

The title of today's sermon is *Right and Wrong – Part 1*.

Welcome, everybody, to another Sabbath.

When God created mankind He created them with a weakness. Mankind does not recognize or admit to this weakness. God created them with a weakness for a spiritual purpose. Every human being, other than Jesus Christ, was born and has this weakness in their thinking; that weakness is the natural carnal mind, selfishness in all our thinking.

For the world to even begin to accept that statement... it can't, because it's a spiritual matter. But we all have been created with this mind, this mindset called 'the carnal mind'. The problem with mankind is that they think they can work out what is right and wrong, what is good and evil, and we see that everywhere now; and that is what is happening in governments and in society, is that mankind, based on his own thinking, is working out right and wrong. Now, if you look at the religions of the world, that's exactly what they do, they work out for themselves what *they think* is right and what is wrong. Governments do exactly the same. Governments say, "Well, we believe that *this* is right." For example, euthanasia is a new topic that's out in society, so how are they going to work out whether euthanasia is right or wrong? How is a person going to work out whether abortion is right or wrong? Well, based on the natural carnal mind they're going to have to work through a series of things and the end result is, the end decision will be, it will be *political*. It depends whether or not this will win us votes! Will we get votes? Will people like us enough to put us into government? Has nothing to do with God.

So a society without God, without God's decision about what is right and wrong is going to lead to its own self-destruction. This is why we have the society we have. *Everyone* is right in their own eyes. *Everyone* has an *opinion* on almost *any* topic and *anybody* in the world, including ourselves, has views and opinions that we think are right and wrong, but they're not always based on what *God* says is right and wrong.

This way of thinking is outlined in Romans 7 and in Romans 8. So we're going to go through Romans 7, spend a little bit of time through Romans 7 and Romans 8 because it outlines this very problem that mankind has. And Paul addresses this issue with regards to the mindset of being right and wrong and how we have this mind.

So in **Romans 7:12 – Therefore the law is holy**; so the law, which is a rule of producing a state approved by God. So the law is something that God has established about what is good and evil and what is right and wrong; **and the commandment, just**, the commandments of God, which is an order, a command, a charge, a precept, **is holy and just**. That's what God says, that the way He is, what He has said in the commandments, is actually holy, it's separate and it is **just**, it is righteous and **good**, it's upright and honorable. So that's what God says about the law and that's what Paul says about the law.

Verse 13 – Has then what is good, now Paul is asking a question here; **Has then what is good, the law, become death to me?** So he's asking this question, "Is the law the problem?" **Certainly not!** So Paul says, "No, it's not!" There is nothing wrong with God's law. **But sin**, sin is the problem, our nature is the problem, God's law is not the problem. The law does not produce death, it's sin that produces death,

and that's where people get confused. The law is righteous and holy; the law of and by itself does not produce death. It's when we *break* the law in its spiritual intent, it then causes, (what we say then is sin), it causes death. So the only way that we can know sin is from the law, which is just and holy and righteous. **But sin, that it might appear**, in other words we might know from the law, which is a lamp to our thinking. So it's only by knowing the law that we can know sin; **that sin was producing death in me through what is good**; through the law. So what Paul is really saying is that without the law you can't know what sin is. And society has what? ...gotten rid of the law. They don't have a law, they say the law is done away therefore they can't know sin, therefore all the decisions are going to be based on what *they* think is right and wrong. And that's the problem with society, they reject God's law.

...so that through sin/by sin the commandment might become exceedingly sinful; so it's the commandment that reveals what sin is.

How was sin producing death in Paul? **Verse 14 - For we know, we see that the law is spiritual**: so the law tells us about our intent. So when you look at any of the commandments, the law of God, when it says, 'Thou shalt not kill', well, that's a straight forward simple command. We know Jesus Christ came and revealed the intent of the law, which is the way we think towards another person is whether or not we kill or whether we murder or whether we hate. Hate is sin because hates leads to murder. So it's in our thinking.

So another way to put it would be, any ill will, *any* ill will towards another human being is sin, because it starts in the mind. So **the law is spiritual, but I am carnal**, naturally selfish, **sold under sin**. So we're in slavery to sin, we're sold to it. So our natural carnal mind is naturally selfish. Now, this is something that a calling brings out and it takes years to view our levels of selfishness, which we all have. We are *all* carnal! We are all carnal! We are *all* selfish by nature!

Now, I'm sure this would go well in the self-motivation courses and the courses of building self-esteem. In society when a speaker gets up and says, "By the way, you are all *selfish* by nature! You *only* think about yourself! *Every* decision you make in life is for *your* good, and when you do good to somebody else or for somebody else it's motivated by *your selfishness*!" Now, they'll all walk out on a high, I'm sure. But within God's Church that's the purpose of life, why we're called into the Church, it's God's Church through the power of God's spirit that reveals our selfishness to us, because we were born with it, that's the way we are! The beauty of it all is that we have to come to accept we're selfish, because if we will refuse to obey God, if we refuse to listen to what God tells us, that He gave us this nature, how will we ever overcome the selfishness that's in us? So the first thing with a calling is to admit our motives are selfish.

Now, that is a great start for anybody in the Body of Christ. If we can only get to that level, to admit that that's the way we are by nature; that's it, we agree with God, that's what God says. *Now* we can take steps to work against what God has put in us for a purpose, the spiritual purpose, we can work against it for a purpose that God has for us. So it's a beautiful thing to understand this, because the world doesn't. Only God's Church knows this truth.

So we, by nature, are sold under sin. We are *in* slavery to sin! Why? I'll just refer to it at this point, **Romans 8:7 - Because the natural mind, the carnal mind, the selfish thinking, is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God**, in other words, we can't obey God in spiritual intent, **nor indeed can be**. Because that's the beauty of understanding what God has done for us. In a calling He shows us what we really are and then He shows us His plan for us. So it's a marvelous plan!

Romans 7:15 - For what I am doing I do not understand: for what I will to do... Paul is saying here, because God's revealed this to him, what he really wants to do, what he wills to do, what he desires to do, is obey God and think no evil. Now, that's what we want. We want to obey God and we don't want to think evil about anything towards anybody or towards God's law or anything. That's our desire! We desire to obey God. So he says, **For what I will to do, that I do not practice;** ah, we don't do it! We don't want to have ill will toward others, but guess what, by nature that's exactly what we do... **but what I hate,** so he hates, Paul says is that, "I hate the sin! I hate this selfishness! I hate my own selfishness! ...don't worry about other peoples, my *own*, the way that I think towards others, the way that I think toward God, I actually hate it, I don't want to *be* that person!" ...**that I do.** We have been called to fight the selfishness. Now, that's the purpose of our calling. We have been called to strive against sin in our thinking.

Verse 16 – For then I do what I will not to do, so what he desires, he doesn't do it, and the fact that he admits it and he's fighting against it, it says, **I agree with the law that it is good.** So now he's saying that the law is actually good because it highlights what sin is, so it is good, it is righteous, and it's a perfect law because it tells you what sin is. We desire not to have any ill will to others in our thoughts, words, and actions. We desire not to be selfish. That's the battle from the day you're called to the day you die – and same for me, I'm in that same battle – every member of the Body of the Christ should be engaged in this battle. And if we *are* engaged in this battle we agree with God that His law is good. I find that really exciting! We actually come into agreement with God. If we're willing to work on ourselves and fight against our own selfishness we're actually acknowledging before God that His way, His law, is good, and that's what Paul was saying.

Verse 17 – But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin, or the selfish thinking **that dwells in me.** So he's acknowledging that he has a carnal mind. Because we have this carnal selfish mind that is against God we can now agree with God to say, yes, that's what's happened, now we're going to fight against it, we're going to work against it.

Verse 18 - For I know/I see that in me (that is, in my natural carnal mind, that in my flesh, in my thinking) nothing good dwells: If we can come to that thought process we are a long way down the path of developing godly character, if we can just see that everything from our natural mind – that's the way we are, that's the way we were until we were called – and even in that calling was a beginning of repentance and we don't really start to overcome that thinking until we are baptized and we have hands laid on us. Then it's by God's power that we can now think differently. Repentance is thinking differently. So we enter in our course of living, of repentance; for the rest of our life we're going to be repenting.

How many times do you repent a day? If you answer that, and if I answer that, that will highlight to us whether we are fighting our selfishness. Because if we go a whole day without thinking that we've done anything wrong something is wrong, because we obviously don't see our own selfishness, which God says and Paul says here that we have. And I acknowledge I'm selfish; all of you, I'm sure, would acknowledge you're selfish. But that's the way we are! ...and that's the fight we've entered into. No one else in the world, other than members of the Body of Christ, are in this fight, in this battle. That is exciting in itself; we're all in this same battle! We're all in the same battle, we're all trying to fight against our own selfishness.

...that nothing good dwells in me, for to will is present with me; so we really don't want to have this selfishness, but **how to perform that which is good I do not find.** So how to perform, how to obey God's

law, we can't do it of and by ourselves. Over the history of mankind there have been plenty of people that have set out to obey God as from a physical level, without God's spirit, and yes, there are people that have done certain things with regards to aspects of the law – for example, not committing adultery. There are some people that have not committed adultery in their life on a physical level, but on a spiritual level they have, and that takes a spiritual mind to understand it. And we're going to get into aspects of that.

The law of God is outlines in the 10 Commandments as being good, but we cannot obey them in spirit and truth by our own strength, it takes God's spirit.

Verse 19 – For the good that I will to do, in the inner thinking, the desire to obey, I do not do: but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. So Paul is saying, "Well, I fail all the time, that's what I do. I have this desire that I want to do good to others, I want to fight myself," and then certain things happen in our life, under pressure, and we go back to the natural carnal mind of selfishness, that's what happens to us.

Verse 20 - Now if I do what I will not to do, so in other words, he says, if I do it; I didn't really want to do it but I do it, **it is no longer I that do it but sin that dwells in me;** this carnal mind dominates our thinking. Sin dwells in our thinking therefore we will sin by habit, because that's the natural carnal mind. We're going to look at aspects of selfishness and how we're going to measure some of that selfishness.

Now I hope that you're not finding it too uncomfortable. Because sometimes in God's Church when we go down this path of looking at ourselves it's hard for us to acknowledge our own pride and our own selfishness, because we have a barrier within our own thinking, that we don't like to think that others think of us as being selfish or pride-filled. But *everybody* has pride and *everybody* has selfishness, so we shouldn't put up those barriers because we're *all* the same. We are *all* the same! We *all* are selfish by nature, but of course because of pride and selfishness we put up barriers to defend the self, the image that we've created in our own minds; that's what we do.

Verse 21 – For I find then a law, now, that's not talking about the law of God, but **a law,** and that law is that we were created this way for a purpose. That's a law, that God put in us a carnal mind, it's a law of God, He puts it into every human being, **that evil/selfishness is present with me.** So that's the law, God put it into motion. A law is simply a command that everyone who is born, other than Jesus Christ, will have this natural carnal mind of selfishness and there is nothing they can do about it, that's the way they were created. That is *a* law that God put in motion. ... **the one who wills to do good,** so no matter what you will to do, your desire, you have this natural carnal mind. He's saying, "I desire to do good but sin comes out of me," as it does all of us.

Verse 22 - For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man: now, we can delight in the law of God. I know there are aspects of God's law that we can actually rejoice in, we delight in it, we actually appreciate the fact that somebody, as far as God communicating to us, that we're selfish. We should be able to delight in that because now we can acknowledge and go, "Well, this is exciting news! *Now* I can desire *not* to be like this. I don't *want* to hurt others." That's what it's about. "I do not want to hurt others, I want to have no ill will towards anybody no matter what; that's my desire." But underneath I know that I'm going to because that's the natural carnal mind at work, therefore the beauty is I can rejoice in God's law because God created repentance and forgiveness. So I know that if I go down that path and don't catch my thoughts early that I *can* go to God and say, "Here I am again!" because it's about repentance, it's about the desire not to have this mind that God created us with.

Paul is saying here he loved God's way of life. He loved and delighted to see spiritual matters, to have spiritual understanding.

So what are some of the things that *you* delight in to have spiritual understanding? ...because it's going to be different for all of us. I delight in the fact that I have spiritual understanding about myself. I acknowledge that I am selfish and I have pride. And I've worked on that pride to different levels at different times, but I still have pride and I'm going to have it until the day I die...and you're going to have it to the day you die because that's the natural carnal mind, we just can't get rid of it, but we can fight against it. We desire not to have it but we can fight against it.

I rejoice that I understand the apostasy – we were talking earlier – I'm just so blessed that I understand the apostasy, what happened to me, how I went to sleep, how I caused this situation in my own life that I was cut off from God's spirit and I was spewed out and I wandered around in my own stupidity choosing what was right and wrong. Because what can you do? Without God's spirit what church were you going to join? Well, I'm going to have to work it out! I'm going to have to rely on my own understanding! So without God's Church, Church of God, where God is, where God dwells, then we're going to have to work it and say, "What am I going to do?" Well, this is the attitude, this is the attitude of man. It's a carnal mind saying, "I'm going to work out what's right and wrong." Which church is right then? Haven't got a lot of choices, you've got heaps of them. Or you can go back into the world where *God has never been* in any of the churches, one choice you could make. Or you could choose one of the 5-600 Church of God's, that just because they carry God's name maybe God's in one of those? But it is going to be a choice from the natural carnal mind to choose what is *right* and wrong in our *own* eyes. That is the natural carnal mind, that's what it does; it chooses what is good and what is evil. That's what we're fighting against.

By fighting we acknowledge we do not know what is best for us spiritually. We acknowledge that God knows what is right and God knows what is wrong and through His word and His law He tells us. And we agree with Him because we fight against the other thinking to come in line with God's thinking. Isn't that a beautiful topic, to understand that? And yet the world has no idea of any of it, but we can rejoice in the fact we even understand that.

Our ability to acknowledge our own selfishness is a good gauge to our conversion, because if we are still refusing to acknowledge we are selfish by nature, how can God work with us, because God created us this way for a purpose, so we can be transformed. Paul here could see there was only one way to have a right relationship with God and with mankind and it's through the law, so he understood it, that's why he says the law is good...the law is good, it doesn't create death in you. It's sin, it's my rebellion *against* the law that's the problem, it's my natural carnal mind that resists what God says and fights against it – *that's* what the problem is, *that's* what's sin, and sin causes *death*. My outcome of life if I keep this way of rebelling against God, I will die. Not talking about a physical level, it's a spiritual level; we will die for eternity, we'll be dead forever – called the second death.

Verse 23 - But I see another law in my members, warring against... now that other law is selfish thinking, **warring against the law**, God's law, **of my mind**, so it's in conflict. They are going to be in conflict because our desire through the 'pride of life, the lust of the flesh' is going to be towards self, to please the self. That's what we're going to do, we're going to please ourselves. But God says, "No, you're not to please yourself, you're to sacrifice yourself for the benefit of others."

What was the last thing that you or I sacrificed within ourselves for the benefit of somebody else? Has there been *anything* that we've sacrificed today, yesterday, or the day before, or the last week? What was it that we put ourselves out, where we went against our own desire to be satisfied and we put it towards the pleasure of somebody else? Well, that again measures the level of our fight, because we should acknowledge that within us our life is about satisfying ourselves, it's not about sacrificing it. So with God's spirit it's about sacrificing the self and the little things. Like, there is many of scriptures that talk about, you know, '...if we're faithful in the little'... well, if we're warring in the little, the little selfish things that occupy our life – and it can be as simple as, "What would you like to eat tonight?" "*I want chicken and chips!*" 😊 Example? And you turn around and say, "That's..." deep down you're thinking, "*I don't really want chicken and chips!*" but you go, "Okay, let's have chicken and chips." *Sacrificing* your own desire! Now, that's the process of life. Whenever you're called, this year or how many years ago, that is the process of conversion, sacrificing the little things, and then in the end you can sacrifice more, you see more of yourself so you can sacrifice bits and pieces of it because then you realize that your life is not about you, it's about *others*, it's about *giving* to others, make *their* life better, not to make our own life better.

Verse 23 - But I see another law in my members, that selfish thinking, **warring against**, in conflict, **with the law of my mind**, God, **and bringing me into captivity**, into bondage. Because that's what happens to our thinking, we become in bondage **to the law of sin which is in my members**, in our own thinking. So the conflict that is in our minds, in our thinking, *is* the battle. Now, we come across this every day; we're going to have to work out what we see God revealing to us through His word and what we need to battle, and I'll give an example. And I'm giving these examples to try and help with regards to the way we battle.

So it may be that we could wake up one Sabbath morning and think, "Mmm, I'm not too sure that I'll go to services today." Conflict. Carnal mind versus God's spirit. Commanded assembly. Will you put out the effort? Will you put *yourself* out because your presence at Sabbath services is to the benefit of others? ...or will you think of yourself and say, "Look, it's inconvenient! Got a half-hour drive, it's raining... I think I'll stay home and listen to a sermon," or will you sacrifice yourself and say, "This is wrong thinking. I am going to obey God, I'm going to *go* because I *know* that iron sharpens iron."

Now, often we can't see how we encourage others. We have no idea! I know in times past, and I'll use this as another example, that people have come up to me after five years and said, "I remember, Wayne, when you said..." And I go, "I don't remember any of that!" 😊 I wouldn't have a *clue* what I said back five years ago – I probably should but I don't. And they'll say, "I was so encouraged and I've hung on to those words for five years and they've helped me so much!" And you know what? I wouldn't have a clue that I'd helped them that much! What could I say that could help anybody that much? But that's what happens! So why not sacrifice the self, come to services because you don't know how you help others. And you know how we can help others? Just by being at Sabbath services, because it creates unity, it shows support. We're a family, we're in this together, we're not isolated! And that's why scripture talks about if one part of the body is missing, the eye is gone or the hand is gone or the foot, it can cause pain. So the effort, God knows the heart, He sees the effort, but within the members of the Body we appreciate the effort too, and often we don't see the effect we have on others by just our attention.

Now that was a sacrifice of the natural carnal mind...that was a sacrifice, that was putting the self aside saying, "Oh no, it's inconvenient for me but I'm going to sacrifice that for the benefit of others, for the benefit of the Body." Well, that's what conversion is – sacrificing the self.

So the conflict is the battle. We need God's spirit to enable a successful battle against our selfishness. So we see now as a summary, we see that we have this natural mind, that God created us with it. We acknowledge it and we acknowledge that God's spirit is the only solution of how we can fight against it and we can sacrifice the self by the power of God's spirit, because it's God in us that's changing our thinking. So that desire to do good, that desire to love another person, is the key, that's the important part, and God sees that desire in us and He will fulfill that desire in us by the power of His holy spirit out to the benefit of others.

Verse 24 Paul goes on and says - **O wretched man that I am!** So he saw his own selfishness and he saw his own pride, and then he asks a question: **Who will deliver me from this body of death?** So who will deliver us from this selfish thinking that earns the death penalty. Because unless we fight against the natural carnal mind the end result is death because we sin and the wages of sin, what we earn, is death, a second death. It is only by the power of God's spirit that we can see selfishness in ourselves. So there's a good measure; we should measure ourselves, and scripture talks about you don't look out but you're looking inward and you should measure yourself. Well, how are you going spiritual? Well, let's have a look? How do we see our selfishness? Do we see we're selfish? To what degree tells us a lot about ourselves. We, by nature, are full of pride, we lift ourselves up and value the self, ourselves as better than others. Now, that's natural. *That is natural!*

In conversations along the line I know I've said, "Why do all bikers wear black?" They want to be free, they want to be independent, they want to be seen as tough – it's pride-filled motive. But why do they all wear the same color? Why are they all *conformed*? Because it's a state of mind, you see, because unless you wear black and you got a Harley Davidson you're not tough in the eyes of others. So you've all got to wear black, conform to the world, you've all got to have a Harley Davidson, and you've all got to have a logo on the back to show where you belong - and what it tells you and what it should tell us is their state of mind. They all are in unity as far as they all admit that they're better than you. ☺ That's what they're really saying because that's what this is, that's what it's all about, "I'm better than you! I'm above you...and run into me and we'll see who's better," that's the attitude.

So that's that natural carnal mind. We should be able to see it in, for example, in, like gangs, we should see that. The street gangs in America where they all wear certain logos and they have territories marked off, it's the same thinking - it's selfishness, total selfishness. "This is *my* area. I'm in *my* gang. I'm part of *this* family." But it reflects a thinking.

Well, within God's Church it's no different. Being a member of the Body of Christ reflects an attitude of humility, it reflects an attitude of desiring to overcome our pride and our selfishness, because we wear God's name, we carry Gods' name. It's a beautiful thing, the fact that we are part of the Body of Christ.

Paul here is saying what was going to deliver him. So then you go down to the next one and it gives you the answer. **Verse 25 - I thank God**, the Almighty God, Yahweh Elohim, **through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind**, or the desire, **I myself serve the law of God**; he *wants* to be obedient. We want to be obedient to God, we don't want to hurt others in our thinking or in our words or in our actions – we don't! **...but with the flesh, the carnal mind, the law of sin - selfishness.** So there is the comparison that Paul had. We are free because of the gift of repentance and the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ which enables forgiveness. So that's how we can thank God. Thank God that He had a plan. He made us this way for a purpose. Thank God that *He* paid the penalty through Jesus Christ for our sins, so that we can be covered, that our sins can be covered. So we have a promise of life. It's a wonderful plan if we grasp fully what God is really trying to do through us and in us.

Our sins are and can be forgiven, covered, by His shed blood, the death of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. So the first thing is we're forgiven at baptism where we bury the old self, we acknowledge that we are selfish, we bury the old self, we come back up, and desiring to walk a new way, like Paul said. You know, the inner man, we want to live anew, we don't want to hurt anybody. That's the desire. And if we do, God has given us the gift of repentance so that we can go before God and say, "I've done it again! I've spoken against a member of the Body of Christ." God dwells in each member of the Body of Christ, and when we speak against another member, what are we really doing? Well, pride, we're lifting ourselves up saying we're better. But we're actually criticizing God because He called the person, His spirit dwells in them. So when we criticize a member of the Body, what are we really doing? It's a terrible sin! It's actually a terrible sin; to pull another member of the Body down through words or actions is a terrible, terrible sin.

So we have to be very careful, the way we think towards members of the Body. The reality is we should think of our own words and thoughts and actions, and we should have that desire *not* to hurt anybody. We choose and desire to serve and obey God in our thinking, but we have this natural carnal mind that gets the better of us. This is the problem we all have. If called into a relationship with God, that's the problem we all have, and that's our battle. We're going to have to fight against it for the rest of our life. Because we were called by God the Father and the world wasn't – so they don't have to address this problem – they can actually think selfish thoughts towards you, they can hate you all they like because they don't know any better, because God hasn't called them in to change their thinking. Their time will come and then they'll have to address the issues we're all having to address.

We willingly battle the selfishness in us, the pride in our minds. So *now* it's about repentance.

Romans 8:1 – Here we're talking about, *if* we are repenting, *if* we are repenting of this selfish thinking, **There is therefore now no condemnation/damnation/sentence to death to those who are in Jesus Christ**, if Jesus Christ lives in us and we are in unity with God the Father and Jesus Christ. To be in Christ is to have God and Christ *in* us by the power of God's spirit. So if we have God's spirit in us we're not condemned, we will be at one with God, **who do not walk**, so we don't live or we're not occupied with/according **to the flesh**, so we don't walk with this carnal mind, we're battling against it, we're battling against the selfishness, **but according to the spirit** which is God's character, God's thinking in us, God's way of right and wrong. We let *God* tell us what's right or wrong, we don't rely on our own understanding.

Verse 2 - For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free, set at liberty, freedom **from the law of sin**, from this carnal mind that we have, from the penalty, the dominion of sin **and death**. So we're free from it because Jesus Christ lives in us. We are set free from the penalty of sin, which is death, by repentance and forgiveness of sin by God. So that's how we can be set free.

Verse 3 - For what the law could not do, it was impossible for the law to do, **in that it was weak through/by reason of/account of/because of the flesh**, because we can't obey the law, the carnal mind can't. ...if the law was weak, because it, the law, does not change people. The law of and by itself over here, which is good and holy, doesn't change anybody. That's why it's considered...here Paul is saying it's weak, because it doesn't change you, the law doesn't change you, it can't, it's just the law. The law is an outline of what is right and wrong so it can't change you. It's a matter of whether you want to subject yourself *to* what God says, that's the issue. So if the law was weak, because it, the law, does not make people change, we, with the knowledge of the law, they are still selfish, carnal, and it will earn the death penalty. The law is over there, we're still selfish. Even though the law sits there we're selfish. It's about

us choosing to fight against ourselves to be subject to the law. **God did by sending His Son, His own Son in the likeness/similitude of the sinful flesh, on account of sin.** So God sent down Jesus Christ and gave us Jesus Christ as a man with the mind of God for the purpose of being our Passover on the account of sin, so that sin could be covered. The penalty was paid for on our behalf, it's been paid. **...He condemned sin in the flesh.** So, sin is the issue, it's not the law. Condemnation is to give judgment against.

Why did that happen? **Verse 4 - That the righteous requirement of the law,** the righteous requirement is *faith*. We have to have faith in God. We have to believe God. **...might be fulfilled,** by the way we live, **in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.** It's about our intent. Jesus Christ came to pay the penalty of sin so God and Christ could live in us. God's spirit enables us to walk in faith which is *now* the requirement of the law. So we have to believe God, that's the requirement. We live by faith, we believe God. What God places in the Church, we believe God.

Do we believe that God sent Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sin? The answer is we have faith, we believe that, yes. The answer is yes, we believe that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for the sin of mankind. We have faith in that, we believe it. And that's what it's saying, that's the requirement of the law now, is that we believe God and we live by faith.

Verse 5 – And those who live according to the flesh, which is that natural selfish thinking, **set their mind/set their thinking on the things of the flesh;** so it's what occupies the thinking. They continually think, this mind thinks, what is best for 'me'...what's best for 'me'. But in itself it doesn't know it, it just thinks it. It's an automatic thing that God processed in the mind, it just thinks what's best for 'me', what makes 'me' comfortable, what makes others think of 'me' as better. How do I exalt 'myself' in the eyes of others? Well, that's the motivation of the natural mind. So we would set our minds on the flesh, what is best for them. We give in to the natural carnal desires and *then* we fulfill them. That's what happens, we actually fulfill what is best for us.

But those who live according to the spirit, which is truth in the inner man, it's about the way we think, **the things of the spirit.** So we then start to fight this natural carnal mind and we start to think of things of the spirit, which are justice to all. We think justice to others, we think what is best for others, not for the self. We think mercy, we show and live mercy towards others. Now, others may say things that may be directed towards us in hate but we don't take it on board as personal; what choice do they really have?

The natural carnal mind is hostile to God, not subject to God's law. When we don't cooperate with them or not seen to be running with them, what is the natural mind going to do? It's going to turn and look down on what it sees as being weak and pathetic, fools. That's how we're looked at, we're looked at as fools, because why, mankind thinks the ways of God are foolishness. That's truth! They think the ways of God are foolishness.

Now, we live the ways of God because we have God and Jesus Christ living in us, so the world will think we are *foolish*, because that's the natural carnal mind. So when anybody criticizes or condemns us or judges us or ridicules us we should just show mercy. They can't help it, they're operating on a natural carnal mind which is hostile to God.

So we think of the things of the spirit, like faith, where we choose to believe God...we choose to believe God. Without God's spirit we can only think of ourselves. It's amazing. I'm sure that all the lecturers that

have the motivation courses, if you made a statement like that, "...that without God's spirit you can only think of yourself," well, that would go down really well, everyone would be jumping up and saying, "Fantastic! This is *great* news!" It's only God's people that can hear that statement. With God's spirit we can begin to sacrifice the self, the selfishness in us. We live the law of love to God and to others; that's our desire and motivation.

Verse 6 - For to be carnally/selfishly minded is death; that's the outcome. If we stay in this state of mind the outcome is going to be death. Now, that word there comes about – what one has in the mind, the thoughts and purposes, it's the intent of the mind, **but to be spiritually minded,** to have the thoughts and purposes in the mind **is life,** to have God's spirit. Our thoughts and purpose is to please God and to please others, to sacrifice the self, **is life and peace.** The end result of living according to our selfish desires is the second death, but to live by the power of God's spirit is everlasting life in Elohim and peace. We have a choice. Do we choose to fight our pride-filled selfish thoughts? And only we as individuals can answer that question.

So I have a question. What is in our minds, our thoughts, and our purposes? Do we seek to put others desires before our own? Are we actively putting to death our selfish interest? Are we sacrificing for others? Is that what our intent is?

One example, which I had written down here, and I *will* use it as an example because I've learned this from within myself and it's something I've learned over time. And I never saw this when I was first called but over time I've learned it...and it's the word 'impatience'. When you analyze it on a spiritual level – now all of us are impatient to different degrees. Now, by nature, my natural carnal mind, I would consider I'm a medium in patience, on the natural mind. But you can come across somebody else and I know somebody else that is highly impatient, ☺ like, whew, that's impossible impatient, so when they drive they'll *tailgate* because they're so impatient to get where they are they tailgate the person in the car because what they're really doing is trying to force the other person out of their way, because, "I've got somewhere to go and *you're in my way!*" That's impatience. So I think I'm a medium in patience. Then there are others by nature that are lower in impatience, they seem to tolerate more from the natural carnal mind, they don't react quickly. So I think I'm about a medium.

But what I learned out of it all was that *deep down* I am really impatient, and when it comes to the surface I start to show outward signs of my selfishness – because that's what impatience is. Whenever we're impatient it's an outward sign of our own selfishness, because what we're really saying is this matter or situation is not going the way I want it. That's deep down, that's the spiritual intent of being impatient. So over time I learned my impatience. Now, I do come across somebody, a man in God's Church, that I felt was so patient that it made me look *so impatient*, and my wife told me ☺. And then it dawned on me, because I hadn't seen it until this point in time, that yes, it's true; in a lot of areas in life I started to examine my own impatience and I learned that I'm... boy, I'm actually *really impatient*, but I never saw it, I never saw how impatient I am. And now I actually sense it within myself when I'm becoming impatient, whereas before I couldn't see it. I've lived most of my life, that I have lived impatiently and yet I didn't think I was that impatient. People would say, "Wayne, you're quite a patient person." I'd go, "Yeah, I think I am." ☺ But it wasn't until I saw the opposite, of someone who was actually patient, with God's spirit, that I then realized and my wife highlighted it to me, that that person is really patient. And at first I thought, "Well, I think I'm a bit patient. She indicated I was impatient." And the more I thought about it, you know what, I am impatient. If things don't go the way I want it... so when I analyzed it, it's *Wayne* the problem, it's my thinking! I want it *my way!* I want those chairs

straight! Why do I want the chairs straight? I had to go through that whole process and then I realized, I'm selfish. It's my way or no way! And that's what I've learned about impatience.

In seeing impatience, and when I see it, I don't look at the other person now and say, "Whoa, that person has got a big problem," I remember *my* impatience in *small* things, *little* things. When I think somebody should get up and *do* something and they don't, how do I think about it, because I'm the problem, not the person. I am, it's the way I'm thinking towards them. Why am I putting this burden on that person? I have no right! They can do whatever they want whenever they want. Why do I think that they should be doing it? Can you see where I'm coming from? I'm the problem! I'm the one that's impatient. It's not about *my* desires or what *I* want, because that is the sign of selfishness.

I thought I'd share that with you and I hope it helps you. It helped me and I've been working on it for a long time and you'll be probably not surprised to know I haven't made a lot of progress ☺. In some things I think I've done really well...really well.

I must relay a story to you. We decided that we would pay down certain credit cards and get rid of them, and I came to the conclusion, after being on the phone with people from credit card companies, that it is much easier to open an account than to close it. And I had one particular lady, and I was on a mobile phone and I'm getting to the maximum on my usage and I knew it and I'm trying to get rid of her, and I said, "Look, I just would like to close down the account."

"Well, Mr. Matthew..." and they go through all this spiel. And I know she was on a spiel to try to keep it open.

I said, "Look, I'm just telling you I want a payout figure, I want to close the account, I don't want anything to do with this credit card."

"Well, do you know, Mr. Matthews, we can take your interest from 19% to 8%?"

And I'm, that's wonderful, you could have told me that three years ago! ☺ All the benefits are being offered now! I said, "No, no, now look, I just want to close the account."

Well, they went on to all these different things, "Well, your annual fee... and we'll waive it."

I said, "LISTEN! I *just want to close the account!*" And then I felt within my own spirit *my impatience*, it was I'm reacting. Nobody can make me do or think this way. I could be a little bit more direct and to work through it, but getting impatient with her – because she's only doing her job and she's getting paid so much an hour and she's trying to save an account because she only gets paid when she probably opens accounts and every time they close one her boss would come to her and say, "How come you lost five accounts today and Mr. Matthew was one of them?" ☺

So I realized at the end of it that I had done wrong, I'd actually sinned because I was getting angry towards that person because she was doing her job and I just wanted to close the account. But I was wrong, I was wrong, I should not have done that, I shouldn't have acted that way, I shouldn't have let that feeling come up in me because nobody can make me impatient. I choose to be impatient, that's the way I think.

So why is that all happening to me? **Verse 8 - So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Couldn't please God with my own selfishness. I can't please God if that's the way I'm thinking, if I've got 'this natural carnal mind which is hostile to God, not subject to the law of God and indeed can't be'. And that's what I let get the better of me, that thinking rather than a godly motive.

Our motives, deep down, are to please God, to love others. That's what we desire. And I know we do, brethren, we want the best for others but at times we fall down.

Verse 9 - But you are not in the flesh, in the carnal mind, **but in the spirit, IF**. So this is the big 'IF' and I bolded this 'IF' because it's an 'IF': ...**IF indeed the spirit of God dwells in you**. It's God's spirit dwells in us we're **NOT** going to be giving in to that carnal mind. Sin won't dwell with us because sin doesn't dwell with God. So if God's decisions about right and wrong dwell in us we are fine, we don't have to go to God and repent.

Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is none of His. So anybody that leaves the Body of Christ is cut off from God. And when somebody disfellowships themselves, or are disfellowshipped, there is a purpose for it; the purpose is that it would wake them out of their current thinking, that's the intent of it. But there are people that think, "Well, that's very harsh and I feel that I can still have communication with that person and I can survive all this." But what they're really doing is choosing what is right and wrong in their own eyes, because God makes it very clear that the reason they're put out of the Body and they're cut off is to hopefully bring them to repentance. But if we lift ourselves up and think, "Well, no, God, you're wrong in doing that. No, the Church of God, the administration, you are wrong! I decide for myself that I'm going to keep in communication," what is that saying? Now, from the sermon so far we should know. It's the natural carnal mind choosing what's right and wrong. That's all it is, it's as simple as that. It doesn't get any clearer. It's the natural carnal mind making its own decision what's right and wrong.

Now, this applies to administrative decisions within the Church; that if there is an administrative decision to have the Feast in a certain location, we within our own reasoning can turn around and say, "I disagree with where God's placed His name." We have that capacity, brethren! But what is it? The natural carnal mind at work choosing right and wrong. God's administration doesn't always get everything 100% right but that's not the point. The point is, are we subject to where God leads? And certain things happen in God's Church for the purpose of testing. So if we do come across a Feast site and we disagree with it I strongly suggest you just keep it to yourself because it's not going to do any good to anybody else. If you went out and started speaking about it or spreading it to others, is that showing love to them? And what I would suggest is we look at our own thinking and say, "What am I doing here?" Well, what we're really doing is lifting ourselves up above God's administration and saying, "*I think...* This is *my view*." Well, as soon as you hear, "This is what I think... This is my view... This is my opinion..." a member of the Body should be able to stand back and go, "Pride has entered."

I don't know where there is a particular show on TV where there is a judge and the two lawyers are arguing about a certain matter and the judge always pulls up the speaker. So the person will say, "Well, I think du-du-du-dah..." and stops the conversation. And the judge turns around, looks at him and says, "In *your* opinion." And the person says, "Yeah, that's what I... In my opinion." The other lawyer would say something and stop and forget to say, "In my opinion..." and the judge would say, "You mean, in *your* opinion." Because that's all it is, two opinions, and the judge would work out between the opinions. But when people get up and make statements, "I think that the Feast should be here..." they should add, "in my opinion." Because that's all it is, their opinion. It's more about a level of humility and sacrificing our opinion. We don't know all the reasons for certain things and certain decisions, we've got no idea! None! We think we do, but we don't, we don't know the background to a lot of things. So making these things often and giving our opinion about matters, we have to be very careful that pride is not motivating that opinion.

Verse 9, we'll just finish off there - **But you are not in the flesh**, in the carnal way, **but in the spirit, IF indeed the spirit of God dwells in you**. **Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is none of His**. If we have been called, repenting and repented, been baptized and had hands laid on us and have

been impregnated with God's spirit and then remain in a state of repentance, remain in a state of *ongoing* repentance, God dwells in us. Isn't that a wonderful story? You know, there is a sermon just in that when you look at all that, the calling, the drawing, repentance - God's not impregnated the spirit yet but you've been drawn by God's spirit and you're given the gift of repentance, to be able to see spiritually. To see what? Sin! You see sin in yourself. "Ah, I'm wrong! I haven't got a clue what's right and wrong separate from God...haven't got a clue!"

Therefore, if this process has happened and we remain in a state of ongoing repentance, therefore we are begotten sons of God. If we do not stay in a state of ongoing repentance we cut ourselves off from God and Christ, we no longer can be called begotten sons. It's as simple as that.

Verse 10 - And if Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin, well, we've seen all that; **but the spirit is life because of righteousness**. Because God in us makes us righteous. The righteous requirement of the law is faith, we believe God. We believe when we go before God in a state of repentance, we believe that our sins are forgiven. Now if we go before God and believe that He's not going to forgive our sins we don't have faith. But we believe, we believe that God will forgive us our sins so we can get up and start again a new way of life, we can continue to walk in this state of overcoming. That in itself is a beautiful, beautiful thing, the fact that we have the gift of repentance, that we're in the faith and that we can go before God and say, "God, forgive me for my selfishness again." But when we get back up from that conversation we know our motivation is to please God and do what is best for the benefit of others. That's our motivation. How long it lasts? ☺ ...each one of us has to answer that. Sometimes it doesn't last very long if you walk straight back into a room that's not going your way. ☺ That's just life but we have to deal with it. So no matter how many times we have to repent it's a beautiful gift, we just keep going back and repenting and *striving* to fight against ourselves.

Verse 10 – And if Christ is in you the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Verse 11 – This covers the promise which we went through before: **But if the spirit of Him**, God the Father, **who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you**, so if God's spirit dwells in you...and now, that word 'dwells', when you go into the deeper meaning of it the word is actually, 'is present and active', which I found rather fascinating, 'is present *and active*', in other words, it's got to be flowing *out* to the benefit of others. We just can't have God's spirit and say, "I'm safe. ☺ I'm okay!" It's about whether or not God's spirit is active, and when it's active it obeys God, it obeys God's law and it flows out to the benefit of others; we'll be sacrificing the self if God's spirit is active in us. **But if the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you**, it's present and active, **He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life**, spirit life, **to your mortal bodies through His spirit which dwells in you**. Isn't that a wonderful promise? That's the purpose of life. That's what we cling to. That is our faith. We believe that God is going to change us from mortal to immortal, from physical to spirit. We believe what God tells us. So if God's spirit is present and active we then will be disciplining ourselves and we'll be trying to live mercy, peace, forgiveness, and no ill will towards others. That's what our motivation will be.

The difficulty is that we have to choose to fight against our own selfishness by the power of God's spirit. So that's what we have to do.

Verse 12 - Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, not to that carnal selfish thinking, **to live according to the flesh**, to please ourselves. We don't owe anything to our nature. We have been

purchased by Christ. That's the truth of it. We don't owe anything to that selfishness. We should not give into or be slaves to our selfishness but fight against it.

Verse 13 - For if you live according to the flesh, that's selfishness, **you will die:** straightforward statement isn't it? If we're not going to battle and if we don't want to battle, what is the end result? Well, I know the end result, I've seen it. People that don't fight the battle and refuse to fight the battle leave God's Church; they no longer battle the selfishness in them, they give into their own desires, and in the end the ways of God are foolishness to them because that's the outcome, And what will it lead to unless it's repented of? It will lead to death, the second death, because it's going to require repentance. Now, God in His mercy will continue to work with people because He is merciful, and at some point in time, God willing, they will come to the gift of repentance and see the mistake about working against God.

Now, I've found in time that the reality is people leave God's Church because they refuse to fight themselves any longer, they've given up on themselves. They want to please themselves, they don't want to fight against their natural carnal mind, and therefore they begin to choose what is right and wrong in their own eyes because that's all they can do.

So if we live according to the flesh we will die: but if by the spirit we put to death the deeds of the body, so we have to fight, we're to put them to death. Now, to put something to death is what? To sacrifice it! When you put something to death you kill it, so we're to kill those selfish thinking, those thoughts, we're to kill them, we're to sacrifice them to the benefit of others. **...you will live.** God says you will live, God will give you life because we've said in our intent that's what we're going to do. If we desire to fight the inner man we will live. If we put to death, sacrifice the selfish desires, we will be given life in a resurrection – that is the promise. We are not to choose of ourselves what is right and wrong. If we do we will not be part of God's way of life – it's impossible! We can't! We can't go choosing what we think is right and what we think is wrong. We will leave the fellowship of God's Church, because see, we know better. That's the carnal mind.

God shows us what is right and wrong by the power of His spirit. It's the only way you can work it out. Mankind can't work it out. God is the only one that knows what is right and wrong, good and evil, and what is true.

Verse 14 - For as many as are led by the spirit of God, it is present and active, **these are the sons of God.** Isn't that a beautiful statement?

Genesis 2, and we're going to start in verse 7. We're going to go and look at – I don't know how far we'll get through this – but we're going to look at where this deciding for what is right and wrong happened, which is of course Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden. But before then, another being, a powerful spiritual being, decided for himself what was right and wrong. And that's the problem with mankind, now, is because that's the way we're made, we decide for ourselves what is right and wrong.

I want to read an aspect, words from the last post that came out:

"To live by the laws of God is the most important part of one's spiritual life."

So that's what we were just talking about.

"If God's law about **how** to have a right relationship towards others and towards God are **not** what regulates our behavior..."

So if we're not regulating and governing ourselves...

"...then all the rest of the knowledge, understanding, prophetic revelation God has given would have no meaning and purpose."

Remember we read previously in 1st Corinthians about sounding brass. Without love what have we got? Nothing! If we're not working on ourselves and if God doesn't live in us – to understand all the scriptures and to understand all the writings in the book of Revelation – what good is any of that if we don't have God's spirit living in us out to the benefit of others. All worthless, all pointless. That's why this endless study – if you look at mankind and the studies, people go off to seminaries and study so called 'religion and doctrine' and they come out with all these views after ten years. What good is it? It's just a vanity! ...just a vanity! It's all worthless because without God's spirit you can't understand spiritual matters, it's impossible.

Our calling is all about how we think and live towards others. And that's what we just covered, that's what our calling is about. God's desire *in* us is to transform our minds so we can become Elohim. He desires to mold righteous judgment – God's way of thinking – into *our* thinking. This molding of right thinking in the mind is about becoming capable of formulating right conclusions and making righteous decisions. And we can only do that if we know what God says about a topic. Righteous decisions come from basing our judgment of every matter in life on God's revealed truth to that moment in time. So in other words, we put our judgment to what God says about what's right and wrong, and given time here we may get into another aspect of that topic which is relevant to today's society.

God tries and tests us by how He leads us and by what He has revealed up and to a specific point in time. So sometimes we think we know certain things and we use our own judgment in those things, but often God has not revealed the total picture, but we make these choices about what we think God is doing or what God is saying when really we should wait on God, wait for God to reveal it. As God reveals more to us we have to address changes in how we think if we desire to truly judge matters of life in a righteous manner according to the ways, standards, truths, and righteousness of God's word. We cannot serve God *if* we rely on our *own* ability to discern right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and error, after all, that has been the problem from the beginning. As I started off with the sermon, that's the problem with man.

Genesis 2:7 - And the LORD God formed/fashioned the man, Adam, of the dust of the ground, out of the earth, and breathed/blew into his nostrils the breath/spirit of life; and the man became a living being/living life. Now, this is often talking about symbolic language because God didn't get there and just blow into his nostrils. It's talking about a symbolic of giving life - wind, breathing, life was given to Adam.

Verse 8 - The LORD God planted a garden/enclosure eastward in Eden; now 'Eden' means 'pleasure'. So this was an area where the man could live and life would be pleasurable for the man, **and there He put the man whom He had formed/whom God formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant,** that is desirable, **in the sight,** in the appearance, **and good for food;** so this was all the trees were able to be eaten. So at this point in time, of course, the curse of weeds and all that didn't exist. So God made it so it was pleasurable for Adam, that he could eat the fruit of the tree.

...**the tree of life**, that which sustains life is the tree of life. It's talking on a physical level here but of course we know it's also symbolic of spiritual matters, spiritual life, but here it's saying the tree of life, that which sustains life. So if he was to consume the tree of life it would sustain him on a physical level, but also for us it's on a spiritual level, the tree of life, God's spirit, would sustain us, **and good for food, and also the tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. Now, that word 'knowledge' is 'discernment, perception, understanding', and 'evil' there is 'disagreement'. Here is another tree that is symbolically representative of making our own choices, and when it's talking about 'evil', what is evil? Evil is when we *disagree with God*! That's what it is. Evil is anything we disagree with God in. So here it's referring also to what is right and wrong spiritually. Evil is disagreement with God.

The trees were symbolic of two ways of life: the tree of life represented God's way of truth, His way of life, the way of love, mercy, and joy – to the benefit of others, to the benefit of His creation. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented Satan's way of life, way of thinking, the way of choosing what is right and wrong for one's self. "This is what I think. This is *my* opinion." In fact, the trees were about life and death on a spiritual level. One tree leads to life everlasting with God in Elohim, the other leads to death for eternity, eternal death. Choose God's way and we can have true life. Choose Satan's way and we can have death. It's our choice. Once we're called it becomes our choice. To choose God's way means we have to fight against the desires to please the self, to fight against our own pride.

Now, pride, by nature, desires to lift itself over others, and the way we do it is to pull others down through words or even actions. I won't go into the other scriptures there but they're rather interesting. I don't fully understand all of the aspects of all of those other scriptures, we'll drop down to verse 15, but just for the sake of just a quick review which I found rather interesting.

There were four rivers that flowed into the garden and they have great symbolic meaning based on their names, because God named those rivers, and one of them of course is the Euphrates. The first one, which I don't know the exact pronunciation is 'Pison', [pee-shon] which means 'increase'. The second one, 'Gihon', [ghee-khone] 'bursting forth'. The third one was 'Heddekel/Chiddeqel', [khid-deh'-kel] [or Tigris] which means 'rapid', and 'Euphrates', which means 'fruitfulness'. So if you take those words and you take them from a spiritual component, if we choose the tree of life we could have spiritual 'increase bursting forth with rapid fruitfulness', because that's what they feed into, the Garden, life. We could have God's character. But the way to do it is you have to be connected to the rivers of life, God's spirit, and if we are we could have 'increase bursting forth in rapid fruitfulness'. Isn't that beautiful? That's what we could have if we're connected. Christ is connected to the vine so the sap can flow into us, God's spirit; if we're connected with God's spirit we can have rapid spiritual growth, we can develop the mind of God. Isn't that beautiful? But it can only be achieved through the tree of life, symbolic of God's spirit. It's the only way.

Verse 15 - Then the LORD God took the man, and put, which is to settle him or to remain, **him in the Garden of Eden**, so He put him there **to tend**, and that word is 'to work, to labor, to till, **to keep it**, to guard, to keep, to watch, to protect it.' So Adam was placed in the garden by himself to look after it, and God has provided an environment where he didn't really have to do a lot – he had to maintain it - but there was fruit there that he could eat and be sustained on a physical level.

Verse 16 – Then the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden, it's fruit, **you shall freely eat**, or you may freely eat, you may consume it. At this point of time there was no weeds, poisons or anything in that enclosure. So it was a beautiful environment for Adam.

Verse 17 – But, it's like the 'if's and the 'but's', isn't it. **But, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, what we think is right and wrong, **you may not eat**, you're not to consume it, because we consume these things in our mind. This is about a physical thing pointing to something spiritual. So the physical part is don't eat of that tree... well, brethren, guess what? Don't eat of *that tree* by choosing what we think is right and wrong. That's what the warning is. So don't make your own choices of what you think might be right and wrong, what I think is right and wrong.

The day you decide for yourself what is right and wrong you're on the path of death. But God didn't tell Adam that directly, but that's what it was about. Once you start doing this, you start taking and consuming *that* fruit, choosing for what you think is right you're heading down a path which is going to lead to death. The day you disagree with your Creator, because that's what you're doing - when it says 'don't consume of that', if Adam did it he disagrees with God, he's lifting himself up – you have rebelled and sinned just like Lucifer, and the outcome of that rebellion is eternal death. But God didn't explain all that to Adam in that sense. He was saying on a physical level, don't consume that one. And of course the natural mind would go, "Why? Why am I not allowed to eat that one?" Because that's the reasoning, you start to reason.

Verse 18 - And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him. So this is a helper, this is not a servant – men. This is a helper, someone to *support*. It does not say that Eve would be *less than* Adam – doesn't say that. It says it's a helper and a support, but it would be someone to help, a helper, someone to support.

Verse 19 - Out of the ground/the earth the LORD God formed every beast, now there is every living creature **of the field, and every bird**, flying creature **of the air; and brought them**, He caused them in a single action, that word is, it's a onetime action **to Adam to see/to consider what he would call them: and Adam called each living creature, that was its name.** So whatever Adam called it, that's what the name was. So if it was an elephant, it was an elephant, that's the name that was given to it. Understanding that, where did language come from? God. God had to *give* Adam a mind that understood language and He had to give him words like 'elephant'.

Verse 20 - So Adam gave names to all the cattle, which is beasts, **to the birds of the air, and to every beast**, which is living creature or living life **of the field; but for Adam there was not found**, not present with the animals, in other words, **a helper comparable**, someone to help, **with him**. At the end of all this Adam is still by himself and there was no other human being created.

Verse 21 - And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept: and He, God, took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place: then the rib, which the LORD God had taken from the man, He made, He built, He established, **He caused to continue into a woman**, that word 'woman' is 'wife, female', He **brought her to him**. So here it is that God from the one flesh has brought a woman for Adam, a companion comparable, equal to, Adam, a help, a support. So he's not alone.

Verse 23 - And Adam said, This one, because it's talking about **is now**, a onetime action, **bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman/wife/female, because she**, this one, **is taken out of man**. So this is a onetime action that this happened. And from that point on a female was called a woman.

Verse 24 - Therefore a man, so it goes on in instruction, **Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined**, and that joined, of course, is joined in marriage -- to cling, to stick, to stay close,

to cleave, keeping a close relationship being married **to his wife**, who is going to support and help you: **and they shall become one flesh** – unity! They are to support each other in all things and strive to sacrifice the self for each other. That was the key to a happy marriage. I'm going to repeat that. So this is the key to a happy marriage in the Body of Christ – they are to support each other in all things and strive to sacrifice the *self* for the other person, for each other. Now, if a marriage goes askew, often it's because of this fact – spiritual in nature so physical human beings can't do it. But in the Church we are to sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of others and one often sacrifices more than the other, therefore the other person can think, this hurts because he's just a selfish... ☺ ...because the tendency is women tend to sacrifice more, give up more to the benefit of the man. And we'll go into scripture why that is, but that's what happens. The requirement of God's spirit is we are to sacrifice to the benefit of the *other*, and how they respond to it doesn't matter! Because that's the issue with the human marriage and that's the issue with the marriage in the Church. One person sacrifices and gives in and eats the chicken and chips but *holds it as a grudge* so that next time they can say, "What would you like to eat?" "Chicken and chips." "*We had chicken and chips last time!*" ☺ You know where I'm coming from. You think, because the natural carnal mind has great powers of recall, and, "You just can't see how much I've been sacrificing for you! You can't even see them, you're not even *aware* of them! ...but I've done this, that, that, that..." Problem. You did it in pride. Anything we sacrifice to the benefit of others should not be recalled at *any* point of our life to *anybody*, in particular the husband or wife. Because it's between you and God, it's got nothing to do with anybody else. I think you know where I'm coming from because we've all done it. ☺ ...because that's what happens in life.

So that's the key to a happy marriage – sacrificing the self to the benefit of the other at any cost all the time for the rest of your life and there will be nothing come back to you in any way from the other person. So be it, because we're doing this for God...we're doing this for God.

So, one of the things about people desiring to have their own right and wrong is fornication is not lawful. Adultery, God says, is not acceptable, yet the world says fornication is, so let's look at fornication. Fornication is really any sexual relationship outside of marriage. It's pretty straight forward. The marriage is between a man and a woman. So today's society, we have so many biases and prejudices. The first one is the volume of unmarried mothers having children and having never been married, in Australia is high; I think it's 40 something percent, it's horrendous. In some places it's as high as 50%. But we tend to look at the woman and say, "Oh, unmarried mother!" But, where is the *guy*? Where is the *male*? *He* caused it! She didn't get pregnant *by herself*! So where is he to support her in this matter, to support her and the child? Even if they don't want to reconcile and come together, where is he for the rest of his life paying for and supporting that child? You can see how things are going to change in the Millennium. It's a responsibility! It's a responsibility of the male to support that mother and child. He was the one who caused it! ...but we in the world look at it and say, "Look at all those unmarried women out there, you know, those young girls with children!" No mention of the *guy* because that's a prejudice in our mind, it's the way we think, it's the way society thinks. We condemn one person.

Remember the time when the lady was caught in the act of adultery and they brought the woman to Christ and they turned around and said, "Ah, here," because they're trying to trap Christ, "Here is the woman caught in adultery. What should we do?" Now, they knew the law, the law is you're to stone. Christ got down and wrote on the ground and said, "Any of you who have not sinned, cast the first stone." So if you're innocent *you* cast the first stone. Because that's what the law says, you have to stone her. But deep down the issue was it says two – where is the *guy*? You've got to stone him too. But oh no, see, that's prejudice, look down on the woman and bring the woman. Bring the woman, we caught her.

But they caught the guy too...but didn't bring him! You can see the prejudice in society in our minds we have.

So Christ could not say, "Fulfill the law toward the woman," because in scripture, which we're going to look at, it says you've got to bring both of them. Both of them have to be stoned because they're both guilty. It's not just the woman, it's the guy too, it's the man, the male. But you see that prejudice in the thinking, you just bring one, trying to trap Christ.

So we look at that. Look at adultery. Look at how many people are having affairs. They're in marriage and they're having affairs, sexual relationship outside the marriage. That's a sin. That's an abomination to God. Fornication is sin and abomination to God because it destroys the person's thinking, it's *against* God's way of life. The beauty of sex in a marriage, the purpose of sex in a marriage, it undermines it all.

Gay marriage. Gay marriage now has been brought to the forefront, but we by our own thinking think that gay marriage is worse than fornication, because that's what society has told us. Fornication is okay out there, every movie has got it, adultery... there are jokes about adultery on every movie, every channel. It's all wonderful, hunky-dory, if you know what that means in Australian, everything is fine, it's not a big issue anymore. But *gay marriage*, *whew*, *homosexuals*, *whoa!* Big arms...you have people up in arms about it! Who is up in arms about adultery? Do you know anybody? Do you know anybody who is up in arms about fornication? When is the last demonstration you saw about fornication? You haven't seen one because of the prejudice of the human thinking, because man worked out what is right and wrong. Over time, going back, fornication was viewed as wrong, another time man worked out, well, it's not that bad. Adultery was frowned on, you'd never talk about it. Now, well, it's not that bad. Homosexuality was never discussed. Now, well, it's not that bad. Because that's the way it goes, that's the way the mind goes, we're working out what's right and wrong for ourselves.

Everyone around the world is now thinking and working out for themselves what *they* think is right and wrong. This is a clear demonstration of man choosing what he thinks is right and wrong. If someone stands for God's law they are named as being prejudice. For what I just said then I'd been seen as prejudice, judgmental, and condemning, because I stand for what God says, because that's what God says I have to do.

Hold your place there and let's look at **Leviticus 20:10** – Now, we're going into topics here that most people won't even talk about because it's just all covered up because nobody wants to know what God thinks about a matter. **The man who commits adultery, which is sex outside of their marriage, with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, both of them, shall surely be put to death**, by stoning. Now if you went out there today and said that adultery deserves the death penalty – well, you're just so far from reality it's just, people just think you've lost it more than what they already do.

Verse 11 - The man who lies with his father's wife, and that can be his mother or his stepmother, has uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. So it's condemning this as a sin as well against God.

Verse 12 - If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them, in other words his son's wife, both of them shall surely be put to death: the only way to get rid of it, because it's an example to the community and go, *whoa*, this brings a penalty. Sin brings death, physically but also spiritually; **they have committed perversion...** a perversion; **their blood shall be upon them.**

Verse 13 - If a man lies with a male, as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall be surely put to death and their blood shall be upon them. So the purpose of sex is between a man and a woman.

When mankind thinks he knows what is best, what is right and wrong, they in fact lift themselves up above God, their Creator. People turn around and say, "Oh, that's Old Testament stuff! You're just living in the past, it's done away, all that stuff."

Romans 1:22 - Professing to be wise, now this is 'expert in own thinking', because that's what happens in the carnal mind, we think we know better, **they became fools**, we are fools when we decide for ourselves what is right and wrong, what is good and evil. We become fools because we're leaning on this natural carnal mind, because we don't... the natural man doesn't see that he's foolish in his thinking, he thinks he's right.

Verse 23 - And changed/exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God, immortal, without decay; so that's God who has no decay, **into an image made like corruptible man**, something that decays. So we've taken something that is immortal, the glory of God, and we've turned it into some sort of image we can see that corrupts and is decayed – metal, wood, clay, statues. We've changed it. Now we've done that in our thinking as well, we're bringing God down to *our* level, mortal man. We think God thinks carnally – that's what we do by doing that. **...and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things**. They created images and idols and things they could see, like animal worship and the worship of nature. When people talk about 'Mother Earth', *mother earth*, the earth is *not our mother*! God is God the Father; *our mother is the Church*, where God dwells! The thinking of man, it goes down this whole evolution and worshipping creatures, putting what God created *for* man *before* man, and that's what societies have done. That's what societies have done.

People turn around and say, "Well, you shouldn't be killing cattle," for example, "for the human consumption." Well, now who's that thinking? Where did that come from? ...have a look, where did that come from, really! We don't kill cows because we shouldn't be eating them as humans. Who's reasoning is *that*? The natural carnal mind working out what's right and wrong. God said He created the animals – cows, sheep, goats, ducks – for human consumption. Now, I'm not saying that you should kill animals inhumanely, there is a way to do it. In the Old Testament God showed clearly how to do it. But you can see how we can lift things up by our own opinions and what we think is right and wrong.

Verse 24 - Therefore God also gave them over to uncleanness, impure motives, **in lusts/cravings of their hearts/their thinking, to dishonor their bodies among themselves**: He gave them over to lawlessness. He gave them over to their natural carnal selfishness. They will please themselves at any cost.

Fornication is what? A male and female pleasing themselves outside of what God says is lawful. What is adultery? A male and a female pleasing themselves outside of marriage. What is adultery? A male and a female pleasing themselves outside of what God says is lawful. What is homosexuality? A male, two males, or two women, pleasing themselves outside of what God says is lawful. Simple. Any sexual relationship outside of a God-ordained marriage between a man and a woman is condemned by God, because they don't understand what God's purpose is in marriage and the beauty of marriage and what it really relates to – one flesh, one way of thinking. It's about a relationship with God and with one another.

One of the most beautiful things that I've been blessed with is to have somebody that was called at the same time as me that has a converted mind, because you find your disagreements are settled reasonably quickly... 😊... because we have them, because we've got the carnal mind. But you realize that in the end it doesn't really matter and therefore I was probably wrong, I shouldn't have said it that way, because you can repent quicker. Whereas when you don't have God's spirit and you're dealing with somebody, do you think they're going to repent real quick? Well, it's going to be very difficult for them because any change that they may make in saying, "Oh, I'm sorry about that," what's the motivation of it? They're trying to get something out of it, which is normally self, giving some credit to self about it, "I'm actually... I apologized to you before you apologized to me." The natural mind can't; it doesn't know it, it doesn't know why it's doing it but it's actually doing it for a selfish motive.

Verse 25 - Who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, for falsehood, and worshiped/honored and served the creature/the creation rather than the Creator, became worshippers of what God created, who is blessed forevermore. God is blessed forevermore.

Verse 26 - For this reason God gave them up to vile/shameful passions, inordinate affection, for destruction. They're destroying themselves. ...for even their women/female change the natural use of what is against nature: So God created a female for a purpose, for Adam, as a support, and they were to become one flesh. So the natural use of a woman in a sexual way is for a man, a man and a woman, to produce children, to also have a bond. If they don't have children they have a bond through this relationship, something they share together. It's *natural*, it's the way God created it. It is not natural for two of the same sex to have a sexual relationship. Simple. It's what God says.

Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use, 'natural use', sexual, of a woman, burning in their lust/desires/longing/craving for, for one another; men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error. And they did not like to retain/not willing to retain God in their knowledge. So they won't let God govern their lives. So man has chosen for himself what he thinks is right and wrong.

Genesis 2:25 - And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. Actually we'll stop there.

So quickly in closing I want to just ask a few questions which are needed for, I know for myself, just to work on over the next few weeks:

Do we see ourselves as God outlines in Romans 8? That our mind without God's spirit is hostile against God's law, against His way of life. In other words, do we really see our own pride? Now, there are degrees of this, of how much God allows us to see. But if we seek God to reveal our own pride, God will show us in a merciful way what it is over time.

Do we agree with God when He states that He has placed Jesus Christ as the head of the Church to lead and guide and direct it? So, do we believe Jesus Christ is leading this Church at this time?

Do we really believe the Almighty God has appointed an end-time apostle to lead His Church, under Jesus Christ, the Church of God – PKG?

Do we agree with God when He ordains someone in the Body of Christ, or do we think ordinations are made from human reasoning? Do we think that Ron Weinland just make the decision or do we think that God the Father and Jesus Christ made it?

Do we sometimes disagree with an ordination and think that we know better? Do we seek to voice that opinion to others because we actually disagree with the administration, or we disagree with God, what God did, deep down? Do we account others as not worthy of that ordination because we know that person and we know all the reasons why we believe that they shouldn't have been ordained?

Are we fighting the inner man, the inner selfishness, as Paul said he was? Are we looking at our own selfishness and not looking out at the selfishness of others? Because that's a tendency of our human mind, is to look out and look at others about what *they're* doing wrong rather than examining ourselves.

Do we agree with the Almighty God that He alone knows what is right and wrong, what is good and evil, and that we're not making decisions of what we think should happen or the way we see it or our opinion, but we defer to God and His views?

When was the last time you or I sacrificed our own desires by putting someone else's desires before our own?

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