

There is a lot to digest in what we're going to cover here, but I want to read some of these things because I don't want to leave anything out.

Last Sabbath we had a sermon entitled 'Love that Transforms' and in that sermon we focused on how God led us in the previous twelve sermons for the purpose of helping us take a deep look into our lives so that we might better see, if you will, what needs to change in our life, because we're ever growing and growing means change, especially in the Church and what God gives to us. And so the ability to better see what needs to change in our life, what needs to be transformed in our thinking, that's what repentance is all about. Repentance is about change; it's about a transformation in our mind, the way we think, and that's a process. It isn't always comfortable, it isn't always pleasant, but we have to yield ourselves to it understanding there is no other way for transformation to take place, except that we have to address things in our life and seek to change it because they are wrong. There are things that are wrong in our life that God wants to reveal to us to help us to see a better way and how to live that better way.

So again, He shows us what needs to be transformed in our thinking and actions that follow, because it's from our thinking that actions come, it's in the mind that everything begins. That's the spirit of our life, the motivation. Where does the motivation come from? That's why last Sabbath we talked about God's motivation toward us; it's about what is best for us, His greatest concern for us and a kind of love that we have a difficult time grasping and comprehending even with His spirit, even after years of growth in the Church.

So again, a process here that we can become closer to God. That's His desire for us, to become more at one with Him so that we can be blessed, have a more abundant full life, if you will, stronger in the Body of Christ, standing fast with God.

In last Sabbath's sermon God's message to us through all of that was that He is well pleased with us. To me, that's good news! To be able to focus on that from time to time, to understand there is a process we go through and God is well pleased. I think of what He said concerning His own Son at the very beginning, in whom He is well pleased, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased." And He is well pleased with the Church, and as we respond to Him and yield to this process, because especially with us, we have to yield to it. It's a process we *choose* to yield to in order to grow, and we understand that need and it's that attitude that is well pleasing to God, to continue to go through whatever we have to, whatever fire, whatever has to heat up our life from time to time to bring things to the surface that are unpleasant to have to address but we have to address them so that we can change, which means repentance.

I think of that admonition we talked about last Sabbath that we have followed in the Church about Passover and preparation for Passover, that isn't just about Passover there in Corinthians, it's about all year long, of how we should think, and in that respect examining ourselves in our relationship with the Body of Christ. That means with one another and toward God; we should always be doing that, and from time to time God helps us to see that more clearly, as in the sermon last Sabbath and in this sermon here we're going to start through today...matter of fact, in most sermons! It's a process we have to go through in examining our lives in a continuing basis, to change.

We, just like in the preparation for Passover as we read about there in thinking about, talking about that which Paul spoke of in Corinthians, it's that desire to discern or to judge ourselves, to repent where needed and become more fully committed, convicted if you will, of how God is leading us and to understand there is a process there to respond to on a continuing basis.

This process of examining and judging ourselves carries with it correction, the need for repentance and change, but the determination also to move forward! Once we have done those things and addressed those things then we're to move forward with boldness and a confidence and comfort, if you will, of understanding God loves us! And yet we have to go through these things that may be difficult...but He loves us, His desire is for us to change so we *can* become a part of His Family. That's His entire motivation for our lives.

Today we're going to look at another aspect of this love of God, or love *from* God as well, if you will, that has *not* been very well understood, practiced, lived, or done correctly when it has been practiced or applied in God's Church – since I've been in the Church – because of our human nature and because of the way we are and because of a growth factor there as well, of what God brings us to. This involves an aspect of how God says we are to love a brother/sister that is very contrary to man's way of doing it, to mankind's way of thinking, of how people practice, or frankly will not practice this but do just the opposite. And so, in this there is a practice that God wants us to apply in our life in how to go to a brother alone that is totally contrary to human thinking. It's not the way we would do it, or want to do it, and so we have to think through a matter in order to do it God's way. It's not a small thing.

But these things have been so taken out of context and so misapplied over the years in many cases, and probably in most cases where I've witnessed people that have done this, it would have probably been better if they'd never gone. And then the sad thing is when people don't go when they should. So it's a double whammy! It has to be done... it needs to be done correctly. We need to *seek* how to do it right, to better understand *how God's love works*, and that's what a lot of this is about.

This sermon is entitled *Going to a Brother*; tried to shorten it up a little there, but just 'Going to a Brother' - that's spiritual, it has nothing to do with gender – brother/sister – it's the same expression here, and this today being *Part 1*.

If we can grasp the primary message of last Sabbath's sermon, which is about God's great love that He has for *each* of us that does involve correction, because He desires above all else that we become part of His Family, *then* we can come to more fully appreciate that love as we come to see the awesome *giving, sacrificing, patient, merciful* depth of God's true motivation toward us. And if we can understand His motivation toward us, where it's coming from, how He deals with us, then the purpose of all that is that there is a response, and a positive response from us. And that has to do with love and how we respond when we understand – not just knowledge, but understanding – what He does, how He does it, and why. Always for our best interest and guaranteed blessings that He has a desire to give us into eternity.

Everything God does for us is geared toward what is truly *best* for us, which means correction in there as well so that we can glean the very most in the sense of abundance, or fullness, or genuine happiness in life.

*Now*, the *challenge* for our carnal, selfish human nature is to grab hold of that spirit, to understand, not just have knowledge of that spirit that is of God, that identifies God, that it is who God is. It says, "God is

love.” To understand that kind of love/agape, a sacrificing kind of love, especially when you talk about mankind, is a desire to grab hold of that spirit and practice, emulate, and live that toward others ourselves. That’s what grace is all about. If we’re just on the receiving end of getting these things from God and receiving mercy, patience, love, all the things that God pours out upon us, and we don’t reciprocate by a right response to God then what are we? That’s what God says...What good? What good is it all? And so again, that desire to emulate and live the same love toward others out of the very same spirit because it requires God’s spirit in us to do this in all of our relationships with others.

Start turning over to Matthew 22 if you will, we’re going to start there today. Before we can *ever consider* going to a brother alone - please understand this because this sermon is gearing up toward that and you’ll see by the time we get to the end the importance of this statement. Before we can *ever consider* going to a brother alone we must first have the vision of what has just been described and then seek out that right and true spirit that we are to have toward others. Before anyone can *ever go* to a brother alone in a true and a meaningful manner, in obedience to God’s way of doing so, they must first have a *right spirit* prevailing toward the brother or sister. And that is easier said than done – very rarely lived when it comes down to going to a brother alone, truly.

Matthew 22:36 – Very basic scriptures here but so important to build upon and understand. Again, knowledge is not the key thing in so many of the things we’ve been going through recently. It’s great to have knowledge, but understanding that knowledge, to understand *why* God has given us that knowledge is so much more vital, because until we begin to understand it, it can’t become a part of us. Just having a lot of knowledge about the truth, just as an example...when we first come in the Church we get a lot of knowledge – we *do not* have understanding for a *long time to come*, truly.

And that’s a difficult thing sometimes to understand, that’s why I often remind individuals in their calling of what a disciple means. It means student, and we are to *learn* God’s way of life, and it’s more than knowledge. So in the beginning it’s a matter of a lot of knowledge but the understanding takes time, it truly does.

**Matthew 22:36 – Master/Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law? And Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all of your life, uses the word ‘soul’ here, but all of your life, in other words, in everything you do God is first, with all of your mind, meaning all of your thinking, your thoughts; and then it really gets down to the bottom line here of what it’s talking about. It’s talking about the motivation, if you will, that which comes out of your reasoning, your thinking. That’s what it’s showing here...and with all your mind.**

And I’ll just quote this from where this comes from, Deuteronomy 6:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5 - Hear, O Israel: The Eternal, in other words the Self-Existing One... Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God/Elohim is one Eternal:**

It’s amazing how these jump out at you now in a very powerful way. There is only one Self-Existing One.

**And you shall love the Eternal your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might.**

So again, that’s what Jesus Christ was referring to and going back to this as the most basic; everything else is built upon it, and here is where it all begins.

So, in **Matthew 22:37**, again - **Jesus said unto him, You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your life, and with all of your mind;** all of your thinking, all of your reasoning. That should be the motivation in what you do. **This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it**, we come into the Church and we learn very early on that basically the Ten Commandments are divided into two, the first four regard our relationship toward God, and the last six are about relationships on a human level, mankind with mankind, of how God says to live life. **And the second is like unto it; You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.** So, again, everything given as a way of life to be lived in obedience to God that's been given directly *in* God's law or given through the prophets is summarized by these two commandments, and everything rests upon, is built upon these two. That's what Jesus Christ is saying.

And this is great knowledge, but understanding what its saying, knowing what it means, is another matter.

And what we should glean out of this above all things, which I have said before, is to understand from the very beginning here, when it says, **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart**; No human being can do that! **...with all your life**; No human being can do that! **...with all of your thinking**; *No human being can do that!* ...to love God on that level! It's something we should strive for and cry out to God for help to attain to but we don't have that ability, and therein is a great lesson to learn from the very beginning! If anyone thinks they love God with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their life, with all their being, deceives themselves, because of sin, because of selfish human nature. If we truly did that we wouldn't have that nature, but the reality is *we have that nature* that is selfish and that *fight*s against God!

So, as far as choice – yes we may *desire* that with all of our being and want to be that way with all of our being, but to be able to do it? We can't! Therefore we cry out to God, "Father, help me! Help me to love; help me to love *You*! Help me to love Your Son! Help me to love Your way of life with my thinking, fully, completely, and where I am wrong, reveal that to me, help me to see my sins, help me to repent of my sins, help me to change!" That's how we live our life – it's a desire to change so that we *can grow* in this. This is something you have to *grow* in. It's something that *no* human being, except one, ever had! Jesus Christ had it! He had it; none of us can have it. But we tend to, as human beings, think we can have it, or think that that's the way we are. No, we deceive ourselves then and we don't understand our own thinking, our own mind and our own reasoning, our own sins, our own human nature, our own selfishness! It's something to grow in.

**And the second? You shall love your neighbour as yourself.** *Wow!* ☺ *Wow-wow-wow-wow-wow!* We *do* love ourselves, that's what selfish human nature is all about. It just *loves* self! Self is always first! That's the problem, self is first, human nature. Any conflict that comes along, it's because of that. Any disagreement in life where we don't do things the way God says to do it, if we don't have the control and judge everything according to God's word and rest in that judgment and are perfected in it, perfect in how we do it... We can't do this because we love self, and so conflict, disagreement with people, the raising of voice, the getting angry, matters of jealousy, matters of envy, things that come out of our nature, the way we are where God says/sums it up in saying it's a matter of what human nature yields itself to, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life'. That summarizes it all, spiritually, which again, is something difficult for the mind to see and to understand and agree with; but it is what it is. That is the truth; that is the way we are.

But to be able to see that in ourselves is another matter. That's what gets in the way; those are the things that *keep* us from being able to love the way God says to. So our lives are one of constant change as long as we're in this physical body! We have things we have to change; we are imperfect! We are *FAR* from perfect...even once we come into God's Church. We can tend to, like Laodicea did, begin to think we're doing pretty good, you know, and that things are okay, and kind of drifting along and becoming lukewarm and thinking that's okay, and the mind deceives itself into thinking it's okay...not understanding, no, there are huge *problems* in relationships that need to be repented of and need to be changed. But the mind tends to deceive itself; that's what God says the mind does.

You know what, just because we're baptized doesn't mean that mind just changed overnight and all of a sudden we're in the God Family! There is a transition there and it's a process of what we refer to as the transforming of the mind, the changing of the mind. We have to go through this process that's a lifelong process in the physical body, in a physical life, and constant change that has to be there, things we have to address. And as we grow and overcome a certain part of our life then we go on to another plateau and then some things seem to be with us pretty much all of our life as far as the mind is concerned.

We all have different personalities and different things that have moulded us into who we are in life, and they happen from childhood, that make us who we are, and yet those can be the same battles...there is some of that *you're going to carry with you all your life because that's who you are in the flesh*, until you can *shed* that and shed the pulls of that which pulls you in a wrong direction, until you're fully healed. And when will that be? When the change comes. Until that change comes you're still going to have battles. You're still going to fight things. How often do I get emails of people referring back to things that go all the way back to their childhood that made them what they are, to their teen years that made them what they are, things that they carry on in the rest of their life, things in family, things in community, things, *whatever* it is your experiences were that made you who you are. It's awesome, the process that God takes us through.

But to be able to truly see things in spirit, in truth, for human beings we don't tend to do that readily *because* of the very nature we have. So again, this thing of loving our neighbour as our self... And who is your neighbour? Who is the closest one to you in life? Sometimes it's your mate, sometimes it's your child, sometimes it's your parent, sometimes it's your grandparent, sometimes whatever...it doesn't just mean the neighbour that's in a house who might be in a neighbourhood and they are your neighbour. Because sometimes, especially in this world today, we rarely see our neighbours. It's not so hard to be nice to them because we never see them! That's the way we are as communities in this world today, in society – I hope you understand what I'm saying. It's not like it used to be forty, fifty, sixty years ago, the farther back you go, where people didn't worry about locking doors and locking windows, and people were more hospitable, if you will. Today though, with large populations and crime and everything else... We live in a sick world!

What was it the other day I heard about Chicago? Mindboggling! The death rate, the *murders* in Chicago – and I hope I get this statistic right – four times *higher* than New York City, *twice* that of Los Angeles. Blew my mind! And in that period of time from 2001 I think they gave - maybe it wasn't 2001... What was the date? When did the war in Afghanistan start? It was the first... Well, anyway, 2005? I've got the date missing here right now. Whatever they used for their figure they showed that ever how long it's been since it started, some of the statistics they received, maybe it was 2005 (I wish I had the right number there), but anyway, they gave an example here of 2000 soldiers who were killed over there during a certain period of time in Afghanistan – 5000 were killed in Chicago. So it doesn't go back that many years. Astounding! Astounding, the city of Chicago, it's safer to be in Afghanistan, that's

basically what some of that says, it's safer to be in Afghanistan as an American soldier than it would be to be in Chicago now a days. I mean, it may be carrying it a little too far, but anyway – horrible! Horrible-horrible! There's a greater war going on there – people killing each other! Anyway, *why* did I go in that direction...? I guess thinking about how sick this world is and how hard it is for us sometimes to really understand how bad it is and how bad we are.

And just like this nation here, we don't think we're that bad. We look at other countries and we think how bad that is, how bad it is in some of these countries and how people are being killed...and yet right in our own cities; and if you put all these cities together and all the people being killed every year here, it's insane! It's insanity! But we think we're pretty good. And that's the deception of the human mind. People don't think about those things as a whole. Who is crying out about this in the news? Who is crying...? Every once in a while you hear a little blurb about Chicago or someplace else, or some sensationalized crime. Yesterday the big news is one person gets shot in New York City. Oh, that's a shock! But it's where it was - it was because it was by the Empire State Building - it's on the news all day long. Now, it's a tragedy, yes, but how many more were killed yesterday in New York? How many were killed yesterday in Chicago? What about all the young people killing each other? Who's crying out about that and the way they're growing up and the society that's there that *breeds* that kind of life? It blows my mind, the hypocrisy of the human mind, but that's the way we tend to be as human beings.

And so to love your neighbour as yourself, it's something you have to grow in. And where does it start? At home. That's where it begins. That's where Christianity begins; that's where *true* Christianity begins, it begins in the home, not with your neighbour whom you rarely see, and if you do see one, often it's probably because you get along well, in most cases, and you think more alike in most cases. Now sometimes that's not the case, but anyway...

The beginning of wisdom here is to understand what we're like, to understand we just don't have this kind of love, and if we can *really* see this for what's being said... You see the question and the answer here and the response from one individual there to Christ was, "Well said." In essence they were dumbfounded by an answer there that was given because it sums up everything, so how can you find fault with that. Because that's how some of this started out, always a desire to trip up Christ, to find a fault, and yet one responded as in awe, "Wow! How can you find fault with that?" But to understand what it meant, they didn't even come close; but it's a beginning.

Let's turn over to 1 John 3. The principle and instruction about going to a brother alone cannot be successfully applied or practiced unless there is the basic understanding and the primary motivation that comes from a right spirit that God describes to us in so many different scriptures through the Bible here, and these are examples of them. It doesn't get much more pointed than it does here in 1<sup>st</sup> John. So what good is it...? In other words, there's a lot we must built upon before we ever try to *practice* or *apply* this principle of going to a brother alone. And I'm amazed sometimes how things work. Well, I am and I'm not, because it's just the way it is, of how often things start coming in. I've had people all of a sudden here requesting a sermon on the subject, which I've told some this is where we were going and I mentioned this a little bit here in the past several weeks, but it's becoming something that is needed out there. Why? Well, because God works with us in a timely fashion, moulds and fashions us, allows various things to happen and things happen in our life that try and test us and bring things to the surface that we need to address and here is one.

**1 John 3:10 - In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:** the context here, whether they practice God's way, God's truth or not, which means they would practice sin. So the

context here is of what you practice; the word 'do' here that we're going to see over and over again so often is about, in the context here and how it's used in the Greek, has to do with what you practice, what you do. In other words, there's action involved here but more along the lines of practicing on a regular basis.

**In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the adversary; whoever does not practice;** 'does not', and it's referring to practice; **whoever does not righteousness is not of God**, so its practice. In other words, what you're striving to live, what you're striving to practice and live by. Says, **if you do not do that, don't seek to practice righteousness, you're not of God; neither he who does not love**, in other words, practice love toward others... **his brother**, it says it specifically here. **...neither he who does not love his brother**. And so God tells us that there is that which we are to live, we are to practice, we are to put to work, to put effort into it – not just to live life like we want to live it, or live it off the cuff, or live it as it comes to us and respond without change, but we tend to do that, we tend to just respond to circumstances and situations and then as time goes on in God's Church, hopefully and prayerfully, we begin to see ourselves and our wrong reactions and we go and ask God for forgiveness, and then as we grow *hopefully* we actually go to the other person who this was done against, whatever it might be that we've done - wrong words, wrong ways of saying things - and ask for forgiveness, that you don't want to be that way, you want things to be right, and trying to make things right and so forth. So growth is a process, it doesn't come naturally. There are things you have to practice. God says to do something in a certain way and we have to practice it.

**Verse 11 - For this is the message that you heard from the beginning**, we've always been... God has *always* told us, especially when it comes to how we care about each other, that we are to love each other. It *did* start from the beginning of time, has gone all through time; Jesus Christ, some of the first things He talked about when He was talking to the disciples, over and over again, was this matter of how to love and *to* love. **For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another**. It's what the law is about. It's what the Ten Commandments are about, to love one another, to love God – there's a way to do that – and a way to love people. And for human beings, sadly, a lot of it is told what *not* to do, and if we can understand that, it's learning what to do then.

**Verse 12 - Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother**. Now, these examples here are awesome, because we tend to, with our carnal, normal human mind, look at examples like this and think, "How horrible that a brother would kill a brother! ...especially when there are very few people on the earth! Very few people! ...and you have all this room and you can't get along? Where does that come from?" And so we tend to think as human beings that we would never, never do something like that, and yet we don't understand the spirit that's there and the mind... and what murder is.

And so it gives the example here; **Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And Why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous**. What usually happens in situations like that? ...especially when it comes to a relationship with God, and one that goes through certain motions of supposedly being "religious", giving an offering up to God, but wasn't done in the right spirit and a right heart in a right way by any measure. And the bottom line was that because another brother then offers up something in a right spirit toward God, because it had to do with that, had to do with right response to God, and what happens in human life so often? Jealousy. Jealousy, envy, can become so powerful that a person will take another person's life. Not just greed, but sometimes just out of jealousy, envy, thinking they have something that we should have...even when there are very few on the earth. And you think, "Why?" It shows something about our basic human nature and what happens in the mind and the way of thinking of the mind that we need to learn from.

So don't ever... We tend to dismiss examples like this because it seems so remote from our thinking that we could ever as human beings, or that 'I' as a human being could ever do something like that.

**Verse 13 – Do not marvel, My brethren, if the world hates you.** So it's a comparison here. This word 'hate', when you see it over and over again here it has to do with a comparison that's being made. It's like the one in Luke where it talks about... in counselling oftentimes, it's used even for baptism, for baptizing people, when it says that you're to love less your father, your mother – you know, "You can't come to Me unless you love less..." It uses the English word 'hate', but it's a word that's used of 'love by comparison' or emotions, feelings and so forth. And the comparison in that example is you must love less your own family than you do God and God's way of life, or you can't be My disciple. That's what it says back there. And so it's that attitude of mind of comparing something here to responses, and it says, "You must love one more and the other less." It can lead to, by context and things of human nature, of absolute hate and the despising of individuals.

So again here, being told, **don't marvel if the world hates you**, well, we learn that pretty fast. It's a comparison, in this particular case here, of someone that loves you less than the world. In other words, they love world. The comparison here is between the world and yourself... those of the world are going to love the world and not love you; they're going to love you less and that can lead into literally what we would term hatred. But anyway, it's just a comparison here.

In other words, don't be shocked when family all of a sudden... God is saying, "It's going to happen." The example here is if someone is not being called into the Church, don't be surprised if because of their choices, because they can't see what you see, whatever, especially if they can't see it, what their response is going to be, because it's going to be what the world's is. It's not going to be to love you and what you're doing now. It's not going to be drawn towards you. They're going to gravitate toward the world, and so they're going to find fault with you in what you're doing. And this is the example being given here; it's an example of a comparison here between two ways of thinking that are so diverse from each other.

**Verse 14 - We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** How strong is your knowing? How much does each individual know this in their own being? We learn that as we come along in the Church; we begin to recognize something unique here about fellowship. And then sometimes what happens as we continue to grow and get to know fellowship, we get to know individuals and we see weaknesses as well as strengths and sometimes then there are conflicts that arise... but anyway, we're tried in those relationships and we forget what it's like in the beginning sometimes, that *uniqueness* of how people have embraced each other, some literally, physically, of a welcoming, but spiritually embracing because we are a Family and there is that uniqueness of something you share yourselves, and especially when you're new, when you first come along you know these things, you experience these things and they mean a great deal to you in your life. That's why you're never to forget them.

So it says, **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.** So that's a good thing to look in our own hearts, because is there a brother in there that we don't love, brethren. It's basically talking about *ALL* who are in fellowship – do we love everyone in fellowship, because if we don't then something is wrong...and we'll come back to some of this later.

**He who does not love;** and again, it's this thing of *practicing* love. It doesn't matter what someone has said, someone has done; if you understand, this isn't just about their physical life, this is about their

spiritual life and you don't have compassion and mercy upon them? Even when they're dead wrong! Do we fail to love someone? Where is the motivation in our thinking? And so, so often as human beings we seek to protect ourselves, or take offence to things and we don't think things through the way God wants us to and to understand things the way God says we should.

So again, **He who does not love**, having to do with practice, does not practice; **He who does not love his brother abides in death**. So if we fail to practice love the way...especially within a fellowship that God gives to us; if we fail to love someone else the way God says to do it, like going to a brother alone – but that's one of just a few things in life of a fellowship and how to get along, how to work things out, how to care for each other, the care we should have for each other, the spirit we should have toward each other, the willingness to forgive, to not hold a grudge of any kind because we have no right to in the first place, if we understand it, to realize that we're sinning if we do something like that, that that is only between an individual and God and God is the only right that can measure something and hold it until it's repented of, hold it against us until it's repented. Only God can do that, and His Son. That's how we're judged. We have no right to do that toward one another! We're not God, we don't give forgiveness of sin. God does through Jesus Christ, through His Son – we have no right in that area, in that arena of life. Our desire should only be that someone is able to be forgiven of sin, that they're able to come out of sin if sin becomes a part of their life.

So again here, we're measured by so many things. Sometimes how to love another... I think of something that came to my attention here just recently and someone was concerned because someone had shared something private in their life and before long it's going through the Church. Private. Maybe they should have said, "Don't tell this to anybody else," but I guess they felt that they really didn't have to, it was a private issue in their own life, of something they were going through and struggling with, and then all of a sudden it's being passed around and you think, "Why would anybody want to do that? Why would a friend....?" If someone's confiding in you and wanting to share something with you as a whole, and unless it's in the context of going to a brother the way God says to, if it's a matter of something you have to do – but if it's a matter of something that you're just confiding because of a struggle you're going through and you're striving to deal with it, there is no sin involved, it's just a personal struggle and it's a personal battle, or whatever it is in life that you shared with somebody else. Why would there be a need of one brother passing it along to another? And you know what happens after a while? It's not even the same story. It doesn't take very long and it's not even the same story...and then it becomes false, it becomes a *lie*. And that's where the *damage* comes in, because this is just the way we are as human beings, because we all hear differently, because it's a matter of interpretation.

There is so much to learn about this matter of interpretation. If you can start with the basics of a language, of understanding that there are things in this book, in Hebrew and in Greek, that people didn't know the interpretation, because they didn't have God's spirit and so they didn't know the intent, the mind of God, what God was showing as His purpose and the intent of what was being said. The same thing happens in life. It doesn't have to be from one language to another it just has to do with communication. How often? *How often* between male and female, husband and wife, do people just misunderstand each other because they're coming from two different backgrounds, and even two different ways of thinking? Because nobody thinks alike! *Nobody* thinks alike! *Nobody exactly* thinks alike! What a horrible world it would be if we did! You just move and you think alike and you do everything exactly alike and you'd think you'd need a break from that after a while because it's seeing yourself all the time, and after a while self isn't so good to look at all the time.

So many things of communication where people interpret something differently because they hear something differently. You say the words – to you they're just as clear as clear can be. I have written things to people thinking I'm really, really clear about it and I get something back and I think, "Where did that come from?" We *think* we're clear! We think we've *clearly* stated something because you know what you're saying and you know what you're writing, but the person reading it, you know what? They're reading by their own interpretation of what the definition of those words are, or what it means to them, or what's happened to them that gives an interpretation of something being said. It's so common! And we *have* to understand those things about people! The possibility that we misinterpreted – but we generally think we're so right about what we've heard. "I heard you say that! I *know* what you said." ...and the ugliness begins.

Do we not understand sometimes the hurt we can cause people by talking about people, by saying something? Because basically God shows us that shouldn't be a part of our life, to be busy bodies, or to spread things around. Not in the environment of the Church! What makes *that* right? What makes it right that we can do it in God's Church? What makes it *right* that because we're baptized into God's Church that somehow we can do this in the Church? But we do it and we talk about someone, we pass along something that someone else has dealt with or going through that's kind of newsy, you know, it's kind of like maybe something you would like to tell somebody else. And after it gets passed through two or three people, four or five people, after a while it is a *lie*! It turns into a *damnable lie*!

I wish we could see it for what it is, that for one person to pass something along to someone else that may be perfectly true in every way, and even with true things you have to be so careful. This is very common. It happens all the time. Things I say, and it goes out in someplace and all of a sudden it comes back to me and it's like, "That isn't what I said! ...not only that, I would *never* have said anything like that, that's not me, that's not my motivation, that's not *my* mind, so where did that come from?" Well, I know where it comes from – the minds are different.

So we have to be careful in these things, to be careful about passing something along, even something we feel is 100% true. Be careful in those areas because maybe you didn't hear clearly, maybe the person telling you the story didn't really tell you the *whole* story. I've had *ministers* tell me stories about situations that come down to judgment in the Church, a need for judgment in the Church, a decision has to be made. And if I'm only told three-fourths of the story and a quarter of it's not there, what can I do? This happened to Mr. Armstrong all the time, especially in some bad things that happened in the Church, because some of the evangelists and some of the heads of different departments that would give reports to Mr. Armstrong didn't give him the full report, weren't totally *truthful* about everything that was going on, and so Mr. Armstrong had to make decisions then based on what he was given. That's what you do as a leader. Boy that fits into what we're going to cover partially at the Feast! Whew! Wow! It's amazing where God leads us sometimes and what He's giving to us so we can see more clearly and understand changes that have to take place and what God is doing.

And so again, I'm just throwing some of these things out to show that we have to be ever so careful to give everything, or *not* to give anything. We have to think things through because people are involved, we can hurt people by things that are said and we don't want to do that, God doesn't want us to do that. So we have to be so careful about things we communicate, things we say and the spirit in which it is done and why it's being done, and is it a help or is it a hurt? Can it be a help or a hurt? Does the other individual mind? Do you know them well enough? Anyway, all these things...

Loving, how to love, how to practice love – there are so many things said in scripture we’re just going to scratch the surface in this sermon today, just scratching the surface, a basic overview of some of these principles and every once in a while throwing something else out so that maybe something will hit home with us individually.

**Verse 15 - Whosoever hates his brother**, this is speaking to the *Church*! This isn’t speaking to the world! And it isn’t the word ‘hate’ like we would normally use it again, it’s a comparison. But to what? What is the comparison being made here and what is the context? Well, it’s going back to what was just stated in verse 14, about not practicing love toward a brother, and it’s showing here an attitude then if we don’t practice love toward a brother... **Whosoever hates his brother**, and it’s just another way of stating what was stated in verse 14, it’s making a comparison. If one does not practice love toward a brother, **is a murderer**: that’s what its saying!

If we don’t practice love toward a brother then what are we doing? There is only one thing left; it’s going the wrong way, its murder. If we know how to do something right toward someone else and we don’t do it because we ignore it or because we just don’t even think about it or don’t even care enough to think about it and we just - like this thing of gossip or whatever it might be, and we just go ahead and do it - then God says it’s a wrong spirit, it’s not His spirit. That’s not the way *He* has told us how we should have or live in our relationships, and so He calls it what it is – a murderer. But we don’t tend to think that way, so when we think about Cain we think, “Oh, how sick! ...a brother killing a brother, and that’s just the beginning in time and how... insanity!” And we’re insane to not live this way of life toward a brother in the Church the way God says to do it.

So we’re doing one or the other. You know, Mr. Armstrong boiled things down to just two ways of life, things that leaders in the world understood and respected; there is the give and get way. It’s the same as there is the love or the hate way; it’s one of the two. It’s either geared toward love, outgoing concern, sacrificing concern even, or it’s the other. There is no in between. There is no *lukewarm*! That’s what’s so dangerous about a lukewarm spirit. There is no lukewarm, there is no middle, it’s either moving in one way or another, one of the two.

**...and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.** Now, there’s a great clue right there, ‘eternal life’. Don’t we want eternal life abiding in us? Absolutely! That’s why we want to repent of sin quickly, because we don’t want to get cut off from God’s spirit. That’s the whole thing about wanting to be in Elohim, never being cut off ever, ever; but for all eternity God in us and we in God, guaranteed, a way of life for eternity. But before that we can be cut off from God’s spirit in this human flesh and we *are* in life, when there is sin! And until we repent of the sin we are cut off and we deceive ourselves if we think we aren’t! And if we aren’t getting along with someone else and we said something wrong or done something wrong toward a brother, the reality is God just cuts us off! It’s like the umbilical cord, there is no blood flowing through. How long can you go? What does that do to your life on a spiritual plane if it’s not repented of quickly?

And so we have to respond and learn to respond quickly, to go before God and say, “Father, forgive me!” And sometimes that’s not enough! Sometimes you’ve got to go to your brother then and say, “You know, I’m sorry, I did that wrong. I shouldn’t have done that. I shouldn’t have raised my voice. I shouldn’t have spoken to you in that way. I shouldn’t have said what I did.” Whatever it is you have to say to make it right, to strive to make it right.

My father-in-law's expression; he used to make comment, "Give me another chance." That was his way of saying, "I'm sorry." 'Give me another chance.' And it endeared us in time, that's just the term he would use and said with a bit of a smile sometimes and its like, "I know I've done it and give me another chance." And yes, absolutely, that spirit, a right spirit.

**...so you know no murderer has eternal life abiding in them.** Because if we're not practicing love God is showing us that we're cut off from His holy spirit. If we won't practice what He says we're to do in our relationships, if we fail to love someone when God has shown us how to do it, what we're supposed to do, how we're supposed to speak and we do the opposite and don't change it, then where is God? And what is the most important thing to see in this then? Why isn't that eternal life abiding in us? There is *sin* that has to be repented of, something has to change in *us*. There is *sin*. That's the only reason God won't abide in us. That's the reason we have a Passover, so we can go before God and say, "Father, forgive me through our Passover." But until we do that we're cut off.

I wish we could have seen this better in Philadelphia, I truly do, but we didn't get much past just *philia* love, and that was the problem; so much so that people got to the point where they thought Philadelphia is it, and they didn't realize that should tell you a whole lot right there, that it's not enough. *Philia* love doesn't quite hack it. There's a lot of that in the world – *fraternal* love, that's what it is – but it isn't God's love. It's far, far, *far*, *Far*, *FAR* from God's love.

**Verse 16 – Hereby**, it just means **By this we can perceive the love/the agape of God:** Where is God's love? Is it in a matter or not in a matter? If we're not practicing love, agape is definitely not there. If He's not dwelling in us, if we're cut off, He's definitely not there, there is sin to be repented of, God's not there. **...by this we can perceive the agape of God;** and so it's showing us what this means, how far this should go in *our* thinking and what it means to us; **because He laid down His life for us: we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** To live in this human life toward one another with God's kind of love most often means there is a sacrifice; there's a sacrifice that has to be made that isn't enjoyable for you to have to do but you have to do it. A sacrifice, it's just the way it works, and a sacrificing kind of love. And most often it really has to do with our own pride, a willingness to sacrifice our way, our own selfish human nature, a willingness to sacrifice it – because we don't, as human beings, like to give up what we think we're owed or what we think is coming to us or what we think is right and just – "...and you're wrong!" We stick to that no matter what.

So again here, **By this we can perceive the agape of God, because He laid down His life for us:** So how far are we willing to go to help someone else continue in this way, or to get through a matter, or to deal with a matter, or to help them in being able to deal with – maybe, yes indeed a wrong spirit, whatever that is. What are we willing to give up in sacrifice in order to help them?

So again, this kind of a mind is something we have to have or seek to have more so in our life and be able to see the areas where we fall short, or we can never go on to practicing the part about going to a brother alone; it would be futile, it would not be handled properly. And I'm going to be real clear about this – my experience in God's Church has been when people have gone to another alone, I have rarely, rarely *ever* seen it done well. Rarely! *Rarely!* And I'm trying to think of some that I've seen done well...and there have been some, but 90% of the time, 95% of the time it's just been done, not only wrong but so *poorly* that it even makes it *worse*, that it makes the situation *worse*. So to apply it, if this life and this mind isn't very much a part of our thinking, first of all – that's why we have to be very careful of how we do it. In all of our relationships we should be careful about our relationships because we don't want to be cut off from God's spirit.

**1 John 4:7** – And we're just skimming the surface in some of these things. It says, **Beloved, let us love one another:** beautiful thing. Wish we could do that all the time. Wish we could always love each other. Wouldn't it be an awesome thing if all families could always love each other, that there are no conflicts in family? But I'd be surprised if there's a week that goes by that we don't hear of some pretty bad conflicts that come our way, and if they make it our way through the ministry that's out there, evangelists and senior elders, how many more do we not hear about? Because I know that there are more that we don't hear about than what we do hear about – because as human beings we tend to be very *good* at covering self, hiding things in our own life, in our own families, protecting, maybe that's the word to use, protecting ourselves. Either we're protecting ourselves or bringing it to the surface and dealing with it, but I guess...whatever, you know the answer.

**Let us love one another for agape is of God;** so there is an expression of love but it's not a definition, it doesn't tell you what kind of love it is until you have the rest of the context, and then it says **...for love/agape is of God.** So it's a matter of yes, love, but what is the definition that God gives? Here it's agape. **Let us love one another...**it's not *philia*, it's not a word for *philia*, it's another word for love that's without other context or words used in the context to define it, especially with God's as a whole, most often He's telling us how to love.

So, **Let us love one another,** and then the definition; **for agape is of God;** It's talking about this is a kind of love that God desires for us to exercise toward each other, that the motivation we should strive for in all of our relationships is that it comes from God's spirit. And every time we pray, if this hasn't been that way, then we need to be repenting of it, and so often that means then we need to be making other things right in our life.

And then it goes on to say **...and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** So again, to love with God's love, we learn that we can't do that unless we have God's spirit in us because it comes from God. We can't work it up! You can't work up agape, it's not in human beings, it's not in the world. The source is God. It's just like talking about God's spirit, or *Logos*, it comes from God, we don't have it in us. *Logos*, if you want to talk about the mind of God, the Word of God, it's not in our mind save to the degree that God has given it to us, save to the degree that God is there and gives it life, and we understand it and see it because of God's spirit...and a matter of growth.

And so same thing with love here, **everyone who loves is born/begotten of God and knows God.** Because we grow in knowing God. Just like if we can drink in of last Sabbath's sermon and grasp the incredible love that God has for us, for the Church, and where we are and embrace that. But it's something that has to be given on a spiritual plane, and these things are spiritual. Relationships are spiritual for the Church.

**Verse 8 - He who does not love, does not know God;** If we don't practice it, if we don't live these things, then the bigger picture of it... You know, I have to go back to something. I think of when people are first called and brought along, and there is a tendency, which is understandable, but we all need to understand it, especially in this day and age because we have never witnessed a time like this. We have never witnessed a time of technology. My background, or my (and a lot of us that came from the period of time of Philadelphia in the Church and experiences in Worldwide – speaking of that), our experience was that when we heard about the Church or we maybe read a 'Plain Truth' or something, you'd write into Headquarters. And basically in your own mind you kind of thought that there were some people in the Church in Pasadena but there is no one around you locally. You didn't know if there was a Church close to you that might have 500-600 people in it, which in so many cases there were, or whatever. And

then you get an answer back maybe in a month and a half, two months, you'd get some booklet or something back, some article back, and you'd read it. And you'd go through this process then until something happened in your life that maybe you finally asked for a visit, or asked for baptism, or asked for something, asked to attend a church. Is there a church? Where is the closest one I can go to? Is it only at the Feast of Tabernacles? Anyway...

*Today* people receive *so much so quickly*, can download books and read it quickly on a little thing on their hand. I've had some write in and talk about how they've just read it right there in their hand, little device, download it from the internet, read it right there. Questions? Answers? Listen to sermons? We didn't have that! We didn't have the ability to hear sermons and things that were said. If you got into a place that maybe had a local library you could check out some sermons, but today there is so much you can receive so quickly.

And so the tendency *can* be, which is not always a healthy one, but the ability to see where you are, to realise, yes, you are learning things very quickly. You have so much knowledge so quickly, it's *awesome!* And that's exciting! But that's *not* spiritual understanding; it's a *long, long* way from spiritual understanding. There is a lot of knowledge all of a sudden, seeing where the world, Easter, Christmas, Catholic church, all these things out there that are so clear, and then all of a sudden seeing the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and things about them and where we are in time and embracing that *knowledge*, and by conviction... But to understand it spiritually? No-no-no-no-no, that takes time. To drink it in, that takes time.

And candidly, the reason I'm mentioning some of this is because sometimes we tend to think, if we're not careful, that the greatest thing is how much I have listened to or can continue to listen to week by week in sermons or how much I read, and misconstrue that as spiritual. That is not spiritual at all. What is spiritual is what you are able to drink in and *change in the mind* and *live*. That's what we're reading about today – *relationships*, that's what's spiritual. How we treat each other - that's what's spiritual. Not how much knowledge we have, how many sermons we listen to, how much we pray, how much we study! This was a fallacy of times past, that sometimes people thought that way, that they were grilled in how much do you pray a day, and how much do you study a day, and how much do you do this a day and that a day, and it was like, what does all that mean unless you understand the greater picture of it all? It's what you *live* that's spiritual! It's not how much you are on your knees, or how much you have read, because all that can be kind of meaningless unless you're making some *giant changes in your life*. The *change* has to go with it! *That's* what's spiritual!

And so sometimes I cringe inside when I know of situations where people feel like they are spiritual because of all the knowledge they have and because of all the things they're doing week by week, when in reality and sometimes their relationships *just downright stink!* ...and how they get along with people in God's Church! ...and how they treat somebody in God's Church! And those kinds of things *irritate the tar out of me, because I think, "DON'T YOU SEE? That's what this is all about! That's what's spiritual! It's the words that come out of your mouth and how you treat someone! THAT'S what's spiritual!*

*I don't care if you listen to five sermons a day, and read everything on the website – much of it is just reading and listening to sermons – it's like being a monk. What good does it do them? The best that monks ever were able to accomplish was the beer that they made, and they have learned over hundreds of years how to make very good beer – especially in Belgium (give them a plug).*

But all this other stuff? Didn't mean anything to them and it doesn't mean anything to anybody in God's Church either if we just study and pray and go through the motions of these things. It's what you *live* in the *mind* and what you say from the mouth and how you treat each other that counts. And that's what we're reading about here.

**Verse 7 - Beloved, let us love one another: for agape is of God; and everyone who loves is begotten of God, and knows God.** That's spiritual! It's how we live toward each other! That's what's spiritual.

**Verse 8 – He who does not love does not know God;** if we're not practicing it, then it has to do with our really even knowing God! That's *spiritual!* *Knowing* God, *seeing* God, what we discussed last Sabbath – *spiritual* to see and understand. What God is offering us and how He takes us through this process and the incredible love He has for us through this!

**Verse 8 – He who does not love God does not know God; for God is love.** That's God! He *is* agape! It defines God. It is who God is.

**Verse 9 - In this was manifested the agape of God toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.** To be a sacrifice... to be, His own Son, the only...the *only* one who was ever to be like Him, after the order of Melchizedek. Awesome to understand Jesus Christ and God's purpose in Him and what He's doing! It's just awesome; it's beyond words, it truly is. And yet God in what He was willing to do in order to have Elohim for all mankind, that we could have the opportunity, and it all boils down to how we live and the example being that of what? God. God was willing to do it for us. His Son who lived a perfectly perfect and a righteous life, *never* sinned... it's a spiritual thing. Sometimes we read it as a physical story and we don't understand what's behind it all, and understand then that's what we are to have in our life – so much so for others it's a desire to sacrifice, a willingness to sacrifice our own wants, our own desires, our own feelings in a matter, our own pride – which is the biggie.

...**because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** So that we could have this life living in us, so we could learn this, so we could go through this process and see ourselves for what we are and embrace God, what God is.

**Herein is agape/God's love, not that we love God...** Some of these blow me over sometimes too, but that's the way we are when we first are drawn in the Church. We don't understand! We don't know! We think we do! We may think, as sometimes I've heard in times past, especially people who've been drawn out of a protestant world and it's really, really, really heavy in Protestantism. It's like, "I've *always* loved Jesus Christ. I have *always* loved God. I have always *wanted* God in my life. I've always wanted Jesus Christ." Sometimes I tell them, depending on where they are, but generally I give them time, because I know better, because I know *you have never loved God. You have never loved Jesus Christ* until God began to draw you to Him and reveal who He really was. Because who you thought was Jesus Christ in the past was not Jesus Christ; that's polluted your mind and your thinking, and even your way of speech in thinking about God. You don't realize that you have *years* in some cases to come out of some of this – what I'd like to call it – spiritual doo-doo from Satan, because it's polluted your mind and you're talking this way because it *has* so polluted your mind and you don't realize the battle in front of you is going to be to fight this until... and that one really is pukey, ucky; it really is, this protestant thing about God and protestantizing God and Jesus Christ. It takes so much meaning away from what is true.

But sometimes we deceive ourselves as human beings to think we always have loved God...and the truth is nobody ever has. *Nobody loves God*. No human being has ever loved God of and by themselves. Only, only, *only* because God (save Jesus Christ), only because God had a purpose for them and worked with them and moulded and fashioned and drew them, *called* them, *gave* them of His spirit so they could see things – even as young teenagers – so they could see things around them that others could not see, that they were able to do what they did and be drawn to God and love and want God's way. God did the drawing. God does the calling; but by an individual's own basic human nature there is not that love unless it's a part of God's purpose...and it is God's purpose in time to draw everyone at different stages in their life.

I think of babies who are going to be resurrected during the Great White Throne. They don't know anything...a day old, two days old, a week old, a month old, a year old, and they're going to be drawn to God from the very beginning! Awesome! They don't have to have any garbage and pollution enter into their minds from the beginning. They don't have to come through the filth and the swill and the sickness of a perverted world; they can learn through everyone who's gone before them. They can see the history of everything that's been written before them.

Our ability to see what we see now after 6,000 years, and especially in the last fifty, has escalated awesomely, in what we can see. In the Millennium it's going to escalate that much more. The Great White Throne pales everything else into insignificance as far as that ability, because everything else before is there and the ability to see that when God gives that spirit to see it, because it's now history. It's so incredible, how God works with human beings. But for people to think that they always loved Jesus Christ, is not true at all.

**Herein is love, not that we loved God**, or else it makes God a liar. Romans gets very clear about some of this; talks about being an enemy of God, at enmity with God, an enemy *to* God. That's the way we are until God begins to draw us and call us, and then that enmity can begin to be gotten rid of, that spirit. ...**but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another**; to follow that example, to strive to live that way toward others. **No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us**; in other words, this is something spiritual! It's not something you can physically see; it's not a matter of seeing God that makes the relationship!

That's going to be some of the most difficult things for some to deal with during the Millennium, is the fact that they can see the God Family and that's going to become their norm, and that's going to be like that power of Laodicea and it's going to be constantly taught...constantly taught throughout the Millennium. They're going to be shown what their battle is constantly throughout the Millennium. They're going to constantly be reminded! Much of the preaching is going to be about *this age* and the lessons of this age, because this is the culmination of 6,000 years and the greatest of the lessons yet.

**If we love one another God dwells in us**, awesome! So if we truly love one another the way God says to do it, it's not because of us, it's because of God, it's because of God's spirit, because it takes God's spirit to do what we started in the beginning talking about – to love your neighbour as yourself. You can't *do it!* In the world it can't be done. In our lives, in the Church, it can't be done without God. It takes God's spirit and then we can begin to live that and experience that and exercise that. **If we love one another God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us**. We can grow in it, the mind becomes at one with God, we can begin thinking differently and grow in that through time.

**Verse 19** – jumping on down here – **We love Him, because He first loved us.** We didn't first love Him. People say, "Oh, I've always loved Jesus Christ. I've always loved God." Not so! It's because He first loved us...even before we were born, if you understand mankind and what God's plan is, and this is a part of what it's talking about too.

**But we love Him because He first loved us;** because it's about Elohim and about becoming a part of Elohim. **We love Him because He first loved us. If a man say, I love God and hate his brother,** now again here, it has to do with this context of failing to love and not following what God says to do in the way God says to love others. There is a way that God says to love and if we don't do that, like the example He's just given... What is the greatest example He's given so far? Well, it summarizes it all – a sacrificing love. If we aren't willing to sacrifice in order to love others then we're not loving God's way, because it's going to require that.

You're going to have to *bite your tongue* sometimes! You're just going to have to learn to bite your tongue sometimes because your *fighting against your own nature*, your own selfish human nature because you feel that something isn't just or you shouldn't talk that way to me; and sometimes you just have to learn to *bite your tongue* so that you stop it there. Now, if everybody was able to do that well there would be a lot of sore tongues out there, but we can't even do that one well. Really, we have to be able to laugh at our sick human nature and realize it is sick and want to change it. Really!

**If any man say, I love God and hate his brother/fail to love his brother,** the way God says to do it, not willing to sacrifice for others, not always wanting our own way or thinking that things are unjust. Well, la-tee-dah, human nature is unjust, and if you expect to be treated justly, always in God's Church by one another, then you're just in the wrong place! You just want to skip this part and be right in Elohim! It doesn't work that way! You can't just go from this to Elohim; if it was that easy, God would do that. If it could be done that way God would give that to us, but the reality is it can't be done that way! So you can't skip this, you've got to live it!

**If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother/fail to love His brother the way God says, then he's a liar.** You know, God just calls things what they are! I love that! It isn't always easy to take as human beings but it's better to be open, truthful, honest; and this is what it is. If we somehow deceive ourselves into thinking we are studying and praying and we're going to Sabbath services and we're tithing faithfully - because these are the things that try people, human nature – and we're doing all these things faithfully and going to the Feast and doing these various things and we're not living this spiritually in how we treat each other and how we talk about each other, how we talk *to* each other, it says, if we fail to love the way God says to and we're not making a change and we're not sacrificing... Basically that's what it comes down to. God's telling us, if we're not sacrificing things about self and about what we want and our time or whatever it might be, our emotions and our feelings about a matter, that maybe you have been treated unjustly. What is the bigger picture in it? Can you learn something from it? On and on it goes. It says, **then he's a liar.**

**...for he who does not love his brother,** in other words, fails to love **his brother whom he has seen, how could he love God whom he has not seen?** That's beautiful! And I wish we not only had this in knowledge but that we could see that clearly, what it's saying, because it's so awesome and so powerful and so true. How can anyone say, in essence here, **he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?** So again here, awesome! They go hand in hand, it's a spiritual thing. That's what God is showing us.

**Verse 21 - And this is the commandment that we have from Him, that He who loves God must love his brother also.** You know, it's so easy for us, and this has been such a big thing in God's Church, it's the way it's been through time and people going through the motions of religion and so forth and feeling sometimes good about what they think their relationship is with God because of what I'd call 'living church', but failing to live what God says *in* the Church toward one another, and that's the problem.

So **this is the commandment, that he who loves God must love his brother also.** Because if we don't do that then we *don't love God!* And God wants us to understand that; you're not living as you should, if we don't *do* this in our relationships toward one another. So are there things that need to change? Always. Can we grow in these things? Absolutely. And the more we grow the more meaningful these things become, the richer God's...and the more we actually, as we just read, see and know God. The closer we draw in the Church to each other in a right spirit, because it requires God's spirit, the more we see God, the more we know God on a personal plane. That's *exactly* what we've just read. Powerful! And it really is to that degree.

Going on here, 1 John 5:1. Would to God that *all* had always been to see this. I think of what it talks about in Matthew, where it talks about 'the love/the agape of many began to wax cold...' And that's what happened in God's Church – starting in Philadelphia – that's what those scriptures apply to in Matthew 24. It started happening in Philadelphia, then how much worse was it in Laodicea when people were coasting and lukewarm, and it was much, much worse than what it was during the period of Philadelphia, and still that wasn't what it was supposed to be by any measure. It's ever growing and seeing what we do need.

**1 John 5:1 - Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten,** talks about 'born' **of God:** in other words, to even know this and to have that confidence in your mind that He is the Messiah, and to know it in spirit and in truth for what it is because you know who He is, you know the truths that go with this. It's because you've been begotten of God. God draws you and you're able to see things that otherwise you wouldn't be able to see. **...and everyone who loves Him who does the begetting loves him also who is begotten of Him.** What beautiful verses here! It just should be automatic, but you know what, *it just isn't!*

So **everyone who loves Him,** speaking of God, **who does the begetting, loves him also that's begotten of Him.** Beautiful verses here. So anyone that's drawn into the Church, that receives the impregnation of God's spirit, it just really should be more automatic – but it isn't, because we have to apply, we have to practice love. But there should be a relationship there already. **He who loves Him who does the begetting loves him also that's begotten of Him.** That *should* be there, but we have to *work* at it for it to be there.

**By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.** So it's tying in this thing about if we really love God then we're going to live right toward each other – that's what it's going to boil down to. So it's come at this in two different directions saying the same thing very powerfully so. **If we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.** So thereby, loving the brethren is what it's talking about.

**For this is the agape of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.** They're not a burden. They're not heavy, and they're not supposed to be. But for some, in some of these things, it would be heavy, it would be a burden.

So the basis of everything we do toward others, especially those in God's Church, must be founded upon, must be *motivated by* a spirit that comes from God. There is no other way. So we must seek to do those things that are motivated by God's spirit. So whatever you do in life and your relationships, seek God's spirit, seek to be motivated by God's spirit in how we treat each other, because there are changes that we can always make in that area, to do it better. You know yourself. Only you, in that respect, as far as a physical human being (God knows you inside out, and Jesus Christ), but you know yourself, you know those things that are in your mind, and only you can know them and ask God for the ability to know them better so that you're not deceiving yourself and so that these things can come to the surface and be dealt with.

So we must seek to do those things that are motivated by God's spirit, yielding to His spirit. It's a matter of yielding to God and not to our own selfish spirit...because one is going to win. One will win out – either by yielding to God's spirit and God's spirit winning, or our own selfish human nature wins out. That's the way it is in everything we do, in all relationships.

So, as it was stated toward the beginning of this sermon: Now the challenge for our carnal selfish nature is to grab hold of that spirit (speaking of God's) and practice, emulate, and live that love toward others out of that very same spirit in all of our relationships with others...and that's the key, that's the battle.

This is that mind, this is that spirit that we want living in us. How God says to live, how to think, and the example always goes back to Him. That's why I think of what He gave to us when we began to understand in a deeper way His sacrifice from the beginning of time. That's how God has loved His Family, Elohim, from the very beginning, willing to sacrifice peace by what He created because there was no other way to bring about Elohim but *exactly* the way God has done it...and that's an incredible thing to see and to know.

**James 2:8 - If you fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbour as yourself, you do well:** Well, we learn that that's easier said than done, something we must grow in and seek to accomplish. But the admonition here then is, **but if you have respect to persons**, so again, there are so many things we could talk about here today just on some basic things of human nature. **But if you have respect to persons;** in other words, this means to show partiality for whatever reason, favoritism, unfair *bias*. These are all a matter of judgment and how we judge things, and there is so much to be learned by this. How we judge matters. How we judge situations and circumstances in people's lives, and people's lives in the Church. And this is one area that is difficult for people, especially when in family. One of the hardest things for people to do within family is to seek to judge righteous judgment because this is from God – good or bad – in other words, something that has to be addressed in life and to seek to judge it righteously, not because you're family.

The prejudice to protect family, the prejudice to favour family is a very strong influence and you can go back in scripture and see examples of various ones and how God has tried them and tested them in some of those areas of life – especially when individuals, if you look at the high priests and different sons of different times, and how that that was their weakness, because it had to do with their own children and they weren't able to judge righteous judgment there, they were a respecter of persons and showed favoritism. And you can't do that; you can't do that in your own family. If something is wrong you had better address it! You'd better address it *righteously* before God, or else who are we? And too often some of these things irritate the tar out of me when I see it done improperly, because we end up hurting our family. You can end up hurting your family *more* if you don't address the things you should address in your family; and if we can't do it in family, this thing of going to a brother alone, because our

best interest is for our family's *spiritual welfare*, how on earth can we ever do it in God's Church? And that's so much of the problem. And that can be a great battle. It can be a great battle.

And sometimes these are the very things, how some people judge, because they think everybody judges this way and so because of how they judge they feel like some things are done in the Church that way. It's too bad. I think of ordinations. Sometimes people think it's because of favoritism, because of who you know, or family, or whatever it might be. I can tell you, that's something I strive to be away from with *all of my being*, and seek that it be from God. When you rely on God for the decisions and choices you make...but sometimes in God's Church people judge unrighteously in those areas because of how *they* judge in their lives, and then they come to wrong conclusions and wrong decisions rather than learning from it and learning to see, "Well, what is God doing?" So often in God's Church we haven't tended to do those things. Does that mean everything's always been done perfectly in God's Church? No, not by any measure. But I hope we can learn by what God does give to people and why God gives it – which we're going to talk a little bit more at the Feast this year. Interesting!

Wow! I'm dumbfounded because I live this all the time, where... especially where something is prepared that far in advance, and generally my vision is what God's given to us, and then you can see that and you can see where God's leading us, like we did in those twelve sermons. You can see a *pattern* of what God does and how He moulds and fashions us. But to see a pattern ahead of time, that's exciting, because there are already things that God does and you see a pattern of what God is doing and how He does it and it's an exciting thing to live, it truly is.

Anyway, this verse here talks about...**But if you have respect to persons**, show partiality, favoritism, unfair bias. That is a battle and sometimes that's a *great* battle for people. You *can't* do that! You can't do it in your own family, you can't do it with your closest friends; you've got to do it because it's right before God, because this is what God says about a matter, not because of your emotions, not because of your feelings, not because of your friendship! That can't be a part of it! And candidly, in some of those cases, if you do it the right way there is going to be some unpleasant things you're going to be doing there in those relationships which we'll get to in the next sermon, that try and test people as to whether they're doing it as perfectly as they can. Because that's how it should be approached, to strive to do something as well as you can, God's way, because that's the motivation, you want it to be done *God's way*, not your way. We don't want things done our way! If something is done *my way* it's the wrong way, it truly is! If it's done *your way*, take it to the bank, it's the *wrong way*! It must be because it's *God's way* and because we're *yielding* to that and we're striving to do it *that way*, God's way.

So often we think our way is the right way! One of the most basic things we need to learn in God's Church is that ought to be the warning sign right then and there!

**But if you have respect of persons**, show partiality, favoritism, and so forth, **then you commit sin**, so those of you which may not be able to see it and probably don't, sometimes that's why we don't change in those areas, because we don't see it, we don't see that's what we're doing. But start looking in your life and say, "Do I show favoritism in judgment?" Do you cover sin that shouldn't be covered? That's a good place to start, because these things aren't really tried and tested sometimes until there is sin involved, and it's how you deal with the sin that counts.

But if you're trying to protect self or someone else that's close to you by covering sin then that's sin to you, and that's the problem, and that's what God is saying, because you're not doing this the way God says to do it. We can't judge unrighteous judgment; that's what the world does. That is not God's

government. That is not God's way of dealing with things. We must learn to judge righteous judgment because God says it's this way, because it's what God has to say about a matter, not because of our thinking about it or our mind on it and what we think about it. It's analyzing it through with reasoned judgment, seeking sound judgment to come from God in how we judge a matter.

**...then you commit sin;** you're practicing sin, if you do this, if you show partiality, favoritism, bias, unfair judgment in a matter... and because it's easier...sometimes it's just easier doing it that way rather than dealing with the situation that should be dealt with. Sometimes it's easier, it's just easier for us and then we don't have to deal with it. It's like burying your head in the sand. It's like somehow it goes away. No, it doesn't go away, it just gets worse and worse and worse.

**...and are convicted,** it's that word again, 'to expose', 'convict', yes, and 'to reprove', because it all goes together in that Greek word here, to be convicted of something. It first has to do with to expose it, something has to be exposed, the wrong, the error must be exposed. And this here is saying, **and are exposed of the law as transgressors.** So if anyone shows favoritism, God says, partiality of *any kind*, partiality in a judgment that is being made, that isn't healthy. Because these are situations where matters count in a judgment as to the end result, and so often they have to do with sin or something that's not being done well or done right. And if partiality or favoritism is in the judgment then it's just sin, and because of that then you are exposed! That is the very thing that exposes, is supposed to expose and reveal the sin that you have, **of the law as transgressors**, as it says here. Exposed, where indeed we should be able to receive that and repent.

I hope you're noticing all the way through here, as a whole, we're not even talking about going to a brother alone yet, as principles, as things spoken of in scripture. These are just about relationships and how we think, and the one we just addressed here basically is that when it comes to judgment is it a matter of something that is unbiased because we're truly seeking to do it God's way? ...because it's a matter of the way God would do it, because what other decision would we want in our lives except what is best. Does that mean you're going to do it perfectly? No, but if you strive to do that, so often then what does God do? He gives you the help you lack; because you're striving to do it in the right way He gives you the answers, He gives you the spirit, He gives you the guidance, He opens up your mind to grasp the judgment that needs to be there.

I think of so many times in counseling and so forth through time, because I don't know the answer – and so I ask God, I don't know the situation. I ask God for... "I don't know how to do this, I don't know the answer to this, You have to give it to me. How do I judge this?" And then all of a sudden things start becoming clearer and everything just opens up. It's like all of a sudden a door is opened up and there are the answers – wham-wham-wham – things I didn't know, things I couldn't know, and God just gives it because it's from Him and because if you seek it, you know what, God grants it, He gives it. He doesn't want you to do things on your own, by yourself; He wants to be there with you. That's why He dwells in us, to give us what we lack! And if we rely upon that, if you depend on that, that's what He does and you can grow in that then, in that experience, because it's more a part of your life.

**Hebrews 12:4** – we've looked at this recently but let's notice again here - **You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.** And a question follows: **Have you forgotten the exhortation,** the word here meaning 'encouragement', the 'comfort' **which speaks unto you as unto children?** We just looked at this last Sabbath, because it has to do with this matter of exposing, things coming to light and how we react to it. **My son, do not despise/lightly esteem the chastening of the Lord, nor faint/grow weary**

**when you are rebuked of Him:** So again here, that same word we just read there in James having to do with something to be exposed or be convicted of it spiritually.

So when it comes to matters of judgment and seeing how God says to do something like this previous verse here, because that's why we're looking at this. 'But if you have respect to persons;' this happens so much in God's Church, to show partiality, to show favoritism, it happens so much in people's family lives, in community, whatever it might be, it doesn't matter. But most things, and the reason I talk about these things so often, things start at home, our neighbour, the one who is closest to us, as a whole it's our children, it's our parents, it's our mate, that's where things begin, that's our greatest arena in life to practice and live God's way, and then it begins to move beyond that in the Church, into the fellowship of the Church, to the local area you're in and to the people you know.

And so again here, some of these things, sometimes I've seen, even in matters like this, the ability to fellowship and really get to know each other. Sometimes we show partiality and favoritism and after a while we only seek to be around those that we show partiality and favoritism to because we're drawn to them because of personality or whatever it might be, and then what are we practicing love.... I remember giving a sermon talking about preparing for the Feast, maybe it was last year or the year before, I don't know, that we hit this really hard, talking about don't let anyone be alone. *Seek* people out, *seek* to bring everybody into the fellowship. Sometimes we can get so busy with our life and our own little niche, and our own little friendships, or whatever, that we omit other parts of the Body, and I think, "Where is God in that?" What are we striving to do? Are we striving to include the whole Body? ...to bring people in? ...to help people along? That's a part of serving, that's a part of helping. And so there are those things we have to *do* as a part of learning how to love others and helping people along, encouraging people and not letting a brother or a sister be forgotten. We tend to do this in a very *bad* way, we really do, and it would be a good thing to look at in your congregation wherever you are, with whomever you're able to fellowship.

Let's turn over to Ephesians 5. Again, we just looked at these, but it's what it says along these lines, about how we think; it's about judgment and how we judge matters that's so important, that we want to make sure it's not our judging in the way we think but it's a matter to yielding to how God judges and what He says something should be done, how it should be done.

**Ephesians 5:8 - For you were sometimes in darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light:** Well, even in this matter here of other brethren and how we think toward them, God says to walk as children of light. We know what we're supposed to do, we then need to do it! We're not to forget anyone. We are all a part of a fellowship and we should bring everyone into that fellowship. Sometimes it's for lessons, just for things for you to learn, maybe, perhaps, whatever it might be, where you can grow in it; and you always grow through that.

**Verse 9 - (For the fruit of the spirit is all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.** Sometimes we have to go through situations where we don't understand how it works until we actually do it, and I keep going back to this thing about being a respecter of persons to show partiality, favoritism....*favoritism*. We can show favoritism in fellowship, we can show favoritism in conversation, and we can show favoritism when it comes to some of the more difficult things then as well, as to how we react to various matters. And so if we're walking in the light we're going to fight against that, we're going to strive to do it God's way, and **proving what is acceptable unto the Lord;** you can't know it, you can't understand how it works until you're actually... until you try it.

So, I challenge you: look at this in your own life and see, see some situations, see some relationships or fellowship where you can apply something a little bit different here about favoritism or showing partiality in fellowship, and seek to make some changes in that, because if we don't then why am I up here preaching today? I might as well have stopped in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5 and not bothered with James and Hebrews and talking about these things in Ephesians. That's why God's giving this to us, so we can look at these things and make some changes in our life, not just listen to a sermon and say, "Oh, that sounds good, and yeah, I do this and I do that..." and then leave here and then next week nothing changes in our fellowship, in our feelings towards others in the Body of Christ, or at the Feast of Tabernacles this year when we get there. And if nothing changes what good has all this been? What fruit? What fruit is there produced from any of this sermon?

**(For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.** Because that's really the way the world is. That's the way the world judges. I don't want to be like the world. I am *sick* of this world! I'm *sick* of how this world judges, I truly am, and how people think and the motivations and the mindset that's out there and the *evil* that exists in man. I loathe it! And when you come to understand that you come to see that's the crux of it all, because that's what started from the very beginning with Satan. It's the mind of the adversary, it fights against God, it fights against God's way.

**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove/expose/convict;** you be yourself reprov'd of those things, expose them. It's better for something to come out in the light and be exposed so it can be dealt with. **For it is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.** So much to be learned by that just in this application I'm not going to take time for it.

**Verse 13 - But all things that are reprov'd,** that same word, **are made manifest by the light:** God is the one that has to show these things, but it doesn't just happen; it's because we pray about it, because we think about it and we ask God, "Father, where am I falling short in this? Where can I change? Where can I do this better? How can I see this better in my life about being, showing, partiality or favoritism? Help me not to be biased in judgment. There are so many judgments – even dealing within God's Church – sometimes, again, I think of just the difference between men and women and there is still *bias* even with all we know, because it doesn't disappear overnight just because you start preaching about it, just because God starts revealing it to us. There are still those things that have made us who we are and we still have battles to fight, prejudices, bias, favoritism in thinking, what we favour. Sometimes, sad to say in the past, men have favoured men in their thinking, in their judgments.

**Therefore he says, Awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.** We have to go to God. God's the only one who can help us to see things properly and not just to continue on a course without change, because then that's just *sleeping*, it's just *coasting*, it's the thing we've been talking about recently, it's this *Laodicean* thing that I hate! Lukewarm! And if we're not careful we can do that with sermons; we can hear it and yes, be inspired by what we hear, but *where* is there by what we've heard? Are there absolutely things that we change week by week? Are there things in our mind that we go to God for and truly seek to change?

**Verse 15 - See then you walk circumspectly,** in other words, with exactness; striving to do it exactly the way God says, going to God and asking God for help, that it be His judgment. ...**not as fools but as wise,** and for it to be wise it must come from God; **redeeming the time,** making the most of the time, **because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.** That's

always what should be there as our motivation: What is God's will, not my will? Because that has to do with all judgment! What is God's will?

**And do not be drunk with wine**, sometimes people can be drunk, you can cloud your vision with favoritism. It can cloud your judgment - favoritism, bias - and the reality is it's in the big way. **...wherein is excess**; again, speaking of the world, **but be filled with God's spirit**.

So, let's look at this again in James. I'm not going to repeat verses 9. It goes on to say there about being convicted as transgressors: **James 2:10 - For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all**. So again here, this admonition that God gives always before us, always showing how short we really come. And you know, if we see these things then that's a healthy thing, to realize in a humble spirit, "I need God in all the decisions that are made and I don't do it that way all the time. ...and so I need to change, I need to address those things as God reveals them when they come along and strive to make changes in my life." That's the way we should go before God.

**Verse 11 - For He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not kill. Now if you do not commit adultery, yet you kill**, this is having to do with the Church. It's speaking to the Church. It's not talking about literally killing someone; it's talking about that spirit of murder, of failing to love someone. That's the context of what's being discussed here. This is to God's Church; it's about God's Church! This is not talking to the world about murders and killers out here; it's talking about that which is done in the mind spiritually that *leads* to such things. **...yet if you kill**, in other words fail to love a brother as God says, perhaps showing partiality, favoritism, because that falls into the same category. If we get into a habit of practicing that and live that and don't change that in our lives, especially when it counts! There are times when God's judgment counts as to a decision that's made and has to do with sin, and that becomes so much more important then, that we do it God's way, and if we don't – and especially within one's own family – it can become murder, because that's where it starts. We have to learn to apply it in our own families first and then in a fellowship, our own spiritual Family.

**...yet if you kill, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do, as they who shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, who has shown no mercy; and mercy rejoices against judgment**. So even this gets into another aspect here about being merciful, another aspect of things of working with people or being around people. How far do we go with mercy? How merciful are we? Do we understand how patient and merciful God is with us? And that has so much to do then with how we treat others, how we judge others, how we work with others.

Philippians 2, some other areas. There are just so many, we don't have time to go through... there is just so much here, over and over again here about how we're to live our lives in fellowship and with those in fellowship in God's Church.

**Philippians 2:1 – Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of agape, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels**, and again, this has to do with the most inward parts, the inner spirit, if you will, of care toward someone else, like the expression of the heart, the deepest part, **and mercies, fulfil my joy, that you be likeminded**, again, there should always be that desire to do it the way God says in whatever we do in life; **having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind**. This has to do with unity again; and just like this thing about bringing all into oneness, a fellowship.

And **let nothing be done through strife**, so again, added instruction that God gives. There's so much throughout the Bible, but here's one that says, **let nothing**, in fellowship, **be done**, in *family*, in *home*,

whatever it might be, **be done through strife**, it's a Greek word that means 'rivalry' or 'ambition'. I've seen a lot of that in God's Church. Some of the greatest lessons of things, of how God has trained me and taught me through time is seeing this thing of rivalry within the ministry, ambition within the ministry, ambition within people in the congregations, of people striving, clawing, scratching, trying to climb...? It wasn't a spiritual ladder they were trying to climb, it was going the wrong way. But anyway, things that are *just wrong* in relationships, this thing done through strife, rivalry, ambition; things that you have to bring into check sometimes, to check your own motivations, to say, "Why am I feeling this way?" Do I feel that there is something...? You know, being jealous of someone else –that's where rivalries come in.

Cain and Abel; it was in *Cain's* mind, it wasn't in Abel's mind – but it was something in Cain's mind. He was a rival! "Had to get rid of the rival! He's thwarting something, keeping something from me that I want! I want to be recognized! I want to have that relationship with God! I want to have that!" Sometimes there are people that, "I want that! I want to be a deacon!" "I want to be an elder." "I want to be a preacher, a pastor." "I want to be..." No, you don't. If you think you do then you don't understand! But people get into those things and they become jealous of others, that they think, "They have something that I deserved, I should have." You think that isn't a part of basic human nature? ...that so often happens in God's Church? It exists. It *exists!* I've had to council people over it...even in recent times, it exists. It's what happens in relationships and people's lives – ambition. It means the wrong kind of ambition. It's great to grow, it's great to mature, but to be ambitious to the point where it has to do with selfishness, of what you can get out of it, is so wrong!

Sitting here, I think of when attendance counting was done in congregations. There was a competition almost between congregations across different regions of who had the most people... these reports that would go in every month and how many people are in their congregation. Almost got to a point - well it was pretty bad how they counted people - it was almost like how some people get votes in some elections, they get dead people to vote somehow in some cases. And it almost got that bad in the Church of counting how many people were in a congregation, so a minister could have so many people on the report week by week by week. This is the area, so if you have more than the other minister then somehow it's this clawing and scratching to the top, supposedly, that you're going to be recognized more. These things happened in God's Church, and it blows my mind!

I remember squabbles that people would get into because someone is being called on the border, barely into one person's territory... see, one person's territory, it was spoken of in those terms. Everybody had 'territory'; *territory*. So people would protect their territory and if really it would be closer for them to go ahead and come to our place of where services are than where you're keeping it. It really would be better if they didn't have to travel that far, because it's a hardship for them, if they came on over here, and because they know some of the people over here it'd be better if they were coming over... All the things that people got into at different times so that they could have more in their congregation. Rivalries! You think that isn't a putrid part of human nature? You think that exists in God's Church today? Rivalry? Ambition? Strife? It does! Not on the plane, not in the same way as what happens in the world but they are things that exist, and to deny them is foolishness on our part because we have human nature. The only thing is we need to see our human nature, especially in things like this and see it for how bad and how ugly it really is when those things do crop up. Strife, rivalry, and ambition.

**...or vainglory;** a word that has to do with conceit or lifting up self, because these all kind of go hand in hand anyway. Most things are done because of conceit, lifting up of self. I think of one minister when all the things had broken up into different groups, of all the ones to think of right now, when we invited

him over to our place to visit one evening because he was not in the same group of people that we were with, but with another group, and I really felt by some of his email back and forth that his desire was to reach out and help people who were scattered, and his way of presenting it to me was he was interested. He wanted to know, "What are *you* doing? Because I see you doing something different in order to reach out to people who are scattered." So I thought this was coming from a genuine spirit, and as the individual was sitting there that night he started telling me about all the churches that *he* has raised up, all the different ones that he started to raise up in the northeast and through the mid-west. And I wanted to vomit, because he didn't raise a single one up – God did! When you take it to yourself and you see yourself in that light, "This is what I did here. This is what I did over there. I raised up this group over here..." You think, "You don't understand! You don't grasp spiritually at all what's going on!" Amazing how some have chosen to go that route here recently from us, to go that direction. You think, you're going to have the quail coming out of your nostrils before long because you don't know what you've gotten a hold of. Sad!

**...and let nothing be done through strife, rivalry, or ambition, or vainglory, lifting up of self, but in lowliness of mind,** now, this is misused by people; **but in lowliness of mind esteem other better than themselves.** This isn't some fake protestant type of thing, it's just awkward translation here; but basically it's talking about in the spirit of humility, that we should esteem other's interests, in other words, raise up other's interests, not raise ourselves up. That's the context. Don't try to raise yourself up but try to raise up other's interests, their desires, their concerns. Don't just be concerned about your own concerns, your own desires, what *you* are doing. Take interest in others and strive to help them, to serve them with a right spirit.

**Every person should not look on their own things,** interests, or concerns, **but every person on the interest or concerns of others.** In other words, not wrapped up in our own world, not motivated by what we're striving to get out of it, but what can you do to give. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** I wish I had more time to go through more here, because there is more, different attitudes of mind, different ways of thinking. I won't even have time in next week's sermon because that's pretty well finished as far as where it's going.

But the point of all this is that we can go through scripture after scripture after scripture here about ways of thinking, like in **1 Peter 2:1** where it says, **Wherefore laying aside all malice,** all evil ways, **and all guile, all deceit and craftiness;** this is speaking to God's Church! Why? Because we as human beings have these things in us. And it says, **and hypocrisy's,** the word means 'play-acting'. Beautiful, play-acting, going through the motions, **and envying and all evil speaking,** in other words about others.

So over and over again it's telling about things we need to get rid of, that shouldn't be a part of our lives that are, because Peter was addressing the Church here because these things happen in the Church, because we're human beings and we bring human nature into the Church.

So by digesting what we've covered - by seeking to digest it this Sabbath until next Sabbath - by seeking to digest what we've covered we can begin to learn and apply the true basics of going to a brother alone in spirit and in truth. Because until we have some of these things down as our primary motivation we can *never* go to a brother in spirit and in truth the way God says to do it.

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