he felt he was trying to cram ten pounds of inspiration into one pound of email as he was talking here about some of the response. And so I told him about one section that I'm going to read to you in a moment here, but I told him it really hit spot on, exactly why this was sent out and so forth, some lessons, all kinds of lessons we can learn from various things, but I thought this was very good in that respect. I told him it was a little bit like a parable and very much spiritual in nature, as it captures much of what this program is about. So I said I'd refer to it as the parable of the ten into the one pound. Anyway... that's supposed to be funny. ☺ I thought it was funny, hopefully he did.

But the individual, in response to recent sermons, was praying about a desire to see more, as so many commented about their desire to see more and learn, just like the last sermon was encouraging everyone to do, about various changes we can make in our lives and so forth – and then stated this. He says here:

“...but when I read your email last night I saw the definitive answer to my prayers. God the Father wants us to strengthen our relationship, not just with Him but with all of God (Elohim). Prayer is not the only way to talk with God. We can also go to His Temple(s) and talk with those servants that dwell there with God and Christ, and build our relationships with them. We need to; these relationships will go on into eternity.”

And I thought that was very well put because that's what it's all about; it's about relationships, family, and what we can build up while we have those opportunities.

Anyway, I'd also like to make some comments about some of that program for everyone that was sent this, but in the new program I'd like to say that if both the husband and wife are ordained it isn't necessary that both of you send back an email in response to the new program, but if both of you would like to do so that's fine too, and maybe on occasion you could kind of switch and take turns doing it too. So whatever you want to set up is fine.

I would like to ask everyone to please try to use the new email address. Don't get it confused with the Church site – that's different. It is a specifically new email address that's set up for this purpose...but also I heard that some people had some problems getting their email through on that address. I don't know why exactly but please try to use that new one that I mentioned within the context of the letter that was sent out to everyone; that helps me keep better track of what's taking place and what we're setting up. Other emails, fine in other areas, but this is specific to what was sent out to everyone.

Also, if you happen to discuss various things with us by telephone or face to face, things that you might otherwise put in the email that you would send to us, obviously there is no need to do that in a particular month. So, in other words, if you have contact with us and we're discussing various things there is no need to follow up with that email, that you've already done your part in the sense of communicating. Oh, and please understand as well, that with so many coming in on a regular basis you will likely not get a reply all the time, or very rarely.

~~~~~

There is a scripture in the book of Hebrews that a person can read, and if they're not careful they can tend to equate it with experiences in the world, to how we as humans act, react, and live in our relationships, in our families and in that which we have witnessed in other families. That's just common to human life and it's here in: **Hebrews 12:6 - For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.** Now, the use of such words in human experience likely does not leave a correct, sound, or balanced view, reaction or feeling about such a statement. It can sometimes seem kind of strong and maybe because of our experiences we don't take it in the light of what God is really saying. So, we've just gone through a period of time that has not been easy for God's people, but the overwhelming vast majority – and I mean overwhelming – have come through this, and I have to say, in flying colours.

I can't help but as I especially go into this sermon today, to be able to say that it's been a very pleasing thing in God's sight. That doesn't mean we always instantly, when something happens, have the perfect, the correct response. We are not perfect. We are not correct yet. We're growing. But it's *how* we go through it that counts before God. And so we go through a process and how we go through it is what is important to Him, how we respond on a spiritual plane, how we deal with our emotions, our feelings, our trials, our whatever it is that's hitting us, and to seek to do it in a godly manner when it's all said and done...and that doesn't mean it has to happen within the hour, or within the day, or within the week, but it's a process sometimes we work through and some have gone through different kinds of processes, if you will, during this period of time.

But again, I'm very deeply moved by that when I think about this particular subject and looking back, especially as we're going to look back a little bit here and then go forward, as to what this means to God, because I know what it means to God. It's been a very, very meaningful experience – His people and how they've responded, because God does the moulding and fashioning. He brings us to certain points in time, He moulds and fashions certain things within us, and then there is that response that when it's said and done, of the fruit it carries with it, that bears as well.

So again, to me this has been a beautiful thing to witness in so many respects. One part of it that is not... I'll wait on that part there because I think it comes out in the sermon later on; I don't want to get ahead of myself. But there are always difficult things too when we go through major trials in God's Church where some don't address things as well as they should have and that's another part of the story here as we go into this a little bit later.

But overall, a beautiful thing to witness, and that doesn't mean, again, that we haven't had to experience pain and suffering, correction, frustration, hurt, attack from others, etcetera, etcetera, because that's a part of it sometimes.

So today indeed we are going to be *blessed* to put everything into perspective in the way that God wants us to see and to understand this complete experience more fully spiritually. Last Sabbath we concluded

the twelfth sermon since 'the day of the Eternal' began; that's counting Pentecost – and I am so deeply encouraged just by the number alone. So often I go back and look at various things, just like I have for the Feast this year and see the things that God has done, how He's led us, where we are, where we're going, and to me it's always an awesome and an inspiring thing. And this to me is inspiring because it reflects upon the very thing we've gone through and why we've gone through it.

And so again here, the number twelve, because we've had twelve holy convocations, if you will, one yearly and the others are weekly Sabbaths. It's the number for perfection; a number for perfection just like the number seven is for completeness, like the Sabbath, the seven day week or the seven thousand years in the way that seven is used in scripture. Twelve is a matter of that which is perfection, that which is perfected, like the twelve thousand times the twelve, the 144,000, the twelve, if you will, gates of the Temple and so forth, the three on each side, and on and on it goes.

This obviously does not mean we are perfect, but God's work in us through this period has been perfected in what He has done in and through us. And that's what we need to see. We ended this period of time last Sabbath with a sermon entitled 'A Reasoned Judgment', and each of us was encouraged to reflect on all the previous messages, including those given by the evangelists, and seek to understand what God was doing *in* us, for all those sermons came from God's inspiration and given through Jesus Christ to us. That's how it works. And although we've looked at, each of us in that respect, each of us individually was to look at this and address this on an individual basis more fully in our lives, to see and understand more fully our stand, that we are to stand firm and to stand fast in God's way of life, in His truth. We've not focused on the one primary reason we have gone through such a transition through all these things through this period of time that ended with May 26<sup>th</sup>, beginning with May 27<sup>th</sup>, *why* God has taken us through this period of time in the manner that He has and what we're to come through and understand through all of this.

So again, today's sermon, if you want a title, is *Love that Transforms*. Because God has poured out during this period of time His love upon us in the most powerful and profound manner, and that's where He's taking us to today, to understand this.

So, let's turn over to Hebrews that I mentioned earlier here, that I quoted this at the very beginning, because we truly need to embrace the great truth that God wants us to understand concerning His great love toward us. And that's what this is about. God moulds and fashions us. He has love that we don't comprehend and we tend to deal with things in the terms of human love and our experiences, and that's why I mentioned this earlier, reading a verse like **Hebrews 12:6 - For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives**. When you think of 'scourging' and how it's used in the Bible, it doesn't carry with it a pleasant thought, and yet that's talking about God's love. And so we need to understand this in the light of what God's giving to us and in the context of things we've gone through and understand His love – not in human terms - but understand God more clearly, more fully.

**Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore seeing we are compassed about**, and that means to 'be surrounded', **with so great a cloud of witnesses**, and if you go back and look through the previous verses it goes through and talks about all the various ones through time, what they've gone through...God having us look back through time at all those who have gone before, the trials, the hardships – and so often that's a healthy thing too, because when you do that you realize we have it pretty good. We have a fan up here, we have air conditioning, pretty soft seats, relatively so... ☺ ...and ease of travel, and the things that we have to get here today and to leave, and the food and so forth, the plenty that we have, and the ease of getting it, candidly. We have it pretty good compared to so many who have gone before us, and

candidly some of the things they had to go through was far more severe than what we've had to go through.

And so again, when it says here, **Therefore seeing we are compassed about, surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses**, what they witnessed in their lives, what a witness of 6,000 years before us, of what people have had to go through as they live this way of life, of how the world treated them, of what they had to live and the environment in which they were able to grow, to be moulded and fashioned; all those who lived by faith.

It says, **let us lay aside**, a word that means 'to put off' **every weight**, whatever weighs you down, those things that tend to weigh us down. We've been doing that as we've been looking at some of this. That's part of the review last week, was to look back and look at some of those things that sometimes weigh us down. ...**and the sin which does so easily beset us**, words here that have to do with 'to easily encircle' or 'surround us'. We're very weak as human beings, and the more we grow the more we comprehend the human mind, the selfishness of the human mind and that battle that Paul speaks of that we have to engage in, that we are thankful for the inner (as Paul put it) the inner man, the truth that God gives us in the mind, but we see this war...and it is a war in our members, in the mind, in the life and how we react to so many things by habit, by nature, because we are selfish by nature. It is the way we are in our human makeup and God made us this way for a purpose, so that we can learn these things.

So this is the area, our arena of life, to learn these greater lessons, and a contrast between God's way and our way, or the selfish way, and to make choices. It's an awesome process that God takes us through to transform. That's why the sermon today, 'Love that Transforms' – to understand that, of how God works in us and the power that's there to change us.

And it goes on to say...**and let us run with patience the race that is set before us**, that's a sermon in itself, to run it in patience. We don't tend to be very patient as human beings, we want things quickly and this learning in this life – I think of so many of the comments from so many of the ministers writing in and talking about this process, especially those more newly ordained, in that respect, learning that the growing never stops, you're ever learning just in that area of life alone, let alone when we're called we're ever growing. You know, this... ever how long we're in this human body it's a process of *always learning, always changing*, always addressing things about our nature, always addressing things about that which we want to hold onto and embrace about God's being and God's mind and God's way and the choices we make in that process. And that transformation of the mind – what an incredible thing – the transforming of the mind.

I don't want to get side tracked here but I think of a type of butterfly. I'm going to tell it anyway because I won't get anywhere if I don't tell you about it. Somebody sent me a thing here recently on the Monarch butterflies, and the reason I'm going to mention this is because if you know the process here of the word, what it means to 'transform' in Romans 12 there, it's the word 'metamorphoo', which is metamorphosis. It's the process of the changes that take place in cocoon life and so forth all the way to something that ends up being a beautiful butterfly and the awesomeness of God's creation there. And we can be in awe of something very physical that God has created in physical life, and we need to be in far more awe of what God is doing in our lives; the transforming of the mind so that He can give it a spirit life, age-lasting life for eternity, into eternity, things we can't even begin to comprehend. But I'm going to stop and tell you about this so you can be in awe of that and hopefully be in even more awe as you think about the word 'transform' and what God is doing in us.

I think I have this right, and I may have it partially wrong, but I think this all takes place within a year's time. Most of us know about the Monarch butterfly that leaves Canada and starts a journey that goes all the way down into a specific region of Mexico, in a forested area, and they go to that same area year by year by year. And so they start that migration which takes them about nine months to do and in part of the story here they talk about how they took some of those Monarch butterflies, captured them in Kansas, and took them over to the Washington, D.C. area and let them go. And sure enough, they get back on their migration path. God has it built into them. It's absolutely awesome! ...that they can get back on course, fly back around – they're able to track them, they have little things they put on them and are able to find them later or find them in route, and they're able to make a history then of what they do and see a pattern.

Anyway, it takes about nine months to do this. Then they go down there and they die and more monarchs then come along from that and they start back north, and they go about thirty days into the southern part of the United States and they die. The next group goes another thirty days up into the northern parts of the United States and they die. The third group goes another thirty days all the way into Canada and they die. And the last bunch, the cycle starts all over, and they live nine months to make it all in one trip all the way to Mexico. And you think, what an awesome thing that God built this into, as a part of a process that... something that happens generation by generation by generation, the marvel of God's creation.

That is dumbfounding. When I saw that... just dumbfounded by it. It's a marvel enough that they make the migration like they do and they go to the exact same spot; but those that have never been there, that's where they go, in the fourth generation. They come back, head back down, that's where they end up. Awesome what God does! How much more awesome for us? ...of what takes place in our minds as God is transforming our mind to be different than what it is with selfish human nature. And as we come to understand His kind of love more and more, to understand how He works with us, that becomes more a part of us, the more we see it the more we understand it the more it becomes a part of us indeed.

And so God is encouraging us to look at these things, of what others have done as they've gone before us and to run with patience. It is a race, and it's a long one; and sometimes when you think you're at the end we find out there's a little bit farther to go. 😊 That's a tough thing. I think of poor people who run some races, because I'm one of those poor people, when you used to run races about a quarter of a mile or 400 yards, 400 meters around a track, and the longer it is, if you lose count, and you've lost count you maybe think you're on the seventh lap when actually you're on the sixth and you have more... anyway. But again here, what an incredible story here.

**Verse 2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him,** so it's always about Christ. Christ is always the focal point of everything that God is doing from beginning to end, and always going back are things to learn about what He went through, and this is a part of that process. **He is the author and finisher of our faith;** everything works through Him, **who for the joy that was set before Him...** the joy, the vision of what He had. We all have understanding as we've come along and come into God's Church, and we're ever growing in that as we mature, and God helps us see more and more what is up ahead. Just like things in the Millennium, I try to think about some of those things that individuals are going to do – couldn't help but think about it today and some of the different ones that had contacted us by email here, and thinking about their lives and what they go through, what we all go through and where we're headed. But again here, that process of what we live through in life and individuals, of what they may or may not do in the future as they grow. I was

thinking about, what an awesome thing it will be if we have opportunity to work with different ones who live on into that age physically, and for those who are changed spiritually, what an awesome thing to continue to watch individuals to grow and be a part of that growth. To me, that's exciting!

And this is a part of the vision that God wants us to have, about Jesus Christ and the vision He had. Now, He had one so far beyond what we can have it can't even be compared, candidly, because of the life that was in Him from birth that grew and matured and that mind that was His and this vision that He had. And so it says here about the joy, the fullness, the richness of life. And candidly, the richer life is, of what we see ahead, the clearer that vision is of where we're headed, the easier it's going to be to run that race. That's what this is all about! The more determined you will be to run the race and to finish it. And we need that; we need to have that kind of vision.

**...who for the joy that was set before Him**, in other words, that vision, that strong belief of where (for us), where we're going, **endured the impalement of a pole, despising the shame**, in other words, the word here literally means 'to think little of', or '[to think] lightly of'. That wasn't what concerned Him, what other people thought about that, because the history of those things, especially at that time, of those who were impaled, the shame that was to go with that in things that are said about that even in scripture and so forth that went with that and how others looked upon it...it didn't matter, that meant little to Him compared to what He knew it meant in the end. And that's the focus we need to have, because we receive a lot of that in our lives. As soon as you come into the Church relationships change and people think or talk openly about you or behind your back or whatever, about what you're doing, and that's a part of it.

And so again here, 'to think little of that' in comparison. It doesn't mean that much in the scheme of things. It's going to be there, it's just the way it is because of who we are. **...and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Therefore consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself**, the word here, 'contradiction', means 'gainsaying' or 'opposition'. And we all have to experience that. I think of the scriptures that talk about us entering into the sufferings of Christ – there are things we're to learn (not to the degree He did), but to learn through a process, that that's the only way we can learn it, is by what we suffer, by what we enter into and understand this goes with the territory. It's a matter of something, as it says here, about all who went before – witnesses. *We're all witnesses*, and God has even magnified that at the end-time, what it means to witness, the witnesses.

**Therefore, consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.** Become tired, weak, give up, just get tired of the battle. I've seen that over and over again in God's Church. And it's not that we don't go through battles, but the important thing is that we go through it! The important thing is that we *learn* through what we suffer through, through what we experience and continue fighting and continue going forward. To give up in a race... what value was it to start? Why begin? Why begin anything if you're not going to finish it? And so *especially* with this way of life, God gives us *awesome* opportunity! I was thinking about that the other day (I've got to be careful to stay out of sermons for the Feast), but thinking about our calling and just to grasp that, to grasp what God has placed before us. We really can't do that! But sometimes we need to reflect upon it, to think of all the billions on the earth and God has called us to give us an opportunity at this time? I don't know that we can really appreciate that to its fullest extent – I know we can't – but we must try and think about it and dwell upon it and understand the awesomeness of what God has placed before us. But to truly grasp it in all that it means? We really don't. One day we'll be able to look back and grasp it; and as we grow we're able to look back and grasp it more fully anyway as we grow.

**Therefore, consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds.** You never give up; you keep pushing forward no matter what happens. Things you're proven to yourself, you *keep going forward*. And sometimes you don't know where forward is until it comes to that point in time and then God shows you and then He says, "Move forward."

**Verse 4 – For you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.** I think of that process; there is something so real in someone's mind, of what was going to take place, of what He was getting ready to experience, that in praying about it He perspired and droplets of blood came out because it was so real in His mind of what He was physically going to experience. And none of us are able to do that but He did, and it's making a point here none of us have gone that far, haven't even come close to it. You want to give up? Something so real in your mind you want to quit, you don't want to go through something, something so powerful in your mind, and yet you continue to go forward? He did.

**Have you forgotten the exhortation;** so a question follows here – **Have you forgotten the exhortation;** it's a word that means 'encouragement' or 'the comfort' **which speaks unto you as unto children;** so it's about encouragement and comfort, as unto children; **My son, do not despise,** the word means 'lightly esteem'. **Do not lightly esteem, or esteem lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint,** and literally here means 'to grow weary' **when you are rebuked of Him:** Words have a lot of meaning here and sometimes it's good just to focus on some of them. But again, **to not lightly esteem the chastening of the Lord,** to understand how important it is, that there are things that happen in our life, but in a unique way when it comes to God and how God does it and what God does in our life, and to always have that in the forefront of our being. To understand that everything that God does is motivated by love, outgoing concern, a kind of love we can only imbibe of, or experience at times on a spiritual plane, because it comes from God's spirit, it is a spiritual matter. We don't have it all the time, we don't experience it all the time to its fullest.

So again here, **Do not grow weary when you are rebuked of Him;** our life is one of change, our life is one of correction, if you will, our nature, our being, our mind has to be corrected. To be transformed means it has to change, which means a correction, a course correction on a regular basis because there are things in us – not just a few – that are just wrong, because we're motivated, not by God's love, we're motivated by selfishness - basically, that's the way we are – and things of pride where we don't want to give up various things.

The word 'rebuked' here in the Greek is a word that means – beautiful word because it's used in different areas of scripture, we'll look at some of those as we go along here – but it says 'when you are rebuked of Him', the word means 'to expose' or 'to convict' or 'to reprove'. All those words in the Greek language is what is contained here. 'To expose', in other words to expose something... It's like the gold being tried; sometimes by going through what we do the gold is heated up and the impurities come to the surface and then we can see it. Before that we can't see it until we go through fire, and then we see it, and then we have to make choices as to what we're going to do, whether it be in ourselves or even in the Body, of how God has us address those things.

But again, 'to convict'; so something about something when it's exposed, it's a matter of a process in our mind of becoming convicted. That's the way to change, you have to become convicted. It isn't just a matter of saying, "Because God says to keep the Sabbath." In time God wants us to become convicted of the Sabbath, it's not just a matter ... it is obedience, everything starts with obedience and an attitude toward God, but in time there is that which changes in the mind where we begin to *understand* the

Sabbath and all the other laws that God gives us, we begin to understand why He said things as far as relationships with Him, a relationship with Him and with others, why He has given us various laws, and we become convicted of that, that that's the only way. And so it starts with obedience but in time we grow in understanding and in time it becomes us, more and more it becomes us.

And then the word 'to reprove', a part of correction in that respect. It's talking about the process whereby God reveals to us sin that's in us, as to 'expose' and 'to be convicted' and then the process of 'reproving us'.

Another place where this is spoken of... **Ephesians 5:8 - For you were sometimes in darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** And so again, all these examples that go throughout scripture and so forth about changes that take place in our mind and what God draws us out of or what we were in before He begins to work with us, the inability to see the truth, and then finally light comes, the truth comes into our life. And He says, **walk as children of light**, in other words, in the light, and that which comes from us is a matter of – because it's a matter of obedience and how we live our life and it has to do with the truth, the word of God – all a matter of light.

**Verse 9 - (For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)** Awesome scripture! The fruit of the spirit, that which... there is something produced in our life as a result of God's spirit working in us; has to do with **all goodness and righteousness and truth**. We become stronger in these things, we become stronger in how we live, that which is a matter of goodness in how we live toward one another, a matter of righteousness, right thinking, a right mind, being right with God because of how we live, and always having to do with the truth.

**Verse 10 - Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.** So again, it's a part of a process; to prove something means you have to do it over and over and over again until it has been fully proven in your mind and in your life and something has taken place where now you know. Knowledge is one thing but you continue doing something after a time and then it becomes a part of you and that's a process of proving, doing it again and again and again *until it is you*, and proving that it's right, proving that it's the truth.

**Verse 11 – And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**, and therein is always the battle, because that's our human pull, that's our human tendency. It says, **have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather 'reprove' them**. That word again, 'to expose', 'to convict', 'to reprove'. It's a part of that process of what God wants us to address spiritually in our lives, to be thankful when something is exposed, because we aren't always thankful, it's not a fun thing when God shows us a weakness in our mind, in our being, in something that we haven't addressed well in our life. And oftentimes the trials we go through are the very things that bring it to light, that expose it and take it out of the darkness, because until then it's still hidden in us somewhere, and yet God takes us through this process over and over.

And we go through a lot of things in our life – in your spiritual growth you go through a lot of things where this happens regularly – but there are times where it's magnified many times over by a major event in God's Church. It's been that way ever since I've been in God's Church. Some major event will come along that will try you to the core of your being! I oftentimes go back to 1969 and onward with the different things that happened in the Church and different ones who left at different times – Pentecost, and before that the book Mr. Armstrong came out with, 'The Incredible Human Potential',

and people starting to say, “Well, he’s saying we have an immortal soul.” All the stupidity of things where spiritual understanding wasn’t there all along the way.

And so again, those things are the things that have shaken God’s Church. And as we went on in time greater shakings took place, and that’s a part of what Matthew 24 talks about, the shaking, the earthquakes, that which shakes the Church to the core of its being sometimes. And we’ve gone through those at different points in time, you know what they are...and we just went through another one. But *how* we go through it, that’s what’s important – how we go through it and what happens by the end of it all. That’s why I love that we’ve had twelve sermons to bring us to this point today. Incredible!

So it goes on to say, **verse 13 - For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light:** it’s what happens, God... that’s exciting when you understand it because when something comes along that shakes, especially the Church – there are certain things that happen to us individually as we grow and times we’re shaken and we’re able to come to these things that happened on a spiritual plane, but when it happens to an entire Church, the entire congregation, because the same event has come about, again here, **all things are reprovèd/exposed**, brought, if you will here, **made manifest by the light**. In other words, it’s a growing process; it’s seeing something more clearly. It’s the ability to draw closer to God, that’s what the light is about here when it talks about ‘walk as children of light’ and ‘you were sometimes in darkness but now are you light *in the Lord*’, and you *grow* in that, that light that you’re able to see, that light that’s able to be reflected in you because of knowing, because of understanding and the next time something comes along or different things come along periodically you’re able to help others.

Sometimes an individual might be weak in a particular area or down or whatever it might be, and because of something you have experienced you’re able to give them those words that help them get back on track quickly, that help them to address what they need to address and get back on course quickly. I have been so encouraged by some of the things I’ve heard different ones say and different ones they’ve had conversations with, and because of those conversations individuals quickly turn and begin to see and begin to latch onto what was here before us and to embrace it, whereas before they were being pulled in a different direction and negative or down. You know, God’s spirit is infectious if we yield to it! And God’s desire is to feed us and to strengthen the Body, and when those things happen it’s a powerful affect then upon other’s lives, and that’s what it’s all about. It’s about being there for them; and the more the light the less of trial and difficulty there will be for people.

But there are some things you can’t grow in, you can’t have certain light until its God’s time, and then He gives that to us. It’s a transformation of the mind and drawing closer to Him.

**...for whatsoever does make manifest is light.** And so *any time* we go through hardships and difficulties and something is exposed in us that isn’t always pleasant to see, understand something very positive is happening in God’s Church in your life, because that’s what it’s all about. It’s about the transformation, and that doesn’t come easy, but it is a matter of God’s love and how He works with us because we have to change, we can’t stay this way, we have to become different, our minds have to come into greater unity and oneness with God. *That’s* what it’s all about! We have to be transformed; the mind, and doing that is not an easy process, it’s *always* been difficult. For 6,000 years, anyone who’s gone through it, it’s been difficult. I’m thankful for those who get to come along during the Millennium because it’s going to be made easier. It’s kind of like pioneers and going west; we’re the pioneers. In the past 6,000 years, all those who have gone before, and we’re getting ready to go into a new age to make it so much easier for people, and then the Great White Throne, that’s even far richer, far more exciting, but they’ll

be able to see it easier too, because they have lived in it, they've already lived in it, they know. When those are resurrected they already have that experience of seeing the ugliness of the world, as a whole. There are some that are babies that never experienced it, but anyway...

**Verse 14 - Therefore He says, Awake you who sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.** Always an admonition to not let sleep take its toll, to not let down, because if we begin to allow something to drift like Laodicea, that lukewarmness, if that begins to come into our life...and that's a battle...and the next thing is sleep, that's what happens, and then if that comes along... anyway, those of us who have been around for a time since the apostasy know what that's like.

**Verse 15 - See then that you walk 'circumspectly'**, the word meaning, 'with exactness'. Strive to walk with exactness in your life...and we can't do that, candidly, you'd have to have God's help. That's why we cry out to God, "God, I can't do this. I can't walk that way! Help me to walk that way!" ... **not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time**, and how much more – this verse has meant more and more the closer and closer we've gotten toward the end of the age. That means buying up the time, using time wisely, making the most of it. And that's been really the encouragement that God's given us right now during these last twelve sermons that we've had, a matter of recognizing where we are and recognizing a change indeed that we need to make, to make *sure* we do it better now, that we *grow* through this process and that we go forward *stronger* than what we were before. We have that opportunity to actually draw closer to God, and overall that's *exactly* what has taken place. It's not easy, but in time, if you don't already do it now, what would you exchange it for, for what you've been blessed to grow in? What would you exchange the experience for?

**...redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** Always a desire to know what God's will is, to draw closer to Him, to understand what He's doing and why He's doing it. Because when you're in God's Church everything happens for a purpose and for a reason, and the *timing* is always so important as well. We can always learn from that – *always!* There is always something that God will show us, because God's in charge! Even during the apostasy God was in charge, but He allowed it for a reason, for a purpose, and what has come out of that is incredible! ...and how people will be blessed later on because of that is incredible! And so the hurt, the pain, the suffering – even for those who've been asleep for a long, long time, even for those who have to wait another thousand years. Sometimes it's hard for us to grasp the value of it all when it's all said and done; because when it's all said and done it's about being in God's Family, it's getting from here to there for as many as who will respond to that calling, for as many who can be worked with as a part of that process. And God knows how to do it the most powerful, the most effective way, and that's what we're experiencing.

**Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine,** so it gives this context here, analogy, if you will, contrast, **wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit;** in other words, you can have too much of that which is alcoholic but you can't have too much of God's spirit, that's the point. There's no excess of God's spirit, you can always grow more and more and more and draw closer and closer to God and be filled more and more with His life, and that's what it's about, again here.

Let's go over to Hebrews 12 again. **Hebrews 12:6 - For whom the Lord loves He chastens,** you know, when God began to call us He loved us, He wanted to share something awesome with us, and in time God's desire is to call everyone. Not everyone is going to respond because there is that element there of choice and there are those who just don't want this, just as much as Satan chose he didn't want God,

he didn't want God's way of life. And there are human beings that are going to choose they just don't want what God has. It's not them, they don't want it. But as a whole, again, we continue to go forward and that which will respond will respond, but always understanding that God's love is always out in the forefront there, it's all about what God has planned from the very beginning of time so that we can all be a part of something for eternity.

This word here 'chasten' is a Greek word that comes from 'child'. It's literally what it starts with; it's a word that means 'child', the word it's taken from, and it literally means 'to train a child'. So the word 'chasten' here, to even understand that in its context helps to better understand something here because if you just read it for what it says – **For whom the lord loves He chastens**, but if you understand how He views it, how He wants us to see it as well, that it's like training a child. And yes, that has various forms of correction at times, but again, it has to do with one's child and the delicate manner in which you deal with your own child in life, or we should want to, we don't do that very well as human beings either, we learn from that too. But to be able to recognize God's desire even more so for us because we are weak in those things in life, and by the time you've learned many of the things it's too late because you had your chance. We're ever growing in human life and that's the difference between grandparents sometimes and parents, and so the cycle continues on in life. So, we're ever learning as human beings, we truly are.

But God is perfect in how He deals with us and what He places before us. And so it's this manner of a word here that means, 'to train a child', which does involve correction; **and scourges every son whom He receives**. Now, the word 'scourges' does come from the word that means 'a whip', 'a scourge that is used for punishment'; it carries with it the meaning of punishment or afflictions, but not in the context we normally look at as far as human beings are concerned. God metes out judgment according to the specific matter that must be judged, and He always does it out of love, totally always for our good, totally always as a matter of giving, whatever that is, whatever that involves, with mercy and righteous judgment, and we learn that through time. We *learn* how merciful God is. The longer you're in God's Church and the more you come to see yourself – the more you grow in spiritually seeing yourself and seeing more your true self, your nature and your motivations in human life, to come to grips with, to grasp and understand that the physical part of you is selfish. It is just the way it is. We are selfish. Call it what it is! And we have this other part that we can yield to that is not selfish, that comes from God, and that affects every relationship we will ever have in God's Church – always-always-always. It'll be a part of something that reflects every relationship we have with God and with one another. It's always going to be a part, depending on where we are in that process, of what we see and what we have changed, what we have been blessed to be able to transform in, in that respect, as far as the mind is concerned.

But again, the more you grow the more you come to understand... And I've had a lot of people write in and tell me those things, about how they have learned that, especially in the past year, how merciful God is to them. It's an awesome and powerful thing to see, because the more you become convicted – that word 'expose' – God exposes our selfishness, He helps us to see a part of Him and how He deals with human beings that we don't tend to do as humans. We tend to mete out judgment and sometimes not in a very merciful manner. We tend to be more harsh in our condemnation toward others. And God doesn't work with us that way, to me it's always mercy first...mercy first. God is so merciful to us. And the more you really come to grasp that, how merciful God is when you are a part of His calling, when you're a part of the Church – the more you come to see that and understand that the more you'll begin to live by it toward others – the more merciful you'll become toward others. And if we don't, then we're not growing in the way or being transformed in the way we should be. So it is a process we go through. But candidly, the more you grow in understanding God's mercy, because you're the recipient of it,

through time you're going to become more merciful to others. That's how God's spirit works, and it's a beautiful thing.

And so again here, God metes out judgment according to the specific matter that must be judged and He always does it out of love with mercy and righteous judgment, always righteous judgment, and it's always with the purpose of deliverance. God wants us to receive deliverance; deliverance from sin, from Egypt, from suffering, from war. That's what He's taking us out of and leading us to something fully different, and it's for the purpose of being delivered to receive blessings. God wants us to be blessed. God wants to pour more blessings out upon us in life, but we get in the way in different things and so He's merciful and gives us mercy and is very patient with us.

God has a desire to give us blessings beyond what we can even begin to grasp. That's why we're going to this scripture next, 1 Corinthians. We're going to take away a lot today if we can grasp what we have gone through since the end of May 26<sup>th</sup> and the whole process of things that have led us up through twelve specific sermons that brought us to today, because this is what God wants us to see. He wants us to see that which is in Him in a very powerful way, of what He's doing anyway in our lives, but He wants us to grasp this matter of His love toward us and that He is well pleased, because He has brought us to this point. He has brought us to this maturity, which is an exciting thing to God.

Have you ever built something and you stand back and you look at it and you're pleased with the finished product? I used to do some shingling working my way through college and I got to the point where I'd be driving down the road and I'd be looking at roofs and see how the guy before me did the job, and think.... And if I did a shake roof especially, there is something about shake roofs I loved, and when I got through with a job like that with brand new shakes on a house, to me there was nothing more beautiful on a house, except they're kind of a fire danger, a fire hazard, so a lot of places outlawed them anymore, but those real thick shake shingles made from cedar are beautiful.

And if you've ever been a part of building a house or anything of that nature and you stand back and look at it when it's said and done, or even to go in and take a room in a house and paint it a different colour, to do the things you do, fill up some holes, and then you stand back and you look at it and you're pleased with it.

How much more can we grasp God with us as He's brought us ever how long, ever how long you've been in God's Church, whether it be a short time or a long time, and as you grow to certain points – and especially when you've gone through something major. And we've gone through some major things in our journey, we really have. Since the apostasy? Now that was a major one, but all along the way, the major things we've gone through, once we've gone through it and God working with us as we've gone through those things – because God has always been moulding a people through all of this process.

And to understand that God wants us to grasp and understand Him and His love – we are what He is building! We are the work of the construction that *He* is *fully* doing, He and His Son! They are moulding and fashioning things in us! And so to stand back after we've gone through something of a certain magnitude, even more so, and to see a completed product is a *very pleasing thing* to God. And that's why as we've been going through a lot of this, coming to this sermon here, that's what I've been saying, because God's been giving it to see it, that He is well pleased with His people and what we've come through.

Some have chosen other things, but there's a process there too of God's love; and difficult as some of those things are, still a matter of God's love and how He works with us in our lives and how He works with the Body purifying, cleansing, *strengthening the Body*, the Church of God, *making us stronger!* ...and especially if we understand where we are, see what is yet to come, and if we can grasp more fully the kind of spirit and attitude that God wants us to have as we go through it, then indeed we are very blessed, we truly are.

**I Corinthians 2:9 - But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them who love Him.** And God has to bring us to the point to where we can even love Him. He calls us out of the world – or if we grew up in the Church He begins to draw us, give us that opportunity to continue on and to learn and to have a relationship with Him that's between us and Him, that we're able to share with a Body as well. But again, what God has prepared for those who love Him...we don't even begin to *grasp* what He's prepared for us and what is ahead for us until we come to some of this and come to understand His love. **...for them who love Him.** And the more we learn to love God and respond to God in that kind of mindset, the more we embrace Him, the more we embrace the Body, the more we see what God is doing in the Body and in the world and it becomes more and more exciting, and frankly, the more God can use us in life – because He wants to give more and more to us and through us.

**Verse 10 - But God has revealed them unto us by His spirit:** so a powerful thing that works in our mind, in our being, through the power of His spirit and done continually on a regular basis through time. **...for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For,** again, scriptures like this we know here, **what can man know about the things of a man,** the physical things around us, **except for the spirit of man which is in him?** So the ability to understand physical things in the world around us. **But even so the things of God can no man know except by the spirit of God.** Neither can we know the love of God save by God's spirit. And this is an opportunity to come to even understand that in a deeper way, in a stronger way when we grasp what He's doing and what He's moulding and fashioning into our lives – and it doesn't come easy! We have to go through a lot to get to where we're going – by design!

If it had feelings, if you looked at a piece of marble and you're going to make a sculpture out of it, you're going to sculpt something out of it, you take the chisel and a hammer to it and you're knocking off pieces. If it had some feelings it wouldn't probably feel so good, if you were that rock. And we're very much like the rock and we have things chiseled away to become something that when it's all said and done is beautiful, awesomely beautiful before God, a part of His Family. But to get there we have a lot that has to be chipped away, constantly being chipped away. And the more we yield to that process the more we grow, the more refined we become, the more awesome the experience in time, the end product. And always things that we need to learn about God.

So again here, **Even so, the things of God can no man know except by the spirit of God.** So again, those things that God gives us spiritually to grasp, to comprehend.

Let's go back here to **Hebrews 12:7 – ...if you endure chastening,** I love this word! God uses words, inspires words to be used at times that have such incredible meaning. I think of some of the Feast sermons that I can't get into, and some of the words we've already looked at through time. Some of the meaning of words of places like along the journey and so forth that God has taken us, and some of the meaning of some of the things there are so profound, they truly are. Words have meaning! I think of 'PKG'. I think of Worldwide. I think of different things God has inspired at different times to have greater meaning to us of what He's doing in our life.

**But if you endure**, it's a compound word – in other words, it's made up of two words, and it means 'to remain under'; If you endure, if you *remain under* – that's a choice. Because I've seen people choose, they couldn't remain under it any longer, they couldn't endure any longer, the chastening, the process of what we have to go through and understand why. Because it's about change. It's about the mind that has to change. And obviously it's not going to be an easy thing, but **if you remain under**; in essence even bring yourself into subjection to that... There may be things we want in life... I can't help but think of different ones who have not endured for different reasons, because they couldn't have certain things in the world that they didn't want to let go of and in God's Church there are just some things you can't have and continue on the course. You either cease and embrace what God offers or we give it up.

And **so if you remain under chastening, God deals with you as with sons/daughters; for what son is he whom the father does not chasten?** It's not a matter of male or female here; it's a matter of being children of God and that which we are willing and desirous to receive – especially coming from God! ...especially when we see the big picture, because we grasp we have to change, we can't stay the way we are. That's what the word 'repentance' is all about, a *change* that has to take place in our thinking, constantly agreeing. No matter how many times you repent for *the exact same thing*, you keep fighting the fight because you're agreeing with God that He is right and you are wrong and you are weak and you know it! And that's why you continue to pray to God, "God, deliver me! I can't deliver myself from these things, my mind!" ...certain things that will *always* be there in our lives, and you just keep fighting and keep agreeing that God is right. That's what it's about – and each time you do you're growing in character; after a while it just becomes who you are. Because you will never be perfect in this human life, you *always* have to repent. You will *always* have to repent in this human life. There is coming a time when you no longer have to repent - ☺ - looking forward to that one...when the change takes place, when finally you don't have the pulls of human life because you're not in a human body anymore. As long as we are that part will always be there, but we become more refined through time, we grow spiritually through time so that God can indeed give us a different body, a different life, that which is spiritual, no longer physical. And to understand and to see the process and why it has to be this way and can be no other way – to embrace it.

**But if you are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers**, Nobody is the lone ranger out here when it comes to having to have course corrections. Sometimes, especially because time is short, and especially within the ministry; others as a whole, we're given more time in some things, sometimes candidly we just... You know what God does in our lives so often? He gives us – primarily on the Sabbath – He gives us the truth, He gives us His way of life and He backs away. He doesn't make us do it. He observes, He watches, certain things He'll work in our life, in our prayer life most obviously especially, but He lets us make mistakes and it's a matter of how we respond to Him, to what we're hearing. And we've been striving to incorporate that more and more as God has helped us to understand the importance of it, to do that within the ministry more and more, that we strive not to insert ourselves into people's lives – because you see, that's not what God has called us to do as a whole. We didn't understand that as a whole in Worldwide, we didn't grasp that in Laodicea as fully by any measure – that it isn't anyone's responsibility to insert themselves in someone's life.

There are times when we are to go to a brother alone, that's a unique matter, but it has to be done God's way. But again here, what an incredible thing to understand that there are things we go through, that there are things that have to be addressed in our lives, as it says here – I want to read this again, **verse 8 – But if you are without chastisement, whereof we're all partakers**, in other words there's correction we all have to go through, and as I was getting ready to mention in part of this, is I think of some of that which is in the ministry, of individuals who have repeated that back and talked about

recognizing what they're going through. And sometimes lately I tend to, especially within the ministry, to give more direct correction if there is correction – but it's not meant to hurt, it's not meant to be harsh in any manner, it's just a matter that, "Hey, you need to look at this and this is the way to do it – walk you in it." ☺ It's not meant to hurt it's meant to help so we can all do a better job, and then it's forgotten unless we don't make the change....and then I may come knocking on the door again, through email, and that's less intrusive.

But again...and slowly but surely in life we change, and in the ministry we change and we learn, but there's this process here. This is how God works with us – not to hurt, always to help, and the reason I'm mentioning this is sometimes people come back with...and it's like they have just been beaten up something furiously by something relatively light. And I understand that, but we have to grow beyond that obviously, and not be that way, and to realize we just simply make the change and we keep going forward and be thankful for it. But we don't have to apologize profusely and beat ourselves with a whip until our back is bleeding – that's not what God wants. He just wants change and we go forward, and that's God's Family, that's God's love. It's just the way it is, not a matter of looking down on anyone, not a matter of keeping record, keeping track, it's just that we change and we go forward.

Just like what's happened the last few weeks – it's done – we are here! We are stronger, as a whole in the Body, the vast majority of the Body is far, *far, Far, FAR stronger today* than it was before May 26<sup>th</sup> – spiritually! *Because* of what you've gone through – truly – the lessons that are learned, the confidence, the strength, the boldness of certain things that I've had repeated to me over and over again by so many. To me it's exciting because it's something that couldn't be learned any other way, we wouldn't have it any other way, it wouldn't be in us any other way.

**But if you are without chastisement, whereof we're all partakers**, that's why everyone needs to understand, you're never the lone ranger, we all have sin, we all have problems, but as soon as we address it and we go forward it's gone. God doesn't remember! He doesn't keep track of things! I don't keep track of things! We don't keep track of things! It's *done*, it's *over*, it's *behind* – we go forward. See, that's the difference between us and the Israelites, we have that blessing in our life that we can do that and we're able to do it. He says, **if you're not partakers then you are illegitimate and not sons.**

**Verse 7 – If you remain under...** what we explained here in the very beginning, **if you endure or remain under chastening.** I just want to repeat this again here in verses 2-3... that's why I have them written down here. I just want to repeat this quickly again, you can follow along...

**Verse 2 - Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured/remained under the impalement of a pole;** Knew what was coming, knew what was going to take place, knew *exactly* how He was going to suffer. He knew the scriptures in Isaiah that said by the time He was beaten His countenance, His image, His body, if you will, what people would see would be so beaten, so marred as far as what was going to...the beating that He was going to take, people wouldn't be able to recognize Him, and some of those descriptions in Isaiah are very, very descriptive indeed of the kind of beating He was going to receive. He knew that, and then He knew when it was all said and done He was going to have nails driven through His hands and through right around His feet area, together, on a pole, and it wasn't going to happen quickly it was going to happen over a period of time.

And so again here, that's what the word is it uses here, **for the joy that was set before Him He remained under the impalement of a pole**; He willingly put Himself through that knowing the end result of it all.

And we have to go through trials in our life and have that kind of a vision, that kind of understanding, that we're willing to go through whatever it takes to get to wherever we're going, to suffer whatever it is in this world because we have to enter into Christ's sufferings. There are things we can learn that way that we really can't learn any other way, which is a matter of a spiritual change in our thinking in growing closer to God and understanding the greater purpose of what God is doing and embracing it.

**...despising/thinking little of the shame, and set down at the right hand of the throne of God.** So it says, **Therefore consider Him who remained under**, see, again, **such opposition of sinners against Himself**, and so what do we do? May 26<sup>th</sup> comes, we understand, and we're going to remain under some opposition out here and some other things that are going to come our way now – we understand that - and so you just do it because that is what God has trained us for. He's trained us to be able to go through this, to do this, *now* in a way of this magnitude because this is far greater, what comes our way now by the world, by others, is far greater...but we have been moulded and fashioned and prepared for this and to have that kind of vision that we continue to remain under and understand it's for a *great purpose* that this is a part of what we go through because this is still a part of a witness. That's still what we're living in a final 'day' here.

Going to Hebrews 10, we were in 12, let's pick it up here: **Hebrews 10:29 - Of how much sorer/how much more severe punishment do you suppose will be thought worthy, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done 'despite'**, the word in the Greek means **'insult' unto the spirit of grace?** So I think of some things that we sometimes go through, some go through and don't go through it right, don't go through it well, and what they bring upon themselves, and it's not a light thing by any measure. But it's talking about things that Christ has gone through and we understand we're to enter into His sufferings and *we keep going forward!* This is how we learn!

**Verse 30 - For we know Him who has said, Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense/I will pay back, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people.** Those things are in God's hands, all of our lives and what happens in our life.

And it goes on to say then, **It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** Not to live, not to respond to God properly, and to ignore or to refuse or to fight against. But as we look at the Body, as a whole, indeed, powerfully so, God is well please, truly is. To me, I'm inspired by it. I'm inspired by all the letters I began to read on the very first day all the way through, and it's inspiring to see, because you know what I see in things that are said? I see what God has done – that's what God has done. He has moulded and fashioned these things in us that weren't there before to the same degree or to the same level. It's like going on to another plateau of growth, and that's inspiring, especially when you understand the only way it comes about is by what God has done. God does the moulding and fashioning; it's His building, we're a part of His building, and when you step back and see it in that perspective it's a beautiful thing, it truly is....and God is well pleased as well.

**Verse 31** again, **It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which after you were illuminated, in other words, brought into the light, you remained under**, that same word, 'endured', **you remained under a great fight of afflictions.** That's why it's so

important to never, never, never forget the beginning process of how God works in our life, or as we begin to learn this in our life, of what it means, that as our mind is opened more and more to the light, to the truth, and we continue to remain under, we endure a great fight of afflictions, because the world isn't so pleased with you. You know, your employer isn't always so pleased with you when you come and ask off for the Feast of Tabernacles, or if you're just coming into the Church and all of a sudden you have to make a change – you realize this can be it, I'm not going to work on the Sabbath anymore, I'm not going to work after sundown on it. And if you live in some of the northern regions of the world like in Great Britain, as an example, and sundown on the Sabbath is middle of the afternoon on Friday, that's when it hits (a weird thing, you get that far north and the sundown), and you've got to go tell them. You know, it's not as tough down here because we're a lot farther south. London is what, a hundred and some miles, if you were to go across, north of Winnipeg, Canada, equally so, if you went across from there – a way far north. And so their sundown is a lot different than ours.

And so for us it may not affect us but a few Sabbaths in the wintertime – usually it's around 5:00pm and afterwards, if they'd quit messing around with the time! But to go tell an employer that, and people there that know that and they have to still come in, how do they always feel? I had people that used to be (found out later on especially) some were not well pleased that I was getting off on the Sabbath or that I wouldn't come in for various things at times for when the company – especially this one company, they had inventory that they did on a Saturday, and I always, to them, got off, and they didn't like that, they hated it.

And you find out later on why some people treated you the way they did. I learned a lesson back then too because one individual, one of the supervisors came to me one time and talked, he said when I was leaving, going with another company, he said, "I just want you to know I've always respected that," he said, "that you kept your Sabbath." Had no idea he felt that way. Sometimes we don't realize the affect we can have on some people's lives and what that might mean in a later time. We just don't understand that. While others we receive, most of the time, is that they don't really respect you too much and they're not very happy with you.

So, that's what it talks about, we 'remain under' the contradiction, this attitude of the world around us. So a great fight of affliction. So whatever it was that came your way, whether it be relatives and so forth, the fact of how they treat you and the like, it's not easy, but you remain under it, you don't quit.

See, I think of, especially, when we went up to one area of the country, during Worldwide still, and at a time toward 85-86', in through there. We were getting bombarded with visit requests and so forth in the Church, a lot of exposure and so forth. I think of different ones we went and visited. I think of different ones that were so sharp of what they had read to that point in time, now they were wanting to come to services, but they were so sharp as far as things they had been reading, that if they'd come into a club environment, speaking of 'Spokesman's Club', they would have been a challenge to those who had been around for all twelve speeches before – they were that sharp. And yet I think of individuals, had different reasons of why they couldn't make the step of coming on along, because of a mate, or because of a job, of something they just couldn't address but they were being drawn, they were being called, their mind was opened up to the truth but they couldn't continue on, they couldn't 'endure' or 'remain under' this we call a great fight of afflictions. Because you're going to have this *all your life* one way or another; and especially in this end-time we've had it in a big way because of what we believe, more than any other time in God's Church.

That's why it's a pleasing thing to God, because the more that you have placed yourself under, the more you have gone through, the more pleasing it is to God that you have done it well. Not always perfectly, but you came to the point where you determined you were going to continue fighting that fight and doing what you had to do, because you weighed it out.

**Verse 33 - Partly, while you were made a gazing stock**, that word means 'a public spectacle'; that's what happens oftentimes. Whoever knows you, it's like being made a public spectacle. All your family knows what you're doing. All the family knows you're not going to keep Christmas anymore, you've told them, "Don't send me anything and I'm not going to be sending you anything." ...and this really helps to nurture physical human relationships in families... They really take that well don't they, all the time? So we learn that people don't like what you do. So while you're made a public spectacle, both by reproaches, the word means 'harsh words'. Sometimes the things people say to you because they *don't* like what you're doing, they *don't* like what you're doing to the family or in the company, or whatever, and sometimes people just lose jobs over it because they're not going to tolerate you, even though they say that they don't do things out of religious reasons and so forth.

**...and afflictions**, the word means 'tribulations' or 'hard experiences'; literally that's what it means. So both **by harsh words, or hard experiences, and partly while you became companions of them who were so used**: so chose to join in a fellowship with those who have suffered the same thing. What an incredible thing, that's what we do, we choose to be in a fellowship of people who go through the same thing and we embrace it. What a beautiful thing! It really is beautiful!

**Verse 34 - For you had compassion on me in my bonds**, that's a joyful one right now, imprisonment, **and took joyfully the spoiling/the plundering of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Therefore do not cast away your confidence**, and that's what God is moulding and fashioning within us, a confidence, a boldness. I hope you all feel that way, but so many that I talk to, so many who write, speak of a boldness and a confidence they have now that's stronger than what it was before – and that's good! ...that's good.

**So therefore, do not cast away your confidence which has great recompense of reward** – always looking to where we're going and where God is leading us and for what purpose, why He called us in the first place. **For you have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God you might receive the promise**. And so much of what we have been going through right now has been focusing upon that, the promised land, where we're going, what it's about. That's the vision, that's the focus that God has had in front of us now in a very powerful and very strong way because of where we were taken and what we are now to focus upon even more fully about where we're going.

**...that you might receive the promise. For yet a little while and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry** - no longer delay. I got a charge out of one email here that was sent where this one individual made comment about how that during some of this period of time here if they heard any grumbling or murmuring or complaining they were going to tell individuals, "I don't want to hear any of that, I don't want to be here another forty years." ☺ So, a good thing to remember sometimes – no murmuring, no complaining, we go forward.

Let's go back here to Hebrews 12:9. All of this following the chapters on faith there, about those who have gone before, to realize we continue on in the same footsteps and to recognize, God wants us to grasp and recognize and understand what it's all about. It's about His love, how He works in our lives –

that change isn't easy, and what we have to experience in life, and we just do it, we just keep going forward and that's what's pleasing to God.

**Hebrews 12:9 - Furthermore/After all, we have had fathers of our flesh,** physical fathers, **who corrected us and we gave them respect: so shouldn't we rather be much more in subjection unto the Father of spirits,** spiritual Father, in other words; so it's using this analogy here – if we've done that in a physical way in this world, shouldn't we do that much, much more in a spiritual plane with God, with our spiritual Father, **and live?** And the implication is in 'learn how to live'; that's what it's about, and learn how to live.

**Verse 10 - For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;** it's a bit awkward in the English in this translation in the King James here, but Phillips is one of the best translations for this that I've seen on this particular verse where he gets really more of the intent of what's being said here, **'For our fathers used to correct us according to their own ideas during...'** and isn't that the way we are as human beings, **'...during the brief days of our childhood.'** See, that the way we are as physical human beings, because we don't know God's way, unless we come into God's Church, and when we come into God's Church, even then we don't do it perfectly ever-ever-ever. We're ever growing in it.

**But He, for our profit,** again, another compound word here that means 'to bring together with', with Him, to become at one. It's beautiful in what He's saying here. Compound word meaning 'to bring together with' – in essence saying 'with Him', with God, that's His desire, to bring us together with Him, of His mind, of His being, **'that we might be partakers of,'** literally means 'to share in' **'His holiness.'** That's what it's all about, and we know that, but sometimes it's just good that we focus upon it and be reminded of it, of what God desires to share with us. It's about Elohim. It's about being in the God Family. It's about what we have to go through in this physical life in order to become literally a part of that spiritual family in spirit, in spirit bodies. Right now we're there, like Mr. Armstrong said, in embryo. We still carry a lot of baggage with us because we're still physical, and there are a lot of battles that go on.

**Verse 11 - Now no chastening,** and again here, a word for 'training', 'discipline', 'the rearing of a child'; **Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous,** no child enjoys that, being chastened, being corrected, because they want something different than what you want to give them or what you feel they should have, or whatever it might be, and so to go through that. We have to think about ourselves and what it means when we go through various things and we don't jump up and down when we come to a point in time where we have to address something, where God heats up the gold and the trial brings things to the surface and we see it and we see some things in our self that sometimes, well, the reality is whatever it is we still have to address it, but it doesn't mean we jump up and down for joy, because there are things that have to do with hurt and pain and suffering and things you go through. Getting rid of self, there is some hurt, there's some pain, and there's suffering in that, and a lot of swallowing of pride through time.

So again, **No chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous:** in other words, at the time it's happening – grievous, in other words painful for the body or the mind, because it is; **nevertheless afterward it yields,** gives up, gives back, as the word means here, **the peaceable/peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.** Beautiful way this is expressed. We have a choice and if we yield ourselves to that process, then at the time it's not fun to go through but afterwards we're able to look back and see what's been produced, to realize the struggle and the hurt and the suffering was so worth what we went through that we can't even compare it. That's why I love some of

the scriptures that talk about what are you going to compare it with... maybe I should go there if I can find it quickly. If I can't find it quickly we won't go there...

I went to the one at the end of chapter 8; there is another one I know someplace that even says it more succinctly, but this here makes a similar sort of comment when it talks about, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ..." and maybe there's an expression before that I'm just not catching. It's like, what can you compare what you're going through, what is worthy to be compared to what you're going to go through – and it's the same sort of expression, "Who is going to separated us from the love of Christ..." No matter what we go through. Anyway, that's not exactly what I was looking for, so much for that one.

**...nevertheless afterward it yields/gives up/gives back the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised, thereby.** And even that Greek word is a word for 'naked' and it means literally, 'to exercise naked, to train'. It's to do with training, and sometimes that's a part of what we have to go through on a spiritual plane and what we have to open up before ourselves, before God. God sees everything anyway, but how much more if we indeed willingly open up before God and let that change take place in us and recognize it doesn't matter what's exposed, it's better for it to be exposed so we can repent and change. And if we can repent and change before that that's even better! But so many things that are exposed reveal things in us that hopefully our desire is and selfish human nature is that nobody else see it, just us, and then we can repent and change.

But sometimes it's seen by others and then that puts another twist, another light on it and then we have to deal with that part of our physical human nature as well because we know that others have seen it and how they think and how they feel...and you have to deal with those things in the mind in a right response toward God and understand things on a spiritual plane – that it *really doesn't matter* – you repent, you go forward, *that's* what matters. It's the product of what God produces that counts. And if anyone else misuses that then that's their failure, that's their failing, or shortcoming. So again, a choice here to be exercised thereby to yield ourselves to the process.

**Verse 12 - Therefore lift up,** a word here that means, 'to strengthen' or 'restore'. **Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;** the unsteady knees or the weak stance in standing. I love these words, how it's used; a weak stance in standing. We go through a lot of different things sometimes and sometimes when we go through those things that are humbling by nature, learning how to enjoy a little bit more itchy sackcloth, to recognize the benefit of that, the reward of that, the blessing of that, that it's a whole lot better to have that than it is which feels good, because if something feels good in physical life, in this physical life oftentimes, and it's comfortable, if you get comfortable in your own situation oftentimes it means that we're falling asleep or that we're getting sluggish or lukewarm and that's not our life. Our life is not always comfortable – *change* is not comfortable, and *humility* is not comfortable. Pride is really what's comfortable with us, because that's a protection for the self, and that's the thing we *really* want to get rid of. Itchy sackcloth is the *best* thing to wear, truly is, because in that we can grow.

Beautiful scriptures here; **therefore lift up,** to strengthen, to restore the hands that hang down. Sometimes we go through, even when you go through various trials or chastening or whatever, if you're not careful you can feel really, really down. God doesn't want you to feel down, He wants you to get up and move forward – you're in a race, run it! We can't get in a position where we begin to feel sorry or bad about what we're going through or sorry for self. That's a part of carnal human nature. Just get up and get going again, *lift* up your head, **lift up the feeble hands and the weak stance and the shakiness**

**of the knees and the legs**, as God says, and start running the race again! Don't let the other get you down! **...and make straight paths for your feet.** Beautiful verses here, 'straight paths for your feet', the way you're walking, the way you're living – make them straight, the straight and narrow that God gives us to live. And frankly, the more refined we become the more at one with God we become, that's going to be true in our life.

**...lest that which is lame**, the word means 'maimed as in an unacceptable sacrifice' – **let that which is lame**; you can't stay in a lame... in something... God doesn't accept that which is lame in sacrifice. When you talk about an animal He will... That's something we saw in Egypt, the animals that were being used are the weak animals, the animals that have broken legs. (Do you remember some of that story?) It wasn't the healthiest of animals they were using for their 'holy' service, their 'holy day' type of services – it was several days in a row there, I can't remember the name of it now, they weren't putting them on an altar but they were killing them and so forth and then handing them out to people who didn't have as much. It was like a celebration, a festive time for them, but what struck me was the animals that they were dedicating for this supposed religious service, that they were the weaker, the lame animals – just the opposite of what God says should be given to Him, when it comes to a matter of the Old Testament and sacrifice. And so, God doesn't want us to be that way ourselves, so that's why some of these verses are given here when it talks about correction and chastening and things we go through, and it's like understand why we go through it, God's love and God's mercy in it, and we get up and run, we run the race, and do it with confidence and boldness.

– **make straight paths for your feet**, make the change; if something is crooked along the way, if something isn't straight like it should be, then fine, make a course correction, put the past behind, it's the past, it's forgiven, it's gone, move forward, **lest that which is lame be turned away/out of the way; but rather let it be healed.** The words 'let it' isn't even in the Greek there, it just means, **but rather be healed.** It has to do with us, each one of us in our response to God; just be healed, be healed spiritually. That's what God desires – a part of growth is this process of being healed, the mind becoming more at one with God. That's the process we go through in life, of being healed.

**Looking diligently**, in other words we contemplate upon it, that's what the word means, **looking diligently**; it has to do with thinking, just like last Sabbath, the reasoned response we have, thinking it through, seeing what God is doing, learning from the lessons. **...looking diligently lest anyone fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;** because those things happen too, those are the things that aren't as pleasant when they take place.

Let's turn back over to 1 Corinthians 11. You know, in the last past twelve weeks, if you will, the past twelve sermons, God has given those things that have perfected a work that He's been doing in us in order to equip us far more fully for what lies ahead. That's what it's *always* about, but especially now because of where we are and where we're going. And as we've examined ourselves through this period of time and yielded to God's moulding, growing stronger in His spirit, we can now move forward, and that's what this has been all about from the very beginning – *we move forward*. The past is the past, it's behind us, and we're stronger now, and God wants us to move forward in boldness, in strength, in confidence, in His love, to grasp that as the focal point of it all.

So again, some instruction here regarding the taking of Passover; **1 Corinthians 11:26 - For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup**, so we read this every Passover in services, it says **you do show the Lord's death until He comes.** So always being reminded of that, recognizing, understanding where our journey begins and how we continue in it as well. **Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and**

**drink this cup of the Lord**, as it is in an **unworthy manner**, so there's a manner in which God wants us to address it beforehand and as we do it, and candidly throughout our lives, **shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine**, the word means 'to test', or 'to prove'. It has to do with a confidence we're able to grow in. As we go through these things too there's actually a confidence and a boldness we can have once we have gone through this and we see how we have come through it on the other side.

You know, to examine ourselves means you're going to find things that need to be changed. Repentance is not a bad thing, it's a beautiful thing before God if we do it His way; we repent and we move forward and we leave the past behind. Repentance... the reality is we have sin! The reality is we have to repent! We have to continually go before God and ask for forgiveness of things we do wrong...and that's a blessing, and it's a beautiful thing that we have been given. The Israelites didn't have that – we do, and that's how we're able to move forward. And God wants us to see that and understand it's a matter of His love and what He's given to us.

So it says here if we do that in an unworthy manner, **shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine/put to test/to prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgment/condemnation to himself, not discerning**, again, a compound word literally meaning 'to judge through as to discern, to distinguish in judgment'; reasoned judgment, that's what it's about. I marvel, we've just gone through that and we're told to do that as part of what we're to do in looking at the previous sermons and what brought us up to that twelfth one; and God wanting us to understand now what it's all about. It's about His love; it's about a love that He's pouring out upon us, that we have the relationship, a strong relationship with Him: and the message back to us, He's well pleased. He's well pleased with how we've gone through it. Do we have changes to make in growth? Absolutely! But we've come a long way, we truly have, and we've gone through something very difficult in a very successful manner, when it's all said and done, because that's what repentance is about – it's about addressing things and moving forward.

**Verse 30 - For this cause**, for those who don't, when this doesn't take place, it says, **For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep**. That's what led to the apostasy, the losing sight of these various things and not being able to see what God was doing in our lives and beginning to lose that vision in the Church and not grasping, not seeing what was taking place as far as the lukewarm spirit that began to enter in and how dangerous that is.

**For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep**. It used to be looked upon that this was only to be taken one way and that is that people die. Yeah, we're all going to die but this is spiritual in nature in what it's talking about, to become weak spiritually, to be sickly spiritually, to be asleep spiritually.

**For if we would judge**, and again, this word here, **to judge through...if we would judge through ourselves, we should not be judged**, in the sense of being condemned. **But when we are judged**, when God does intervene in life to judge, to be directly involved in that matter, **we are chastened**, a word for 'training' again, 'as a child'. So we have to go through those things from time to time and sometimes we have to go through it as a Body. You know why? Because God prepares us for it! All the major events that happen in God's Church, God has allowed by design. It's a part of what He's moulding into the Church, for lessons to be learned through time... all these things that have happened in the Old Testament... I sometimes am just... we ought to be dumbfounded with stories that are here, over and

over again, and a lot of them, candidly, written for the past 2,000 years and the farther we go along the more it's about us, because as we grow closer to God's Kingdom coming to this earth, and to the Millennium, and to the Great White Throne being established, more and more this book applies to us. And the lessons of things that have happened to us in times past were designed for the very purpose of teaching us – just as we've gone through and talked about the forty years in the wilderness. That was by design! God had the intent, of knowing from the very beginning what they were going to do. It wasn't something that just happened!

Like Adam and Eve, and God is hitting Himself in the forehead, "What am I going to do now?" And it's like taking them out of the land of Egypt, "Oh no! Look at their response to Me freeing them! Now what am I going to do? Well, I guess another 39 years will teach them." Duh! There were things there to be learned by design that are *inspiring* to us, of how God has a plan to mould and fashion something on a spiritual plane...and it is awesome, it is dumbfounding. The more we grasp what God is doing and see the overview of it all, of what it does in our lives, it's such an incredible thing, it truly is. It's more than we can drink in, candidly, and we can only drink in to the degree of where we are and what our relationship is with God at any moment in time. But with all it should be very inspiring and very uplifting and very motivating...and all a matter of God's love. Incredible!

**...that we should not be chastened with the world.** So that's God's desire. If we are chastened as with the training of a child, which has to happen – and there are various times this has to happen because this is where God brings the... It's just like the Sabbath. How often people talk about how that, "This is what we were talking about this week." Or "This is something I went through this week, and then here is a sermon on it. It's like you had a microphone in the room or something, listening." It's just that God moulds and fashions us and prepares us together. That's what's an incredible thing to understand!

I remember times past when people used to go from one area to another visiting or whatever, and they'd come back and say, "Well, what was your sermon?" "Same thing." And it's like they must be communicating with each other. No, it's just how God's spirit works. If He's moulding an area or a group of people there is that which He moulds along the way to lead us in the same direction in teaching us some of the same things.

So it says **...we're chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world.** That's what God's desire is, along with the world. And I think, what a horrible thing if anyone gives it up along the way – and that happens. It's been that way ever since I've been in God's Church. To give something up somewhere along the way, to be condemned with the world. What does that mean? Does it mean it's all over with and you're going to be dust? As a whole, no, but it might mean the Great White Throne. To be condemned with the world, that you've been given an opportunity but you're not going to have it now or you're going to have it in the Great White Throne.

Let's turn over to Revelation 3. So again, there is only one way in which God chastens us, when looking at this word that means 'for training as a child', discipline, rearing of a child, and always for a specific purpose, to bring us to change, to a transforming of the mind. That's what God's desire is; He works with us to mould and fashion, to change our thinking and the way we think.

**Revelation 3:16 - So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,** so those of us who have been around since the apostasy, we lived this, we experienced this. **So because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot,** which is always a warning before us, don't ever let yourself get to that, and if things have happened in the past now is the time, more than ever, which I feel is what's happened,

people have gone into this period of time far more resolved. **...I will spew you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;** Because that's how that begins to come into our lives if we don't grasp we always need more, we always need more of God's help, and it's by that understanding – if you have that understanding of...that's why God's given us too, things at this period of time to be sobered by, even times of people who have left, so that we can be sobered by... to not allow ourselves to drift, because to let down, if God doesn't intervene to stop something happening in our life we're gone. God is very merciful and very patient, and we have to understand the need to be on watch, to be, if you will, on guard because if we think that something can't happen to us... That's been one of my major concerns, candidly, since 2007 and 2008 as new people have come along, to not understand the danger of Laodicea. Because after you receive so much, which they were receiving so much so quickly, which was an awesome thing to see, then if it isn't coming at the same pace – and it will not continue to come at the same pace as when you're first called, the changes you go through then - and the tendency of human nature is to begin to level out and begin to drift, and that's such a dangerous, dangerous place to be.

So God has taken us through a period of time to be sobered by that, to realize how dangerous – and that's the very reason we drop to our knees more and cry out to God more, *"I need help! I can't do this! I need your help daily, to be on guard, to be alert. I need help to change, to think right."*

**...and do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:** before God! That's why I love the word 'exposed' and how we looked at it a moment ago, about running naked, training, to realize here that it's before God, to understand this is a healthy thing – that we are as Paul was talking about, wretched, *"Oh wretched man that I am..."* That's a *healthy* thing to see spiritually! Not to see it as a negative thing before God and to understand that's where the understanding is of how much we need God, if we see and know these things about ourselves as physical human beings; to be thankful for what we've grown in but to understand there's this other part that's pulling, that's more powerful than you are. That's why you *always* need God living in you.

**I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire:** I love this verse, because it's like saying you need trials, you *need* times of fire in your life. **I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire:** meaning you *understand*, so that you don't become lukewarm, so that you don't begin to drift and level off, *that trials are a good thing*, both personally and Church wide from time to time. They refine us, they make us stronger! *We are a stronger group today than what we were three weeks ago* as far as a Body is concerned. God has made us a more pure Body today. I have gone through a lot of these times in times past where God has continually made the Body a purer Body and there are times He does it in one fell swoop.

I remember one time that was the strongest I've ever seen, it was the time in Toledo when we went through what we did up there, when the Church split up there and more left than stayed. More left in Detroit and Toledo than stayed. And I was so thankful when it was all said and done. It was a *horrible* thing to go through but the spirit and the attitude that was there was now gone. God blessed us by it all being taken out in one fell swoop so that when it was all taken away what remained was that which was yielding itself to God and following God and became much stronger. Smaller, but that's not what it's about, it's about what we have that we carry with us and how much closer we become to God through what we experience.

So this is an understanding, **I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire so that you may be rich...** You want riches? Then *this* is where it comes from! It comes from going through trials and hardships,

but understand, those aren't easy to go through and there's some chastening involved, but we're blessed to be able to repent, and once we do it's behind us and we go forward, nothings remembered. God doesn't hold it against us! To me it's a beautiful thing when we change and grow and become stronger. The past is the past! I feel badly sometimes because I know sometimes, especially if we've been around a long time, our recollection is how we've been treated in the past in God's Church and how the ministry worked in times past sometimes, but we have to understand what we went through and what was happening in the Church and that those things so often were *not* right during that period of time, especially Laodicea.

**...and buy of Me white raiment/clothing, white, so that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear to others;** so we can be a light and an example, the more we grow the more we're a blessing to one another as well, **and anoint your eyes with eye salve,** expression that if you look it up in the Greek in how it's used it means to literally take the salve and you rub it thoroughly inside and on the eye, means thoroughly all over, you don't miss anything. All these that mean so much. **...that you might be able to see.**

**Verse 19 - As many as I love, I rebuke,** that word, 'to expose', 'to convict', or 'reprove'. It's done out of love, whatever it is. It only hurts to the degree of our carnality. That's what is an amazing thing to understand. It only hurts really to the degree of our pride and our carnality and how difficult it is sometimes to give up or make a change in something because there's something we're still holding onto in resisting God and He's just blessing us to see it. And that's a blessing. If we can see something that we've been holding onto, that we haven't grasped, then what a blessing when we can get rid of it and repent of it, and that's what God does, it's out of love.

**As many as I love,** He says, **I rebuke/I expose/I convict and reprove,** it all works together doesn't it? **...and chasten:** again, that aspect of child rearing. God is working with us as with children. We're His children and He loves us with a love that we can't even begin to comprehend. The most you have ever loved looks pretty puny compared to God's love. The most you've ever loved anything or anyone or whatever it is in life is very, very puny and *small* compared to God's love – truly – you can't even begin to compare it, but maybe we can begin to appreciate it more or strive to appreciate it more.

**...be zealous therefore, and repent. Look,** He says, **I stand at the door and knock:** how much truer now in our lives than ever before, even though it was written for a specific era you can learn from all these eras, of what it says, but this really applies because there is that tendency still of life, and will be through the Millennium, of Laodicea. It's a spirit to fight against. **Look,** He says, **I stand at the door and knock; if any man would hear My voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.** You know, dining, a close relationship, a fellowship. Isn't that amazing, oftentimes people will eat together and it's that time that you're relaxed that you're able to share and draw closer together and sometimes open up and be able to visit more and get to know each other more and it's just a part... just like after services here today, or other areas where people have that opportunity in the Church to eat and fellowship afterwards... and that's why this expression is used, an opportunity to dine, that's what God is using. It's about fellowship and drawing closer together. He says to just open up.

Sometimes we have to *open up* ourselves and let God in and let Him work with us and not resist, and receive what He has because dining with Him is on a spiritual plane; it has to do with spiritual food and what we receive.

**To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame to set down with my Father in His throne.** It's about sharing, when it's all said and done, in God's Family.

Let's jump ahead here to II Timothy and we'll conclude for today.

**II Timothy 3:12 - Yes, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.** It's just a given. It is the way of life. We're going to suffer hardship and persecution. **But evil men and seducers shall advance worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.** And thankfully we're getting close to the end of that, but you know, this spirit and attitude is in the world more and more... and the more you grow, the more you see it, but it's really in the world and it's in a powerful way right now. It is so *sick!* Everything is so sick, truly is, because there's a power that's stirred up out there in a very great way.

But it says here; **But continue,** again, that word, to abide, to remain in, to dwell in. **But continue in the things which you have learned and been assured,** in other words, this word having to do with 'made to be trustworthy' with the idea of being established. **...which you have learned and been established,** in other words, what you've been established in, in faith, **knowing of whom you have learned them;**

**Verse 15 - And that from a child:** Timothy is being told by Paul here, these things, as he's serving in the ministry and so forth, but it's an admonition to how all of us are to live and how God works with us, and that's the point. **And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures,** so Timothy had, and we have too because we're still children 😊. We start out that way and that's why I refer so often to and tell people to always remember a 'disciple', what it means, that we're a student and we're children, we're young, God's ever working with us. And so God has blessed us to know and to understand His word, to see things that we otherwise were not able to see before, **which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for testing, for correction, for instruction,** again, the word about 'rearing of a child', **in righteousness: That the man of God may become perfect,** we're not there but that's God's desire and that's why we go through the things we do, **thoroughly furnished,** a word that means 'to be prepared' or 'fully equipped', 'completed'. And that's what we're talking about today, a process of what God is doing to us, **unto all good works.**

I thought it apropos to focus on that verse and you can look at that later because it's really about what this is, what we've been looking at here today, and to realize God has perfected a work in us through what we've gone through and there is that which I can't stress enough of what He's given us starting with May 27<sup>th</sup> all the way to the end of last week, of a story flow, of a picture, a vision of something that God wants us to grasp, and now this one here is the reason for it all, to embrace this, to understand the love of God, to be thankful for that and to move forward very powerfully so.

So God has indeed, in twelve sermons, far more powerfully prepared us, equipped us, so that we can now stand fast and stand firm. That's what He's brought us to this point, so that we can move forward in greater confidence and boldness and finish what He's placed before us.

~~~end