

It is obvious by numerous comments and conversations that truly the Church is *highly anticipating, eagerly anticipating* the dawning of the 'day' in this 'Day of the Lord'. The Church and many listeners, followers, and readers of the Church's sites were also highly anticipating May 27th. We've heard from different ones, have bumped into some on occasion. My wife had an occasion here the other day to bump into someone in a business and the conversation came up. Some remind me of co-workers in times past because they see things to a point but they don't see it all yet, it isn't their time yet, and they spoke of how their entire family, with older children if I remember, they're not even teenagers, they're past that, older - they were sitting around on that particular day, the 26th, waiting. They're not a part with us but they were waiting. *Amazing* how there are situations like that! ...highly anticipating that point in time and still anticipating the return of Jesus Christ. *Amazing!*

Then on Pentecost of May 27th God did reveal to us that indeed Jesus Christ was returning, or if you will, coming on *that day*...but that the 'day' was prophetic, the 'Day of the Lord', and that was followed by further revealing that when this 'Day of the Lord' began we had entered into the 'night-time' portion of that 'day', as with the beginning of any new day that begins after sundown.

And now, the Church is anticipating the first rays of sunlight and wondering, "When will God begin to act to do what He has said He will do in this 'Day of the Lord'? Will the analogy of marching of the children of Israel around Jericho now follow, where they arose early in the morning, prepared and ate their morning meals, and then prepared themselves for a longer march on that final day? So what will the pattern be? How closely will it follow some of this? *We don't know! I don't know! We wait on God!* We look to God to do things in His time and then He'll reveal those things to us. And so we wait on God...but again here, we're going to come back to this in a little bit here...but we wait, not as a matter of just passing time, but in the biblical sense, in the way it's used biblically of waiting, and we'll come back to that a little bit farther here into the sermon.

I have quite a few things I've written down here that I don't want to miss today so I'm reading quite a bit of this in the beginning as an introduction.

So what we are getting ready to enter into as far as the analogy of marching around the city of Jericho is that we are looking for the beginning of that which is different in our marching, and that is when the 2nd encircling, if you will, of Jericho begins - when the 2nd Trumpet is blown - because we don't know when that is! But our anticipation of this is very much like the anticipation we had in the beginning - I mean *in the beginning*, after the 1st Trumpet had blown on December 14, 2008 - and this brings us full circle back to what we anticipated then in the beginning, today, bringing us to this point in time.

And that's the title of this particular sermon today, *Full Circle*'. We have come full circle.

Before we jump into this sermon let's drive the point home even more concerning this analogy of marching around Jericho. If we grasp the analogy of the difference in our marching, not coming until the final 'day' when God made a change in *how* that day would be different, then we know it was the addition of 6 additional times of marching that corresponds to the last 6 Trumpets, as we've talked about previously...the last 6 Trumpets sounding. This lesson, if you will, of consistency here is that the full period of all seven days of marching corresponds to what has been happening with the long blowing,

if you will, of the 1st Trumpet through all 7 days, because that's the consistency that's been there and that's the consistency of something that God has given to us. The 2nd Trumpet has never blown, but the 1st one beginning on December 14th did and the effect of that, the continuation of that, if you will, even of a continual blowing, has continued on even to now. And *that continues to the end* as much as the 1st Seal being opened up has to do with things of the Church, and it continues and has continued from the very beginning.

It is about that which is symbolized (speaking of that 1st Trumpet) in destruction having to do primarily with the economy of the United States, but flooding throughout the world and growing into a final global economic collapse. That is the symbolism contained in the 1st Trumpet. Then there is the physical literal aspect, if you will, of the fulfillment that has to do with the destruction of literal productivity in grasslands, and hay, and crops, and forests, and fruit trees, and on and on it goes; that which has been a process here through time that's going to continue all the way to the end until that verse is fulfilled by God!

And so I think of that too, how that's continued throughout the years, magnified physically especially at the beginning of this final 'day' through the kind of drought that this country experienced in most regions and then flooding in others, because that destroys productivity, literally physically. So it's not a matter of something that just has to be without water, it can have too much water and do the same damage.

So now it has had a (speaking of this 1st Trumpet again) second thrust forward. We had it at the beginning of this period of time of entering into the 'Day of the Lord' and again through this Hurricane, candidly, of destruction symbolized by the 1st Trumpet, by that which has happened again by Hurricane Sandy with a great economic blow to one of the most populated areas of the United States. Unlike Katrina, which still has damage there, there is no coming back from this. There is a little bit of clean-up that can be done...a little bit of clean-up and then we continue to go through the things that must happen to this country.

So again, just another massive blow from the continual blowing of the 1st Trumpet, and there is much more to follow from this 1st Trumpet blowing as the effects of the blowing are far from over.

Let's turn over to 2 Peter 2. And of course, all this is coupled *powerfully* with several of the Thunders that have just taken place in this period of time, not just one but several. Again, before we begin to get into the main thrust of this sermon we need to first set the stage with the powerful lesson and appreciation of *how God has molded and fashioned us*, led us to where we are now and has blessed us with such a powerful spirit of *anticipation* of His Kingdom coming. You haven't always had this! You have had the blessing of being molded and fashioned into this, growing into this. That's one of the universal things that has continued. It continued up until the time of May 27th and that has been magnified many times over now that we've been thrust into this final 'day'. This *anticipation, eager anticipation*, if you will, of what is going to come to pass, of things we know that must come to pass before Jesus Christ returns...and that's a good thing if we handle it properly, if we deal with it properly. It's something, candidly, that God has molded and fashioned in us, and I hope we can see that as we go through this sermon today. It's a blessing of something that God has molded and fashioned into us, because if we didn't have that anticipation something is mightily wrong, truly....something is mightily wrong or we're just not quite there yet, growing, but not to where we can become in time through all this.

2 Peter 2:7 - we're just jumping into the flow of the sermon here about things of judgment and things that God is going to do through time and has done through time and will continue to do. But it says... **And delivered just Lot, 'vexed'**, now, we're going to focus on these two words, 'vexed', here in these two verses, because there are different words being used here and it's important to understand what is being said. This one here literally means 'to wear down' or 'to be worn out' by what is taking place, 'to be pressed down' by something. Pressed down! How often have we talked about things like that? I've mentioned this about being just worn out, worn down, and we feel this pressure in the world around us because we see something that the world doesn't see! We understand something that the world doesn't understand! And this was a part of what Lot was doing, He 'vexed', it talks about here... **He was vexed with the filthy 'conversation'**, the word means 'conduct' literally, which can obviously come out in conversation but it's about 'conduct' in the Greek, **of the wicked**: of those who don't follow God's way of life! Of the world, of a world that is in bondage and doesn't even know it!

And so, because of the ability that God has given us to see the condition of the world, to see things in the world around us and how much worse it has gotten, how it's *accelerated* through time, and not only that, but a lot of it has come because He has helped us to see ourselves! What an awesome thing! I was thinking about that the other day here and thinking how that we don't know ourselves as human beings. God says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and *desperately* wicked!" But nobody believes that! We don't believe our 'heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked!' ...but that's the way of our human nature! And then it goes on to show, 'but God knows the heart, He tries the reins'. God knows what's inside of us. He knows why we function and react to things the way we do. He knows us inside and out! ...and candidly, we can't know ourselves in a true way until God blesses us to see it, a little bit at a time...can't do it all at once, we couldn't take it. It's hard enough to take it when it does come our way, and so often it comes when we go through some major trial in life, whether it be something in the Church or in our own personal lives, and as a result of that trial we go through something comes to the surface that we haven't been able to see in our reaction to certain things. We come to see that isn't right or where it's unbalanced, or where it's not healthy, and God helps us to see why, that there is something that needs to be *changed* so that we can grow; and that's a beautiful thing!

And so, through time we come to see things in our self; but the more that God blesses us in that the more we can grasp and comprehend what's in the world. The more we begin to see and grasp the spirit of life in human beings, because we see it first in ourselves, and we become more deeply convicted of how selfish human nature is. When it says that there are those three things that rule our lives, in essence, it means what it says, and it's so powerful, 'the *lust* of the flesh, the *lust* of the eyes, and the *pride of life*' keeps mankind in bondage! That is our battle, and I hope everyone sees that. I hope that you see that in *you*, because that's a matter of growth. We all have to see it in ourselves, and the more we see it in self then we see it more clearly in the world and we respond then because of growing spiritually more like what Lot experienced, to be worn down by, to be worn out by, if you will, because of what is in the world that comes at us and the rest of... not just at us, but we learn to ache and yearn for, hurt for, if you will, people around us, the world and what they suffer through...not just in battles that you go through in the Church, but it's all around us in the world - that's the product, what they're suffering, of bondage, of captivity, until God frees them and begins to help them and bless them to see the things, the kinds of things *you* see, to have that pressure, to be pressed down, to feel that. And we have to experience that so we can begin to understand how others are pressed down, to have a right kind of empathy and a right kind of mercy and a right kind of compassion and a right kind of judgment and a right kind of judging then toward others...not unrighteous judgment but a right kind of judging in life that comes from understanding where they are and what they don't have and what we have and how we should be, indeed, so much farther ahead in understanding.

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked. (For that righteous man dwelling among them...) and *he* wasn't *righteous*. I hope you understand that statement. I'm going to explain it to you so you don't misunderstand it, but when God says someone, speaks of someone being righteous it doesn't mean *they* are righteous, it doesn't mean they have righteousness within them because they are so good in how they keep God's law! *On the contrary!* It's not about *our* righteousness, it's about what God accounts to us and attributes to us as righteousness, and that's how He spoke of Lot, because Lot believed Him, because Lot obeyed Him and he lived by faith. It's because of faith.

Let's read the rest...(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, 'vexed'...) this word is a different word; it's a word meaning 'torture', 'in pain'. Torture! In pain! Mentally! Those are some of the worst of battles sometimes, the things we go through and we struggle, especially when it comes to change in dealing with things and facing things when God puts something before us that needs to be changed in our life, and our human nature fights it and resists it. And until we just surrender and say, "Yes, God, you're right! I'm wrong! Forgive me." ...and accept what we are, accept the responsibility and ask for repentance, or forgiveness through repentance, and then it's a matter of believing God and knowing that it's gone. Awesome! That's attributed to us as righteousness, not because we are righteous...because we have sin in our life everyday! So did Lot! So does everybody! Nobody is perfect! *Nobody* is perfect! I hear comments on occasion of people that beat themselves down, that wonder, "Why would God even work with me? Why is God involved in my life? I see myself..." Count that as a blessing if you see yourself, because in the world, people don't! It's because God is blessing you to see yourself so you can grow, so you can learn. That's what's exciting in this way of life, that God is blessing us to see self so we can learn what He's doing in life, and that enables us to better help others and serve others in time.

So it says here... **vexed his righteous soul day to day with their unlawful/their lawless/their godless 'deeds'...** a word that means 'behavior', 'actions'. So we see that in the world around us and the more we see self the more we grow, and especially in this world today we see the acceleration of evil, we see how there are beings that misuse anything that's out there - technology. We just went through a series that talked about how a being and beings misused technology from the beginning - the printing press. It didn't make life better. Protestantism didn't make life better for mankind; on the contrary, it became a hindrance to the true Church of God through time because of this new liberty that was spreading through the world. But it did give an ability for the Church to blossom for a time, to move forward for a time, but it began to lose those things that were there and began to die out because of...they couldn't handle it! Just as *we* who were a part of Philadelphia *couldn't handle it!* We became right and increased with goods in time; that's what happened, that's the next years that followed, because we are human beings. We are human beings and *we need God's Kingdom!* That's why I think of some of the stuff in the Feast sermons this year and some of what we covered there, and realizing how God's working in our lives. It is an awesome process! The more we learn the more awesome it becomes, how God works in human life and *how* changes come about.

Just like with the Church...the conclusion we came to, to show that the Church can't even govern itself. That's what Philadelphia proved - the Church cannot govern itself! Through the history of the Church during Philadelphia, the larger it became, the longer it was there, the more truth that it had, the more shaking and earthquakes, if you will, that it speaks about, the shakings within the Church that took place. And those became greater and greater through time, because a man was dying, getting old, and others began to do what human nature sometimes perversely does -seek power! And so people, evangelists, were dividing up who they were going to be with; Garner Ted(?) or some others (?)...that's what was taking place. Incredible what took place, that we have experienced, the Church of God cannot

govern itself, it must be governed by God and it must always yield to God. But human nature doesn't always yield to God so God letting us do what we would do by our own human nature in time, the results of Sardis occurs, the results of Philadelphia occurs, in the following years of Laodicea. That's why we need the Kingdom of God, to be ruled by God, to have God's Government on this earth; and to protect then, in a very powerful way, that which is taught in the Church of God! The Millennium is going to be so different than what it's been through time's past.

And so again, getting back to what we were talking about here, how beings have misused technology and how those beings...that's some of the greatest power today, the use of technology. Not even just their own spirit power, but the misuse of power that's out there, especially in the terms of mass communication of the internet and the telephone and all the things you can do on them today. Sick-sick-sick how mankind uses it, but how those beings have inspired it to be used!

We'll come back to some of this, some of the parts here a bit later on, but talking about faith and righteousness and how righteousness is attributed to someone, and that's when God speaks this way of someone, inspires something to be written like He did in 2 Peter here. I'm not going to go on right here, but again, it's about a matter of what God accounts of righteousness, not that we are righteous - because no one is in the sense of the ability you have *by your own power* to keep the law of God! You can't! You can't do it perfectly, only one did...only *one* did.

So, highly anticipating the coming of God's Kingdom because we yearn for it, because we are so oppressed, worn out, afflicted in mind by the way this world is, so tired of how ugly and spiritually immoral it is...and because in many respects, even for us, it becomes more a battle of just living in it. It does! This isn't easy! When you know what you know, when you understand what you understand, living in this is not the preferred thing, is it, especially because of what you know of where we are basically in time. So we are eager, but we have grown in that. We are eager for the Government of God, the Kingdom of God, to get to that time, if you will. We are eager to see this world be humbled, we see the necessity of it.

I think of sermons we had from the very beginning talking about the necessity - even in the book - the necessity for horrifying things to have to come on this earth because of the pride of mankind, and not because we want to see those horrifying things happen, on the contrary, God doesn't want to see man suffer but *this is the only way* for His Kingdom to come, to be received by God in the way that it must be received, for the Millennium to be established, and for the attitude and the mind of man to seek something different so that God can work with them. Just as much as when you're called and you have to be humbled, to be worked with...and so does the world because we're at the time of a massive change in earth's history.

So the more you anticipate God's Kingdom coming, the more the ugliness of this world weighs on you, that's good! Candidly, *that's good!* You may feel worn down, pressed down by it at times...I talk to people, I talk to ministers who feel that way, I feel that way - feel pressed down by this world and by what comes at you. Good! That's a healthy thing spiritually in the right context.

So the more we yearn for God's Kingdom and the more we see the ugliness of the world the more spiritually we will tend to be because it's real to us and we don't want to get caught up in it, we don't want to be a part of that world, we want to be separate from it, we have a greater desire of looking deeper into our lives - just like the kinds of sermons we've had, to understand, to see that this is what has to change, we have to change, and it begins in our relationships, because really when it gets right

down to it that's what's *spiritual*! It isn't how long you stay on your knees! It isn't how many sermons you listen to! It isn't that type of thing! Those things are necessary but that's not what it's all about! It's about how we live toward each other, because that's the Kingdom of God; it's about a Family. It's about a Family that lives a certain way of life, God's way, perfectly. Awesome! And we have to learn that. We have to *want* that, we have to *desire* that. And the more we yearn for that the more we see the ugliness of the world and the oppression of the world upon ourselves, upon others in the Church, upon family, upon neighbors, upon everyone in the world, and we want to see them be able to be delivered.

In thinking about some of this you could practically say that this unique spirit of anticipation is a fruit that comes from seeking to be spiritually alert. We've had sermons about that, a desire to be spiritually alert, and the more we understand what that means in our life, to not fall asleep spiritually, to be on guard. The more that's real to us the stronger the spirit of anticipation will be because it's more real to us then.

So, regardless of what happens.... I am saying, *regardless of what happens...* I believe what's going to come to pass and I believe that all of you believe what's coming to pass, that we are in the 'night-time' portion of the 'Day of the Lord'... but regardless of what happens, waiting with high anticipation has been spiritually beneficial to all of us, a great blessing, something you must grow in...again, regardless the outcome. It's a way of life, and the stronger that is the stronger you will be.

We are being defined, aren't we? molded more perfectly in a powerful way as we choose to continue moving forward, continuing to stand fast in God's way waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.

Let's notice a scripture over here in Hosea. I spoke of this in the introduction, that we wait on God but we do not wait in the sense of just trying to pass time. Because some of that happened a little bit before May 27th, kind of just wanting to pass time and get through it and sometimes bad habits that come from some of that that really are a matter of letting down and not addressing things that we should address. And so again, it's not a matter of just passing time, it means much more than that in how it's used biblically here. We wait in the sense of that which is biblical.

Hosea 12:6 - an example of waiting. There are different uses of this word, Old and New Testament, but all with the same kind of thrust, if you will. In speaking to Israel it says - **Therefore turn you to your God: keep mercy**, interesting - 'turn you to your God': **keep mercy and judgment, and 'wait'**; a word that means 'to look for' or 'to look upon', 'to hope upon', 'to expect'; **to wait on your God continually**. A good thing, an awesome blessing, something you can actually grow in, a spirit and a desire and a focus in life.

Another one in **Psalms 62:5** - **My soul, 'wait'** - and this word means 'to rest in', 'to be at peace in', 'to be quieted' in the sense of your life, your soul, the way you feel in life, the way you are in life, the way you are at rest and at peace with God and with the truths of God because you know where you are, you know where you're going, that confidence, that expectation, candidly, of God's Kingdom and of those things that must come to pass and that which you wait upon for God to do and to accomplish. We wait upon God, we look to God, we don't look to ourselves, to work out our own problems and difficulties in life. We have to work, we have to accomplish those things, we have to fight - but to understand it's in God. **My soul**, it says, **wait only upon God; for my expectation**, just exactly what it means, looking for something to happen, to occur that God has promised. Think of how it began in the beginning - Abraham and Isaac and Jacob - and it's continued on, promises that God has given.

Again, it says here; **for my expectation is from Him**. In other words, that's our focus, that's... God is first! God's way of life is first! What we look for in life, our goals, our desires, everything we plan and do in our life then revolves around this, of what our desire is, our expectation is in what God has said to us and given to us. **He alone is my rock and my salvation, my defense**; sometimes a whole lot easier to read this than to live it. **He alone is my rock, my salvation, and my defense**; some things test us at times to see, indeed, to what degree this is existing in our life and then we can even grow in it then, when we are brought to that point in life, to grow in it even more; **I shall not be 'moved'**; word means 'shaken'; shaken from this way.

I hurt when I think of people who have been shaken from this way, who don't hold fast, who don't do the things...and especially so close, *so close*... even when I've said it in times past it's been hard for me to grasp and comprehend when I know that people are going to go by the wayside and continue to make wrong choices, and *still will do so until the end*! That is *astounding* to understand! ...but it's true and it's happened. That's why I'm concerned about the one in ninety-nine so often here, especially in recent time, because individuals have to make choices in what they're going to fight for in their life.

Romans 8:19 - For the 'earnest expectation', literally means in the Greek, 'strained expectancy'. It's not easy! Strained! I like the way it's stated there... 'as in anxious longing', 'eager anticipation'. Anticipation is not an easy thing; waiting for something, something to occur, something to happen, looking forward to, especially when you come up to a point in time and you're told, "You're not quite there yet..." "You're not quite there yet, you have more to go...and here is why." And then it puts everyone to the test, or puts our spirit to the test to see what our reaction is, our response is to God, as to indeed do we believe Psalm 62:6 we read earlier, 'He alone is my rock, my salvation, and my defense.' Awesome when it comes to that point of those things being real in our life, or being lived in our life.

So again, **For the earnest expectation of the...and the word is 'creation' not 'creature'...of the creation, 'waits'**; literally means in the Greek, 'eagerly awaits'. That's what it's all about here. **...the earnest expectation of the creation waits**; we wait, we're a part of that creation, **for the manifestation of the sons of God**. Ever since I've been in God's Church this is the way it's been; it's the way it's been for anyone who's been told by God, given what God gives to us when He calls us, whenever that is. You go back and read the scriptures about people in people's lives in the Church at Ephesus and what they awaited. They were looking for the Kingdom of God. They were looking for the coming of Jesus Christ. They were looking to a time of a great resurrection. They were looking to a time of the blessings that were told to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be fulfilled, of that which they came to understand was spiritual...and physical... but not just physical as so many have taken those things to be in the Old Testament concerning when Israel came out of Egypt and went into the promised land. It's far more than that, we learn that. And so this *earnest*...it's not just an expectation, it's one that has great power in the life and how you live it, because no one in the world is living it, no one else lives it, and you're not cheered for living it. So there are battles involved, strain involved, stress involved, pressure involved.

For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, human nature, the way we are, 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life', all for a purpose, **not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope**, a process that God has given that once He begins to work with you that which comes as a result of something that has to do with the transforming of the way we think, of the spirit that's in the mind, a spirit essence that's in the mind when impregnated with God's spirit and has that connection, and then God's spirit that blesses and feeds and gives growth to that through a process of hope, of looking to God, of an expectation of something that has come from God; a desire, that *earnest*

expectation, that *eager anticipation* is a good thing, is an awesome thing...though we may feel worn down by it at times. It's a positive thing when used the way God gives to us, if we understand it's context.

Verse 21 - Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, we yearn for that! God has given us *focus* of that. Even the previous Feast when the *entire theme* that God gave to us, basically, was coming out of Egypt, was coming out of bondage and what God's Kingdom is all about and what He's doing to this world and for this world, for mankind, finally...and then it's not over with because people still have to come out of bondage spiritually but at least it's in a world now that's governed by God, God's world. One Church! One Government! Justice, righteousness that's on the earth! **Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the of the children of God.**

Verse 22 - For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain, labor as in childbirth, meaning it is not easy. It's not easy! Never has been for *anyone* whom God has called and worked with and that which is worked in their live to mold and fashion, to change their minds and their thinking. **For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together until now.** ...in so many ways, for those whom God calls and also just the world itself because it must exist, that existence that was given for 6,000 years for a purpose and plan that God has, so that there are multiple billions who can become a part of His Family in an awesome way.

Verse 23 - And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the spirit, so not just the world, it's showing both here; **even we ourselves groan within ourselves**; 'groan' - waiting. Again, that word that means here, 'eagerly anticipating', 'eagerly awaiting', **waiting for the adoption**, the son-ship, **the redemption of our body**. It's a lifelong process. We just live in an age when this can be magnified, is magnified many times over because candidly, in the Millennium these things will be there but not with the same kind of stress, the same kind of things that we have gone through in the first 6,000 years...and thinking about that this morning, I think what an awesome thing to understand that there is that which is molded and fashioned into 144,000 whom God has called through time, who have lived in that period of 6,000 years with Satan and the demons around, in a world that was not God's - in that respect Satan is the God of this world - in all the systems, in all the governments, and everything that's in the world around us, the economy and so forth, everything that's out there. And God has molded and fashioned things in those individuals that is unique and powerful because God's going to use it in a powerful way, and that's why it had to be done during this period of time. And then others that make that way *far easier*; it's akin to, in a physical analogy, of pioneers and people moving west and how difficult that was and the loss in life, the things that took place, the tragedies, the hardships and what it molded and fashioned in people to make it easier. Now, today, it's much easier...and a physical thing, but in a spiritual sort of way that's what God is preparing.

And so, I think of those that have opportunity to live on into the Millennium right now. You have the ability of things being molded and fashioned in you, which God is doing to the degree you yield to it, that no one else can have molded and fashioned in them during the Millennium. No one else! That's an awesome thing to understand, what God does and why He does things the way He does and how He molds and fashions and gives opportunity...it truly is.

Incredible the blessings we have in life sometimes that we don't grasp the depth of really what God has given to us.

So, hopefully we're beginning to see more fully what God has been molding and fashioning into us, because we have grown in this thing of anticipation, eager anticipation. It started, we had an eager anticipation going back to the period of time of December 14, 2008, and we grew in that up to May 27th this past year. We grew in that mightily, in things that God taught us and gave to us on a spiritual plane, *that could not have come in any other way*. It's unique to us and what God is molding in us. And now that continues on in a far more mature fashion spiritually in what God is molding in us.

I marvel when I go through some of this and see what I'm striving to convey today, that is a matter of what God is going to convey to you through the power of His spirit that we all receive in varying ways, but to see how God has molded and fashioned us since that time, since May 27th, to see spiritually the sermons that are there that God has given - that this sermon is very much about, of God bringing us *full circle* to where we are - is an awesome, awesome thing, it truly is! So again, hopefully we'll see more fully what God is fashioning into us that can come in no other way.

I think of Mr. Armstrong, how he was always blessed with the ability to convey a sense of urgency, which I've mentioned many of times, a sense of urgency - he always had it! He spoke of certain weaknesses that he knew he had that his wife had blessings in until she was no longer there. She had an ability to know when someone was whitewashing them, or buttering up (might be a better word), I could use another expression but if you really know the deep meaning of it it's not a pretty picture. Anyway ☺, I think we all know what it is. But Loma had that and Mr. Armstrong knew that, he wrote about that in the autobiography, that she had that, that God gave that to her, that ability, and then when she wasn't there...and that's... you see why God allows things to happen? Why she wasn't there later on? Why the Church needed to go through certain things so that things *could* happen around the leadership in the Church, things could take place that would happen because they weren't seen immediately, weren't seen for what they were. And so it was all for a purpose, to lead us through things that had to happen during the 70's and into the 80's and then finally another era to follow. Awesome how God works.

But this is something Mr. Armstrong had in a very powerful way, this sense of urgency - always-always-always - in all of his writings...I mean, his writing was unique in just one style alone, CAPITAL LETTERS all through a word. A word was accentuated that had meaning to it more so that he wanted to get across, it was CAPITALIZED, every letter was capitalized. Not accepted well by the world around us but for the Church received in a very powerful way because it drove the point home, that sense of urgency in things he was communicating, and that style that he had, and when he spoke in sermons and so forth, that sense of urgency. That helped to motivate people! That helped to stir people up, *if we desired, if we wanted that, if we wanted what we were hearing*, because too many began to shut off in things he was saying. But again, that has to do with a relationship with God. But he had that sense of urgency in messages and for those who could hear that sense of urgency translated into their lives, in action, in other words, and how they lived and what they did. Because we were able to receive then that sense of urgency in our lives and we were motivated by that, highly motivated by that sense of urgency and it was always go-go-go in that respect, of things that were going on in the work, of things that were happening, and in our own lives, in the Church and so forth. It gave that motivation that we so desperately need in life, that driving force, if you will, because human nature doesn't tend to be that way...it needs help to be that way on a spiritual plane, and God gave that help and very powerfully so through Mr. Armstrong in this.

So that sense of urgency, again, translated into their lives as this way of life being a matter, again, of a sense of urgency upon all of us at that time, and all the time if we listened...a sense of the need to be

spiritually alert, because that's what it was about, spiritually alert, what God is doing and seeing what God is doing and being a part of it and having... That is a motivation in our life, it was powerful!

And so again, that *is* powerful and awesomely important in our lives, a sense of urgency. But the blessing of being able to experience that sense of urgency with the added blessing of *eager anticipation* being stirred up within us makes us even stronger, especially in the context of being 'vexed in spirit'. Because as I look back in time there was some of it out there but it wasn't strong, this matter of being 'vexed in spirit' in the way we've just discussed it here today, of things that God has been blessing us to experience more and more of because of what we've gone through and how He's used these times to mold and fashion certain things within us that we would have in no other way.

So again, this matter of being 'vexed in spirit' in the sense of 'to wear down', 'to be worn down', 'to be pressed down' because of what we see in this world, a greater yearning for, a greater desire to see the change.

Now, I think about times past in different Church areas we were in; we desired God's Kingdom to come, Jesus Christ to return, and for this world to be changed, but nothing - *nothing* - *NOTHING* compared to what we've been blessed to experience in the last 3-4 years, and that's something that God has to give and mold and fashion in us as we yield to it. We might take it for granted, and not only take it for granted we might not even see it if we hadn't addressed it or don't address it in a sermon like this. It's something that we realize is a part of our life and we don't really like it that much and not realizing it's a blessing to have it, to have this sense about us, that we are worn out with this world, that we feel oppressed by this world, that we have an *incredible desire* to see this world change! God has blessed us to have our stomach full of everything to do with this world! It *must* be changed, from top to bottom! It is *so* messed up! And that spirit we have, because of what we have experience in life and what we see in the world around us that God has given us the ability to see on a spiritual plane. That is an awesome blessing to add to a sense of urgency. It's a maturing process working within us and needs to be there especially because of where we are in time. Because we're here, we're not back 30 years ago and 40 years ago; back then what was needed was given, what is needed now is being given now. Awesome!

Hebrews 11 - It's a way of life to live. It's a way of life to live. I haven't had that sense of eager anticipation to the degree - not even close - when I was living during the time of Philadelphia, nor into Laodicea. Matter of fact, during Laodicea that began to wane a lot more in the Church...a lot more - because Mr. Armstrong wasn't around giving that sense of urgency. Things began to level out and leveling out is not good...not good, because Laodicea happens then, when you level out in life. There is really no such thing as leveling out, you begin to go down or go backward, you begin to lose strength, momentum, purpose, focus. We began to lose that in God's Church, that's why the apostasy happened; that's how it was able to happen.

Now, we've gone through some of these verses before; we've gone through them quite a bit as a matter of fact, but I am in awe of how each time we go through it that God gives a little bit more, drives the point home a little bit more.

Hebrews 11, it's the faith chapter.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And I think of our life! You know, I think of this throughout your life, of spiritual growth, and you can only look at your life and things that you have seen from the beginning and some of you have shorter life to look

back into as far as the Church is concerned, some farther. It depends on when God called you and began to work with you and we begin to see this matter of faith and what God has given us to believe and hold fast to and to live...and especially when it comes to things concerning the Kingdom of God and where we are in time and what God is showing us.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. I think of how we've grown in that, how we've had the ability to grow in that, of things that we grasp and comprehend in a greater way, things about the 'Day of the Lord' now, things about the 'night' and how things fit together in such an awesome way when God gives us everything we have. ...and we'll come to more as we go along here, but I hope you see, in a stronger way, the faith that God has been molding and fashioning in you, because it's something that God does. It's not something you just happen to have! It's not something you just possess because of your ability to do things or have things; it's something that is a matter of God's spirit, it's a product, a fruit of something that follows in life. It's a gift that God gives.

Verse 2 - For by it the elders obtained a good report. Why? Well, because of how they responded, because of what they believed, because of what God molded and fashioned into them and their response to it.

Verse 3 - Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, in other words, we just believe it. Not only so but that becomes so strong we see how stupid ideas of evolution are, to where when I see things of evolution there are times I just have to laugh, like 'The Far Side'... because it's far out! You know, Gary Larson who wrote the... some people don't like his cartoons; I love them, that sense of humor, and to me that's the way evolution is. You see some things out there that are so utterly *stupid* and *insane* that so called... the people who educate, the people to be the educators of the world, those who have the doctorates and so forth and some of these things, and you think, "That is so foolish and so insane you don't realize how dumb you really are, that you reject God!" When those things are the very things that should declare God in a very powerful way, the things of nature and what God has done. But man hates that and wants everything different, with God out of the picture.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. And so science has become so 'great' today and they build such great machines and millions and billions of dollars going into trying to find 'the *God particle*'. They want to find the beginning of everything. Idiots! Foolish! Morons, spiritually and physically when it comes down to things of knowledge and so forth. Seriously! This is insane the way man thinks! Absolutely insane thinking, that man won't accept what God says, thinks he's going to find something out there that will explain how everything began, because he won't listen to God. God just commanded it and it came into being out of something that didn't exist. Amazing! And how deeply do you believe that? You believe it with all your being. You know it! You know it as much as you know the Sabbath day, the Holy Days and what they mean!

And that's the way the *whole world* is, so filled with pride, that their way is best. It's like what we're experiencing right now in this country - everybody knows, has their own opinion of what is best, how to *solve* problems.

Verse 6 - Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him. And we grow in that, we learn from God. God helps us to learn more, to grow in this matter of grasping that life, the blessings of life, the fullness of life, that which is good comes from God and comes only if you diligently seek after it! You

have to *diligently*... you can't level out, you can't just *go through the motions*, which so many have done through time. Laodicea! This was the way of Laodicea! It wasn't a matter of *diligently* seeking God it was just kind of going through the motions after a time because we had *lost* the sense of urgency, because it wasn't being given to us. It wasn't being given to us because God was allowing something else to happen, to reveal things in our nature and things about us that we needed to come to grasp and comprehend - that the Church can't govern itself, that we need God's Government fully in our... we need the Kingdom of God, we need to be *in* the Kingdom of God! That's why this life is not what it's all about, even in God's Church. This is just a means to get there and we must yield our self to that process and throw ourselves into it, to be diligent about it.

That's why I told people over and over again, you've got to *fight* for this way of life! That's what diligently seeking is about! You've got to fight for it! If you're just taking it easy... if you're not praying to God every day... if you're not.... *I don't care if it's for two minutes!* If your spirit and your heart is crying out to God, "God I need you! Forgive me of my sins; help me to conquer!" You'll grow! You'll learn to do better, you'll learn to grow in those things and spend more time with God and at other times, at times of tragedy or hardship in your life you'll cry out more to God. That's the way it should be! But you have to fight for it! You have to fight against your nature!

And please, don't misunderstand me and say, "Oh, he said today that everybody, all you have to have is two minutes a day and you're okay..."

Verse 7 - By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not yet seen, God has warned us of things not yet seen, and we have responded just like Noah...just like Noah! We believe! That's why I said earlier... That's why I made the statement, just to drive the point home, *regardless of what happens, waiting with high anticipation has been spiritually beneficial, a great blessing!* Again, *regardless the outcome!* But I believe with all my being we are where we are. But if I am full of you-know-what; if that were the bottom line and it came down to that *you go forward and you FIGHT for this way of life, you OBEY God's Sabbath, and you continue to hold on to all you can, because Jesus Christ is returning!* I hope you understand what I'm saying! But I believe this with all my being, as I believe you do too, that's why you're here.

So Noah, told of God certain things to do, and Noah believed Him...*Noah believed Him.* We believe Him! He's told us what we've been going through and why and we've had to... I'm getting ahead of the sermon here...

Verse 7 - By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, it doesn't mean in the sense of being afraid of God; it has to do with a fear to do anything else but that. It's a healthy fear, it's an honor and a respect and a reverence toward God that we would fear doing anything different. That's why... it's like sermons - I would *fear* to give something that... I don't even know how to go about it, to give some sermon other than what God was giving, if just because I decided to give something. That doesn't make much sense to you, maybe. I think of times past, what we were told in the ministry to do, to give so many types of sermons throughout the year and blah-blah-blah. Anyway, but it's like ordinations. I would fear... I do. I fear not to do it the way God says to do it when He gives it.

...and prepared an ark to the saving of his house; because he believed God - flood is coming. And you talk about waiting for something God said, just in time, which we've already looked up the definition, and that's not what it was about - but that's incredible! Over a hundred years? 120 exactly!

...by which he condemned the world, and we do too because we believe God. We know it's going to come to pass. We agree with God! We don't want this world! We recognize what must happen to this world - as much as God told Noah what was going to happen to mankind we know what's going to happen to mankind, and so we yield to that process.

...and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Not that he's righteous. Not that Lot was righteous. Not that Abraham was righteous. Not that anyone is righteous. It's a matter of faith. God attributes it to us, accounts it to us, if you will, as righteousness because we believe Him. And we can't even believe Him unless He works with us. He has to bless us and bring us to that ability to believe Him. He has to give us something in the spirit, in the mind, to have that ability.

It's like I remember the first time I believed about the Sabbath - the first moment I heard about it. Not the first time I heard the word 'Sabbath', but in the context of the Sabbath was meant to be kept, and I knew it was true from that first moment, not having to look up a scripture, not having to look up one verse or anything, it's just in the mind and I knew it. But God has to give that! And so there is that which God gives. Now, we have choices then to make as to how we're going to do it and whether we, as Noah did, he was moved with fear, he believed it, he responded to what God had given to him and sometimes we don't respond properly and sometimes people don't. But when we do, how awesome it is and the blessing we have as a result of it.

...he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Because it goes on with the story in other places showing here it started with Noah, because everyone else was dead, and then it came down to Abraham, and then it says a lot about Abraham and faith. Paul talks a lot about it in Romans and other places, and those lessons, but it started here, that's why he's the heir, that's why he received it as well, **became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**

Verse 8 - By faith Abraham, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; we just read about that, we went back there; the 430 years that began with the beginning of promises that were given to Abraham, 215 years of wandering with his family and then 215 years in the land of Egypt. And they didn't start out as slaves right away but that came with time. 430 years to the day, God said. **By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out not knowing where he went.** There are times we don't know. There are things that we don't know, that God doesn't give everything. He gives us what we need and then it's up to us, it's up to... if we're moved by fear then we're going to do what God says and He will lead us... and it's just as He led Abraham. And He led Abraham, you read the stories back there; He led him from point to point. There are things He did with him constantly.

By faith he journeyed in the land of promise, as in a strange country, and spiritually this is for us! This is what we live spiritually! We come to understand in a deeper way, no matter where we are in the world this isn't our world, this isn't our country; we're ambassadors of a different one, aren't we? Exactly what God says...a different one that's coming, that's what we represent by our lives.

...he journeyed in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles/temporary dwellings with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: Awesome! And we go through the same thing, very much so, on a spiritual plane, on a physical plane, things we do and things we live.

Verse 10 - For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. That's what it's all about - keeping your eyes focused on what God says, on what God gives to us, things primarily first and foremost about His Kingdom that's coming, about the Millennium that's coming, about the return, the coming of His Son to become King of kings to fulfill the prophecies about the Messiah. We believe those things with all of our being; we wait for them, as I mentioned earlier. When we came in the Church, when I came in the Church...that's been our life from the very beginning - waiting, looking to God, waiting on Him to fulfill His time and His purpose, looking to Him, looking to Him to guide and direct and lead us and give us those things we needed to continue.

Verse 13 - These all died in faith not having received the promises, so sometimes anticipation has a way of testing you as well - eager anticipation - and it all comes down to a matter of keeping God in focus, to have the right kind of eager anticipation of the things that God is going to fulfill and to understand. I think of people who have gone before us, I think of all the people who have gone before us and I think of how blessed we are that in our lifetimes we're going to see things come to pass that every one of them died waiting for. They didn't quit, did they? That's why I said again what I said in the beginning - you don't quit! ...especially to the one in ninety-nine - I wish people wouldn't quit! I wish people wouldn't become distracted. It *astounds* me that individuals could go back to believing Petra is a place in the desert that you flee to during tribulation! It astounds me to think that people can go back to believing 144,000 are those who are going to come out of some church at the end-time here and you have to wait until it becomes larger than what Worldwide was, and since it's growing so slow what kind of... what does that stir up? Complacency, loss of hope, because you realize it's never going to happen in your lifetime, most likely, unless you're really, really young, then that.... Well, anyway, I won't go there.

These all died in faith not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, that's our life, and the farther we go the more we embrace and have hope in what God has placed before us... **and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.** That's what so much of this is about - is coming to understand there is nothing in this world for us. There is nothing in it to be saved! *Everything* has to be changed! *Everything* is messed up and polluted! *Everything!* What is it you want to take into a new age? As a whole, what is it you want to take into a new age? We were talking upstairs earlier just about agriculture and food and all the things that have to be changed. Man is so greedy! We're so *sick* because of what we've been given, because of the system that's out there! Everything has to be changed! Everything in education; everything, top to bottom. Incredible! We're going to be busy.

Because I have lived through periods of time in the Church where there are people in various countries, whether it be this one or others, who have believed that there are certain 'good things' that they think should continue on in another time, or think that there were certain 'good things' in the beginning, as an example, in this country that were good and noble. Maybe for the best that man could do for man, but they are not good and noble. It's not God's! It's not to be saved! It is not to be taken into a new age! Only God's Government and God's way, from top to bottom, is to be embraced and lived in a new age. We're not taking anything with us.

That's one thing I used to enjoy about Mr. Waterhouse, when he'd go around from area to area and spend about 4-4½ hours speaking ☺, and the comment that was so often made (I'll start with the big one), "He's going to take the Alaska out of the Alaskans." "Texas out of the Texans." "New York out of the New Yorkers." "Italy out of the Italians." "Germany out of the Germans." In other words, he just went through a few different areas of the world showing that whoever you are - I was just looking

around the room here at different ones and from where you are - God has to take that out of us, what we are, where we've grown up, the traits we have of various things that are inside of us, and there are certain traits that no matter what we're taking with us. But the point being is there are different ways of thinking people have and they have to be taken out of us, because if it's not of God it's not to be taken, no matter where it comes from. That's the point. And anyway, it was just a humorous way of making a point, that we're not taking this world and it's ways with us.

Verse 14 - For they who say such things declare plainly that they seek another country. Another - wherever they are, wherever you are, another one - not this one, not where we are in this world but a different one.

Verse 16 - But now they desire a better country, yes, speaking of that, **that is one from heaven: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a City.** And so again, indeed, are we 'vexed' in spirit the way we should be, in the sense of this world and what we see out there? Because we really need to be, we really need to have that kind of spirit and that attitude, and if that's real within us then you're going to feel it, you're going to know it and you're going to yearn more deeply for something different, and you're not going to want to take anything with you. You're going to *want* to be a part of helping to change it all.

Verse 39 - And these all, having obtained a good report through faith; that's how it's done. It's not about how righteous we are. Now, we are to respond and seek to be and live righteously, obviously, but this is the process how God attributes righteousness to us, because the more we grow the more we're going to see what we are and what we are is not a pretty thing save for that which is spiritual within us that God has given to us. But the carnal part, the physical part, the human nature - it's got to go! And the more you yearn for that, the more you loathe it, the more you'll want to see this world freed.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect. So it's a matter of God's timing and what He's doing and to be able to see that as well, the process, the 144,000, the order.

So indeed, yes, we are at a time where we've come full circle, back to what we had anticipated back in December of 2008. We've come full circle, we really have. Because I marvel... some of you haven't lived through all that, some of you were called at different parts, 2009, 2010, 2011, whenever, but going back to that point in time and just before it and then as we were thrust into that point in time, we've gone through a lot. But spiritually and as a part of where we thought we were, in one respect, God has brought us back full circle to the same point in time, in essence. That's the 'dawning' of the 'day' here; that's the 'dawning' part, because we're right at that point in time as to where we were then and what we saw at that moment in time, what God allowed us to see to that moment in time.

So I think of that point in time, going back to that 1st Trumpet being blown. I think of the sermons that followed as God was molding and fashioning something new in us, which was a matter of His mercy. What an awesome blessing! The things we've learned about God's mercy. And I hope everyone has. I have learned more about God's mercy...and candidly, not just starting then but as we went along, began to see things about God's mercy, and the closer we got to Pentecost of this past year the more and more and more, looking myself, the things I've learned about mercy I marvel at. I truly do! ...and yearn for, within the Church, within the world, of seeing something of how we deal with each other, of how human beings need to deal with each other, and seeing that that's how God has worked with us for

6,000 years with mankind. Incredible mercy that God has given to us, truly! And when He works with us in the Church that's the very thing that helps to endear you more to God.

When you grasp and comprehend why you're still here.... it's because of God's mercy. Truly! Awesome, the mercy of God to work with us, to account faith, believing Him, as a matter of righteousness, because the more you grow the more you understand you are not righteous, the more you see the human spirit that's within you that *must* be changed, that yearning for, that *eager* anticipation for being in a different body, a spiritual one, not being in a type of bondage that's always going to be in your life. You're always going to have a measure of bondage in your life even after you go into the Millennium, because human nature is human nature, and because of the way we are as human beings it tends to keep in bondage. That's why that battle is there that Paul talked about, that struggle. There is that inward man, the spiritual begotten part, that you see certain things you want and you cry out for, you ask for forgiveness of the things that aren't in unity with that, and then there's this other part back here that's just *bad*. How can you say it any other way? It's just *bad*! 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the *pride of life*!' Pride is so ugly and yet we all have it - varying degrees depending on how much we've grown to conquer and overcome various parts of it - but you will have to the day you're changed or the day you die, and you've got to fight against it so it doesn't come out. That's so much of the key to battling so often.

So again, I think of the sermons that followed as God has been molding and fashioning something new in us, which was a matter of His mercy that He desires to be molded and fashioned more deeply within us. That's what He's doing, that's what He's been molding and fashioning in us as well, His mercy - learning about it, growing in it, and candidly, by seeing how God is dealing with this world - not in the way we had anticipated back in December 2008. Because we had been prepared for through time, through Philadelphia, through Laodicea, through this period of time all the way up to then, for 'great tribulation'. It was the word we used to describe *horrifying* things that are going to happen on this earth, but we didn't know how God was going to do those things and when. We thought we knew when.

So, I've been drawn back to some of the early sermons and I'm going to go back and repeat just a couple things here because I think they're awesome when you see what God is doing, because it's realizing what God is molding in us, teaching us, and where He's taking us. We're on a journey... we were starting into a journey at that moment in time that was different for us. No one has ever experienced it. No one has ever experienced 1260 days except us, we've experienced it. But we were getting ready to experience it so God was preparing us because what He was teaching us *here* is what He taught us throughout that period of time, what He began to mold and fashion within us through that period of time.

I'm going to just go back and read a few comments of things that were said.

The first sermon in January, January 3rd was a time we were fasting, and so the sermon being titled, 'Fasting for Humility'; a desire to be right with God, a desire because we were sobered by the time we'd entered into not knowing exactly when the 2nd Trumpet would blow, and so looking to God to guide, to direct, to lead us, and to have a spirit of humility before God - which means we're not going to do things our way. Humility is a matter of the opposite of pride. It's a matter of looking to God to lead, to guide and direct *His* way, to do things His way.

So anyway, in that sermon, in the beginning it was stated:

"Today is the third Sabbath since the 1st Trumpet of the 7th Seal was blown. Today is the 1st Sabbath of a new year of the Roman calendar. Today we're humbling ourselves before God; we are fasting. It is indeed so appropriate that we are fasting and humbling ourselves before God because we acknowledge we are in the wilderness."

And we knew that, but I think of how much more that God has *driven the point home*, and in this Feast of Tabernacles even in a more powerful way and even in some other sermons - those analogies that we had no idea, at this moment in time, what God was going to teach us even more so about *being in the wilderness*. Those things that God was going to teach us and give to us, to move us in a very powerful way, of analogies of things that are going to take place, were going to take place in time that are a direct correlation - ours spiritual, theirs physical.

So just saying here again:

"We acknowledge we are in the wilderness; we are wandering through a desert as far as this world is concerned."

But again, that's where God was leading us, to teach us this in a far greater way, what this meant to us.

"God has taken us out of Egypt but we have not reached the promised land. We are unique..."

And so we recognized a spiritual journey, but we understand too, obviously, that we're not...just like I said earlier, we're not fully out of Egypt until we're changed.

"...but we have not reached the promised land. We are unique because we know how long it is before we can see God's Kingdom coming to this earth."

At least we thought we did. That's what we lived. It was the present truth, 1260 days.

"But nevertheless, we are wandering. We humble ourselves before God and we know He will lead us in all these things. We have more fully learned *not* to trust in ourselves in judging *how God leads* us."

Boy, did we little know that we had much more to learn in that, much more to be driven home in that, because it takes humility to receive what God was going to give us. Indeed it did. And so God, again, what we started with is *exactly* what God has led us into to learn in a far greater way, not to trust in ourselves in judging how He leads us - to look upon Him, to wait upon Him. He'll lead us. You never lose sight of that! God will continue to lead and guide and direct you.

"We have learned more fully not to be *offended* in God's way of directing our steps."

That wasn't fully learned yet. We had started to learn that but we didn't know that God was going to take us through a lot more because there was more to be molded and fashioned into us in this area of our lives, which has to do, again, with a powerful relationship with God, of learning not to be offended in God.

And I mentioned there then the change in Feast observance of 2008, because *some were offended*, of what God had given to the Church, to me, to give to the Church, concerning a different way of observing

that particular year at the Feast. You remember what it was? Half and half; small portion of time where we could come together and observe it as a group, but that we also were able to keep it alone by ourselves and still keep it and being in full obedience to God and He was teaching us things to help us to grasp and understand what it meant to dwell in booths and how we had come to misuse some of those terms in a very physical way in our lives, that He was teaching something in a very spiritually way.

And so again here, so often in life we don't think that we're offended in God, we think that, "Well, that's just a wrong decision he made...that's not the way God would do it." And so it tests us and tries us to see...do we understand how we receive things from God? Do we have confidence in the process of how God works with us? Do we grasp fully - like we talked about at the Feast - that there has only been *one time* in *all* of the Churches history that God allowed - that *God allowed* - for the Church to go astray through wrong leadership. God has the power to provide what is right, and He has the power as well to take that away for something else to be learned. Awesome to understand what God has done!

Not because anyone is great! It's because of what God does! God is the one who does it!

So again, those statements being made there...and I hope those hit you in the same way that they hit me.

"We have learned more fully not to be *offended* in God's way of directing our steps..."

...then referring to that particular thing that happened for that Feast.

"...not to be embarrassed due to pride! ...not to be embarrassed due to pride because of the way God leads us."

Meaning that there are times then, because we are zealous and we want to share what we have with others and then when something doesn't materialize exactly that way - the 'great tribulation' didn't start immediately....and it hasn't happened yet as far as what you'd classify as physical great tribulation, of how we thought things were going to be. Because candidly, the Church has always believed for a full 3½ years this nation was going to suffer...and God was teaching us something different, something powerful, because that period of time was a witness - a witness of the way mankind has responded to God for 6,000 years and also a witness of the most powerful, *powerful* - one of the most beautiful attributes of God that man can come to grasp and understand - how merciful He is to us. Awesome!

And so that carried through that entire 3½ years, God's mercy. And we grew in that, we learned about that very powerfully so.

So again here...

"...learned not to be embarrassed due to pride because of the way God leads us."

And I think of individuals who had battles at times and they acknowledged those things in time, it came out that it was because of pride and because, "It makes *me* look bad then..." And it's not about 'me', it's not about 'you', it's not about 'us' looking bad, it's about *God!* It's about what God is doing! And we swallow our pride and we seek to be of a humble spirit always before God!

So appropriate that we began this period of time, as a whole, in fasting, to fast for humility. Because it's not a matter of a one-time event in our life, it's something we should always strive to have in our life, this humility, to fight against pride. Again, every Feast that theme comes out somewhere because there is the one being... that God wants us to loathe and hate that spirit because of what it does, to lift ourselves up. That's why the obelisk is such a powerful example here of idolatry, of lifting something up that points up to God as a stench in God's nose, of the haughtiness of mankind to raise something up, because of our mind, above what God tells us to do, that we allow, that we believe something else can be true or exist. And anything that disagrees with God is spiritual idolatry and it's like an obelisk being lifted up before God. That's what every false religion, everything that's scattered out here that's not in unity and oneness with God; the ignoring of a great apostasy that took place and because of that not accepting personal responsibility, is pride! It's all about pride! And so we've had to learn, we've gone through 3½ years of things to help get rid of pride more in our life. And I've seen this in people's lives! Of how people have been able to combat and fight against that and grow in a greater spirit of humility! And with that there is a greater sense... How do you describe it? A greater spiritual understanding of things when you do that. The more you're able to fight against pride the more spiritual alertness and soundness of mind - that's it - spiritual soundness of mind there is, being able to cut through and see things because then we're not in the way.

And so, to be made to look bad by a friend, by a relative, by whomever...*who cares!* You still follow God! And if you've got something to learn and you can learn from that experience - good! That's a blessing! But to take it upon ourselves? That's a horrible thing to do!

So again here, that's why these things were being... well, they weren't being said at that time for that reason, but some of it was coming out at that time and God was going to teach us much more in the following 3½ years.

"...not to be embarrassed due to pride because of the way God leads us."

And then I mentioned there the timing of the revelation of the 50th Truth. So we were learning then! Little did we know we had much more to learn! You know, if we hadn't have gone through things like that...God prepared us, was molding and fashioning something different within us, it helped us to go through different things that God gave through time. I think of the 7 Truths that God gave us *during* that time! It helped to prepare us for some of that. It helped to prepare us for May 27th - it candidly did! Because we were able to... again, I hope you can see that by experiencing this you've had the ability to grow more, to become stronger in something, to become stronger in faith, to become stronger in an anticipation for something that God has said is before us.

I think of the time that we met together after the apostasy and how a group from Detroit came down...and I've talked about this at different times - came together with some of us from Toledo, and we came together to keep services in an area. I think it was the first combined service that we had - and the humility of spirit that was there because we had come up to a time where we, candidly, came to a point where we really appreciated the Sabbath and the Holy Days more than we ever did in our lives before that. Because we saw that... so many that had been taken away from and the power and the force behind it was to take it away from all of us, to take God's truth away from us, which the Sabbath and the Holy Days are focal to all of that. And I think of *this*, what we've gone through, and how we've grown because of some of this as well, a greater conviction, a greater strength of spirit, a greater appreciation. And because we're in this period of time there is a better and a stronger anticipation of what God is doing than what we even had before, in a more mature fashion if you will. And that's

something that God has to give. Again, I hope you can see the growth and the blessing of that, that it is a blessing.

Going on here and reading some of what was here.

"So today we are fasting. We are seeking to humble ourselves before God and seek more fully His forgiveness, which means to accept more fully the depth of our sins and our guilt for how we, each of us individually, have let down."

I think of the sermons we started to have right after May 27th, and some of the coasting that was taking place, and for some who have been new to experience a spirit of Laodicea that was taking place because of letting down up to that point in time on a spiritual plane, to see how dangerous some of that is, of coasting. Because it wasn't long lived therefore it wasn't like, fully like Laodicea, but to have a taste of that is a healthy thing so that you can learn to hate it, to loathe it, to understand it's danger.

Going on...

"Yes, we have begun to more fully grasp the ugliness of pride and how quickly the human spirit can turn against God, against His servants, against His truth."

Have we grown in that in the last 3½ years? To see the power that exists in those things and what the battle must always be in our life, that we become stronger because of this?

"We see we did not have all the answers to every way that God will lead us and how He will bring about the full end of this age."

We didn't know what we were saying at that time but that's what God was showing us and showing us even a lot more, that there was a lot more to be fulfilled in this.

Let's turn over to Daniel 9. The last comment made in that sermon that I want to read here today...

"Fasting is indeed an act of humility, of humbling ourselves before God. It is to be done with a spirit of *introspection*, of self-examination and repentance."

And I think of how the sermons before the Feast here were all about that in a very, very powerful way spiritually.

I want to read this here because it's an example of a prayer that Daniel had that was also in that particular sermon, but I just want to read these first four verses here.

Daniel 9:1 - In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years wherein the word of the Eternal came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy-years in the desolations of Jerusalem. What an awesome thing! This was toward the very end now, and now because of where they were God was showing to Daniel that this had been prophesied a long time ago, that there were seventy-years to be fulfilled, but it couldn't be known until God gave it.

I think of how awesome it is. I think of what we have gone through in the book of Daniel recently and the things that God revealed. Until it's God's timing there was no purpose in revealing some of those things earlier, and the timing involved in the second coming of Christ, talking about the periods of time from the time of the apostasy all the way up to the final day, May 27th. Awesome!

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: It's a beautiful picture because it pictures something that has to be in our lives on a continuing basis - not just a matter of fasting that has to be there but that attitude and spirit of how we look to God and this matter of what we've learned about sackcloth. We've learned a lot about sackcloth. I point at these bags in the back of the room here that hold...they're coffee bags, whole beans. They're itchy. You can cut a hole out the top, kind of like they have some of those things in Mexico in times past - you can think of the poncho's, a poncho - and you cut out the arms and cut out the head, and if you wear something like that it's not going to be very comfortable. And we learn from that don't we? We learn about pride, that it's... and humility, the opposite, and what it's like, the contrast between the two. And humility is to be a specific way of life for us; it isn't comfortable because it isn't natural.

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and mighty God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them who love Him, and to them who keep His commandments; Awesome how blessed we are, brethren, truly is.

If you want, you can be turning over to Matthew 23 in the meantime, because I do have some more things I do want to read here.

After the first week of January there when we had the sermon on fasting it was followed up by Part 2, and then we had two sermons concerning Esther and the lessons to be learned from some of that, of what God was leading us in. Then we came to a sermon that we had 'A Great Fast'. It was the end of January and it was a particular two-day fast and I want to read to you a few things that came out of that sermon and we're going to conclude by that part there, then we'll come to Matthew 23.

We're going to look at a couple paragraphs from that particular sermon. Said in there, in that particular sermon having to do with 'A Great Fast' it says...

"Today we find ourselves in a great fast. This fast is of great importance to us all. We are fully focused on these end-times; times that the world and the Church that was scattered just do not see. We have entered a time that is rapidly moving into greater and greater tribulation in this world. It is not yet what might be called 'great' tribulation."

So God was starting to show us just a glimpse then, that we're not there but we're rapidly moving into such time. At that time I thought we were rapidly moving into it - meaning quicker - but in the scheme of things it's still rapid enough. Anyway, went on to say:

"This time has not begun as we thought it might, thank God!"

Then the next point here going on...

"The time of 'great' tribulation upon the Church did not instantly happen..."

Referring back to the beginning of the apostasy.

"...and even as the destruction of the Church with a scattering and the apostasy increased in power and strength it did not happen, it did not come at all as we had imagined it might. It was not clear what was happening, it was not clear concerning the magnitude and greatness of it all."

But I think of what God has led us to and He's let us see as we've been going along, various things about what we've been experiencing...and certainly toward the end. But anyway, going on....What followed this period of fasting was where God led us to grasp more fully the importance of a final witness - as I said early - of a 3½ years of a reflection of 6,000 years. But I've already stated this point here - the greatest point of all of this was the matter of mercy, of how God has dealt with mankind for a full 6,000 years.

So indeed, if you look back to that period of time, spiritually where we were, where we were as God's Church at the beginning, what we anticipated, God has brought us full circle because that same anticipation, but now magnified, is before us right now.

I think of the awesomeness of that two-day fast because of all that God gave to us, and we're going to be given a lot more in time about what that consisted of. But I do want to read one more paragraph:

"So what is the purpose of our prayers..."

Speaking of that two-day fast.

"...our petitions and fasting before God? It is in like manner as Elijah prayed..."

Because we went through a lot of scriptures concerning an example of Elijah...

"...that God would bring many more to receive a special calling from Him, that many more be brought to repentance and acceptance of the truth through the timing, repetition, and power from unleashing far mightier Thunders, and as well, the Trumpets that are before us - and all these now ready to be delivered in great awe and might."

Full circle. We've come full circle. And even in some of this that was stated at that particular time...I think of how God has shown us throughout that 3½ years His timing, His repetition of various things, that in time will produce a fruit, or is producing a fruit, when people are beginning, when people begin to make the changes they do.

But Matthew 23 now. Do you grasp? Do you see the things that God has molded into us? Do you see a process of whereby God has worked with us from the beginning? And I think of even in the beginning of this last phase here starting with May 27th, because it's truly an awesome thing. **Matthew 23:23** - it reminds me of this verse here where Christ said...**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these you should do, speaking of indeed you should tithe, but not to leave the other undone, the matters of the law, the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.**

And I *hope* that you can understand by the kinds of sermons especially that God has been giving since May 27th that this is what God has molded and fashioned into us more than anything else, what He was

molding and fashioning into us for the 3½ years leading up to that - because these are the things that are more important in life than the physical routine, than going through the motions - which are necessary. There are things we must do. We must come to Sabbath services. We must, indeed, go through the motions of things in our life because that's our life! But that shouldn't be the height of it! This... *this* is what's important, *this* is what's been molded and fashioned into us, the ability of a righteous judgment, of how we... I think of the things of 'going to your brother', of things that God has given us in understanding of Government at the Feast, that He has - as I gave in the example - when Mr. Armstrong...

I can see him in the room there when Laura and I were sitting there at that particular meeting in Pasadena when they brought different ministers in on a regular basis. We'd be there for two weeks and they'd bring in new ministers, a new group from all over the world, and we would sit there in a refreshing program and Mr. Armstrong had piles of the book back there in the background. And so often they would film him and then when he wasn't able to be there, which was most of the time following that, then people would see the film. We got to be there at that time, to see that awesome...to me an awesome event, to see his face, to see his excitement, to see something that was so personal, in that respect, of how excited he was about 'The Mystery of the Ages'. After all the years, 50+ years, come together, this was what God gave to the Church through him.

And I think of these things here, of what God has given to us after all that we've gone through - this is what has brought us to where we are now and it's an awesome thing, it truly is: judgment, mercy, and faith. 3½ years learning about God's mercy. I've seen a lot of changes. Some of the major changes I've seen are in ministers because they're the ones who got preached at more, preached to more about these matters of mercy, and changes that people have made in their lives and how we work with one another, how we deal with one another - because the spirit of what has existed in God's Church, of sheriffing and so forth, those things that have to be rooted out of life that are not just a matter of something that was in the ministry - it's something that's in everybody's life. It's a *control* thing. It's a control thing that people try to exercise over each other which should not be in human relationships, that must be gotten rid of in human relationships indeed. And so God has been teaching us those things, about judgment, mercy, and faith - because of believing Him.

Let's turn over to one last scripture today - we'll complete it here - but I marvel at this one here. Psalms 46. You know, there are things that God gives us from time to time - I think especially during the time of Christ - there were times when He would quote something and He would be quoting a Psalm that was being fulfilled in His life, of what He was doing right then. And so that happened over and over again. There are different times even in the book of the Acts of things that happened with some of the apostles and things that were taking place, of things that were happening right then in their life that were a matter of prophecies written long ago. Here is one that's for right now. Awesome! This is about our time!

You can always learn lessons from all those things that are written through time, but when they're specifically about a particular period of time... this is for us - this is about us.

Psalms 46:1 - and I think about what happened up in New York, what happened in New Jersey, what happened in all that region up there, a thousand mile stretch of an effect of a storm - a little bit of suffering, not much at all compared to what's coming, and that should sober us indeed in a very powerful way because it's a small foretaste and a 'type' of exactly what's following. **God is our refuge/our shelter**; and so people are concerned about others in God's Church. God is your refuge, He

is your shelter. We're going to go through things where that's going to mean a lot more to you. ...**and strength, a very present help in trouble.** In other words, basically saying always there - always there - you just have to look to Him and cry out to Him, which we will do more of. But always there to help in time of trouble because He wants to show His great power and His love in your life through all the journey that you've gone.

Verse 2 - Therefore we will not fear though, and the word 'though' isn't there. It's basically saying, **therefore we will not fear the earth being,** not 'removed', the word means '**changed**'; we're not going to fear the world being changed. We know why it *must* go through this and why it must go through this change. The change it is talking about is the one we're getting ready to go through. That's what this Psalm is about in a very powerful way.

...**and though,** again the word 'though' is not there, **the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;** what are 'mountains'? All the nations and what God's going to do. And at least the next one they do acknowledge 'though' isn't there, they have it in italics: ***Though and the waters thereof roar and are troubled,*** and the word 'troubled' there means 'to boil as in turmoil, to be in turmoil', **and the mountains 'shake'**; literally means 'to shake and tremble'; again, the countries, the nations - awesome here what it's saying...**with the 'swelling'**, it's the Hebrew word for 'pride'; **with the swelling thereof.** Because that's what's brought the world to what it is and that's what God is going to bring low, the nations. And so a word that is used there talking about that God is going to bring them into the sea, as it were, in a great storm and cause them to be moved because of these swells that are there so powerfully so to bring them down. That's what it's talking about here. But it's all about pride.

I think of all the scriptures we read about pride and what God's going to do. He's going to remove the 'arrogancy' and the pride of nations at the end-time.

Verse 4 - There is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the City of God, what we're blessed to be a part of in what's coming; **the holy of the Tabernacles of the most High.** God's Kingdom that's just about here and what He's bringing.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be 'moved' the word meaning here again in Hebrew 'to be shaken so as to fall, to be overthrown'. God says that isn't going to happen. That's about the Church! It's about us! We're a part of it, that's where God is in the midst of, He's in the midst of us. He's in the midst of our lives! We're a part of that City, if you will, that God is constructing and a part of what is coming.

And so it goes on to say, talking about the Tabernacles, and that's basically where God dwells. That's what it's all about. He dwells in us, in our lives. So **God is in the midst of her, she shall not be 'moved':** in other words, she's not going to be shaken, to fall. He's getting ready to make a contrast here, to be overthrown, because as it goes on to say here; **God shall help her, and that right 'early'**. Interesting word here - literally has to do with 'the turning of the morning', or 'at the dawning of the day' - literally how it's translated in places. **God shall help her** - incredible!

Verse 6 - The heathen/nations raged, not 'heathen', it's about the nations because that's what this is all about, the mountains and the nations raged, **the kingdoms were 'moved'**: this is that same word we read earlier about where God said that's not going to happen to the Church, but it will to the nations, 'to be shaken as to fall', that's what that means in Hebrew, 'to be overthrown'. **He uttered His voice, the earth melted.** In other words, nothing can stand before God. When God begins to do what He said He

was going to do through time, to bring about His Kingdom, nothing resists Him, it says, **though it melts in His path before Him**; when you read other scriptures it talks about the earth melting away and various things. This is what it's about.

And so it says, again here, **verse 7 - The Eternal of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our 'refuge'**. Our shelter. **Selah**. In other words, 'think on this', 'meditate on this', 'understand it's meaning'.

Come, behold the works of the Eternal, it's like God saying to us...well, I think of what Johnny Harrell has said, "You have a front row seat." It's Johnny Harrell that said we have a front row seat. That's basically what God is saying. "Come, you have a front row seat - come on, look, see what God is doing, come see His works." We're a part of it, we see it firsthand. **...what 'desolations'**, the word means literally 'waste' and 'horror' **He has made in the earth**. It's about the end-time; that's when God is going to do it. *This* time that's in front of us.

Verse 9 - He makes wars to cease - When? During this time. That's what this is all about, beating their swords into plowshares. There will never be another war. There will be an attempt to war but there will never be another war - when Satan is restrained for a little season - but *there will never be another war!* I think of how sick it is what's happening in Syria. They're calling it a civil disturbance, some are calling it a civil war. It's a war! Thousands and thousands of people are dying, it's spilling over into Lebanon and other areas of the world and it's getting ready to spill over throughout the Middle East. Incredible! An end to war. Man can't end war! He can't end things in nations! Says he does.

I think of those who love us in Afghanistan for what we've done there. Incredible! Sick, sick world!

He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth; all over the earth; God's going to bring an end to it all. **He breaks the bow, and 'cuts the spear'**; literally means 'cut's in pieces', or 'cuts it off'. There will be no more war. There will be no more fighting. They will be beating their swords into plowshares - anyway, it's going to be used for agriculture not for killing. **He burns the chariot in the fire**. Awesome! You think of the most, at that time, the most powerful weapon that could be used, as a whole, was that of a chariot and how the force and the power against some military might was used, and here it talks about burning the chariots, the most powerful of those things that man has God says it's going to be destroyed.

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. When? Over the next few months. That's what it's about, it's about God's time and why He intervenes to do what He does.

Verse 11 - The Eternal of hosts is with us and the God of Jacob is our refuge/our shelter.

So I marvel how we've come full circle now and we're right at that very same time that we thought we were at and God has brought us to that point now at a time of a 'dawning'. Indeed, God is our refuge, our high tower, our rock!

~~~end