

Hello, brethren! Welcome, on this Sabbath.

In view of recent events that took place in the Church of God, when people left the Church or were disfellowshipped, I took a closer look at what the Bible says about faith (belief) and the faithfulness that's associated with that.

Jesus says, "Will I find faith on the earth when I return?" And to that, I couple faithfulness. In other words, He says, "Will you still be faithful to Me? Faithful to all that I have given you from the Father?" It makes me think of things like the 57 Truths, and paying your 1st Tithes, and saving your 2nd Tithes, and the love we should have for each other in the Church and also towards the world.

Are we faithful in our prayers? In repentance? In helpfulness? And do we really feel for each other? Are we faithful to our mate? And I don't just mean this in the physical sense, but also in the spirit. When men look at other women, and women at other men in society, especially in this age of internet and full-color printing that is full of seductive women, but also seductive men. This is a bigger fight for men than for women; that's a fact. I know, because I fight these thoughts and such temptation. But above all, are we faithful to God the Father who has called us and who has an incredible plan for us? Are we faithful to those who are placed over us? Are we prepared to go on no matter what?

The title of today's sermon is *Faith and Faithfulness*.

I would like to take a look at faith first. That is the first thing we need to be able to hold onto, faithfulness, and with the help of God's spirit we can do so. Let's look at what faith really is in **Hebrews 11:1 – Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for**. This has to be done by God's spirit. Faith is a spiritual thing and cannot be seen by our physical mind. If we lose that spirit because we commit sin that we do not repent of then we will also lose this assurance. We must, therefore, first of all examine ourselves whether we are in the faith and put all iniquity away from us. And then we will also get **the evidence of things not seen**.

We now look in **James 2:14 – What does it profit, my brethren, if a man say he has faith but has no works? Can that faith save him?** So it is of no use if it does not come with works.

James also says in **verse 17 – Even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself**.

Verse 21 – Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. Are we prepared to sacrifice ourselves for others? And I do speak for myself, to myself too! I know this needs to be worked on for I am lacking in this. It takes me effort to do so, and sometimes it's easier to do so than at other times.

Verse 24 – You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. We are justified by our works.

Verse 26 – For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. These verses speak for themselves.

We know that the works that we must do are spiritual. With the help of God the Father and Jesus Christ living in us we can see this spiritually and put it into practice. They work out both 'to will and to work' in us. As Jesus said, 'Of and by Myself I can do nothing.' He knew that everything has to come from the Father and relied completely on that. He was convinced of this and lived in complete harmony with His Father and in full agreement with all that the Father gave Him to do. His sacrifice is the most beautiful example of this. *Everything* else that He performed during His life here on earth was fully based on His faith upon and faithfulness towards God the Father.

Let's have a look at how great that faith, that trust, in His Father was. We go to **John 11:1 – Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.** So Lazarus became ill.

A little further in **verse 11 – These things He said: and after that He said unto them, our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of the sleep.** So Lazarus is asleep.

Verse 12 – The disciples therefore said unto Him, Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover.

Verse 13 – Now Jesus had spoken of His death: but they thought that He spoke of taking rest in sleep. This is how God looks upon death. You are asleep until He awakens you in the first or second resurrection.

And in **verse 14 – Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then Thomas (who is called Didymus) said unto his fellow disciples, let us also go that we may die with Him. So when Jesus came, He found that he had been in the tomb for days already. Now Bethany was near to Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.**

Verse 19 – Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. Martha then, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary still sat in the house. Martha then said unto Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that whatsoever You shall ask of God, God will give to You. Martha knew, because God gave it to her to see that Jesus could ask anything of His Father.

Verse 23 – Jesus said unto her, your brother shall rise again. Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes on me, though he die, yet shall he live. Martha knew about the resurrection. I often wonder how the traditional religions of this world explain this verse when they try and tell you their nonsense about 'going to heaven'!

Verse 25 – Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes on Me, though he die, yet shall he live. Jesus speaks about believing in Him, but it is not talking about believing in the person of Jesus as the religions of the world do. No! No! He means here that we must do as He says, to let God's love develop in us, His mercy, His grace, His clemency, His forgiveness and faithfulness, (we'll touch upon this later). So we must live according to His commandments and ordinances.

On in **verse 32 – Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was and saw Him, fell down at His feet saying unto him, Lord, if You had been here my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and also saw the Jews weeping that came with her, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have you laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. ... and Jesus wept.** Ron Weinland explained this weeping of Jesus to us. He wept for all of humanity

because He saw God's plan and He could see that there would still be a lot of suffering ahead for mankind.

Verse 38 – Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself came to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto Him, Lord, by this time he will stink for he has been *dead* for four days.

Verse 40 – Jesus said unto her, Did I not say to you that if you would believe you will see the glory of God? Here yet again Jesus is speaking about the faith and how we can see the glory of God. And we can see that glory if we go forward, and never stop repenting on a daily basis, and allow ourselves to be molded and fashioned until God (as He spoke to Abraham) can say to us: "Now I know you. Inherit My family Elohim." When we are made spirit we will be able to see His glory. One must be spirit in order to be able to see spirit. That's why it says in the Bible that no one has ever seen God. Physically, some have, as God has manifested Himself physically at times. He did so to Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. Ron has also explained this to us in the past.

So Jesus says that 'no one has ever seen God,' but in **John 14:9**, He says **He that has seen Me has seen the Father**, talking about the works and the mind that comes from the Father, which we should have also so as to show to the world that we are different. We must act as ambassadors of Jesus Christ to the world and manifest the works that God does in us and reflect that same mind that Jesus refers to.

We now come upon those verses that I wanted to expound upon, about that faith and faithfulness that Jesus had. Let's go to verses 41 and 42 of John 11... Back to **John 11:41 – So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said: Father, I thank You that You heard Me. And I knew that You would hear Me always: but because of the multitude that stands around I said it, that they may believe that You did send Me.** "I know that You always hear Me." His faith was so great that He knew beforehand that Lazarus would be awakened! What faith! Unbelievable! You can see this more when you read on in the verse. He says, "I really did this for the multitude," (the crowd standing around), so they would believe that He came from the Father, but He already knew for a fact that Lazarus would be awakened. Amazing if you can see the deeper meaning of these last two verses and can see the faith that He had even when He walked the earth as a human.

Verse 43 – And when He had spoken, He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth!

Let's go to **Galatians 2:16 – Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.** It clearly states here that we must have the same faith of Jesus Christ. So that same faith must be working in us, the same faith that we just saw manifested at the awakening of Lazarus from death. And what do we think then? "Yes, but how is the faith to come into us? How is that possible?"

Let's go to **Ephesians 2:8 – For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.** So we can do nothing of and by ourselves. Everything is being given to us from God. Through grace we can obtain eternal life, but that faith must also come from God. He has to give it to us.

Please turn with me to Revelation 14:12. It describes God's Church, and in that true Church the members must have the faith *of* Jesus. **Revelation 14:12 – Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.** So it's not only our faith in Him, but also His faith working in us. We must be close to God, surrender to Him, and do His will in prayer,

fasting, and meditation. And with meditation, I mean thinking about His plan and seeing how beautiful everything has been made in His creation, to consider all that He has done so far to bring us to Him, into His family, the sacrifice that He (God the Father) has given, and to which Jesus Christ consented, to be offered up as a Lamb.

We'll go back now to the scriptures we read a little while ago in James 2:14-26. Wayne spoke on these verses in his sermon dated August 17, 2013. I'm now going back to the part where he covers these verses: **James 2:14-26...**

Verse 14 – For what profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, believes God, but does not have works? So now what it's going into is it's saying, if you've got faith, if I've got faith, I should be able to see it by what I do. Because I can just have faith and say, I have all faith, but I don't live love to others. What's the deeds? They don't connect. There is something wrong here. **Can faith save you?** No! We must walk and live God's way of life, which is sacrificing the self to the benefit of others. We must live justice, mercy, and faith towards all. We are to demonstrate our faith by the attitudes and actions in our life. We are to walk in the spirit because our actions should reveal our faith.

Verse 15 – If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say to him, Depart in peace, their words, be warmed and filled... "I hope things go well for you" ...but you do not give him the things which are needy for the body, what profit is it? What profit is it? We have to live love by our actions, by what we do.

Now, I know people who are listening to this in different places that are not in the Church are probably going to misunderstand a lot of that, but that's life, because it's about the spiritual intent on what we're doing...

So if we say, **depart in peace, be warm and filled, and we don't give what is needed, what good is it?**

Verse 17 – Thus, also faith by itself, if it does not have works, deeds, it is dead, because we're not living it. Works demonstrate what we believe. Works are the application of justice, mercy, forgiveness, patience, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, and love – the fruits of the spirit. We have to demonstrate them in our life towards others by the way we think, but also by our deeds.

Verse 18 – But someone will say, You have faith and I have works: show me your faith without your works, without your deeds, the actions that reveal what you believe, **and I will show you my faith by my works,** by what I do, the fact that I do love all. I'm not selective in my love. **You believe that there is one God, you do well – even the demons believe and tremble.**

Verse 20 – But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? So having faith without works is dead. It is useless. The reality is, brethren, we cannot separate faith from our deeds, from the way we live, the way we walk. We are to walk in the spirit.

If you want to just drop down to **verse 26 – For as the body without the human**

spirit, so it says, **For the body without the spirit**, so the physical body without the human spirit **is dead**. So you have a body without the spirit of man in it. It's dead, **so faith without works is dead**. It's the way we live. It's the way we walk. We are to walk in the spirit.

God requires that we believe Him, we believe the truth, but He also requires that we live and walk in the spirit. We should live love, no ill will to anybody; and that is what our calling is about.

(So far the quote from Wayne Matthews' sermon.)

Let's look at some examples of faith coupled to works that were recorded for us by God. We go to Daniel 3. There is an important example there of living faith shown by Daniel and his companions, and coupled to works. In **Daniel 3:1 – Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.**

Verse 5 – That at what time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

Verse 6 – And whosoever does not fall down and worship shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

Some verses further, **verse 15 – Now if you are ready at whatever time that you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the image which I have made; good! But if you worship not, you shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?**

Verse 16 – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Verse 21 – Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

And then further in **verse 25 – Then he answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.** They saw a fourth figure. God had sent an angel. You can read this in **verse 28 – Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word and have yielded their body, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God.**

If we summarize this story we can conclude that these three are saying:

1. Our God can deliver us if He so chooses.
2. He will most certainly deliver us.
3. And if He would choose not to, we will still keep obeying Him and not you,

Nebuchadnezzar.

What a living faith! Incredible! Imagine yourself being there and then. They did not know what God would choose to do. It was a matter of life and death. They had faith and works for they were going into the fiery furnace, and they also did spiritual works, for God was with them and in them.

When we read Hebrews 11 we see that faith goes together with works. Let's look at some examples. **Hebrews 11:4 – By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.** Abel offered a sacrifice and gave witness that he was righteous.

Verse 7 – By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Noah built the ark and he was an heir of righteousness.

Verse 9 – By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. Abraham left; he goes.

Verse 17 – By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*. He was prepared to sacrifice Isaac.

And then **verse 24 – By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.** Moses departed from the house of Pharaoh's daughter to live with his own people.

Verse 31 – By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. Rahab helped the spies.

Verse 32 – And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and the prophets. All had faith combined with works.

When you look, for example, at the faith of Abraham and Sarah, then you see they were the only ones obeying God. There was no one else in their age. The same is true for Noah. He stood alone in his faith. His wife nor his sons and their wives believed God. Imagine, building an ark for 120 years. It took as long as 120 years before Noah entered into the ark. 120 years all alone in your faith. That's something else than what we are now going through. We can share in this belief with one another. We can build each other up every Sabbath that we come together.

We are only very few really, and this gives us all the more reason not to give up, but to go on. It is so unique that God called you and me from among all the people who are living on earth. Go forward and ask God for help. He has something better in store for us, something much better than what the world around us has to offer. God is preparing us. He is molding and fashioning us so we *can* fit as stones into His Temple. We are all unique and different, and that is what makes Gods plan so beautiful. I know for myself that I do not realize this enough, and therefore, I push myself and ask of Him to help me with my conversion, to help me accomplish His plan in me.

This is what we all must do. Go forward and *never* give up. Whatever it is that God has in store for you, go for it! He will help you and give you the strength that you need at the time you need it, even if you are faced by the Red Sea. It does not matter. If God is for you, who can be against you? He is

our Rock, our High Tower, our Petra. With Him, through faith that He gives us, we can do the works that are required of us.

So all those whom we have just quoted have not yet received the promise. They have looked forward to it in faith, and they were strangers and pilgrims. They believed and knew with certainty that they would get eternal life, for such is God's plan. God saved them, for example, from the fiery furnace, but they knew that the possibility existed that such maybe did not fit into His plan and that they may have to die.

Let's now go to **Hosea 2:19 – And I will betroth thee unto Me forever, for all eternity!**

Verse 20 – I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness. The Hebrew meaning of this word here for 'faithfulness' is 'determination, stableness, fidelity, honesty, meticulous.' In Greek, it says about 'faith' – 'trustworthy.' So faith is trustworthiness and loyalty.

We'll now take a closer look at the word 'faithful.' When we are baptized, after 'counting the costs,' we promise to be faithful to the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. By the authority of Jesus Christ, we become a begotten son of God in His Family, and at that occasion we promise that we will be faithful to that commitment. If we fail on our road to that goal, His Family Elohim, when we actually break our commitment, then we are unfaithful. And that is what physical Israel did, but we do it spiritually because we have God's spirit in us. Laodicea did the same thing. Laodicea became unfaithful and people returned to the cesspool they had been called out of.

We go to **Jeremiah 3:20 – Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, says the LORD.** Like husband and wife, God compares it to marriage.

Verse 21 – A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God. If you depart from God you forget about His plan and you lose *everything* you could see so clearly before. You end up in Satan's grip, ready to push you back into the cesspool.

Don't give up! Remain faithful to our Father to the end and He will reward us bountifully. *Fight* for being allowed to enter into His Family. All that is promised to us is beautiful. God *is* faithful. You don't have to worry about that! It is up to us! If we don't stay close to Him we become lukewarm and start to take it all for granted. No! No! No! It isn't to be taken for granted! It is awesome what has been given to us! It hurts to see people in God's Church that were so precious to us leave because they are no longer faithful and have discarded it, the covenant they made with God. Unbelievable! Me, too. I must push myself every day and fight to stay on top of the temptations of this world. I ask, "Father please help! Don't let me fall into the hands of the adversary. Help me stay faithful to You. Give me the faith of Jesus Christ and do Your will with me, whatever it is, because I want You! I want You!" We must all ask this daily, every day of our life. And it is mentioned in the Bible in so many places, He is faithful and will not abandon us. And as long as we go for it, God will perform the 'to work and to will' in us, and will mold and fashion us according to His will.

Jeremiah 3:22 – Return you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God! God says, "Return. Whatever you have done, and repent and change and come back to Me and I shall have mercy on you." There's plenty of scripture's where God mentions this.

Keeping the 10 Commandments, of course, is the basis for being faithful. Jesus told us that we must do so according to the spirit. He came to fulfill the law, to make it more complete. We've just expounded on our faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God, but there must also be faithfulness between a husband and a wife in marriage. It is a promise they make when they get married, 'for better or for worse.'

Many among you know what happened to my wife, Engeliën. She's confined to a wheelchair and cannot speak. It is unthinkable to me that I would leave her, would become unfaithful to her. Our experience is that God has brought us closer together even though the situation is, humanly speaking, far from ideal. God molds and fashions us in order to prepare us to fit as stones in His Temple, so we go on together and try to do the best we can. God uses these trials and not so pleasant moments in life to mold us.

I want to read part of the booklet, "The Ten Commandments," that can be found on our website, but first something else. We know that the first four Commandments are aimed at how we should behave towards God. We also know that the last six Commandments are about our behavior towards fellow man. The 7th Commandment is about faithfulness in marriage between husband and wife, and therefore, it is about family, relatives, as God has it in mind for mankind. Spiritually speaking, Jesus Christ will marry the woman, the Church.

In Matthew 25 the following is mentioned about marriage... **Matthew 25:1 – Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom,** the virgins, God's Church, Jesus Christ's bride.

Verse 2 – And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. The foolish virgins weren't faithful. They became lukewarm, were sucked back into the world. This is a wise lesson for us. Because what happens when you don't repent daily and practice this way of life on a daily basis? What happens?

Verse 10 – And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. The door is *shut*. You're *outside*. You're not part of it! *Horrible!*

Verse 11 – Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. "Open the door!"

Verse 12 – But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. "I don't know you!" *Imagine* Jesus saying this to you. I don't ever want to think about it! Do *you*? "I don't know you!"

Verse 13 – Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes. Watch! Be on the alert! Repent! Practice this watchfulness. Practice what God asks us to do. Love your brethren in the Church and people in the world. Be a witness by letting your light shine, as Jesus so beautifully put it.

Physical family is an image of God's Family, and in that physical family we can learn and be prepared for His spiritual Family. The 7th commandment is, "You shall not commit adultery!"

In the booklet, "The 10 Commandments," the following is stated about the 7th Commandment:

Marriage Pictures Christ and His Church

As ordained by God, the marriage union is a holy thing. It is so holy that in His Word Almighty God uses the marriage union as a type of the relationship between Christ

and His Church! Notice Ephesians 5:22- 24: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." In this place, God shows that in the Christian home the wife is to submit herself to her husband as the head of that home, just as she must learn to submit to Christ Himself for all eternity! In this holy relationship she is learning a lesson of lasting faithfulness!

Then the husbands are addressed: "Husbands, LOVE your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself" (verses 25, 28).

Jesus Christ served, helped, trained, protected and eventually gave Himself for His Church. So are husbands to protect, to provide for, to guide, to encourage, to love and give to their wives! A Christian man is to be the head of his house. Yet he is to use that office to serve and to give protection, guidance and happiness to his wife and family. And Almighty God holds him responsible for being the right kind of head!

Because of this great lesson and purpose in marriage, God says: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (verse 31). In the marriage union, man and woman are made one. Their relationship is then to picture the eternal, loving, and serving relationship of Christ and His Church. Therefore, nothing should come between them. The lesson of marriage is to teach us eternal faithfulness to Jesus Christ as our Head! To separate from one's God given mate is to fail to learn the lesson which God intends for us to learn in marriage. It is a reproach to Almighty God -- for it denies His wisdom in ordaining the marriage union in making us truly "one flesh" with our mate!

How can we ever be faithful to the living God throughout all eternity if we selfishly refuse to be faithful to the mate to whom we are bound in this life for only a few years and fail to learn the lessons of patience, kindness, long-suffering, self-control, love and faithfulness in the sacred marriage union?

Here ends my quote from the booklet, "The Ten Commandments."

Do not misunderstand some of what has been stated here, as there are conditions within God's Church where divorce can be an option in one's life. It is clear that God hates divorce, but it is for the very reason of what this sermon is covering. In this case, it would be about the unfaithfulness to live God's truth and ways toward their mate. Horrible and/or abusive acts of unfaithfulness in a marriage can lead to divorce in God's Church.

So how can we be forever faithful to God when through selfish motives we even refuse to be faithful to our partner? That's what's being said here. We must also be able to trust each other and believe in each other, and we do that by being faithful to each other day by day, and by confirming that faithfulness by the manner in which we treat each other. That is how we can encourage our partner and give them confidence because of our faithfulness to them.

And this takes time. I know this because me and my wife *have* been separated in the past, before we came into the Church. Fortunately, we reconciled afterwards, and that is fantastic because it does

not always happen that way. Shortly after, I was called, and later my wife came into the Church, too. I am convinced that God gave us to experience this and then brought us back together.

Matthew 5:27. Jesus said that we must also keep this Commandment spiritually, and we can find this in **Matthew 5:27 – You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

How can we multiply such faith and faithfulness of Jesus towards His Father in our lives? We must ask our God every day to mold this into our lives, and to submit with eagerness and devotion to Him, stirring this up in us so that He and Jesus Christ can live more fully in us.

Now we go to **Proverbs 3:1 – My son, forget not my law; but let your heart keep my commandments.** *Never forget* how we came by the truth! *Never forget* your calling by which you could 'see' everything because God had opened our eyes. We came to see that we were not living by His Commandments and that much still needed to be done.

Verse 2 – For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to you. The longer you are in God's Church the more peace you will have in your life, if you hold fast to that faithfulness.

Verse 3 – Never let go of loyalty and faithfulness. Tie them around your neck; write them in your heart. There is that word 'faithfulness' again. Make sure it is written upon your heart, just like love, Godly love, grace. The dictionary says about 'grace': 'clemency, compassion, mercy, grace, meekness, kindness.' *Fight* for this and allow God and His Son to develop this in us. Ask and pray for this every day and He will give it to us. 'Ask and you shall be given,' says Jesus. If it is within God's plan, then we can ask anything!

Verse 4 – If you do this, both God and people will be pleased with you. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and never rely on your own judgment. There it is again: 'Trust in the LORD,' not on your own human reasoning. *Use* His spirit, brethren.

Verse 6 – Remember the LORD in everything you do, and He will show you the right way. *He* will show you the right way.

Verse 7 – Don't be wise in your own eyes, fear the LORD, and depart from evil. To fear is to obey God. Keep His commandments and you will automatically 'depart from evil,' then He can do works in us. Every time that we repent and persevere in the way of life we have entered in the more God can give us His love and His faithfulness to us, so He can bring us towards the goal – God's Family!

Verse 8 – It will be like good medicine and nourishment to your bones. Departing from evil is like medicine to us. It refreshes and strengthens our bones, our soul.

Verse 9 – Honour the LORD by making Him an offering of the first fruits of all your increase. The increase God has given to us doesn't come from us. God gave it to us; *everything* comes from Him. We have gotten *everything* from Him and He asks us to give 1st Tithes from it. These 1st Tithes are used for the Church and for the work towards people in the world, for sending out the books and everything more. Our Father is giving, and He wants us to be unselfish too. As Mr. Armstrong always said, "There are two ways of living – give and get."

Verse 10 – Then your barns will be filled with grain and your presses shall overflow with new wine. Then we will be abundantly blessed spiritually! More of His spirit in us is more important than all the

physical wealth in the world. But if we become unfaithful, God can and will not live in us and give us those blessings, the blessing we just read about in Proverbs. Then we are left to our own and become an easy prey to Satan and his demons. I, and many who have lived through that period with me, have witnessed during Mr. Tkach Sr.'s leadership what such unfaithfulness causes. Jesus said that the love would wax cold. Of course, because when you no longer have God's spirit living in you, you can no longer receive of His Godly love, His agape. People started keeping Christmas again, started eating unclean foods, and some even went back to the churches they were called out of!

Recently, I came across a married couple that had been close friends of ours in God's Church. I told them that we were once again in that time of year that we observe, the fall Holy Days, and they looked at me and asked me, "Do you still keep those Feasts?!" *Incredible!* It hurt badly and I felt completely useless because I knew that God's spirit had been replaced by man's spirit once again, a spirit influenced by Satan every day.

Make sure this does not happen to you! Ask our Father for His help, because it would be terrible if such a thing would happen to you! And as Mr. Armstrong always said, "One that is deceived does not know that they are deceived, otherwise they *would not* be deceived!" And we will not be deceived, to become unfaithful, if we give ourselves over to both, to who live in us every day. If we have sin that we do not want to repent from, then we are on thin ice and we can become unfaithful. Satan knows exactly what he needs to do to cause you, through your selfish nature, to become unfaithful to the covenant you have made upon baptism.

Now we go to Malachi 2:10. Let's take a look at how God looks upon unfaithfulness towards Himself and unfaithfulness in human marriage. **Malachi 2:10 – Don't we all have a Father? Hasn't one God created us?** As God told us at the Feast of Tabernacles in 2005, there is only one Father, one God, and not a trinity or two 'god-persons' as Mr. Armstrong still thought. The latter, by the way, was at that time the present truth, and we always follow the present truth. And later when God gave Ron to reveal that Jesus Christ has not always existed, but that He was born from the virgin, Mary, it was crystal clear to us. Did that cause Mr. Armstrong to suddenly no longer be God's apostle? Did that make everything that he had given to God's Church to be *false*? *No!* No, of course not! God gives everything in time and according to His will, and then it becomes clear and only then we can see it.

Going on in **verse 10 – Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?** 'Treacherously' means 'unfaithful,' running after pagan worldly idolatry and losing our way, just like those old friends from Church that I just mentioned. They have loved the ways of the world more than God. They have become unfaithful to God the Father, our Creator. *Unfaithful!*

In verse 11 this is stated even more clearly. **Verse 11 – Judah has dealt unfaithfully (treacherously), and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.** 'Unfaithfully' – no faithfulness, no faith, no love, no grace, no mercy, because they embraced pagan religions and mingled with the heathen nations around them, and consequently, were infected by their perverted habits. And God pulled back and let them loose in their unfaithfulness.

Verse 12 – The LORD will cut off the man that does so, the master and the scholar, out of the tents of Jacob, even though he sacrifices an offering unto the LORD of hosts. To 'cut off' – now that we have received God's spirit, if we will not repent from certain sin, we become unfaithful and this results in eternal death.

Verse 13 – This is another thing you do. You cover the LORD'S altar with tears, weeping and wailing because He no longer accepts the offerings you bring Him, neither receives them with good will at your hand. When you are unfaithful because of sin you won't tackle then God says that He has no pleasure in your sacrifices and daily prayers. He tells us that He does not accept them. In other words, He does not hear us. He does not listen to us.

Verse 14 – Yet you say, Why? Because Yahweh has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have dealt unfaithfully though she is your companion and the wife of your covenant. Here God speaks about human marriage. Why? *Why?* Because God the Father witnessed that marriage. The world is full of unfaithfulness, but in God's Church we must work at our marriage and not commit adultery or whatever, which can lead to divorce.

Keep your spot here. We're coming right back to this.

We go now to Proverbs 5:18. The wife of your youth, your companion, the wife you married... **Proverbs 5:18 – Let your fountain be blessed; And rejoice in the wife of your youth.** Rejoice, be happy with the wife that God has provided for you and with whom you have spent your life with since your youth, with whom you have experienced everything in life.

Verse 19 – Pretty and graceful as a deer, let her breasts satisfy you at all times and be you ravished always with her love. Think about when you were young and about the wife that you married: 'Pretty and graceful as a deer... be you ravished always with her love.' Be happy that you are at one with each other.

Verse 20 – For why should you, my son, be ravished with a strange woman. Why embrace the bosom of a stranger? *Why* would you be unfaithful? "Why would you be unfaithful?" That's what God asks here.

Verse 21 – For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD. He examines all the paths. You cannot hide from Him. Adam and Eve thought they could hide from God, but God sees and knows everything. He hears all prayers. He knows everyone's thoughts. *Incredible!* Incredible!

Verse 22 – The sins of the wicked are a trap. He gets caught in the net of his own sins. You get entrapped in your own sins.

Verse 23 – He dies because of lack of self-control, he goes astray because of his foolishness. You lose God's spirit, you die spiritually, because God no longer works with you to convert you. You lose the truth and Satan causes you to stray further and further away.

We go now back to **Malachi 2:15 – And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a Godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.** The 'Godly seed' means when you have God's spirit and do not die spiritually and remain faithful to Him, as we read in Proverbs, but also to be faithful to your wife or husband. Every day you must ask God to help you not to give in to the temptation of this world. In other words, when you're on guard and restrain yourself with God's spirit working in you, you don't need to become unfaithful to the man or woman of your youth, and you can always repent.

Let's look at **verse 16 – For I hate divorce, says the LORD God of Israel, and when one covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts.** God hates divorce. He hates it! **Therefore take heed to your spirit that you don't deal unfaithfully (treacherously).** Be on guard and use the help of His

spirit and of our older brother Jesus Christ, too, and don't be unfaithful to your wife who is 'pretty and graceful as a deer,' as we just read in Proverbs.

I Corinthians 7:10. There are several situations that can result in divorce. An example given in the Bible is recorded by Paul in **I Corinthians 7:10 – But to the married I command—not I, but the Lord—that the wife not leave her husband.** God says that you should not divorce!

Verse 12 – But to the rest I—not the Lord—say, if any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is content to live with him, let him not leave her.

Verse 13 – And the woman that has an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. A partner that has no problems with the other partner being in the Church, it's what it's referring to here.

Verse 14 – For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now are they holy. At baptism the family is being sanctified. As you belong to God, through you, your family is, too. They get, so to speak, an entrance ticket to the truth. Of course, they will have to use it first. Like when you go to the movie theatre but you throw away your ticket, then they won't let you in. You cannot go into the film movie in the theatre. The same is true for they that do not respond to God's truth and who, so to speak, throw the ticket away. They will not come into His Church.

Now we come to the situation when an unbelieving partner does no longer want to live with the believing one. This usually includes some very hostile behavior towards the Church, which we can read in **verse 15 – Yet if the unbeliever departs let there be separation. The brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us in peace.**

In the past two years, we have been covering much more about God delivering people out of bondage and revealing far more fully the way of peace. The section I will be quoting is from Part 7 of the post entitled, "Family: Coming Out of Bondage." I will begin with the seventh paragraph in this first section entitled, "Husbands Ruling Over."

When the Church was only beginning, it was not yet "time" to deliver the family out of bondage. Deliverance out of bondage was not yet possible due to the conditions of the world and society in general. It was enough that people would battle conditions (the world) of not working on God's Sabbaths and that they would live a life so completely different than the world around them as they sought to live by the Ten Commandments. Now we have come to these things beginning to be addressed within the Church because the "time" to deliver the family, and to far more fully lead it out of bondage, is nearly here as the Millennium is just before us.

So within the Church and through the apostles who taught and wrote scripture, God began to give more knowledge (spiritual) to the man (husband) and woman (wife) on how to live in unity with Him and each other. God was leading the Church to begin coming out from under the curse that mankind brought upon himself from the beginning – of the man "ruling over" the woman. God gave instruction on how to have a true "spiritual" relationship with Him by working on a true spiritual relationship with one another. God revealed that the man was to be the head of the wife (not to "rule over" her) in the physical structure of the marriage, but the administration of God's government was to be spiritual in the relationship. This is the area where both men and women have been lacking in understanding in the spiritual

administration of God's ways in the family.

Next, under the section entitled, "True Government verses Ruling Over," I will begin reading by beginning with the sixth paragraph.

From the beginning, God did establish that mankind would have government (order) in the family. It was as Paul revealed to the Church that the husband was to be the head of the wife. For 6,000 years, God's government for the family has been based on this structure (order). This was the means whereby God could bless and lead families – those whom He had called. Yet God knew what mankind would do from the beginning – rejecting Him and His ways. God knew the struggles and hardships that would come upon marriage and family life. So God purposed for His people (those whom He would call), during this "time of man," that they strive to live by the best possible structure for marriage and family in the midst of a perverse, disobedient, and highly dominated male society.

God structured marriage and family-life to be governed in a specific manner during the age of man's self-rule. Once God's rule has been established upon the Messiah's reign, far more depth of purpose in marriage and family will be experienced with spiritual blessings through the powerful working of His spirit that will be poured out upon mankind. People will be brought to see and taught to live by a greater depth of spiritual purpose in marriage and family – as such structure and purpose is "spiritual" – fully of God's spirit. As God pours out far greater abundance and access to the power of His spirit (His life) to work in (transform) human life, marriage and family will be brought out of spiritual bondage. Husbands and wives will be brought to "see," know, and live what it means to share life (side by side) in unity of spirit with one another; likewise, at that time, they will be far more fully enabled to do so toward God also.

God has revealed that now and on into the Millennium, the "basic" structure for family will still be the husband as the head of the wife. Yet even now, God has already begun to reveal that His structure of government in the family is "fully spiritual," and it is to be administered spiritually. Ordination of women magnifies the true administration of how God's government is to work (function) within the Church and within the family. The structure for government in the Church is by ordination, and it is to always be administered spiritually. Within the Church, there is an order of structure for the "administration" of God's ways. Most are familiar with that structure as it currently begins with an elder, then evangelist, prophet, and then an apostle.

God's people are coming to more clearly "see" that the administration of God's ways (government, laws, etc.) are spiritual in how they are to be practiced and lived within the Church and within the family. Ordination also reveals the way (or flow) of how God's spirit can (and does) change the order of God's government, not only in the Church, but also in a family. An individual who is ordained from a sr. elder to an evangelist affects the way (the flow, the order) of how God's spirit works (administers God's ways) within the Church. Any other raise in ordination does likewise. The same is true in a family. If a wife in a family is ordained to an elder (and the husband is not), this affects the way, the flow, the order, of how God's spirit works (administers God's ways) within the family. In the very near future, sermons will be given and booklets written that expound upon this principle, just as such has happened

in times past utilizing the guidelines given by Paul to husbands and wives.

Let's go to Hebrews 10. And how faithful are we towards each other in the Church? Because when we are faithful to God, then with the help of His spirit we can also be faithful to one another in the Body. **Hebrews 10:23 – Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised).** Do we hold fast unwavering, faithful to what we believe? Will we hold fast through the 57 Truths that we have been given and not throw them away? What has been given to us is *fantastic*. Go over these 57 Truths again and study them. That is something I myself fail to do often enough. I must push myself, too, and ask the Father to enable me to recapture that 'first love.' I must ask for enthusiasm, to be hot, and not give up. I want to continue this covenant that we all signed up for at baptism. I don't want to let go of this! I don't want to be divorced from it, but become ever stronger, rooted in it so that that won't happen, so that I can continue in this way of life that we are being taught.

Verse 24 – And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. We should talk to each other about how we must live. We must let God work in us by surrendering to Him. He does the 'to work and to will' in us. We must pay heed to each other.

We are all different in God's Church. We are from many different walks of life and would have never met up in the world, but God brought us together and so we must learn to understand each other. And the more we get to know each other, the stronger our bond will be and the more faithful we can be to each other 'unto love and to good works.' We must focus on everyone in the Church and be concerned about all. We must encourage each other and be an example so others in the congregation can become motivated to do so also. We must be considerate with one another, bring everyone into fellowship, and leave no one on the side. Go to them and include them.

Having faith and being faithful is fantastic, but it needs to be done by works, otherwise, your faith is a dead faith.

We are family. Consider that when you meet! See Elohim in each other! See the other person as a member of the God Family, as a child, a son of God, and then you will be able to develop that Godly love, agape, more in us, and through our example others can come to see this and do so, too.

Verse 25 – Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as you see the day approaching. You know, when I hear something new in services that I have not heard before I usually write it down next to the verse in my Bible. So I did with this verse. Ron quoted this verse in a sermon and said the following: "'Not forsaking' literally means, 'not to leave behind.' In other words, 'make sure everyone is involved in and part of our assembling together.'" So we can see here that the words 'not forsaking' means 'not to leave behind.' That is what Ron said about it. And I would just like to add to that – be faithful in that, for if we do so, it is pleasing to God. He wants to see that mind that was in Christ Jesus also in us, too. He lives and is with His Father, our Father, in heaven waiting until He can return to earth to restore all things. He is the only one that can do this because of His sacrifice, His resurrection, and His love for all humanity, all that ever lived and all who are yet to live. How beautiful is God's plan!

Matthew 23:23. Jesus tells the scribes and the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:23 – Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and anise and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these you ought to have done and not to have left the other undone.** "You are so perfect in giving tithes, and so you should be," and so should we, but **the weightier matters of the law...** Look at what is being considered as 'weightier.' 'Weightier' are **mercy and faith**. In the King James this translated as 'faith,' but in the Contemporary

English Version it says 'faithfulness.' That is what God requires of us.

I want to tell you something that I've told to most people in our congregation about when I was called for the first time. We were on a vacation or holiday and coincidentally I... No, of course it was no coincidence... I told Engelien, "Would you put some Plain Truths in our suitcase so that I'll have something to read?" I had never really read through them. Usually, I leafed through one and then it went straight into the dustbin. Of course, I now regret that, but later on I got my hands on all those Plain Truths again. Anyway, imagine Engelien putting one of the few Plain Truths that I had left from 1985 and 1986 in our suitcase, and in those publications *Mystery of the Ages* was being published! I remember the scales falling from my eyes! Here I was sitting under a parasol at the beach with a big cigar in my mouth – yes, yes, I know, but back then I didn't. I always loved my cigars until... But anyway, there I was, an "Oh! Oh!" one after another coming out of my mouth, and outbursts of "Incredible! Incredible!" I cried. I didn't know what happened to me. Engelien thought I got sun struck. No, that's a joke. But she did say that I suffered from religious mania or something of that kind. I told her that I knew only one thing, that it was the truth that I read! Precisely as Ron always says that when he read "The United States and Britain in Prophecy" he just *knew* it was true! I had the same experience when I sat there drinking a large beer and smoking my cigar while reading *Mystery of the Ages*.

I guess we've all had such a moment, and I do include people that were practically born in the church, and we should never ever forget that! You must remain faithful to that and always think back on that, because what was true back then is still true today. It is as simple as that. What was true back then is still true today.

Later, under Joseph Tkach Sr., we were put out of the Church because we kept to that truth. A minister came and talked with us and I told him that I would *never ever* deny this truth. That I would *never* believe the pagan doctrines that they came up with. I, and with me, Engelien, kept on believing what we had learned through Mr. Armstrong. We remained faithful to what God had given us.

When we were in the period of the scattering – and I'll make a long story short – I got my hands on some tapes from Ron Weinland. My English isn't very good now, but back then it was way worse, and I asked God, "If this came from Him that I would need translating for me." And lo, I understood some 60 to 70 percent of it. It wasn't normal. It wasn't normal for me then! God helped me to understand. We're talking about 1999; the sermons were 'Restored and Revived.' You can still find them on the Church website, given in 1999. And once again, I said, "Oh!" and "Incredible!" "Whoa!" I told Engelien about it, what was being said on these tapes, and she became enthusiastic, too. And when Gijs and Mieke listened to these sermons they too said, "Yes, Yes! God let us find this!" God let us find this. It was all back in 1999. After that, we contacted Ron and came back into God's one and only Church, because that this was God true Church was crystal clear to me after this experience. If this is from God then this also is God's true Church.

And while I'm telling this story I have to think again of this minister that came to our house. Please understand me, we cannot go without God's help. We must always stay close to Him through our daily prayers and our conduct. But I will never, *never* forget that when the minister came to our house, we told him that we would never ever (with God's help!) forsake the truth, and that we would remain faithful to the end. We would remain faithful to all the doctrines that were given to us since that time. We would stay faithful to that calling, that first love that we had back then. We were prepared to do anything for it, and that is what we need to rekindle now.

To be faithful does not only count for people that were in the Church from before 1994, but also for

those who came after, to be faithful to the moment that you were called, when you came into the Church of God-PKG.

When we were still in the Worldwide Church of God, I always said, "Hold fast what you have received," referring to Revelation 3:3. "Don't give up. Hold fast. Keep the faith! Keep following this way! Stay faithful and God will certainly reward us." But why then are there people in God's Church that we knew well and that we loved that recently left the Church?

We all know the story of Laodicea and how God's people were no longer on fire for the truth, how they started taking it all for granted, and because of that finally left the Church. But it also happened that people were jealous or had their own ideas about what God gives in His Church. The Father gives everything to Christ and He gives it all to the one that is in the head of the Church. Right now, that is Ron Weinland; he is a prophet and an apostle, as we all know. But that's the way things usually go. Satan starts pushing our buttons, and he knows everyone's weak spots. He pulls you away from God and the Church; he manipulates you and you start to disagree with what's being said. At that moment, you are *unfaithful*! I've seen it in God's Church. I've seen how people started making up their own ideas, how they started 'teaching' and started forming their own little group to spread their own ideas in. They are *unfaithful* to what was given to them. They no longer cherish the truth and no longer build upon that truth. They no longer believe it and have become *unfaithful*.

We go to 2 Peter 1:19. Let's look at what Peter wrote about this. **2 Peter 1:19 – And we have the word of prophecy, the truth, made more sure; whereunto you do well.** The truth comes from God, the prophetic words to speak on behalf of God. God's words speak the truth, the truth inspired by God to those whom He is working with at that time. This means speaking for God. On in **verse 19... that you take heed**, meditate and pray about it, hold fast to it and cherish it. It is so beautiful... **as unto a lamp shining in a dark place.** This was recently explained to us on Atonement by Wayne. The truth is the 'light' and 'the dark place' means sin and death... **until the day dawn, and the Morning star arise in your hearts.**

We go to **Revelation 22:16.** (Please keep your place in 2nd Peter as we take a look at who is the Morning Star.) **Revelation 22:16 – I Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things to you for the assemblies. I am the root and the offspring of David; the Bright and Morning Star.** He, Christ, is the Morning Star that we must keep in our hearts.

We go back to **2 Peter 1:20 – Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. You. Can. Not. Explain. It. Yourself!** That's what is mentioned here.

Verse 21 – For no prophecy ever came by the will of man... It must be given to you. It does not come from man with his own ideas ...**but holy men of God spoke**, people set apart by God for just that purpose. **Holy men of God spoke, being moved by the holy spirit.** Those in whom God's spirit is working, that's where God's word comes from. And if we know that, we can be faithful to that, *in faith. Then* we can truly have faith that it comes from God.

2 Peter 2:1. We continue in **2 Peter 2:2 – But there also arose false prophets among the people, as among you also there will be false teachers**, we just touched upon the following, **destructive heresies**, people in the Church that want to be teachers, who think up their own things and spread them among little clicks they form around themselves, **they will secretly bring in**, sowing doubt and disaccord by wrong interpretations of Scriptures, **denying even the Master who bought them**, becoming unfaithful to the one who sacrificed Himself for us, **bringing on themselves swift destruction.** They lose God's spirit and no longer repent and conquer. 'Swift destruction' is death, unless you repent, of course, and if you don't, look at the last part of **verse 9 ...and to keep the**

unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment.

Back to **verse 2** – **Many will follow their immoral ways, and as a result, the way of the truth will be spoken badly of.** They lose the truth. When you speak to them you can tell something isn't right. You no longer agree. This is because they no longer believe in the structure of God's Church. They have become *unfaithful*.

Verse 20 – **For if after they have escaped the defilement of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state has become worse with them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.** When you have received the truth upon your calling, and you depart from that truth, then you are thrust back into the world and you are worse off than when not yet received the truth.

Verse 22 – **What happened to them shows that the proverbs are true: "A dog goes back to what it has vomited" and "A pig that has been washed goes back to roll in the mud."** We must make sure this does not happen to us. It's a terrible thing when God has to say this about us! We must prevent this and *fight* for this never to happen – never, never! Pray, fight, surrender to our Father completely! Be diligent. Keep on going, remain faithful, and never give up! Pray daily and ask, "Help us, Father! Please let us come to your Family and be united with your Son. *Help* us to be faithful to *Your* calling and repent daily from all the filth that is still in us. Give us that faith that was in Jesus also. It doesn't matter whatever happens to me, help me so that I can keep repenting and persevering."

2 Peter 3:17 – And when we know all the things that can happen to us, how we can be caught up in different ideas that others want to press on us, keep the following scripture in mind: **You therefore, beloved, knowing *these things* beforehand, beware lest being carried away with the error of the wicked you fall from your own steadfastness.**

God's Church has gone through a cleansing. We recently fasted for that very purpose and also to examine ourselves, to ask God to help us purge out those things (our sins) that are a stumbling block to us, and to help us repent and convert and to ask Him to develop more and more of His agape love in us. And if we keep on asking this of Him then we can remain faithful and have a living faith in us till the day we die.

In closing, let's go to **Matthew 25:21** – **His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.** Ask God to mold and fashion the same faith that was in Jesus Christ into you. Strive to be a faithful husband or wife, and also to be a faithful servant!

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