

Welcome, family, to God's weekly Sabbath.

Let's start by turning to Matthew 13, and we're going to read verse 44-46. **Matthew 13:44-46—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.** Each of us, as we go through life and invest our hard earned time and money into a home, a business or education, and we expect a return on what we have put into it, we do all we can to make sure that what has been invested grows in more value over time. This means going without some pleasures in life for the time so that what is valued more will grow and we can enjoy the fruits of our labor.

When I was going through my plumbing apprenticeship it was hard at times. When you started out you got the jobs that weren't mostly desired. They were the mostly on the end of a shovel and you did the harder labor jobs. And as you grew in your apprenticeship and got a couple years under you you actually got jobs that were more rewarding, more easy to do, but it's... it's just something that you had to go through through that four year period of time. We had to work full time during the week and go to school twice a week after a hard day's work. There were times I felt it wasn't worth it, but after four years I received my journeyman's card and it *was all* worth it. I knew that I could take care of my family. I can still remember the day I passed the test and received my journeyman's card and the relief I had.

When we are called by God at baptism He started investing in us with His holy spirit, and as we grow it grows in us. It will take a lifetime for God to see the return on what He has invested in us.

For our next verse let's go to Jeremiah 18, and we're going to read verses 4-6. **Jeremiah 18:4-6—And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.** And that's exactly what we are in God's hands. We're just a pile of clay until that holy spirit is given to us and it starts to grow and He can start to mold and fashion each and every one of us.

Verse 5—Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, which we are, spiritual house of Israel, can I not do with you as the potter? says the LORD. You know, and each and every one of us in the past seven years God's been... especially the past seven years God has been just molding and shaping and fashioning each and every one of us to go through this time period we're in now. And He's prepared us, you know, just as our namesake says, "Preparing for the Kingdom of God."

Verse 6 again, **O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? says the LORD, Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!** Only God can make something out of nothing. We are nothing until God molds us into what He wants us to be.

So, brethren, what are we doing to make sure that God gets His due return on what He has invested in us?

The title of today's sermon is *Return on Investment*.

Alright, let's turn to Genesis 25:29 and we're going to read through verse 34. **Genesis 25:29-34.** This is the story about Esau when he sold his birthright. Alright, starting in verse 29—**Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary. Therefore, his name is called Edom. But Jacob said, Sell me your birthright this day. And Esau said, Look, I'm about to die; so what is this birthright to me? He just didn't see the value in it. Then Jacob said, Swear to me this day. So he swore to him, and sold him his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.** Esau didn't see the value of what he was going to inherit. We, brethren, must always see what God has offered each and every one of us. It truly is a pearl of great price and we must grow in the understanding of how valuable it is. Esau knew his grandfather, Abraham. Abraham was very wealthy. You know, you think of when he went to rescue Lot there was... He had an army. He was... I think there were 300 people that were born in his household? So was his father, Isaac. You know, he lived around this wealth all his life and he knew was it was giving up, but the reality of what he gave up didn't sink in until later.

Our Father, God Almighty, owns everything, and He's promised to give it all to us. We have to see the value and never turn back on it. You know, it's just when we're called into this Church and God gives us His holy spirit, starts to grow in each and every one of us, we have to value that every day. Every day we have to look to God, go to God, repent every day and just never, never turn loose of it. It's just like the merchant that saw that pearl of great price, or that field, that he sold everything he had. And we're going to read some verses in the future here that are going to maybe come out in a little bit different way. But we can never, never ever look back. We've got to go forward no matter how tough it is, and just really look at the value of our calling.

Alright, let's go to Matthew 19. Matthew 19:16-23. And we've read this quite a few times, but it can apply to what we're going through today about making sure God gets a return on His investment in us. And it's the story about the young rich man. So, **Matthew 19:16—Now behold, one came to him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? So he said to him, Why you call me good? No one is good but One, and that is, God. But if you want to enter eternal life, keep the commandments. And he said to him, Which ones? Jesus said, You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love the neighbor as yourself. And the young man said to him, All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack? And Jesus said to him, If you want to**

be perfect, go and sell what you have, give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. There isn't anything in this physical life that can be compared to what is being offered to us. We owe to God, our Father, to dedicate our lives to Him - not just for this Year of Dedication, but for the rest of our lives.

You know, this young, rich man, a lot of times people take this and look at it as physical, but it's just in our lives we have to be willing to go through and give up anything, even if it comes down to a lot of people have given up mates, jobs. Whatever it takes to give up to follow this way of life, to follow God, to follow Jesus Christ, we have to be willing to do that. And that's the example that's being given here, is that no matter what we have in life, nothing can come before that pearl of great price, that investment God's made in each and every one of us. We have to be willing to go forward and live this way of life no matter what it takes.

Alright. For some contrast to what we just read, let's turn to Luke 21:1-4. And it's the story of the widow with her two mites, and just a total different attitude of... what we're supposed to have, is that attitude, and of course it's, this is happening physically but we need to apply that attitude to our lives spiritually. So **Luke 21:1-4—And he looked up and he saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and he saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites.** And my understanding, two mites is 1/10th of a penny or something, but very little. **And he said, Truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all.** It was all in her attitude. She gave all she had, and the rest of the people were giving out of their wealth. But we have to take it spiritually and give all we have, and just in humility, and just like I said, we have just got to cherish and value what God has given each and every one of us.

So let's read this story again. **And he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury,** you know, giving out of their abundance, **and he saw a certain poor widow.** You know, being a widow back in that day had to be pretty rough. **...putting in two mites. And he said, Truly I say to you this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in their offerings to God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood she had.** You know, I've often wondered about this widow after that act of giving all she had. You know, we can't out give God. You know, I think it's in Malachi 3 or 4 where, you know, God says, "Test Me." You know, pay our tithes, pay our offerings, "and see if I won't, you know, bless you for it." You know. So I'm sure this widow, you know, was taken care of because of her attitude. But we have to have that attitude spiritually. We really do. Is that we're willing to give everything we have. And we owe it to God. We have to put everything we have spiritually into this way of life. Nothing can come in the way of us obeying God, and fearing not to do so.

Alright. Let's turn to Matthew 25 and we're going to read verses 14-30. This is the parable of the talents. Look at this in many different ways in the past, but anyway, **Matthew 25:14— For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called on his own servants and**

delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his ability; and immediately he went on a journey. And we all know this is Jesus Christ. You know, he gave all - each and every one of us, according to what... the talents he gave us, you know, you go back to the example of we're all one body, we're all one family, and not all can be the head, and not all can be the feet. But God's put us in His family, His Church where He wants us to be.

Verse 16—Then he who had received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. But he who had received one went out and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. God and Jesus Christ are going to settle accounts with us on how we respond, when asked what we did with what was given to us. You know, each of us have been given talents. We may not think so, but we have, and God's placed each and every one of us in His Church where He wants us to be.

So back to **verse 20—So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them. And his lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of the lord.** You know, and there again, this is all about... "The joy of the Lord" is the Kingdom, God's Family, Elohim, and it's what we're all, what we're all striving for and working for.

And **verse 22—He also who had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them. His lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.** You know he said the same thing to the one with five talents as he said to the two, that he would, you know, "Because you were faithful with what I gave you," whether it was five or two, "you know, I'll make you ruler over many things." **And he entered into the joy of the lord.**

Verse 24—Then he who had received one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *here is what is yours*. But the lord answered him and said to him, You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and gathered where I had not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money in with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own in interest. And there again, you know, God's looking for us to grow so that His investment in us, that He gets a return on that. And He's given each and every one of us talents, whether it's one, two, or five. But remember the one that had five and the one that had two got the same reward, you know, so we have to go forward with what we're given. And there again, back to my mom's saying, "Bloom where you're planted." Sometimes we may feel we only have one talent. That may be the case. But as we see from the other examples, we have to work hard to make *it* grow; turn it into two talents.

This last year at the Feast I saw a member in God's family show an act of kindness to some of the brethren that weren't with us at the Feast. They went out and got cards for all of them and then took the time to go around and have everyone sign them. Would we want not this person to be in the Body? We are family and God has given each and every one of us a job to do. We need to be busy doing our job. We need to make time count and not count time. We all want to see the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this present evil world. In the mean time we need to be about growing with the gift God our Father has given us.

Alright. **Verse 28—Therefore, take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but for him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And he cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** You know, we just need to take this to heart, that we're in God's Church and we have got to just continue to draw closer to God, you know, the lessons we learned last year through fasting, and just being able to draw closer to God, especially as we go into this. We're in this last period of time now. And what's ahead of us, God knows; we don't. But we have got to just stay close to Him, and again, use our talents to serve the brethren in God's Church. And we have no idea the, you know, the influence that we're going to have on people in the future. You know, they're going to look to us for hope. I can't imagine going through what is coming and not knowing what the end of it is. And God's given that to us. That's, again, He's prepared us for it and we can just go forward and be there to help and serve other people.

Alright, let's turn to Matthew 20:1. Matthew 20:1, and we're going to read through verse 16. And this is the parable or the story of the landowner... and went out and asked people to work in his vineyard, which we've been asked to do, His Church. Each and every one of us has been asked to (at our calling) to work in God's Church in whatever capacity He's put us in.

So, **Matthew 20:1-16—For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.** You know, and that's what God and Jesus Christ have done. They've called some, some people very early, you know, to work in His vineyard, in His Church. Like Mr. Armstrong, fifty years that he worked in God's Church and how diligent he was. You know, it's just... got to really cherish what we have and when we're called and that we are called. And there again, I was reading the first chapter of Mr. Weinland's new book, you know, and the odds that everyone that read *2008*, there were only a thousand that responded. So you take a thousand and divide it into seven billion; those are the odds of being in this Church. Pretty tough odds. But anyway, again, we've got to cherish that and really do our part to make sure He gets a return on His investment.

Anyway, **verse 1 again—For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you. So they went.**

Verse 5—Again he went out on the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, Why have you been standing here idle all day? And he said to them, Because no one hired us. And he said to them, You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.

Verse 8—So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, Call the laborers and give them *their wages*, beginning with the last to the first. And when he came to those who *were hired* at the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.

And then verse 11—And when they had received *it*, they complained against the landowner, saying, These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us, and have borne the burden in the heat of the day. But he answered one of them and said, Friend, Am I doing you no wrong? Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take *what is yours* and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as you. You know, there again, we've just got to apply that to God's Family. And that's what that denarius is, is being able to enter Elohim and have eternal life and live in God's Family. And some of us been in the Church for a long time and some may get the same reward for being in the Church half as long. But there again, that's the reward that's given and we should be happy that people get that same reward as us, that we're all in the same family. And there again, just being in the Church physically we have to just take that to heart here in this time period. Is that we're just happy we're all here together and we all work together and strive for the same goal, and that goal is God's Family.

Verse 15—Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is it your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first will be last. For many are called, but few are chosen. You know, some in God's Church have been living this way of life for a long life, others for shorter periods of time, but we're all going to receive the same reward, which is to be in God's Family. And again, it's just that's something that we got to go back to that pearl and that field and just realize how precious it is and then not to lose sight of that. And that's what's happened with people in the past. They've just grown weary and not taken account for what's been given to us and the value of it. So we can't do that. We've got to just continue to stay loyal to God and this way of life.

Alright, now, let's turn to Romans 12:1. **Romans 12:1**—I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*. There again, we owe God everything. He owes us nothing. And we have to just give our lives to God. I mean, there again, back to the odds, a thousand in seven billion. It is a definitely a pearl of great price that He's given to each and every one of us, is our calling.

Verse 2—And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. You know, we've just got to come out of this world. We've got to be examples to this world. We're ambassadors for

God and for Jesus Christ and we have to set an example, especially for what this time period we're going into.

Verse 3—For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more mighty than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt with each one a measure of faith. And back to the talents. You know, He's given each and every one of us talents, and we don't think of ourselves higher than anybody else. It's just we're all one body and we take care of each other. We're family. And we have just got to bond with God and Jesus Christ, you know, having their mind and them living in us and us in them. And that's what's going to make us strong, being able to go through what's ahead of us. Scary times are coming. You know, you look back in history, what's happened, and it says what's coming is the worst time for mankind. But God's going to be there for us.

Anyway, **verse 4—For we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, Church of God—PKG, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.** There, back to the story of the talents. The one, he just went out and buried it. He didn't try and turn it into two. He would have got the same reward! The one that had five, and the one that had two that were diligent and went out and doubled it, they were given the same reward.

So, anyway, **verse 6** again, **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, let us use them; if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.** You know, Mr. and Mrs. Weinland are God's prophets, and their daughter, and that's the gift that's been given to them. You know, it's just we all can't be the head and we all can't be the feet, but I'll tell you what, if you break a foot, the rest of the body knows about it. So, like I said, we're family. We just stick together and stay close, especially, again, what we're about to go through.

Verse 7—or ministry, **let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberty; and he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoice in hope, patience in tribulation.** There again, it's coming and we're going to have to be patient. We don't know what we're going through, but it's been told us time and time again that God is going to take care of us, you know, and He knows what we're going through. You know, you can go back through all the example of what people have gone through in the past. There again, go to Hebrews 11 and just see what God's people have gone through.

But **verse 12** again, **rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;** there again, just this Year of Dedication we've gone through, you know, the prayer and the fasting. And stay close to God. We just cannot let down, especially in this time period we're in.

Verse 13—distributing to the needs of the saints, that's each and every one in the Church, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute; and bless and do not curse.

Alright. **Verse 15—Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.** You know, we've just got to be there and have compassion for each other, and it's just the - I can't say it enough, that we're family - and it's just, you know, when you grow up in a family, physical family, we care for each other. You know, you live in a household altogether, it's just we each have our function. You know, I can remember growing up as a child that when it came after dinner - I had two sisters and a brother - and we were split up into sister/brother teams for doing dishes, you know. It was just our function. We didn't question it; we just did it. You know, so we stick together as a family, especially in God's Church. I don't know where my dad came up with the phrase but, "bloods thicker than water, but spirit's thicker than blood," and we've just got to remember that. And this is God's family and we're going to live together for eternity so we got to stay close.

Verse 16—Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. You know, there again, it's back to what we've been told: not to read into things, not to speculate, but to just use the website. I mean, now we're going to have three books plus the website plus all the sermons. There is more than enough there for us to learn from.

Verse 17—Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the LORD. And that's exactly what's happening in this last time period. God's going to get people's attention and it's going to be His way. And thankfully, it's just... can't imagine what it's going to be like to live in that era of time and where we have a government that is literally for the people.

Verse 20—Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in doing so you heap coals of fire on his head. Do not become overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. And that's, again, back to us being ambassadors and the examples we're going to have to set the next time period. And it's all for God's purpose.

Alright. Let's go back to Matthew 13:45 where we started. **Matthew 13:45—Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, plural - pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.** You know, God looks at each and every one of us as a pearl of great price, and He bought it with the life of His Son. God wants return on His investment, and that return is for us to enter His Family, Elohim.

Alright. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 6:19. **1 Corinthians 6:19—Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.** You know, I mean, God allowed His Son to go through a horrific beating and then

being nailed to a pole. I mean, he went through that for us and there's scripture there, you know, that he, you know, where he sweat blood knowing what he was about to go through. But he was *willing* to go through it so that we could be in God's Family, so that God could have, you know, a return on His investment. Because without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ it couldn't happen, you know, and God says everything that's been created out there, you know, has been for us with God planning for eons of time for a family. And it's just a very short time ahead of us and He is going to get His return on His investment. 144,000 will be the first part of that, you know, and as we go on through the next thousand and then the Hundred-year period, He'll get a return on His investment. That's guaranteed. And the reason He will is because we were bought with the life of His Son. And again, we have got to take it very, very serious and really cherish and value what we've been given.

1 Corinthians 7:23. **1 Corinthians 7:23—You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called.** You know, just your mind starts, you know, in John 6:44, "No one can come to Jesus Christ unless God calls them." You know, when you get called by God it's exciting to see new members come in and the fire that they have and just how excited they are with their calling and, you know, that they're just.... I was talking to an individual that is, actually, this next week will probably be their first Sabbath with us, but how they were just on fire with everything, reading the books, listening to all the archived sermons, reading the 57 Truths. And we have to. We have to keep that fire going in us. There again, those of us that went through the Apostasy and fell asleep, got lukewarm, you know, didn't stay close to God, you know, we can't let that happen. We cannot let that happen *especially* now! I mean, God is our strength so, anyway.

Let's re-read that again. **You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that *state* in which he was called.**

Alright. Let's go to Acts 20. Just reading some short scriptures here of, you know, to remind us and keep it in our head that God bought us with a great price of His Son. And there again, He wants some return on that investment. **Acts 20:28.** This is where Paul, he's actually talking to the elders in Ephesus, but it goes for all of us. **Verse 28—Therefore, take heed to yourselves, to all the flock, you know, God's Church, PKG - yes to the elders, but all of us, among which the holy spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood.** And it's just... I know we do. You know, Passover's quite a way's away but it's just it's something, we have to have that mind of Passover every day of our lives, to realize and remember what was given for us. You know, the beginning of God's plan back in Leviticus 23, where we go through God's plan, it all starts with Passover. Without Christ's sacrifice and his blood being able to cover our sins, we couldn't be in God's Kingdom. I know we all know that, but it's something that we all have to remember daily and to remember not only God and Jesus Christ, our Father and elder brother, but to remember we're family. I mean, that's being pounded into our head so much because that's what this is all about, is family. So, just ask each and every one of us to not forget that.

Alright, our next verse, let's go to Ephesians 1:3, and we're going to read through verse 14. **Ephesians 1:3.** Alright, starting in **verse 3—Blessed be the God and our Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.** And since, you know, I use the phrase "dawn of time," well, there was no, there is no beginning with God. But, again, just what everything we look around and see has all been for us. And He's prepared it for us. And, again, we're very close to being ruled by - this world will be ruled by that government.

Verse 6—to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mysteries of His will. You know, there again, we know what's coming. I mean, He's prepared our minds so that we are encouraged by when things start to get tough, because we know we're just that much closer to Jesus Christ returning to this earth and living under his rule.

Verse 9 again, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He proposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together the one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in him.

Verse 11—In him we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works in all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth. You know, there again, that pearl of great price.

Starting **verse 13 again, In him also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance upon the redemption of the purchased possession, in the praise of His glory.** There again, return on investment. He's bought us, paid for us, and like I said, we're pearls to Him and He's given everything for it. And we, again, have got to value that.

Alright. I'd like to read something from Ron's Last Great Day sermon from the Feast this year, just breaking into it but it's... Well, I'll read it. Just... "But anyway, hopefully," this is Ron talking, "But anyway, hopefully, all of you have drawn much closer together and drawn closer to God over this Year of Dedication especially, but even closer together here at the Feast. But as I was saying here, hopefully, we've drawn closer to God in this Year of Dedication. And I believe, I know that everyone who has applied themselves in fasting and prayer *have* drawn close to God and Jesus Christ and have become much stronger and more spiritually because of that. And I hope *also* that all of you come to grasp the

power and the importance of fasting and more often and that you will use that tool much more as we proceed forward into the seventh-period, and again, what I believe to be the last 1260-day period before Christ returns."

You know, we need to take that encouragement. We've learned over this past year that fasting at least once a month, it has drawn us closer to God and made a stronger Church, and again, preparing for the Kingdom of God, preparing for what this time period we're in now for. God's not going to send us into battle unless we're ready for it, you know. You might look at the past seven years as boot camp but He's prepared us for, for what's ahead and we need to take what we've learned in the past year and apply it going forward, to continue to use the power of fasting to stay close to God in this end-time.

Alright. I'd like to read something from *2008-God's Final Witness*, and it's on page 233, and it's down at the bottom of the page and it starts with the word "everything" in bold letters. Alright, quoting from the *2008*: "**Everything** God created is about the ultimate purpose He is working out concerning the creation of His Family."

"The very life that existed **in** Jesus Christ from the beginning is the life that we can begin to have **in** us (dwelling in us through the spirit) once we are begotten of God. Then, a new life begins to develop in our minds... are transformed from physical selfishness to the ways of God. Now, we can share in that same life that dwelled **in** Christ, after we are forgiven of our sins and God begins to dwell **in** us after being begotten."

"This has always been God's plan from the beginning, that mankind be able to be begotten of His spirit once our sins are atoned through the blood of Jesus Christ. From this point forward, we are to grow and be molded and fashioned into the very image and likeness of our elder brother Jesus Christ, so that we can be born into the God Family as He was."

Alright, one short verse that, you know, we read this verse often, and there's a reason for that, is we need to remember it. And that's 1 John 4:4. **1 John 4:4—You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.** You know, and we, we read this so often and there's a reason we've got to remember that, and especially as we go forward, to remember that, you know, we can have some tough times but God is in us and the world is less than that. You know, greater is God than what's in this world. And we, again, we have to remember that.

Alright, let's turn to Isaiah 41. Isaiah 41, and we're going to read verses 10-13. **Isaiah 41:10-13—Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you, I will hold you with My righteous right hand. Behold, all those who are incensed against**

you shall be ashamed and disgraced. They shall be as nothing. And those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them—those who contend with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, Fear not, I will help you. And brethren, let's all of us remember that God owes us nothing, but we owe Him everything. Let's make sure He gets His due return on His investment in us. And that will be all part of His Family, Elohim. It's what God has invested in us, so that He can get that return, His Family.