

Today this is going to be *Part 4* of the sermon series entitled *Going to a Brother*, and we're going to begin with the last two verses that we read at the end of last Sabbath's sermon, just jumping right into it to pick up the context again and then we're going to continue on.

We've been going through Matthew 18 where the scriptures are that have to do with this matter of going to a brother, building up to this point in time of those things we're going to be addressing. There are so many factors in this particular subject matter anyway it's not a simple matter in any fashion or form, however, in times past in many respects it has been treated as a simple matter – but it's far, far from that and I hope we've been getting the idea of that as we've been going through this series, to realize there is a lot to consider, a lot to have in mind, and understanding we need to live and be living, practicing this way of life.

Matthew 18:7 - Woe unto the world because of offences! Or in other words, 'from offences', which again, the words there that have to do with 'causing to stumble' or 'stumbling', which is about sin. That's what it's about, it's just a different way of expressing something, this matter of offence or of those who are 'cause to offend', those who *cause* someone to stumble, I should say, or to be offended. And that's kind of an awkward way of stating it. I really don't like that word 'offend' because it carries with it in our use of the English language here different ideas. It's very easy for people to be offended by things and that is *not* what it's talking about – only in relationship to sin - if something has been done to you. And so really this concept or the better way of discussing this is the sense of causing someone to stumble or that you stumble as a result of what someone else has done toward you.

So you can be the one that perpetrates it, causing someone to stumble, or you can be the recipient of it because of someone's example, what they have done around you, what they've said to you and so forth, that ends up causing you to stumble. So again, kind of a two-way street here of those things that indeed happen within the environs of God's Church.

And so it goes on to say, **Indeed, it is necessary that offences/stumbling**, in other words, the effects of sin, **come**; it's just because of what we are as human beings, we're not perfect and there will be sin and there will be these things that happen. They happen in the world, obviously, all the time, but they happen in God's Church too and we have to address the reality, the truth of that. **But woe, it says, to that man through whom the offence comes!** ...the cause for stumbling, those who cause to stumble. In other words, through whom the sin comes.

And so all the way through here in Matthew 18 it's setting the stage for everyone to strive, as a whole, for a right spirit and a right attitude toward one another within the Body, because that's the first consideration. This is about the Body of Christ, this is about the Church of God, and it is about our attitude toward other people in the Body, and God desires, admonishes us in this respect, to have a humble spirit, to have that spirit and attitude of a little child, or even of seeing a little child in others – in other words, treating others in that manner. But it has to do with humility, of how we receive one another, not being lifted up with pride, not being lifted up with haughtiness, because it's very important how the instruction that's going to follow here in a little while is put into practice.

It's important to grasp the greater message here for it is about destruction that comes from sin, it's about destruction that comes from sin which offends others in the sense of leading others to stumble. And that's just human nature; sadly it gravitates to this anyway. Human nature gravitates to sin, and so if someone within the Body sets a wrong example, does the wrong thing toward someone else, sins toward someone else, or sets an example of that, it's easier for others to follow that same example. And we're going to get to some specifics here, especially in the context of some things that are discussed here.

Let's turn over to Matthew 13; we're going to come back to 18 and continue on but let's just turn over there for a moment. So a relationship between those who perpetrate sin and those who stumble, are led to stumbling as a result of someone's sin, yet again, to understand in all this each is responsible for their own sin. Just because someone is led to stumble or led to sin, the choice is still theirs regardless, you can't blame someone else for your sin. The reality is we're all responsible for our own sin.

At this stage here it's important to consider what is stated in Matthew 13, in the flow of Matthew 18 and what's being discussed.

Matthew 13:38 - The field is the world; we're jumping into the last part of a parable here, the explanation of it. **The field is the world; and the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked/wicked one; The enemy who sowed them is the devil;** speaking of the tares, sowed the tares; **and the harvest is the end of the world/the age; the reapers are the angels.**

Verse 40 - As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age/the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, this word here 'that cause...'; 'that cause to stumble', or in other words, 'the source of stumbling', **and those who do iniquity.** Now the point of this particular parable here, of talking about it, is we understand this process of what we've always been taught, that there is this process we go through as far as God's Church in the last 2,000 years, in the Millennial period, and then the Great White Throne and judgment that's always upon God's people, the Church of God, if you will, and those who are going to yield to the process and those who will not yield to the process and their end. And it's simplified in various terms here but the terms being used here is that when it's all said and done those who refuse to repent, those who will not turn to God, those who will not change, there is that which has to take place when it's all said and done, and it talks about gathering the tares together and burn by fire...and those things don't escape us.

But the reason for looking at this right now is when it says here in verse 21 that **The Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those who do iniquity.** In other words, we're talking about the same thing, because those who do iniquity, those who sin, that is what causes others to stumble. It is something that spreads, as we talked about even last Sabbath. And so there is that direct tie-in of that which should not escape us in any fashion or form, that there is that which causes to stumble and we need to understand that it's sin. That's why sometimes people go to a brother and it's not a matter of sin, it's their interpretation of something, it's what they feel someone to be doing in a different way, but again here, it's important to understand this must be tied in with *sin* because it's sin that causes others to stumble, and we'll build upon that a little bit.

Let's notice Matthew 24, the same corollary, or comparison, is being made here by the use of both words, of that which offends or causes stumbling as the one who does iniquity, who does sin.

Matthew 24:10 – again, the point being is that sin is not private, sin hurts, sin spreads, sin hurts others, *especially* in the Body, *especially* in the Church, and that’s why Matthew 18 is being addressed especially to the Church. There are things here that God wants us to understand and practice in a proper way. Matthew 24 - again, a prophecy having to do with the end of the age here, thing that we have already experienced through time, things that began especially very powerfully so through Philadelphia.

And then shall many be offended – to cause to stumble. Many shall be offended – cause to stumble. We have lived through that over and over again. ...and shall **betray one another, and shall hate one another.** And so because of the actions... it only takes a few and it begins to spread, especially if there is greater authority or responsibility in that and taken advantage of in a wrong way. That’s a very powerful tool that Satan has used through time. *He* used it. *He* had great power. And if we look at what happened in various Church areas through time, through Mr. Armstrong’s time and on into the period of Laodicea, and even since that time, this same pattern has always been there and there are those who begin a process that leads to others stumbling and falling as well.

Everyone is responsible for what they did. Everyone is responsible for what they reject or what they hold onto – can’t blame it on anyone else - but the sad thing is that sin spreads. And there are things that God wants us to address in life, especially in the Body of Christ, to help ensure that the damage is less, to hopefully and prayerfully by dealing with it in a strong manner, in a right manner in God’s way, in the manner He tells us to do it, that it’ll help to lessen the damage and the hurt and the pain and the suffering – and that’s what Matthew 18 is so much about here, truly is, when it’s done the right way, in God’s way; but it must always be done in a spirit of humility and how we see each other.

And so that’s why this is addressed over and over again in Matthew 18, this attitude of Jesus Christ, when He picked up a little child and said this is how you have to receive the Kingdom of God, as a little child, in that spirit of humility and doing things exactly the way God says to do it, not even considering some other path, some other way.

And then shall many be offended/cause/to cause to stumble, and they shall betray one another and shall hate one another. That’s how things spread. **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.** And so whether it literally be teachers, ministers, which we’ve experienced, or whether it be individuals, because it doesn’t mean a prophet as in the Old Testament, it has to do with, again, that which is a matter of inspired speaking, and there is that which is not inspired speaking but is portrayed or represented as that from others. It’s like anyone who would come along and begin to teach or to preach something different – they are, in this respect, a false inspired speaker, because it isn’t from God, it isn’t inspired from God, it is inspired by something else perhaps, but it’s not from God. And so that’s what this verse 11 is all about.

And so it says, **many shall arise...** Well, we’ve experienced that in and through Worldwide, those of you who have been through Worldwide! I started in 1969, some of you started before that (maybe not here in this room – anybody here baptized in the Church before that? ...but some of you experienced, you were around that time so you saw things even as young people growing up in the Church. You’ve been around for a while). We’ve seen many things in Worldwide, what happened through the time of Philadelphia and on into Laodicea and these things that took place, how people were hurt. And what’s amazing is that Matthew 18 wasn’t applied very well here at all! It wasn’t really *lived!* And when it was lived it wasn’t lived in the right way, as a whole. That’s been my experience through time in God’s Church, that as a whole it hasn’t been applied, and when it has been applied it hasn’t been applied properly and it causes damage to both sides, obviously, hurt and pain and suffering to God’s people.

Verse 12 - And because iniquity shall abound, that's the cause of it! People began to change, and if they begin to live, practice sin, begin to set a wrong example – because you can't hide things in the Church and after a while it can hurt other people, and especially when we come down to and talk about those things that have to do with what we believe. **And because iniquity shall abound the love/agape of many shall wax cold.** We've experienced that; we experienced that through Philadelphia. God's love began to be lessened more and more the farther we went, and as we went into Laodicea...weaker and weaker and weaker. And God's love is the source, comes through the power of God's spirit, the source is God, and because God's spirit is not as alive in an individual because it begins to be choked off, because it begins to become less and less a force in a person's life, people aren't yielding to it and human nature comes out.

So again, the admonition throughout Matthew 18 is that we first look at ourselves, to go above and beyond, or as some use the expression, 'over and above', striving not to offend, striving not to do anything that would cause someone hurt – that's what we should strive to do. As Paul put it, there is a certain expression he used (I might even have it here in my notes, I don't know that I quoted it again...), but his attitude was he'd rather go to an extreme not to offend someone. He'd rather not eat meat the rest of his life than to offend someone. If there's a possibility there of offending someone he could do without it, even though he had the freedom to do it; that was his attitude. And so that should be our attitude, that we want to do whatever we can in a spirit of humility to go above and beyond, over and above, whatever, trying to be a right example. And we don't do that well as human beings but we should strive to, and when we hear sermons like this obviously we look at ourselves more deeply and repent of the things where we're not doing this, where we don't have that spirit and attitude and strive to change. That's what God wants – change.

So again, a desire here not to cause someone to stumble by our wrong actions toward someone and that we seek first here to have a humble spirit toward others in the God Family.

I'm just going to read you this verse here in **1 John 2:10 - He who loves his brother abides in the light.** That's what God desires. How do you abide in the light? Because you're living this way of life, because you're striving to live this way of life in spirit and in truth toward others; a right mind, a right attitude toward others. That's the only way we abide in – and that word 'abide' has to do with 'dwell in', to 'abide in', 'to continue in', 'to remain in' that we see so often when it's referring to God's spirit and God living in us, abiding in, dwelling in us. And so, we're able to abide in – just another way of saying it – in God and God in us, able to abide in the light, because we're not able to love our brother unless we're doing that. If we're not abiding in the light, which means we're obeying God, which we're seeking to do things that are right and striving to live a right life. That's how you live in the light.

And there is none occasion of stumbling in him; none occasion of stumbling or only not of causing someone else to stumble, but yourself stumbling, because you're doing what God has admonished to do in the first place.

1 Corinthians 8:13 – this attitude that Paul expressed, similar to what we discussed earlier but in a different area of scripture where he said here - **Wherefore, if meat makes my brother to offend/ stumble, I will eat no flesh/meat while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend/stumble.** What an attitude! What an incredible attitude! So although we might have the freedom of some things there are some things we should go above and beyond then in striving not to hurt someone, to think in those terms. And we don't always do that very well.

Let's go back to Matthew 18. And so if we're embracing an attitude of humility, in other words of looking at self first, because that's what it's about – God wants us to look at ourselves first before we look at someone else in the sense of a duty or a responsibility that we might have especially.

Matthew 18:8 - Therefore if your hand or your foot offend you/cause you to stumble, or cause anyone to stumble – just cause to stumble, cut them off, and cast them from you: it is better for you to enter into life lame or crippled, rather than having two hands or two feet and to be cast into everlasting/age-lasting/age long, if you will, fire. The point being here is that the fire doesn't last forever. It's the point that it's until it's consumed something, and the fire will be there until it's accomplished as we have always been taught, as we understand. It just shows here, in essence, that it's a finality here, and we understand it means they're never to be resurrected again, it's over with when this judgment comes.

Verse 9 – And if your eye offend you, pluck it out and cast it from you; These are very descriptive, rather grotesque things, aren't they? And that's how we should look upon it! Can you imagine pulling out an eye, cutting off an arm, cutting off both arms because it's better to go into life, it says here, into everlasting life, if you will, lame, crippled in other words, so that you can go into everlasting life this way than to end up not going anywhere at all but eternal death, if you will, the punishment here, everlasting fire.

And if your eye offend you, pluck it out and cast it from you, it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into gehenna fire. That's what the word 'hell' is, it's gehenna, valley beside the area of Jerusalem there that pictures something the mind can understand and grasp, where refuse and garbage and stuff is thrown and burned up, and basically that's what we're being shown here, of what will happen to people in the sense of a punishment, in a sense of that which is going to totally consume, never to be resurrected again. It doesn't mean you have to literally be in a fire, it just has to do with that which is totally consumed and never to be resurrected again.

Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 3, you see, because this is not about a physical arm, this is not about physical eyes, it's about something that is spiritual, and that's what we need to grasp and comprehend about Matthew 18 in a very powerful way, to understand that something like this is repulsive to think of, to think of grabbing an eye and pulling it out, getting a sword or something large to whack off an arm. It's not a pretty sight! And *this* is not a pretty sight, what God is talking about here in Matthew 18, it's a hideous thing, it's a horrible thing, but there are some things that have to be done for the sake of the rest of the Body, and that's what this is all about.

1 Corinthians 3:9 – pick up some context here... What's amazing as you go through the story flow here of so much of what is in 1 Corinthians here anyway, but going through this it builds up to a time of taking them to an understanding of the Passover period, of how to observe the Passover. There are those things that prepare them for that because this is what they were working toward; this is what Paul was teaching them about and teaching them things that they had been going through and things they needed to understand about sin and what was taking place in the Church.

1 Corinthians 3:9 here, it says - **For we are labourers together with God:** I love the term that we used to have in Worldwide, co-workers. A letter would go out on a regular basis to co-workers, whether they were a part of the Church or not, if they helped contribute because they liked the message, they liked 'The Plain Truth' magazine, they liked what Mr. Armstrong was saying on the telecast, they contributed but never really desired to follow through in order to become a part of the Church, they didn't want to

necessarily begin keeping the Sabbath and doing some of those things. They didn't make that step because, candidly, God wasn't drawing them at that point. Some, perhaps, He was, but the point being is that there were decisions made in people's lives and they didn't want to go all the way in the sense of the Church, and so they were referred to as 'co-workers'.

And we are co-workers together with God. You are God's husbandry, you are God's building.

'Husbandry' – it's like that which is being planted in a field or the example that's used so often having to do with grapevines and how you take care of them and the fruit that's produced, or planting of seed and the tares that come along. And so all these examples here; we're a part of God's field, and we talk about that which is going to come out of the various harvests, we talk about the spring harvest and the fall harvest, and we talk about a Temple, we talk about a building that we're able to be a part of. **...and you are God's building.**

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereon. And so God gives us warning here to be careful of how we yield ourselves to the building process – and really, that's a lot of what Matthew 18 is about here, an attitude we should have toward the building. What is the building? The Body of Christ, the Church of God. And it's our attitude that God has concern of, of teaching us and helping us to understand that indeed we need to respond and have a right spirit and a right attitude toward how we build.

But let every man take heed how he builds thereon, what God gives to us. And as we grow we have to continue to be careful how we build. Through time it's always been that way as a part of God's people, and the more God gives the more we have to be careful how we build with what we're given, that we do it God's way! ...because the tendency, the temptation of human nature is to do it a different way. That is the battle.

Verse 11 - For other foundation can no man/no one lay but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Again, everything begins with Him, with the Passover on into time through the process of how we become a part of God's Family.

Verse 12 - Now if any one build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

in other words there are different ways to build and it gives two different types of things that are part of the analogy that's given here; that which can be heated up in fire and it doesn't change, it stays the same, that which is heated up by fire and it burns and becomes something different and is of no value and no use – wood, hay, and stubble. If you build with gold, silver, and precious stones, that's how God wants us to understand what He's giving to us, that that's how we build, that's how we should see the Word of God, the truth of God – in that context.

Verse 13 - Every man's/Every person's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it,

in time! Somewhere through time it's going to become very clear – the day will declare it – and generally it's going to be a day of trial, a day of something that comes along to try someone. That's why Jesus Christ used the example over and over again, to watch, to be spiritually alert, because you don't know the hour of the coming of Christ. Not a specific literal hour He's referring to but you don't know when something is going to come along, the thief in the night if you will, that's going to come along and put you to the test as to what you are truly living and how you respond to that trial and test, when the fire comes. Because fire is an analogy that's used over and over again about trial; so when a trial comes along, some sort of tribulation, some sort of pull in life that comes along, how are we going to react to it,

how are we going to respond to it? That's what's being asked here. Are we going to burn up with it or are we going to come through it. It's still going to be a fire and it's not fun to go through, but that's when the dross – especially when you talk about silver and gold – the impurities are able to come to the surface and then we can find what needs to be changed and God makes it manifest and shows us what needs to be changed. With others, God says this is what will destroy you.

That's why we have talked about in terms here, in the first three months here of entering into this final 'day', of that which is going to *define everyone in God's Church!* This is the time that's defining everyone in God's Church! It's not the previous two years, five years, ten years, thirty years even, in God's Church, *this is the time* – that's what God's message is to the Church – *this right now, this time we're living through now* is the time that's going to define everyone, and God gives greater opportunity to become much stronger. He's going to give more power – He already has been and will continue to do so to make us stronger, more effective as a part of what He has planned – others go by the wayside. And it's not over with. I'm just going to tell you – it's not over with! Okay? That ought to be sobering! Because now is the time to make changes and obey God in *everything!* ...to strive to obey God in everything! ...to strive to fight against the weaknesses you have in your life! ...to no longer coast! If you coast this will define you! Laodicea isn't going to hack it in this year, in the few months that are remaining, thirty-five weeks that are remaining right now. Coasting... if there was coasting – which there was a lot of it – leading up to May 27th, coasting isn't going to get it now.

You have been called to something special! Everybody in God's Church right now has been called to something special - you're not in the same boat as the world, you're not in the same boat as those who are still scattered out there, you have been given more, and to whom more is given, more is *required* by God – especially now! And so if you've been given opportunity to live into a new age, how you respond to that which God has placed before you, God wants to know that, and the time He's going to know it is *now*. So **the day will declare it**, for us in this age at this time even more so in a very powerful way this 'day' is going to make it manifest, it's going to declare it in a very powerful way in God's Church.

And so, **Every person's work shall be made manifest:** and that's an absolute promise right now until the time of Christ's return here, **for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire;** test, trials, things that pull at us. Again, how loud can you cry out, "Don't coast! Don't be Laodicean! Learn from the past, learn from those things that have gone before you and don't let it happen to you!" Because one of the hardest things sometimes for people to grasp and comprehend when they've been called into something when it's already passed, like Laodicea, is to understand the spirit of it, and yet that spirit exists, will exist in the Millennium as well, and that's what people have to fight against because it's just human nature.

...because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's/every person's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereon, he shall receive a reward. I mean, you read of something like this right now and this is applied to all time, but this should even be more meaningful to now, for now, for where we are, because these words just scream out! ...because we're at a time where so much is going to change very soon now in *your* lifetime! You're not going to die and be resurrected at some point later on, as a whole... still can happen...

If any man's work shall be burned, the wood, the hay, the stubble, nothing left, nothing remain, **he shall suffer loss: but he himself,** and as the word or is here **may be saved; yet so as by fire.** Still going to take fire! **Know you not that you are the Temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you?** God reminds us of that – we are the Temple, we are the Body of Christ, we are the Church of God, we are

part of the Temple of God, **and the spirit of God dwells in you. If any man defile**, and the word here literally means 'to destroy' rather than to build... **yield to destroying, rather than building, the Temple of God, him shall God destroy**; so, again here, still a possibility that in time an individual is going to be able to repent, but not necessarily obviously in *this* time. ...**for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple you are**. So this here and what is to be done, it's about God's Temple. We're all a part of the Temple and a clear picture that we all should have.

Let's notice just over here in 1 Corinthians 5 now, because there's a theme running through this, much to be learned, admonitions God gave through Paul. **1 Corinthians 5:1 - It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication...** I referred to this last Sabbath, today we're going to go into it so that we can understand more about what's being said here. ...**such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife**. Incest; in this case here from a matter of a stepson, but he took his father's wife. It's still so highly immoral, sick, perverted. But notice the attitude of the congregation, of the Corinthian Church here and how they dealt with this.

And he says, **And you are puffed up**, you are *filled with pride*. Do you know why he was saying this? Let's notice; **and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you**. In other words, "You're allowing this to exist *in God's Church!* And *what are you doing* about it? *What are you doing* to address this? You're *puffed up!*" Awesome here, what he's saying; he says, "You're lifted up with pride!" In other words, "Your standard is higher than God's! The way you're handling it, you're not handling it the way God says to do it, you're handling it your own way, therefore you are puffed up, filled with pride to think that you can have this happen within the Body and somehow because they're friends and because you like them, that you're going to somehow tolerate this?"

It's kind of like the death penalty. God says when someone murders someone else they should be put to death, not stay in prison for a lifetime. That's not God's way! He says put them to death! But mankind... I think it's all throughout Europe and most other nations except the United States. Most nations in the world if you look at Europe, and I think Australia, and Canada, and different ones, I believe this is correct, they have no death penalty, and they believe what we do here in the United States is cruel, that anyone should ever be put to death for such crimes, such hideous crimes. Because their standard of righteousness is this is just a horrible thing to do, to take human life. *Their* righteousness! They're puffed up against God, against the truth of God because God says, "No, that's not merciful, that's not righteous, that isn't healthy, that isn't good...on the contrary, they should be put to death and the sooner the better! If there is absolute proof someone has done something they should absolutely be put to death quickly." That's God's way!

But man's way isn't that way because our standard is a 'better' standard than God's and we don't understand why God says to do it that way, because people don't understand the plan of God anyway. Make sense? Okay. Same thing is true here. Sometimes if we're not careful, out of friendship, what we misconstrue as friendship, rather than doing what Matthew 18 tells us we *tolerate* or *allow* things to exist that should never be allowed to exist within the Body. That's what God says. So He said there is a way of dealing with things and not to be more righteous in spirit and mind than God by not addressing or doing things the way God says to do it.

Verse 3 - For I verily, as absent in body, yet present in spirit, have judged already, amazing what he's saying here. He says, "I don't have to be there with you, I've already judged this matter, because it's God's judgment. It's a matter of God's judgment in the matter." He says, "I don't have to be there

physically with you, I'm not physically there with you now. I'm writing this letter to you to tell you about this." He says, **for verily, as absent in the body but present in the spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him who has done this deed**, well, it was both of them, **those who have done this deed**, the two of them. **In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ**, in other words, the spirit that's in him because he's showing here that he is with them in spirit. He *knows* spiritually what's coming from God, he is in unity with God and the spirit of God and he's saying, in essence, to them, "As you receive the spirit of God there is only one thing you can do and should be doing here in how you address this matter."

So he says, **in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together**, in essence here, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, because that's what we desire to be in our life, God living in us, Christ living in us, to be led by God's spirit. He says, **To deliver such an one unto Satan**, now, that's very strong, what he's saying here! He says, **deliver them to Satan**. What does that mean? In essence he is telling them to do what they've already done to themselves anyway, but to make it official as far as the Church is concerned, to separate them from the Body, from the Body of Christ, from the Church of God. An arm or an eye? Cast it from you. That's what it's talking about in Matthew 18.

So he says, **to deliver such a one unto Satan**; in other words, they have already sinned, they've already cut themselves off, that power, they've already given themselves to such power to pull at them...and you don't want that to come into and affect the Church then, that's what God is showing here, because that's what will happen. Sin spreads. That's what he's talking about here. So **to deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**. That's God's way! It may sound harsh to people. Sometimes people don't want to go to someone and talk to them because, "I'll lose a friend!" Well, that's puffed up, that's self righteous! That's not God's righteousness. God doesn't say to do it that way. He says you don't understand love then! If you really love someone, you'll tell them, you'll go to them because you *don't* want to lose them from the Body! To ignore it is not love, it's absolutely hatred! That's the way God classifies it. He says you don't love someone if you don't go to them, if you don't care about them, if you don't care what happens to them! You're more concerned with yourself, that you might lose a friend or this is awkward to do or you don't want to have to do it! That's self-righteous and it's more concern about self than it is anything to do with God's love and concern for the Body. ...toward a little one? ...toward another one in the Body? ...to have an attitude of humility and love toward another in the Body? ...the way God says we should do it, as a little child, a little lamb, a child? Because that's what we are before God.

Your glorying/being puffed up/boasting; it's the same word for 'boasting', **your pride**, in essence, **is not good**. And pride is always there when... it's like spiritual idolatry, you life up an idol spiritually before God because you choose to do something in a different way than the way God says to do it. That's spiritual idolatry, and it's pride. That's what pride is all about, doing something in a different way than the way God says to do it because in the way God says to do it there is *power* to change, there is *power* to love. It's hard to administer sometimes but it must be done because it's God's way, it's how God's spirit works in our life and how God's spirit works in the Church.

Your glorying is not good; know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? So someone that causes...sins, stumbles, they stumble, but because of that sin they cause others to stumble? That's what's being addressed in Matthew 18. When you cause others to stumble, because sin spreads. That's the way it's always been in God's Church - always, always, always.

So either it's addressed and taken care of God's way or the sin spreads and people become weaker and weaker and the love of many begins to wax cold and people begin to, as we read in Matthew 24, not love toward each other – how does it state it? Says it perfectly here – **many shall be offended, caused to stumble, and shall betray one another.** To not love someone, to not address someone the way God says to do it is to betray someone. First of all, to betray God, to betray Jesus Christ, to betray the Church because it's not being done the way it's supposed to be. **...and shall hate one another.** And the word 'hate' throughout the Bible here, the way it's used especially when you look at 1st John and some of those areas, is 'a failure to love', is a refusal to love the way God says to love - is by definition to hate. It's not something in the middle, and God even goes farther, He says such hatred is murder. So it's not love toward someone to save, it's more concern about protecting self and not doing that which just feels a little awkward and I don't like doing it and I don't want to have to do this and it's not really that bad and the ministry in time will take care of it. By the time the ministry even knows about it it's too late, the person could have been helped a long time ago, sobered to reality, and by that time they're so far gone that they can't be helped. That's my experience.

Verse 7 - Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened; so it means, 'as you are unleavened'. He's using the Days of Unleavened Bread here showing that when you keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, as you approach that time, because he's talking about approaching the Days of Unleavened Bread and Passover and using the example of the Church, about becoming unleavened during the Days of Unleavened Bread, that we get rid of all leavening and we make our home unleavened, in that respect, and that's what this means here, it's the example being used.

So, **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump,** in other words, in your own life. It's always about self, what we have to address in ourselves first. It's not about someone else first, it's about us first, it's about making sure we're of a humble spirit and a humble attitude and we're doing what we're supposed to be doing and repenting of the things that we're not doing right and then still doing, even in the midst of that, because no matter how much you grow, how long you've been in God's Church you can never do everything perfectly, you will always have sin. And that, really, should help you to be of more of a spirit of humility in the first place and be able to help others in a right spirit as well – mercy, being merciful, not harsh in judgment because we can see ourselves.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump even as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: so again, bringing this matter of sacrifice, that it takes sacrifice to live this way of life. **Therefore let us keep the Feast;** amazing how many in the protestant world talk about how, "Where does it say you should keep the Holy Days, the Sabbath?" So basic, so simple it's a given. But here he's telling them, **Let us keep the Feast;** it wasn't a suggestion...**not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** That's what God desires in us, to have that spirit of sincerity and truth in how we live His way of life and how we treat each other.

So again, in Corinthians, showing the importance here of becoming unleavened individually and in the Body, of those things that sometimes have to be addressed in the Body, to deliver, as he said, such a one to Satan, to separate from the Body. Because that's what's taking place if someone is 'delivered unto Satan'; that's the expression that's used, in other words, no longer able to be a part of the Church, no longer able to glean and benefit from the Church spiritually, that it's better to be disfellowshipped, to be away from the Body, otherwise sin will spread.

Romans 16:17 - Now I beseech you, brethren, mark; These are not easy things to look at, in the sense they can sound rather sharp and harsh, but they're really filled with God's love. It's about love, it's how to administer love in physical life, God's love, and His love and desire is for the Body. And if part of the Body is hurting the other part of the Body in the sense of causing others to stumble and can spread up the arm like gangrene into more of the Body, it's better to cut it off quickly, God says, pull out the eye, whatever it is, to save the Body. It's going to hurt the Body any way you look at it. When anyone is separated from the Body, when someone sins and chooses to leave the Body or even before they choose to leave and they still stay around because they spread whatever that they're doing, and it begins to spread within the Body, again, it still hurts when it finally comes to that point in time, but it's healthy for the Body that it not be a part anymore.

So it says, **...I beseech you... 'mark'**, it's a word that means 'to look at', 'to contemplate', 'to point out', 'to watch'. So an admonition here in the Church of something that has to be done God's way, to look at indeed because if you don't look at it, if you don't see what's going on, or you hide your eyes to what's taking place, then you're not doing what you should be doing. Contemplate, yes indeed, think about it, what is involved here, what is it doing? To point out, if need be then, to show, to mark, "Look at this! Learn from this!" **...watch those who cause divisions and 'offences'**, that same word here 'offences', 'offend', 'cause to stumble'; **those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and 'avoid' them**. The word is, 'to turn away from'. That's what it literally means in the Greek here, which is a simple word, 'to avoid', 'turn away from'. And that can seem harsh to people. No, *it is God's love!* It is God's love working through a physical people *with* His spirit in them, if they yield themselves to that spirit. Easy to do? No. But to be done? Absolutely. God's way. Because if there is fruit that can be produced or salvaged or helped in even the future time, *this* is what is healthiest.

Because God's plan isn't just in this moment, it's through time, and people can be worked with at different moments in time and God knows how to best do that, we don't! We must yield to the process of how He says to do something because His desire is far greater than ours... You know, *far greater than any of us* to see everyone saved. He makes our desire look puny in comparison. If you have a desire to save? His desire is much, much greater, and His way is the best way to help produce that or to bring it to pass. You don't know what's going on in the mind of the individual unless you've been there and gone that route and have had these things happen to you, of what can help to bring an individual, so as by fire, God says, because fire is going to come at some point in time if there is that potential, which God always has before Him, because His desire above all else is to give everyone ample opportunity to repent and to change and to receive His way of life - far more than what ours is!

And so again, that admonition, those who cause divisions; sin divides, sin hurts. But it even gets more specific sometimes when you begin to realize what's being spoken of here.

Let's notice **1 Timothy 1:1 - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ...** Please understand here, the word 'Saviour' here is referring to God, God Almighty, the word 'King' and so forth, those are throughout the Old Testament. I've given sermons on that in the past. Too often people look at the word 'Saviour' and say, "Well, see, it's talking about Jesus Christ." And Jesus Christ, those titles are given to Him, King - over and over again in the Old Testament it speaks of God Almighty being King - but those titles are titles that are given to Christ, things that He's going to fulfill and accomplish from God the Father.

But it says, **an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith:** so again, Paul saw Timothy mature, grow up, ordained him, and brought him into the ministry, began to work with him, knew family members in the Church, and to Paul it was like working with a son. **Unto Timothy, my son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Verse 3 - As I sought/implored/encouraged you to remain in Ephesus, so Paul is speaking to Timothy here, this is written to Timothy and he's reminding him of these things. He's reminding him of his relationship first of all, he's going to remind him of his ordination, he's reminding him here now of a time when Paul was to go on but his desire was, his admonition to Timothy was to remain in Ephesus to continue doing what he was doing, to follow up with, to help take care of the Church there.

So he says, **as I sought/implored/encouraged you to remain at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia, that you might 'charge'**, strong words being used here – **that you might 'order'**; in the Greek here that's what it means, 'to order' or 'to command', no weakness – it's right down the line, straight forward, right to the point, **that you might charge some/that you might order some/that you might...**in other words, "Timothy, you have authority here that needs to be exercised when it needs to be exercised." When does authority ever need to be exercised? When something is not in order with it.

If everyone is doing what we should be doing, if everyone in a family, if children are doing what they are supposed to be doing, what they're told to do, there is no need to exercise the authority of a parent, there is no need for correction. But it's when someone does that which is not a part of what they've been instructed to do that authority has to be used and they have to be reminded of who the parent is. See? Because that's why God gave parents, as a whole, because children, until they're of mature age, they're going to make some wrong decisions, they're going to make some wrong choices in life. The parent is there to guide and direct them, and so it is in God's Church.

We're children! Little children! And we're to see ourselves in that light and to realize we need guidance and direction from God; that's why we meet together in Sabbath services, because we realize that's when God gives us guidance and direction and instruction and correction and everything else that we need in order to grow and mature on a spiritual plane. And so there are some things, at times, where that authority has to be used more than others, in a stronger manner than in others. And we have to be careful then how that is used and when it is done, but to strive to do it God's way.

...that you might charge/order/command some that they not teach any other doctrine; so that *should* be strong! If someone comes along and begins to teach something different... If that would have happened in Worldwide, if we could have done that more, if in Church areas an elder, a deacon, a member of the Body could have addressed some things, if a minister began to teach something wrong, different from what they were hearing from Headquarters, from Mr. Armstrong, from the Church... if within a congregation someone heard someone on the sidelines, not a minister but another member, beginning to say something... Because this happened so much! I think back on my experiences in the Church and long before ordination around other people and you hear certain things, of someone bringing along some idea of what they think something should be like or something, their interpretation of something they're reading in the Bible and you think... "Whoa, where did that come from? I've never.... that doesn't go with everything else that we've been given!" And so that's what they're doing, they're teaching some other doctrine, some other thing that they think is true! And people can go far out on this! That's why we've used the term, somebody who is a wannabe, a teacher, a wannabe teacher. I've had my fill of that in times past, of things of those experiences, because it means that you

want to come along and teach something you think everybody needs to know that's different from what you've been taught. No, God teaches us what we're supposed to have and it's supposed to be in unity and harmony and oneness. There is an awesome lesson there! I'm getting into a Feast sermon; I'm going to have to back away here...

There are awesome things that we're to learn from our experiences of times past, of *why* things went the way they did and *how* some of these things didn't function well. We're to learn from that! And we have in a mighty way but God is driving the point home just before His Son returns to this earth. And so that's why we have stressed over and over again in God's Church and to the ministry, the importance of being in *absolute* unity and oneness! And God has given us a miracle of technology! Mr. Armstrong used to talk about this so often, the miracle of technology to do the work of God, and he saw the growth of the printing press, the radio and the TV, and all these things even becoming greater. And I think of 'The Plain Truth', when they started doing it, they started on one of these crazy... what did you call that thing? You crank it... mimeograph – yeah, I remember doing that in high school, you had these things, your fingers would get ink all over it and those pages and you had to type perfectly because you couldn't erase things like you do today so easily with spell check and various things. And whatever you printed off that's what...

That's how they made 'The Plain Truth', they used that machine to print off pages and began to send it out, Loma and himself in the beginning, and then they saw the technology grow and as they grew in the power to produce, and even at headquarters they had their own printing presses. In Bricketwood, I used to work at the printing presses on occasion to help in binding up some of the things that were sent out to different parts of Africa and Europe and 'The Plain Truth' from there and some of the booklets and things. Awesome technology to mass produce millions.

And then today we see the ability of writing on a ... you know when they had to have whole departments at headquarters, Pasadena, they had *whole departments* filled with people of various areas for publications and so forth. That's why I get a charge out of... had letters come in, "If you could turn this over to your..." whatever it was... how did they express that? Do you remember different ones we've gotten in times past? Anyway, it's like, "...turn this over to your publishing department." Or whatever. Anyway, we don't have departments, we have a simple computer and you can do everything today... you can do the design of a cover for a book, you can put everything in format on a single computer, do it yourself; you don't have to have a whole bunch of people working to follow up on it like they used to have to do. And the technology has continued to grow to enable God's work to the degree that God has given it. Awesome, the age that we've seen!

And now, because of the ability of the internet, people can hear throughout the United States and Canada at the same time, it can be loaded on here so that people next Sabbath are going to be able to listen to it in Australia and New Zealand and Europe, and you think, "How incredible!" and God has given that at a time when the Church has been so scattered, and we are scattered still as far as not having what Mr. Armstrong was able to work with in the sense of building up through Ambassador College and so forth and have ministers in different areas and the time it would take to do all those things and the expense of doing those things. God has blessed us to be able to do it through the internet.

Awesome what He's given us! ...and primarily, above and beyond everything else, for the sake of unity, so we can be of one mind more than any other time, in that respect, with far more that God has given us as concerning truth and where we are in time and what God has been giving to us as far as what we

need to see – 57 Truths. And so everything that’s on the internet...that’s why we encourage the ministry, encourage the Church – there it is, it’s all there, everything that you need at this time that God has given to you. You don’t need something different, you need what’s there. There is more than you can digest, truly, especially on a spiritual plane. Knowledge – even if you learned it word by word – a lot to learn in how you live life, in how you practice it, in how you live it.

But I am in awe of how God has given us the opportunity to have greatest unity and oneness, and yet that’s about to be made insignificant compared to what’s coming when Jesus Christ returns and 144,000 are on this earth. Awesome-awesome-awesome how God works!

But it’s *so important to God* that His people be of the same mind, that we be of a unified spirit, that there be no divisions, that there be *no one* who begins to teach *anything different*, to begin to come up with different ideas. Because that’s what we experienced through Laodicea, that was the fruit, the falling asleep, the people that began to leave, the things that happened finally in one fell swoop that an apostasy could occur. That’s what led up to it, because this wasn’t being lived, what God said to do and how to do it.

...mark them, as it said here, **those who cause divisions...**and so forth. And Paul goes on in telling Timothy here, **command them, those who teach any other doctrine**, teach anything else than what you have heard. “Timothy, you have a job to do. Charge them not to do it, and if they do it...” then he had a responsibility to follow through with more.

Neither give heed, and so this is an admonition to Timothy and to an admonition of what he was to preach in the area, and this is what he preached: **Neither give heed/pay attention to/to listen to fables, myths**, things that people make up that aren’t from God, that don’t come from God, **endless genealogies**, things that they were dealing with there in Ephesus in this particular case, things they were dealing with in that particular area. It says... **which minister/present/stir up questions, rather than godly edifying which is of faith.**

Verse 5 – Now, the end of the commandment, in other words, the purpose of the commandment, what it’s to accomplish in life **is agape**; So even when it comes to God’s law, it’s to teach us, to show us what God’s love is all about so we can begin to understand love, how love works, and even instruction here of how to deal with others in the Body is a matter of God’s love. And so whether it be a matter of the 10 Commandments or what is being commanded here, the purpose of the commandment, those things being commanded, is agape, so that there is God’s love in the Body, so that it can have the greatest potential to flourish.

...so that it is agape out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; in other words, not hypocritical, not just going through the motions but something that’s true and real that comes out of us, that should come out of us. **From which some having swerved**, in other words have swerved away from that because they haven’t had a good conscience because of sin, because their heart hasn’t been pure because of other things they have done and allowed into their life, with faith, in other words going through the motions in a hypocritical manner, going to the Feast of Tabernacles, or going through the motions of being with the Church but not really obeying God.

...from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling/foolish talk; That’s what happens. You know, when anybody leaves the Body or gets to a point where they believe different ways

than what has been given, there is something that has been going on in their life for some time. When a person comes to a point of being able to leave the Body it doesn't just happen overnight.

What happened with the apostasy didn't happen overnight; there were already things happening in the Church that led up to that and those who gravitated more, immediately toward Protestantism, there were things going on in their lives long before the actual day that Mr. Tkach gave that sermon down in Atlanta, or that was actually recorded later on for the rest of the Church. There are things that people had already let down in their life spiritually, and that's what happens if that pure heart, if a desire to obey God's commandments isn't there, of a good conscience, of striving for a good conscience. That's why we repent, because the conscience isn't good, because we know it needs to be cleaned up and cleared up before God, we want to change, we want to be in unity with God, and not just going through the motions of 'living the Church' or 'living Church', if you will.

...from which some having swerved/have turned aside, so if they're not doing this it's not so easy to swerve and turn aside to foolish talk...**Desiring to be teachers of the law**; that's what can happen, even if it's to teach one other person, to tell one other person, to get one other person to believe what they believe they see or to give... it's a desire to have an audience, that others listen to that. It's a perversion of what we see of how God works, because this isn't how God works, but it's a desire to duplicate or receive some imaginary type of whatever it is that we desire as human beings, recognition from others, praise from others, being lifted up by others. That's not what this life is all about.

So it shows here that this foolish talk, which isn't in unity with the Church, the truth – that's what Paul's admonition is to Timothy here. He's talking about various things here you need to be careful, you need to order, to charge some who step out of line in these things, that they not come along and start teaching something different with foolish talk, because that's how it happens. **Desiring to be teachers of the law**; it shows the real motivation, the spirit that's inside, because they want to be teachers of what *they* believe is right, that comes from God, what they believe has been revealed to them. **...and understanding neither what they say, nor what they so confidently assert**. I've seen this over and over and over again in God's Church, that spirit and that attitude, something that has to be fought against.

And so this is really the greatest area of causing people to stumble that has ever existed in God's Church. If somebody commits certain sins, has a battle with alcohol, has a battle with some sexual thing of some sort in their life, has some other kind of battle in life, whatever it might be, as a whole the Church doesn't gravitate to those things. Those things can hurt others, those things, some in time, people can gravitate to those, just like letting down in the use of alcohol, that can happen, that has happened. People can gravitate to some of that and begin to let down barriers and so forth and begin to... and those things should never be done and need to be addressed, but the greatest destructive power that has ever existed in God's Church is this one here we're reading about. This is the one more than any other where Matthew 18 needs to be lived.

This is the *one* that can cause the greatest damage, when anyone speaks anything *different* from what God has given to His Church. When anyone begins to speak *against* people or individuals, Mr. Armstrong, myself, toward others in the Body, those things generate this kind of thing here, this kind of foolish talk, this kind of tearing down that can take place, and especially if it brings in behind it a justification for doing something different, whatever it might be.

That's why we've lived through something here just recently that ought to be a very sobering thing to people and to realize how these things have always happened around God's Church.

1 Timothy 1:18 – jumping down a little ways he goes on to say, **My son Timothy, I commit this charge to you according to the prophecies which went before on you**, what he's referring to is Timothy's ordination here. So there was the prayer when...as we do when people are ordained and hands are laid upon an individual and there is a prayer that has to do with a job and a responsibility that's going to be given to an individual that has to do with inspired speaking, reminding an individual of what they've been set aside for and what God is doing in their life. And so he's reminding Timothy of this ordination and what was said at that moment in time when hands were laid upon him, of a job that was being given through Paul to Timothy.

And so he says, **My son Timothy, I commit this charge to you according to the prophecies/inspired speaking/prayer**, candidly, of what was said over him, **which went before on you**, in other words **upon your ordination, that you by them might war a good warfare**; In other words, by those words that were spoken over you you have been set apart for a special purpose, a desire that God even grant you more of His spirit to carry out the responsibilities of whatever has been laid to your charge, that you would do that in a manner of fighting a good warfare, because it's about a spiritual battle and a warfare and you're entering into it in a greater way to have a greater influence, a greater responsibility within the Body. So that's the admonition.

Holding faith, what you've been given to believe, that you live it, hold onto that; that whatever you've been given, basically he's saying, through me to you, holding on to the truth that you've been given, to live it, hold onto that, **and a good conscience**; so everything that Timothy had been given to believe, he had to measure everything else that was happening, that Paul was admonishing him here, according to that, according to what he'd already been given as far as the truth is concerned; **Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith**, in other words, concerning the truth, concerning what has been given to the Church to believe – they're not living it, they're starting to believe something different, so **some have put away concerning faith have made/become shipwrecked**: He uses an example here - they've crashed, they've become shipwrecked because they put away some of these things, whatever it is concerning what they believe. They have started believing something different.

And he goes on to say here, **verse 20 - Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander**; believed to be elders in the Church, ministers in the Church. **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan**, that expression again. What did he do? He separated them from the Church. He made sure there was no question in anyone's mind – he marked, he pointed out they are not a part with us, they do not share with us, and because of what they teach, because of what they believe, they believe something different, they should have no part with us. It's healthier for the Body! Because if these things aren't dealt with speedily, *especially* these things, they cause great damage in the Body and they *always* lead others astray, just as we have *always* witnessed in God's Church. These are the things that have greater power to destroy; these are the things that have greater power to turn people away from the truth than any other single thing as far as sin is concerned.

So, **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to 'blaspheme'**...and the word means 'to slander'. To slander what? The truth, what they've been given to believe, because they believe something else they start teaching something else and that can't be a part of God's Church! And so, it's so expedient upon the entire Body that we speak the same thing, and if someone doesn't and you know it and it's been said to you, you have a *very strong responsibility* that God Almighty has given you to take care of, to address immediately, not to let it go on, not to continue on, but to be addressed quickly...as with all sin as a whole, but this is the primary one because

this is the primary one that causes the greatest destruction – has through time’s past. And so God’s teaching us those things, what these things mean and how to live them.

This is mentioned again about Hymenaeus in 2nd Timothy 2 as well. I think it would be good to turn over there and just read that in context, because his name comes up again, because of what he did in the Church. And so Paul had to continue on in Macedonia, Timothy is being left behind, in 1st Timothy, to work in Ephesus, and there were troubles they had within the Church, within the Body, undoubtedly because it’s always happened this way, others followed. But these two individuals, the perpetrators of it, at least the two mentioned earlier were the perpetrators of things that were taking place, that people in the Church knew them and so forth and they had an impact on the Church. And Timothy is being left behind and told when these things pop up – and they will – address them this way, *command* them that they’re not to speak differently, and if they do then Timothy has a responsibility.

2 Timothy 2:16 – ‘Shun’ – again that word, ‘to turn around’, or ‘to turn away’, ‘to avoid’, ‘**profane**’; Greek, comes from a word for ‘threshold’. Interesting some words you look at, like threshold, like at a door. In Greek it gives the definition here of ‘permission to trod upon’, ‘to be trodden upon’, in other words, ‘to be trampled’, ‘to be walked upon’. So it says, **So shun/turn away from profane**, that which is allowed to be trampled upon, **empty talk**: or whatever is taught, whatever is given... **and empty talk**, in other words, ‘no substance’, a word that mean’s ‘to chatter’, **for they will increase**, a word that means **it will advance into more ungodliness**. So again here, this admonition being given to Timothy again. And you think, “Why did he have to address this so many times?” It’s because the Church was just getting underway in many respects; in time Paul was working with Ephesus, now he’d gone on to Macedonia and he’s writing Timothy again because he’s received word about continuation of difficulties and battles.

And candidly, this has been the battle in God’s Church through time! Different ideas that creep in, different ideas that people have and want to bring along and this chatter behind the scenes that takes place sometimes. That’s why I’m so thankful we don’t see that as a whole in God’s Church right now to the degree that I’ve experienced through times past in Worldwide or through Laodicea, candidly. It was flourishing mightily during the period of Laodicea, all through Laodicea, and then it took on new definition after the apostasy; it began and it just went insane, what was happening, all kinds of ideas coming out of the woodwork. That’s why it didn’t take very long to have 500 different organized groups out here who had splintered away from Worldwide, supposedly holding onto the Sabbath and the Holy Days and teaching such varied kinds of things that were believed to be what God was giving.

And so it says, **shun/turn away from/avoid profane words and empty talk, for they will only increase**, they will advance **into more ungodliness. And their word will eat as does a ‘canker’/as a canker does**: in other words, it’s a word for ‘eating sore’ or ‘gangrene’. It’ll just spread... you know, this thing about sin spreading, and so will this if it isn’t shut-up, if it isn’t stopped, if it isn’t gotten rid of in the Body. It’s better to cut off an arm, it’s better to pluck out an eye than the whole Body become gangrene. That’s another way of saying it here! It says, **of whom is Hymenaeus and**, in this case here, **Philetus**; so brings up another individual, people that are known in the Church in that particular area. So whether Philetus came along now, perhaps Hymenaeus still having some influence on certain ones, and Philetus, is likely what happened here, knowing how things have happened through the Church, came up and Timothy had to deal with him. And so he’s just repeating these names now because they’re still in the forefront; even this much later these individuals are still known and still having an influence in some manner or form upon God’s people, there are still people out here listening to them!

How often do we have that on this particular little machine right here? This computer, where those things *have* happened in times past, where people will get on the internet and start looking around. That's what happened... you know, the more the Church began to be spread, and that's how people came into contact with each other, and people shopping around for what they agreed with, and if they didn't like something they'd go to something else. I think of the one individual one time - just one example of so many - he knew he couldn't be a part of the 144,000 so he went to an organization that still taught he could be. So you think, "Okay...?!" Crazy things that people will do because of what they want to hold onto or what they refuse to hold onto.

Verse 18 - Who concerning the truth have 'erred', the word means, 'gone astray'...**concerning the truth have gone astray saying that the resurrection has already past; and has overthrown the faith of some.** Some listened. Some listened to their chatter, some listened to their reasoning, when at the *very beginning* if they had *obeyed* God you know what they would have done? They'd have gone to their brother or they would have said to their brother immediately, "Where did that come from? That's not what the Church teaches. That's not what Paul has been teaching. That's not what Mr. Armstrong taught. That's not what has been given to us in the Church, so where did you get that idea? Don't you think that's *dangerous* to be talking about such a thing? Don't you think that's divisive? This isn't good. This isn't healthy."

Verse 19 - Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His. So it always comes down to this: someone may cut themselves off from God's spirit by things they do, by things they say or things they believe, or things they practice, but nobody gets by with anything and the reality is God takes care of His people and He knows who are His, those who are yielding themselves to Him. But again, it's learning matters here having to do with love, what comes from God, why God says the things He does, why it's always best to do it exactly the way He says, and then try to learn from that. Why does He say it this way? Why does He say to do this and what does this mean for me? What does this mean for other people?

And let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, with some to honour and some to dishonour. And the reality is, just like the tares, they were going to exist of necessity because of the way the world is and because of how people learn. There is a necessity that these things have always been a part of God's Church. It'll be this way *all the way to the end*...and that's why people have to look deep inside themselves and seek to draw closer to God, seek that these things not happen, listen to the sermons that have been given about that we're in a great warfare more than ever before because there are beings stirred up out there *more* than they've ever been stirred up. They know the closer they get their time is shorter, the more havoc they want to create and cause, and they know who you are. This is not a time to play around, to take chances!

Verse 21 - If a man will therefore purge himself from these, the thing of dishonour, **he shall be a vessel unto honour,** that's what repentance is about. If we will seek to purge ourselves of the things of dishonour, of the things that hurt life, of the things that fight against God, then indeed God has called us to be vessels of honour, that His spirit work within us, **sanctified**, set apart for holy use and purpose, and the word, goes on to say **and meet/useful for the master's use**, so when we humble ourselves, seek to repent, continue to fight against sin, whatever... every one of you has sin that you have to fight against.

If you don't know what your battles are, if you think that you've got them all whipped, you're deceived! You have to change! As long as we're in this physical Body there are things that must change and we

must continue to fight against a selfishness that exists in our human nature because you're never going to be away from that until you're in a different body or your dead, and then it can cease. There is going to be peace then. So peace comes in two ways in life – through death and through eternal life. That's the peace we look for.

And he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet/useful, as the word means, for the masters use and prepared/made ready unto every good work. It's like saying, talking about humility, that when humility is there, and we're living it, striving to live it, striving to do things the way God says, seeking to change, to become what He's offering us, with that kind of a spirit and mind, then God can use us. But it's when self gets in the way, it's when pride gets in the way, it's when sin gets in the way that the brakes go on and we can't be used, we can't serve Him, not profitably to serve others.

Let's go back to Matthew 18. So really what we're going through here in Matthew 18 is a very sobering thing when you look at it in that respect, but it should drive home the point even more so the importance of unity and oneness of how God looks upon unity and oneness with Him in all things. Because all sin hurts and all sin spreads, all sin is like a cancer, all sin is like leavening and hurts and will hurt others. So it is in our own lives if we fail to repent. It's like leaven and it just leavens more and more. That's why you have to *constantly be at the fight*, that's why you have to *constantly be fighting* and going before God repenting of sin! It's when people let down and don't continue to repent and don't continue to fight the fight that we become...well, the wrong thing begins to take place and the sin just swells and gets worse.

Matthew 18:8 – reading these two verses again here to more clearly understand what is being spoken of here - **Therefore if your hand or your foot offend/cause to stumble cut them off and cast them from you:** it's everything about disfellowshipment; that's what this is about, about being separated from the Body. But if there is a way to prevent this that's what God's desire is. God's desire is first of all that a person will be brought to repentance and *change*, because God's desire for every one of us is that we remain in the Body. A lot has been given to bring us into the Body! The death of Jesus Christ was given to bring us into the Body, and to *keep* us in the Body. A lot of sacrifice has gone before to bring us into the Body and to keep us in the Body, and that's God's great desire for us. That is God's love for us. And so when we practice and do things the way God says to do it there is greater potential and ability, because of God's love, to not have to cast off part of the Body, to not have to pluck out an eye – but the desire is to save.

So it says, **it is better that you enter into life lame or crippled, rather than to have two hands or two feet and to be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you:** so it's casting away from the Body; **it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into gehenna fire.**

Verse 10 - Take heed that you do not 'despise', and the word is in the Greek here, 'to think little of', or 'to look down upon'; it's that attitude of mind of when someone is lifted up and they look down upon someone else as being lesser or their ideas or their ways lesser of importance. It's this lifted up, "I know what's best. I am better." ...or whatever it might be. So the admonition is given here then **Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones;** Who? What? Anyone that can be affected by what has just been discussed here, about having to cut off an arm or pluck out an eye. We're all part of the Body and we should have a great desire for each other, a great desire to see each other remain a part of the Body, and not to lift ourselves up thinking that we're better.

Going on here, I'll read it again: **Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I am telling you, That in heaven there are angels do always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of man has come to save that which was lost.** What can be learned from that? Well, it ought to be a humbling thing again, this matter of humility, because that includes each one of us. **For the Son of man came to save that which was lost.** That's where we were until God drew us and called us. If we were blessed to grow up in the Church then we had opportunity a little bit different, how we approach that, but again, to learn from the lesson here, this is what it's discussing.

So, **The Son of man came to save that which was lost.** In other words, no one is better than anyone else in this regard. So this should always be a sobering thing to ourselves whenever we come upon sin, whatever it is, somebody says something that isn't in unity, something slipped out of their mouth, they didn't consider it as they should have, that is not in unity and oneness with the teaching of the Church, or they have slipped and stumbled, have yielded themselves, given into sin, don't look down upon them in the sense of... Because what happens a lot of times in human nature is, "I wouldn't do that! I wouldn't have done that!" We tend to measure and judge people because of certain sin, or because of something they've done wrong, or because of something they've said in a wrong way. And yet if we're exercising love toward them there is a way to address that, but never to look down on them in the sense of less than what we are, that we lift ourselves up and think we're better than them. Always understanding, that's why it's stated exactly this way, to realize we're all in the same boat, hopefully all going in the *same direction*. It's when someone tries to take the boat in a different way that it gets tough.

Verse 12 – So what do you think? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine and go into the mountains and seek after the one which has gone astray? This is really quite basic. Even this has not been fully understood in the sense that sometimes we can read through something like this and not understand the context of what it's talking about and what the admonition is here, what we're to learn from this. This is a matter of attitude that God is addressing here, an attitude toward someone who has *begun to go astray*. *Before* it gets to the point that they are fully lost and gone and can never be brought back into this, in this case here in the example of sheep, the one in ninety-nine, brought back into the flock. The desire is... when does that happen? When sin begins, when division begins, whatever it is, at its onset – not after it's been festering there for a time and allowed to continue on like they were doing in Corinthians in there and Paul had to chasten them for what they were doing, for an attitude of pride and haughtiness and how they were dealing with their brother rather than addressing it like they should have been.

So again here, it's a matter of attitude toward someone who's begun to go astray, but once they've fully rejected what is true, that's another matter. Once a person has gone to a brother alone it's another matter. What happens then? What happens if others have to go? What happens if the ministry has to go? It becomes another matter. But that's how you begin to practice and apply this thing of going after the one in ninety-nine – see? When something like this begins it's not the whole Body that's gone astray or going astray? Generally it starts with one, or two, or whatever it might be, but the quicker you can get to or help the one, that's what it's all about! You're doing your part because of your love and your desire to go after the one in ninety-nine so you can *all* remain a part of the Body. It's like a desire you want to keep your arm or you want to keep your eye, or you want to keep the other sheep... because we're *all sheep* before God, in that respect. So it's a matter that we all stay together in the same flock, and the desire to see that. And that's what God's addressing here. So there are things you can do in God's Church to help *ensure* this, or to help *facilitate* this in a better way than to ignore it or not to do it or to do it in a wrong manner.

That's what Matthew 18 is all about; it's about God's love being exercised in weak human life! ...in lives that have sin! ...in lives that have pride! ...and how we treat each other and how we *think* about each other and what God says we should do to make it right and to do it the right way. And so while there's a chance to help we should strive to help. While there is a chance to find that sheep don't you leave the ninety-nine and go after the one? That's what he's saying here! Isn't that the attitude of love? Isn't that the attitude of desiring to save? Isn't that the attitude of sacrifice here, no matter what it requires, no matter how hard it is to go after them that's what you do? Because the ninety-nine are okay! The ninety-nine you can leave for a while and focus on where you need to focus. That's what it means to go after the one in ninety-nine, when this process has begun, that's when it needs to be addressed, because you don't want to lose one of these, one of these little ones that belong to God.

God doesn't want to lose them and that's why He wants us to do things in a certain way. You know why? Because His way works. It doesn't mean the other person is always going to choose it, but it works, because when followed through *His way still works!* And either someone will, because of someone coming to them out of love, out of care and concern, they're going to respond to that, they're going to be touched by that, it's going to prick them in the heart and they will make a change and they will address something that needs to be addressed, or the choice is not to and to be separated. But you have to do what God says to do, to go after the one in ninety-nine and to do it His way, because His desire is to save. ...and not to ignore or turn our back on something that God says plainly we should do.

So this phrase needs to be kept in mind as it has everything to do with *how you go to your brother once they begin to go astray*, begin to veer off course from the truth, from the true way that God has given, this matter of going after the one in ninety-nine.

So again, **So what do you think? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine and go into the mountains and seek after the one which has gone astray?** It's attitude! **And if he is able to find it,** if the person will listen to you, if they'll receive you, if you're able to find it, **verily I say unto you, that he rejoices more over that sheep than of the ninety-nine which did not go astray.** So, it's an attitude of mind again, a desire that God has when something comes upon someone, a desire to see them stay in the fellowship, to remain in the fellowship, to remain a part of the Body, to continue on this course with us, that we be able to do it together, that we're able to continue to walk to God's house side by side in council blended sweet in what we share together because it's about what we're able to share with each other.

Verse 14 - Even so, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. So it's all about how we see each other. It's about how we care about each other, that that's what we must see first of all in our own heart and spirit; how do we look upon *God's Church*? How do we look upon *the Family* of God? And it can never have pride and haughtiness in it. It can never have this attitude of looking down upon anyone else in the Body, because then we'll never be able to help them when we do go to them, if we're responsible for doing so.

Verse 15 - Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you: What is it talking about? If they sin...and it must be indeed a matter that is clearly sin. And I'll just tell you, all division is sin, all divisiveness is sin. Anything that is spoken that is not in unity with God and what God gives to His Church – that is always sin first and foremost in the Body. To teach some other way? To think some other idea of how things should be or how things should have been, or what should have taken place...whatever, is... God judges that very powerfully so. You're going to hear more about that at the Feast this year. Awesome!

Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: *alone...alone-alone-alone...* Because so often what happens is the *exact opposite* of this. I have known of so many situations where people have gone and talked to a lot of others first and sometimes *never* goes to the other person alone, sometimes has *never-never-never* exercised what God said to do, to go to the other person alone, but instead has talked about the matter with others, just as they did in Corinthians there talking about the man and the woman, because they all knew it. *Everybody* knew it! The *whole Church* knew it but they didn't address it. No one addressed it! And Paul chastened them, chastised them for that spirit and that attitude in saying you should have done it God's way. That's what he was telling them.

You know, it's a matter of family. If we have the concept of Family... you protect Family and you protect Family name. That should be something that should just be normal – that *should* be normal in the world. We should have at least that basic desire; but to do it God's way, His way, even more so. There is a right way to deal with *sin* in the Body.

And matter of fact, let's look at a couple scriptures right quick here.... a couple of Proverbs here, very simple, so very powerful, so very true in what they teach, so basic in what they teach, but rarely, rarely lived and understood for what they truly say.

Proverbs 17:9 - He who covers a transgression seeks love; Now, there is a way to cover sin that's right and there is a way of covering sin that is sin. I hope we understand the difference. And basically it has to do with if you do it God's way you seek to cover a sin – in other words, how does God deal with us in bringing us to repentance? We repent of sin and as far as God's concerned it's gone; it's as far as, He says, the east is from the west, whatever distance you can think of that's humongous through the universe, that's what it is, it's out of mind – out of sight and out of mind. It's not going to be used against you again, it's gone, we're clean before God. Truly, through Jesus Christ, when we repent of sin, it is absolutely gone, and when you've repented you should feel that free. Generally with human nature we don't. Generally we tend to still beat ourselves up for a time and carry it because...and sometimes that's partially healthy and sometimes it's bad. So we grow in that through time, we learn through that process, we learn through that experience.

But again, to cover sin the way God says to do it. This is a part of what we're reading here in Matthew 18 – how to cover sin God's way. There is a sin, basically God says... He didn't say go and talk to the whole Church about it and then have the minister go and talk to them when it's so bad, that it's gotten so far out of line that a minister has to go and try to salvage and save the one in the ninety-nine. Because that's the *worst* thing! That's the worst case scenario but the scenario I am most acquainted with, candidly, in God's Church through Philadelphia and through Laodicea. That's what's existed! I'd say it's as high as 90% of the time, maybe higher. Sad!

If we had understood and practiced these things through Philadelphia we wouldn't have had an apostasy. *We would not have had the apostasy.* Chew on that one for a little while.

He who covers a transgression seeks love; you do it God's way, you really love someone else, you're seeking love, because you love the individual, because it's not a matter of judging them. So often when people have gone to others alone it's because they condemned them already, they have judged them and condemned them already. It's not a matter of trying to save, it's not a matter of trying to help, it's not done from a motivation of love. Oftentimes it's done from a motivation of self-righteousness and looking down upon someone, not a matter of genuine care and concern and love because you love

them, because you want to see them be and remain in the Body. But that's how it should be done. That should be the motivation behind it no matter... well, if that's the motivation behind it and the desire for it then prayerfully fruit is going to be produced and prayerfully the individual is going to respond and it'll cover sin. Because if the person is brought to repentance what a beautiful thing, it's gone! It's gone! The one in ninety-nine remains and the fellowship remains and we don't have to go so far that we have to *cut* off an arm or *pluck* out an eyeball. Isn't that beautiful? ...little strands hanging down in your face. Sick isn't it? Perverted! And that's the way we should look at it!

How much more spiritually, how *sick* is that spiritually before God? ...something like that have to happen? But sadly those things come to that at times! But where there is potential of saving, where there is a possibility of delivering, where there is a possibility of bringing the one of the ninety-nine back into the flock, God says that should be our motivation.

He who covers a transgression seeks love; Do we seek love? That's what it really all boils down to. Are we doing it God's way? Do we start out first of all looking at ourselves and realizing we have nothing to be lifted up by, we have nothing to be judgmental about to anyone? ...no matter *what* they've done! ...in the sense of condemning; to judge it, yes, condemning, no. But there is the great fault that sometimes happens in life, is that we condemn, and this is not about condemnation, this is about saving! Jesus Christ made it very clear He didn't come to condemn the world, He came, in essence, as far as the Church is concerned, to save it! That's the motivation and that should be our desire toward one another in the Body, is to see it saved.

...but he who repeats a matter separates friends. If there is any potential to help someone, just because you've opened *your big fat mouth to others* and spread it around you do the very opposite of seeking God's love; on the contrary, you destroy the Body, you work at destroying the Body, you separate people to where they can't be helped because they already know the whole Church knows it, the whole Church is talking about it – "Why didn't you come to me alone?" "You love me? Why didn't you come to me alone?" Sometimes this has happened where people know that some have already been talked to because someone else had come to them, and why didn't *they* come to me? *Why* didn't my *brother* come to me if they loved me? And then that causes a problem in the Body that can take *years* sometimes to heal...*years to heal*. It's all about love and seeking love.

One more Proverb here and then we'll close for the day: Proverbs 27. We have to be careful what comes out of our mouth. There are times that you have to deal with some things within the ministry, there is a right way of doing that as well, but never to condemn, always to help, always a matter of love, perhaps a matter to understand, how to deal with a matter, perhaps learning that process or discussing certain things in order to know where or how to deal with certain things within the Body, within the Church, some things are spoken of. But it should go no farther save for the spirit to help and then to follow through with whatever responsibility might be there.

Proverbs 27:5 - Open rebuke is better than secret love. We say we love someone and we don't do what God says to do in going after the one in ninety-nine? Secret love. What good did it do them? We can talk about it all day long, but unless we exercise it, unless we live it, it doesn't help at all, does it? Anyway, that's what this is about as well.

So again, Matthew 18, we're still not through it. Probably next Sabbath we'll get through some of this.

A lot said here and a lot to learn from it and God's giving us this in a more powerful way. I marvel – just before all this is over and before we enter into a new age – because this is how it's going to be done in the future.

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