

Greetings to everyone here today, and everyone out there listening. Beautiful Sabbath. Every Sabbath is beautiful, but today is really good with the sun shining out there. That's always a pleasant thing at this time of year. We've had not too bad of a winter, actually, so hopefully it stays that way through now and on up through Passover, because I've known a few Passover's that it's been pretty bad around here. We had one a few years back where people got stranded in some cases. So you never know when it's going to come back in again.

Okay, no announcement's today so I'm going to launch right into the sermon here.

Today we're continuing on. This will be the last part - at least that's the plan. Today will be the last part of this particular series. This will be *Part 3 of Lessons From A Ministry*.

And I'm going to repeat what's been stated in the previous two sermons that has everything to do with what this series is all about. It was stated that over the past seven years within the Church more than any other tool that's been used within the Church to teach great lessons and to mold the Church, the ministry is one of the most powerful, indeed. And that's quite a statement when you think about it, and especially as we go through this particular sermon. Because God has used that in a very powerful way to teach the entire congregation and congregations around the world. And there have been constant changes over the past seven years within the ministry, and all that is by design. Because there are many things that God has given to us, as has been brought out in posts, that have to do with our transformation, with our molding and fashioning, and especially after you read the next chapter, Chapter 6 in the book, when you begin to understand more fully why God has done things the way He has, how God has done the things the way He has, and what we've gone through as a Church in the sense of being strengthened in faith, which is one of the greatest areas that God has strengthened us and given us power and ability, that there are other things as well that are coming out now that will help us to even learn more, or at least to be able to focus upon those things. Because there are those things that are more important than faith - or there is that thing in our life that should be far more important than faith as far as a priority in our life.

And faith is a very powerful tool, obviously, but what we're discussing in this that brings things to the surface has to do with relationships, how we think about one another. It has to do with love, the love of God. Because love is the most important thing in the sense of God's spirit, God's mind, God's being living and dwelling within us. And that is a way of life that must exist within us in a very powerful way - something we should desire more and more. And yet this one tool has been used to bring things to the surface that we otherwise might not be able to see in ourselves as well as we can through this tool. And so that's why we're focusing upon this at this particular time, going through some of these things, because, again, the ability to see ourselves, the ability to see things within ourselves, battles, whatever it might be - especially when you dig down deep. Because a lot of things.... We're

here because a lot of things have been brought to the surface that we addressed over the past seven years in our own lives. And there's always growth, always growth to follow. There is never a time when we can no longer grow and change, and this process of transformation that's taking place in us. So we're at a stage of being able to go through a process of growth that is highly refined as far as God's Church is concerned.

I don't think we sometimes grasp what we've gone through. I don't think... You know, when you live something sometimes you don't grasp what you've really gone through, what you've really experienced in life when we talk about a process and especially in other eras of the Church. This is not a specific era that's named. It is the end-time, a period in the end-time we're living through. But again, we understand that we've gone beyond Philadelphia, beyond Laodicea. We are in a particular period having to do with a countdown to the return of Jesus Christ. We haven't understood all those things.

But because of being God's Church at the end, especially a remnant group with whom God is working, we have gone through many, many things. And we need to. We have to because we're getting ready to go from one stage to another that is an awesome transition itself - from a period of 6,000 to the period of 1,000. To a period of man's reign on earth to a period when Jesus Christ and 144,000 are going to reign on this earth. And because of that and because of those who are going to live on into that period of time, and because of the information that God is giving so that those people will be primed, ready to receive what's there, it will be there for them, and then a process will begin as far as teaching even far more, but building upon what has been given at this point in time.

That's why I love this thing about a progressive revelation. If you go back through time and you read about things that took place in the Garden of Eden from the very beginning it's given in a very short amount of chapters here, if you will, very few chapters and covers several hundreds of years. Matter of fact, just a few chapters and over a thousand years are covered. And so it was as far as information that God gave to people, understanding that God gave to people. And again, I've gone through this many times, but we need to understand this, brethren, because this process of a progressive revelation of what God has given has been done by design, by purpose, through purpose, of many experiences that people would live through in time - much having to do with molding and fashioning the very ones with whom God is going to work. Some of these individuals, if you go back in that period of time, who are going to be in the height of that government that God is bringing to this earth under Jesus Christ. The things that they had to experience, the things that they had to go through that had to be very unique with them. And God worked with them personally.

God Almighty, if you look at Abraham, God Almighty worked directly, in a very powerful way with Abraham, met with him, talked with him directly. Not in His spirit form but in the form of a man. And we understand even of the story of Melchizedek, even as a priesthood and something that was totally different in that period of time. That's why when you read in the book of Hebrews that God in many different ways has worked with people through time, but through many different prophets, many different people, if you will, with many forms of a ministry as far as a matter of serving and teaching

people. So, again, all the way up through the time of Christ, all the way up through the eras of the Church, and then the end-time. And so much more has been given, a fullness of God's plan that people had during Mr. Armstrong's time that never existed prior to that. People didn't have the kind of knowledge and understanding at any other era of time, except for the disciples and some of the things those individuals specifically understood that Jesus Christ gave to them. But even what they conveyed and what they gave was within a specific framework that not even all that they gave was understood by them. They didn't grasp it all any more than some things that I know that I have written in times past that I haven't understood at all. I haven't! I can only answer those things and give answer to those things that I understand now at a moment, a period, a specific moment in time, if you will (I'll get it out).

And just like with what's coming out now. That's why I understand that with Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 that God has given a framework of things for us to understand and grasp, but I know there's more to learn in there. And I know that we'll not be able to grasp everything that's there until later on. Some things are actually given to be understood later on. Just as in this book. Everything that's in this book, we don't understand right now. We don't come close in some cases to understanding much of the prophecy that's still in this book, because it's not all about right now. A lot of it is. But there's a lot of it that has to do with later on. And there are things that have to be revealed later on that are in here. You're going to be dumbfounded. Just like we are sometimes when we come across various scriptures and we say, "Man, that's so plain. Why didn't I see that before?" Because it wasn't God's time. And when it becomes God's time then we can see things and learn from things that are astounding. Because God has to give it. All ability to see and understand comes from God.

And so again, going on with this particular sermon and how God has used the ministry. It's been a very powerful tool to teach. And perhaps we haven't learned all the lessons and the importance of those lessons that we need to. And that's why we're going through this series right now, so that we can look back now over the past seven years, in some cases about how did I respond? How did I think in various situations? Because it's about each one of us individually. How did I respond? How did I deal with these matters? How am I thinking? What is my thinking like? Because we can always change and grow in how we think, especially in our relationships... especially in our relationships.

So in last Sabbath's sermon I came to a point where I realized that I was running out of time. And I really thought I'd finish it last week. So I was going through a couple different stories there and leading in a particular direction. But I want to pick up some of this today, mention a couple of things here before we launch back into and pick up from where we left off last week, because there are some things here that we need to grasp even more deeply, even more fully.

We were going through a particular section, especially in 1 Corinthians 16 where Paul was talking about them receiving Timothy in a very special way. How they were to treat him, work with him, accept him as one being sent from Paul himself. And that's important to understand, to grasp and understand what Paul was doing at this particular time. Because Paul *knew*, Paul understood, though he wasn't able to travel to them as he was restricted and restrained from being able to do so, he sent

Timothy to them, to the Corinthians to address various matters that Paul knew was going on within the congregation, within the Church. And because of experience he warned the Church, or told the Church to treat Timothy in a specific manner. Because he understood human nature. He understood things had been going on and things that happened with a congregation that had been happening in other congregations, just as we do within the ministry of the Church. There is a pattern after a time of how people live, how people change, how people grow, and how God works with people within a congregation, of battles that we go through, of things that we experience. And those are the things we learn from in a very powerful way if we yield ourselves to the process.

And so here, in essence, Paul is telling the people, the brethren to receive Timothy in a very specific way. What is not stated, but what needs to be understood is that this has everything to do with how they receive God. It has to do with their relationship with God. Because how they address things with Timothy is going to determine, in large part, how they think toward Paul and toward God's government and what Paul is directing them in in the first place, how serious they take what he has stated to them. And if they really grasp it spiritually they'll understand this is coming from God. This is what God wants me to focus upon right now. This is what God wants me to see and He desires that I treat, that I work with Timothy in a very specific way.

Because, you see, that's not the way human beings function. That's the whole story here of some of this account of what Paul is addressing. Because what normally happens when a young person is sent along and a congregation has been living a certain way for a certain amount of time and already has established a certain way of doing things and someone else comes along and changes some things or addresses certain specific things in their life there's resistance. Because that's just human nature. It's just human nature. And so that's why we addressed some of the things we addressed last Sabbath.

It doesn't matter the age. If God chooses someone for a specific purpose to do something, gives them the responsibility of doing it, then their ability to receive it has everything to do with their ability to receive what God is giving to them, what God is showing them, and how God is leading them. And that is the spirit of it all, the spiritual part of it all. But oftentimes with human nature we get involved in other things - in matters of judging, as I mentioned last Sabbath. Of sometimes of not letting people change. And this affects every relationship. But please understand - and I hope we understand this in a very powerful way - that if we can grasp this toward the ministry and how things in the ministry have affected us within the Church and things that have taken place over the past seven years, then hopefully we can understand this on a higher plane as well spiritually, the principles that are there, in all of our relationships with one another.

That's why last Sabbath we went through and talked about (or mentioned) something that, again, is written here in the book of Peter, 1 Peter 2. And I just want to read this again. **[Peter 2:9]—You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.** This is how God wants us to see our calling. He wants us to grasp and comprehend how awesome it is that He *personally* - sometimes we don't understand or don't grasp the magnitude of that - that it's God Almighty Himself who has to draw you and call you. What an incredible thing! One out of fourteen million? Perhaps one out of twenty million? Whatever

it is. And how God works with us as He begins to draw us and open our minds to understand the things that we understand. A lot of people in God's Church forget that. I know hundreds of people. I know hundreds of ministers who forgot that, that God Almighty is the one that opens our mind. God Almighty is the one that gives us the understanding that we have. We aren't able to learn it on our own. It isn't by our own ability that we come to a deeper understanding - as all the evangelists, and all the pastors who sat there at headquarters in Pasadena, California, who wouldn't come even to the Bible Studies held by Mr. Armstrong himself - God's apostle. What an atrocious, hideous thing! Because why? They were rich and increased with goods, just as God said would happen to Philadelphia, toward the end of Philadelphia, because that would be what launched people into Laodicea - that spirit, that attitude. They *knew*, they knew too much, or so much (they thought), and didn't grasp that at every Bible Study they went to they could learn more. They could grow more.

But they lost that somewhere. "Because he's just an old man and repeating things he's always said, not saying anything new." Bull! People used to say that when he talked about the two trees. "He's just talking about... He's an old man. It's like he's kind of lost it and he's going back to the beginning there and talking about those two trees again." And people would shut him off. People made comment. I heard the comments, "He's not giving anything new. Is he giving anything new? It's the same thing over and over, talking about the two trees." And every time God was giving him something more, additional to build upon that.

Look how we have gone through and talked about things just having to do with some of the posts that have come out in recent time - going back to basic things that God gave then about dressing and keeping. (And the expression that I'm supposed to be using?) Cultivating! Thank you. One of these days I'm going to get that down. Cultivating and keeping what God has given us. Just that alone, so much understanding that we can grow in that God has given to us. Awesome!

And so things having to do with God's government and how God functions and how God works, sometimes, oftentimes (if we can grasp it), can teach us so much more about ourselves because of our response to individuals, to things that come our way in time, to change that may take place. It always happened in God's Church, as I mentioned before, and it's worth repeating over and over and over again so that we can get it deeply, that as a whole, ministers were changed out about every seven years. They were transferred from one area to another. That's the way it used to work. That was, generally, the rule of thumb that was followed. And every time that someone new came in there were changes. There were changes in the way he functioned and the way he operated in order to work with a group or a congregation. And there was always, always, *always* resistance to the change! You could take it to the bank, in that respect, spiritually, that there would be resistance to change. Because not everyone works in exactly the same way. And God doesn't work with individuals in exactly the same way to teach exactly the same things that a congregation can learn through different teaching or different instruction or different personalities, or whatever it might have been in the way that God worked *then*. Just as God works differently now. Has been for some time.

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. So sometimes people forget their calling and forget that God, and God alone, is the one who opens our minds and gives us what we have. And we need God all the time in order to *keep* and retain those things that He gives to us and to be able to build upon them, and never to look to ourselves as having such pride that there isn't more that we need or that we can't grow more, and to understand that it always comes from God. Anything profitable, anything lasting, anything that's true, anything that's right that we can build upon has to come from God.

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people. And so God wants us to see our calling, how unique we are. And so within that we are all a part of a body, but we all have a special calling - every individual. And there's no superiority. There may be different responsibilities that God gives in being able to work with and to govern in the sense of government, if you will. But again, those things aren't a matter of superiority of any fashion or form. It's a matter of administration. It's a matter of how God works. It's a matter of an honor to God and looking to God in what God gives to us. Because if those things exist in our thinking we will never be of a mind and an attitude that we will begin to look up to in a wrong way, a ministry. Because that's happened in the past! A big mistake! Neither will individuals in a ministry raise up in such a way, or rise up to a point (I'm using the English language improperly here), to a point where they will begin to look down upon others and think themselves superior or better than. Because that's existed. Those things are all wrong. And it has to do with relationships. It has to do with how people treat one another. And so God desires that we treat each other properly within the body, in a right way. Not to abuse authority and not to disregard that which God gives to us either.

But anyway, the rest of this verse here, **that you should show forth the praises** (virtues); it's a word in the Greek that has to do with the moral excellence. That God has called us to show forth by how we live, by the changes we make in our life, of the moral excellence, the virtue, the mind, if you will, of God. That people, they may not understand who we are, but because they've come in contact with us, even in the world, that they will understand there's something different about us, that we're not like everybody else. We're not like everybody else - we shouldn't be - in how we treat them, in how we talk to them. They should see something different. They should experience something different. And if they don't, then we're not doing what we need to be doing. We're not living what we need to be living.

Anyway, being able to understand those verses I just read, and being able to grasp them with confidence and boldness and faith, having confidence of who we are, understanding a great calling that God has given to each one of us, has much to do with how strong and how good our relationships are with one another within a body.

So again, I'm going to begin, I'm going to read a few of these verses again in **1 Corinthians 16:10** here. It says, **Now if Timothy come, see that he may be with you without fear.** In other words, don't make it difficult for him. Don't resist his work or his office or the responsibilities he has in that office, **for he works the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man, therefore, despise him,** or in

other words, treat with contempt, **but conduct him forth in peace**. In other words, work to make it easier. Work to make his job easy. Don't resist. Don't give resistance to it.

So again, going through some of these very quickly. I don't want to repeat everything that was said last week, or toward the end of the sermon last week. Because the reality is there are things that have happened as changes take place in the ministry. And I just want to mention today, there are going to be a lot more changes. We're going to constantly make changes within the ministry until we're to the end. It's going to happen. I'm getting ready to make some more changes. And it's for our training. It's so that we can learn from this process. And hopefully we get accustomed to this, to realize that if God tells us to turn right, we turn right. If God says turn left, we turn left. If He says, whatever He tells us to do, we just do it. We support. We rejoice in that, whatever God gives to us and ever how God gives to us. And we work to make it right, to make it effective and profitable.

So there'll be more things to happen as far as retirement's concerned. There'll be changes in different areas from time to time. And as I said, we're probably going to keep doing this until the very end because this is the way God is working with us right now and it's because we can learn lessons from this. And hopefully, even after this series, we'll be able to examine ourselves more quickly when certain things pop up in our head.

I'm going to go through a list here right now. I'm going to stop right there and just mention a few things that my wife and I just threw out there as we, as I was going through some of this and thinking about giving this particular sermon and talking about some of the things within the ministry, of things that we deal with, of things that happen, of things that sometimes happen within a congregation.

Jealousy. Envy. The ministry, in some cases, has helped bring these things to the surface. "Well, why are they being ordained? Why are they being ordained? I know them! I've known them for a long time." These things have happened. These things happen. It reveals the way a person thinks, it truly does, in a very powerful way. Jealousy and envy, how judgment, how sometimes we judge one another. It helps these things to come to the surface, how we judge one another.

Another one here: finding fault with elders, ministers. Again wrong judgment, often to justify one's own disagreement with an ordination. Again, these things happen because they're a part of human nature. Finding fault. Wrong judgment. Sometimes little things that pop up that are said or stated, that if we understand why we're saying it, it really gets back to something far deeper in ourselves, of why we sometimes make certain statements. It is because there is something deeper inside of us that we need to see that's leading to a certain response.

Again, disagreement with an ordination (I'm just jotting... I'm just reading through some of the things I jotted down here), sometimes from members or other ministers, and/or family, or some becoming ordained, or of some being retired or removed due to streamlining or lowered in responsibility or rank, if you will. I don't like that word. But again, there is an order of things within the ministry as an

associate, an elder, a senior elder, pastor, evangelist, prophet, apostle. We understand the order of how God works with us as a congregation.

And sometimes when these things take place it brings things out of us that maybe we don't really know it exists until it actually happens. Occasionally there is a situation where someone is more readily able to believe their ordination (I mentioned this last Sabbath, I believe), is from God, but when retired they don't think it's from God. In other words, sometimes if an individual's ordained we can feel excited and good about that. Well, it's an honor, in that respect, to be able to serve in a specific manner in a specific moment in time if that's what God gives to us, and should be taken away in a very positive way in the sense of the opportunity to serve. Because it's about service. It's about an opportunity of service.

Carries a lot more with it though. It carries a lot more with it. Because a lot of these things when they happen, they can lead to a person's destruction too. I have seen it over and over and over again in God's Church. I've seen a lot more than that than I have of success, of people using it properly in the last forty-some years in God's Church. Because human beings tend to misuse power - because it becomes a matter of pride. So it can happen to the one who's ordained or it can happen to some who see some ordained and they can't deal with it. They can't deal with it.

And so again, different responses that we have. I've already mentioned this one, but I want to mention it again: a failure to forgive. Often a matter of wrong judgment, again, where someone does not forget another's past, their mistakes, lack of past maturity, lifestyle, or even sins. Now, we should be able to apply this to every individual within a body in how we think. Are we forgiving? Do we forgive? Do we desire to see people grow? Do we desire to see people get ahead in life, to succeed in life? And especially within the Body, within the Church, to excel and do well? Obviously we should desire that. And how we feel when people go through various trials or when they go through a struggle and we know they're going through a particular struggle as they're being drawn out of the world, or whatever stage it might happen in a person's life. We can look around within a body, within a congregation. We get to know each other well and oftentimes familiarity breeds contempt in life and we begin to judge one another in wrong ways. And this is a very powerful thing that can affect the closeness of a body. So the ability to forgive others.

And the reason I'm mentioning this within the framework within a ministry is because oftentimes then this brings this to the surface in a more powerful way, if you will, or in a way that you have to focus upon it even more so.

So again, we should have a desire to always be forgiving towards others, to put other people's past in the past, never to be brought up again, and to have that desire toward one another, to see one another succeed. Sometimes we know very well, as I mentioned last Sabbath, as a pastor, getting to know people's problems and difficulties and sins sometimes and the struggles they go through, has often turned them against the ministry because they think they're being judged according to those things that they're battling and dealing with in life. And that should never be a part of our thinking.

Another one: a minister's belief that they should be treated differently as a manner of being looked up to. And so this sometimes happens where an individual can begin to think that they should be treated differently by a congregation. Because sometimes we've experienced things from our past, especially if there's a past with Worldwide. And if not, that's just a part of human nature, a part of human nature that seems to aggrandize some things sometimes that shouldn't be aggrandized. We should never expect that from others no matter what we do in life, to be treated differently or special. Because we're not special. We're unique. We have an awesome calling. But we're in this together in a special calling that God has given us - equal in our calling, equal in where we're working and what we're working toward - to be in God's Family. What could be greater? That's the calling God has given to us.

Well, I could mention some more here but I'm going to pause on that one here. The point being is when various things happen within the Body and individuals are ordained, you need to be careful how we handle it, how we think about one another, how we treat one another. There should be excitement when someone has such opportunity to serve, and also a soberness of mind, to pray for them. Because many have been destroyed by it because of how it's used.

So we're talking about love, brethren, and how we love one another, to what degree we love one another.

So I was mentioning last Sabbath about some of these things and I was talking about one section here where.... I think I'll just read part of this. I'm going to quote what I mentioned last Sabbath about Apollos. Apollos had a comment here and a response to Paul (and sent Timothy, but didn't send Apollos), because Apollos responded in a particular way here that, as a pastor, reveals that there was some kind of a difficulty here. And I want to read this. **[verse 12]—As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren. But his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he has a more convenient time.**

Now, I believe deeply here there was some kind of a struggle. I don't know what it was, but Paul was being very open about it, about a particular matter here, that it wasn't a convenient time for him. And maybe there was something physical as far as his life was concerned that he had to take care of at that particular time, but the way Paul states this tends to reveal a lot more. And I was mentioning how that it came to a point, because familiarity can breed contempt, and opportunities to serve within a body because individuals can know that much is known about their life and what they've gone through, it got to the point where (I was going to mention this last Sabbath) how that it got to a point where as a pastor I asked. I got to a point where almost in an apologetic manner, as though I might be infringing upon individuals to serve in a particular area, would ask them if they had the time or the ability to do certain things. Whereas our response should be, as I mentioned last Sabbath, "What do you want done? How quickly do you need it done? Where? What? How? How can I serve?" We're called to serve within the Body, within the Church, and wherever we have opportunity we should jump at those opportunities. But again, sometimes individuals haven't. So again, things

that if you ever come across some of these things in your own thinking, in your own mind, they're things to be examined.

Let's go over to 1 Corinthians 13 now and I want to continue on from a part of what we discussed or what we were discussing last Sabbath and didn't get to. And then we'll come back to 1 Thessalonians that I want to go through some of that as well.

Let's notice 1 Corinthians 13:1 because this has to do with some of what I was mentioning earlier in the beginning of the sermon here. I'll be candid with you. There's some things about what happens within the ministry, I don't really like talking about. I don't even like going through some of this subject matter because it affects a lot of people and it's kind of awkward. But I think we all need to be mature and realize that we go through things when some of these kinds of things take place, when some of these things have happened in times past. And I can tell you, within any congregation there has been wrong judgment every time there's an ordination. Just as I mentioned last Sabbath, sometimes we tell individuals that your friends are going to change. Your friendships are going to change. That's a sad thing, isn't it, that as pastors of God's Church we'd have to warn individuals that were being ordained that things are going to change in your relationships, because those who have been close to you aren't going to treat you the same way any longer? That's a sad thing. Truly is. But sometimes that can be brought upon one's self as well because it can go to the head. It can go to one's head and people be raised up in self-importance before a congregation.

All of these things reek. All of these things reek before God's throne in the sense of they don't smell good. They're not good and they are things that need to be weeded out of our lives.

1 Corinthians 13:1—Although I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, and this is God's love, I am become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And although I have the gift of prophecy.... I think of what we have been given in God's Church. If you want to talk about a couple of things we've been given in a very powerful way over the last several years, both of these, both of these are very strong and very powerful for God's Church today more than any other age in God's Church - the matter of faith that we have lived by, and a matter of prophecy or prophetic things that God has given to us to grasp and understand at the end of an age that others have longed to know about and longed to see throughout the generations that have preceded us. **And although I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge;** in other words, the purpose of why God is doing what He is accomplishing, how He is going about it, how things are being fulfilled as far as prophecy is concerned. And that's why I'm excited about both chapters, remaining chapters here, 6 and 7 that are coming out, because it brings so much together, truly does in a very powerful way, of what we have gone through as a body and how God has worked with us.

And so it says, **Although I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains;** in other words if there was a purpose of something being accomplished, whether it have to do with something physical or

something spiritual in what this means, **but do not have love** (agape), **I am nothing**. Because generally we tend to think strictly physically and not what this is talking about even on a prophetic plane when it comes to peoples or nations and so forth.

And so God making it very clear to us so that we can understand the depth of this that when, if we have incredible faith, if we have incredible ability to grasp and comprehend things prophetically, how God does what He does, why He does what He does, and if we lack in this particular area, if we don't have what we need to have that's far more important in our lives, it doesn't mean a thing. It becomes totally meaningless and useless. Because how we live and how we treat one another is what is most important.

And again, to speak openly, because I've been away for three years, over that three years I have known of too many jealousies, too many envyings, too much resistance, things of resistance toward God's ministry that should never have been there. That if they haven't been repented of, they need to be repented of now if people can acknowledge those things and look at those things in their life and their past and how they may have responded - resistance to change, resistance to things that God has given as a particular direction of how things are to be administered and how they are to be done. If there is resistance to those things, there is resistance to God. There is a resistance to God's spirit and how God's spirit works in our life. If there is pride - if pride enters in - which has happened even during the period of the 6th period, if you will, prophetically, of this end-time, 1260-day period, that sixth period that I'm talking about here of the measuring of the temple in a very powerful way. I, during most of that time, was not present physically. But I was spiritually. And I was kept abreast of things that were going on and would receive on a continual basis things that were happening in different areas because of a request that we made to the ministry about sending in monthly reports. That within those reports I was kept abreast of (and by letters and so forth that people sent) of things that were going on within the body and in people's lives, which was good (to be able to do so).

But I'm sharing with you today one of the most important things through all of this that came through that entire period of time that has to do with relationships and things that came up because of ordinations, of how some misused the responsibility given or learn in a process of time how to better use a responsibility that was given to them, or how people resisted that responsibility that was given to someone within a congregation. Those things happen, brethren, over and over and over again. And that's the reason we're going through this particular sermon series at this particular time, because of the importance that God wants us to grasp at this moment in time, that we have been given a lot. Because one of the first things I began to talk about after being away for three years had to do with prophecy and where we are and where we're going and what's coming out in the book and the focus that God is giving us because of a third book that's coming out now. But what's far more important than that is what we're covering today, see? Far more important that we grasp and comprehend this matter of relationships and how we think toward one another and how we treat one another. Because it has to do with how we see ourselves in the calling that God has given to us and how we function

within a body. And so, again, there are things that God uses to bring to the surface so that we can see these things.

...and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. So the most important thing, brethren, is that we yield ourselves to God's spirit, to His life, to His mind, to His love living within us, and that we truly put a stop to - in other words, grab a hold of our own carnal human nature when we respond or if we respond in a wrong manner toward anyone within the body - and address these things.

So I want you to think about today every person that you know who has been ordained in the last seven years: What was your immediate response to every individual that you know of? Was there ever an occasion where it wasn't what it should have been? Was there ever an occasion? Is there ever an occasion within God's Church where someone has been given responsibility and has come to you and mentioned to you certain things that should be done in a certain manner that you resisted or that you didn't listen or that you thought there was a better way? Has there ever been a time in that period of the last seven years, and especially just the last three years, that that has ever occurred in your life? Because, you see, I know that it has over and over and over again. And I can't stress enough the importance of the content on a spiritual plane of what we're going through today. Because that's the very purpose of this sermon, to bring to the surface, to help us to focus upon, to help us to think about, to help us to think about our response in those situations. Because if they weren't where they should have been in a matter of rejoicing, if we were not able to rejoice in all those occasions and immediately support and back a certain way that something has been asked to be done.... This has happened within the ministry where some within the ministry have been asked to do things in a specific manner and have not done so. It's happened within the body as well, because we all have human nature. We all have human nature.

And so God desires that we look into our lives and look at ourselves in a very unique manner at this specific moment in time, because we have a great work ahead of us and this is one area above everything else that needs to be refined and focused upon and made the best it can be in our lives in how we think toward each other so that we can go forward in a greater unity and spirit of oneness than ever before. Because this is the most important of all, that we have this kind of mind, God's mind toward one another. Love. A desire to see every person here succeed within the body throughout the world. That we desire that every person come through whatever battle might be there. That we not hold anything against anyone. That we support whatever God is doing and ever how God is doing it. That we jump in and say, "How can I help? Where can I help? How much more? What can I do?" instead of resisting and sometimes fighting against how things are being asked to be done.

If I got real specific and told you some specific stories you would be dumbfounded. You would be a little dumbfounded. I'm not going to do that because that wouldn't be right. But things have indeed happened in people's lives where they needed to focus upon, should focus upon a response to how, maybe, they've been asked to do something from the ministry and haven't done it - maybe out of

neglect, sometimes just because they know a better way or don't want to do it that way, or just don't want to do it for some special reason. We have to examine those reasons.

Brethren, we want to support God. We want to be behind whatever God wants us to do in anything He tells us to do and how to do it and to rejoice in how God works with us, to rejoice in any kind of change that might come along. Because you know what? It's change. It's change that comes along sometimes and comes our way that helps us to see things in our life more clearly so that we can change ourselves, so that we can grow. We should rejoice in growth. We should rejoice in change, whenever it comes our way. Whenever we're able to see something in ourselves we should rejoice.

Now, God will show each and every one of us our human nature. That's a beautiful thing. I'm at a point in life where I so loathe my nature. I hate it. I *hate* my human nature. I truly do. I so long to be changed. I truly do, with all my being. I'm not necessarily in a rush to get there now because I know I have some work to do, but if I could finish it out - spirit being - I would do that, because I loathe human nature. Human nature is such an ugly thing! And we must feel that way about our nature.

I remember long ago at different times, I think especially back in Philadelphia more than maybe any other period of time. In Laodicea people didn't care. But at least during the period of Philadelphia people seemed to, obviously, care a lot more. But sometimes there would be the occasion where people would make comments that in some sermons they were, almost as it were, getting tired of hearing about how bad our human nature is, how bad we are. Like I said, by the time it got to Laodicea people didn't care. But at least, at *least* during the period of Philadelphia that would even jar individuals who didn't really want to change in the first place. But at least they were hearing something and knowing that something needs to change or take place here in their life to where it was becoming a burden. Well, that's just wrong thinking. That shows right there that they weren't spiritually where they needed to be. Because you know what? We should be thankful when God lets us look in a spiritual mirror. It's not ever going to be pleasant. When God shows you things about your nature you're never going to jump up and down and say, "Oh, I'm so happy I see this right now!" Now, you want to in time. You want to look back at it and say, "I'm so glad I was able to see that." But you need to support it. You need to fight it. When God lets us see ourselves then we know there's a lot more that needs to be done. We never get to a point where we're kind of satisfied with where we are.

If you get to a point where you're kind of satisfied and kind of happy with where you are, you're not in good shape spiritually. Are you kind of happy where you are? How you are at this moment in time in your life? That from here on out you'd be just, if you'd be just able to continue on the way you are, that this is fine with you? I'm not. There are changes I want to make in my life. There are changes I want to make from the beginning of my calling that I'm still fighting in my life, in my thinking as a human being. Now, they're becoming more refined, obviously, as time goes on. But you know what? If you dig down deep in your being, in your mind, and the way you think, the root, the cause, the core of why you do everything you do in life, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," that exists because that's what we are. Every one of us! There's not a one of you listening today

that doesn't have that full in your life, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life." That is what you are. The only thing that makes you different is what you're able to have of God's spirit dwelling within you and the ability that God has given your mind to refine many of those areas because you can "see" some of those things at work deep down inside of you.

And the more you grow the uglier those things become. The more you grow spiritually the more you desire those things to be rooted out of you - I mean the very core of them all. But the reality is you can never get rid of it all. You can't get rid of it all. You can't get rid of all the smell. You can't get rid of all the ugliness. And we, each one of us, have it. I have it. You have it. We all have it. Human nature. And human nature is not pretty. And that's our battle.

And transformation, then, is an awesome thing. When we understand - what an incredible thing that God can work with the human mind to make it different, to make the spirit within us different. That's an awesome thing. Now, you still have your human nature, but that which you have chosen and that which you yield to in your being, in your mind, that which you see on a spiritual plane and desire to have more of and cry out... Because that's why, that's what motivates you to cry out to God day by day and say, "Father, I need your spirit!" Because you believe that! You don't just do it as a routine. You go do your little prayer here in the corner somewhere and say, "Father. I need Your spirit. Please give me Your spirit and I need it every day." Do you mean it? Do you say that because you mean it with all your being, because you know what you are and you realize then and you cry out to God, "Father! I need your spirit! I don't want to be me. I want to be like You. I want to be as Your Son, as You. I want to have Your mind within me, Your thinking within me."

That's why, in some of the things we're talking about today, when certain things bring things to the surface, of how we are, that manifest and make it clear what our thinking is like deep down inside. Because it brings something to the surface - maybe in our thinking, maybe in our words. I have heard words that are totally atrocious towards others, about others in life, towards things having to do with this subject we're discussing here, ordination. Why should it be that way? Why is it that way? Because human nature. It's what we're like. The pride, being lifted up, the way we sometimes think about ourselves and think about others and how we judge others and misjudge others, how we think about others, how we talk about others. Things we need to look at deeply in our life.

So again, powerful, powerful verses here. **If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, have a silver tongue.** I guess that's the expression used. I know mine isn't. Even when I write I feel sorry for the editors. I've gotten better in English, and that's not saying a whole lot. Because, I'll just tell you. Back in Ambassador College they give you different tests, they gave us different tests at different times there and would go by your transcript and so forth, of things you had. And mine wasn't very good in English so I had to take a little test. And it's kind of like when I tried out for the choir. I tried out for the choir and you took the songbook there and you would sing one of the songs. And right away you'd be told, basically... they'd generally get to sing a couple different songs or a couple different verses from two different songs. They stopped me after the first verse and they told me, basically, I could work, take a music lesson, music class if I wanted to. And here I'd been leading

songs in church long before this and did long afterwards and felt sorry for the congregation. But you do what you have to do.

Same thing was true with English. They put me in, literally, what was called... Now, the class wasn't called that, but this is what everybody else called it, "Dumb-Dumb English." So I was in Dumb-Dumb English my first year at Ambassador College. I should have kept in it every year after that probably, because I didn't have a good command of the English language. Adjectives, adverbs - anyway, they're all Greek to me. I do better in Greek! Sentence structure and so forth. So, anyway, we know what we are. And this thing here going on with something like this, I don't kid myself. I marvel that people are able to receive what they do. And that's because of God's spirit.

So again here, so no matter how we speak, and do not have love. What do we have? If we understand all knowledge, all prophecy, have all faith - again, these are profound things that are being said here - and don't have God's love living within us what do we have? We don't have anything. Those are limited in the value they have in our life. It depends on how we value them and how we use them. And if they're not used coupled with God's love, coupled with agape in how they're used, they're really useless in one respect. They really have no value of and by themselves. It all depends on how we use what we're given, just as it depends upon how we use our calling, whether we "render according to the benefit" to what God has given to us. Or an ordination, whether we render according to the benefit that God has given us - that is sometimes given to refine and try us in a certain area of life. Because it will. It will. And so sometimes people want something and don't realize that what they got isn't what they should have had. But God will allow it at times to learn certain lessons of life so we can grow more, so we can change and overcome more, have more opportunity for change and growth.

And although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, so whatever sacrifice we might give physically of our life, even our own physical life. If we don't have God's love living within us He says we don't have anything. It's all for naught. It has no depth, no purpose, no great meaning.

Love suffers long, with one another. Love suffers long. We put up with differences. And really, if we understand that, it's really about ourselves anyway, isn't it, and how we think toward someone else in the first place, whether or not... Because if we really understand ourselves we understand that we're imperfect - highly imperfect. We have flaws. I have flaws. I have weaknesses. But if you start judging someone according to their weaknesses and God's not in the picture within the Body of Christ, then we've got a big problem. Because God has called us to change and we're able to change and grow. And we're not to remain the same way when we're called, the way we were when we were called. We're to become something different. We're to honor God. We're to honor God by the changes we make in our life, by everything we do in our life. Whether it be in family - I don't care what it is - how we dress, how we treat our... how we cultivate our own lives, our own appearance if it might be able to be used in that manner. Which it can be if we grasp it. Is it to God's honor, to God's glory? Is that why? Is that our motivation in the things we do, in how we keep our own home, cultivate the

things that are... Dress and keep, cultivate and keep (I'm getting used to that) and what it means. Keep it in a way that honors God, that glorifies God, to be thankful for what God has given to us. Whatever. Doesn't matter what it is in life. Especially in how we think about one another and treat one another.

Love suffers long and is kind. Why? Well, if we really get it we're kind because we know what we are. We can see ourselves in the mirror and we know that God has suffered long with us. I marvel. I marvel. Sometimes this is one of the things that strengthens me far more than many other things in my own life, is I know what I am. I know how I think as a human being. I see my nature because God's blessed me to see it. And because of that that's helped me to understand an attitude of mind that I'm able to have toward others in suffering long and recognizing there are differences; there are different ways of doing things. None of us are perfect by any measure. We all have weaknesses in how we think toward each other or treat each other. That becomes so important before God. It truly does. "Suffers long and is kind," primarily because you see yourself! Do we understand that? It's not something you just get from God. It's not something He just gives to you. It's something you grow in. It's something that becomes you. It's something that *you* become with time because of a transformation that takes place in the mind. You begin to treat others differently because you *grasp*, you begin to understand in a deeper way through the power of God's spirit, what you are and how He has worked with you. How God has worked with me has helped me to understand, very powerfully so, how to work with the Church, how to work with individuals in their lives, how to work with individuals and the sin in their lives. Because I know how God has dealt with me in working with the sin in my life. Because we all have sin.

If you think you're void of sin, you're highly mistaken. You're in the wrong place. We all have it. God's called us to reveal those things to us so that we can change and become something different.

Loves does not envy. Love doesn't envy when someone else is recognized or given a responsibility or has something to accomplish and do that's been given to them even within the Church, or whatever it might be, or even physically within someone's physical life and what they're doing out here. Because sometimes there's envy because of something that someone has done or something that someone has, some job or whatever it might be, or education or whatever it is. That should never exist, to be envious of someone else!

Love does not parade itself, doesn't put on a show, doesn't think it's special, doesn't raise itself up in thinking it's important. If we know what we are we won't do that.

...is not puffed up. Same thing here, is not puffed up, not lifted up by anything in life. I'll tell you, when those things happen in life I think of some of the things... I think of some of the earlier years, of some of the things I went through and experienced. And I saw ways that God dealt with me and He was very merciful, but He let me see some of these things in a very powerful way. You know, you take certain things to yourself He'll take it away just as fast as you think you got it so we can learn. But He's merciful to us.

Does not behave rudely. Sometimes we can be rude toward someone else by something we say that's cutting or catty. Hear it all the time. Not often, but more than I want. Something where someone's been kind of catty to someone else or about someone else in something they've said in a kind a digging type of thing, to dig at someone else. Those things should never exist in a person's life. Why would anyone ever do that toward anyone else? Is there some envy there? Is there some jealousy? Is there some...? Why would a person do that to anyone else? **Does not behave rudely, does not seek its own.** Doesn't seek its own. Does not insist on its own way. Doesn't jockey for position or power. These things happen. These things happen. It's going on right now. It happens. Jockeying for position, jockeying for power. Doesn't resist the guidance and direction of those over them. Anyway...

...is not provoked, thinks no evil. So, again, think about your own life. Think about if these things ever happen, especially in regards to the context of the sermon we're going through today. Because people have become provoked by something they've been asked to do by someone else or when they've been told that this isn't proper, we should do something different. How do we respond? Do we come to some defense for ourselves or whatever it might be, trying to defend because whatever "the because" is.

Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Bears all things. What are we willing to bear? What are we willing to bear for others? What are we willing to carry for others?

...believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Again, all in the context of what is right before God's eyes, what is right as far as what the Church has given to us.

Love never fails. It's a beautiful thing. God's love never fails. We do. We do. We do! If we really understood it, we looked at it day by day, it'd probably be right there in front of our face day by day where we have failed in some area of our life, in something we could have done better. That's what prayer is about as we seek a relationship with God and we're open to God and we pray to God about something we've said or something we've done or something we thought and we just open up before God. Because God knows. God knows what's in your mind! God not only knows the number of hairs on your head (which sometime get fewer and fewer as you get older), you know. God not only knows those things, He literally knows those things in your mind, how you think. How you think. Now, how you choose to respond in certain things that there are certain things that isn't known until some things take place in life, but oftentimes even by that God knows a direction we will go. That's why He works with us to mold and fashion us, to help us to see certain things, to help us be humbled, and sometimes to humble us so we will have ears to hear.

Because just like what has to happen to this world and what has to happen to nations and people, that has to happen in our lives on a daily basis, or on an ongoing basis, not necessarily a daily basis, where there are certain things in our life where we have to be humbled. That's a part of our transformation. I hope we understand that and grasp that, that there are things that have to happen in our life from time to time where God works with us to humble us, because we don't willingly do it. The closest we get to that is when we fast, in the sense of humbling ourselves before God because

we're doing it because we cry out to God because we know we need help, we know we see things in our lives we want to change and so we're crying out to God. But there are other things that oftentimes just can't be seen until God humbles us in a particular matter. He'll work with us to humble us. And that's a beautiful thing. It's not a fun thing but it's a beautiful thing because He wants us to have the ability to change, to become something different.

And so just as with nations, God has worked with us. Far more with us right now because we're called, called to succeed, called to be in His Family, called to (in some cases) to be a part of 144,000, in most cases to live on into a new age and to be the beginning, the foundation of a new age. That's awesome to understand!

...is not provoked, thinks no evil. Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Bears all things, believeth all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. God's love doesn't but ours does, brethren. Again, because our love is selfish. Our love is selfish by nature - to protect self, first of all, to protect family, first of all. That's how we think. To protect those of our... closest to us, or whatever. And then that's the way it branches out in life because we tend to be selfish. Our love tends to be selfish. That's why God's love, we desire that, we embrace that because it's totally unselfish - totally unselfish, pure. Pure.

Love never fails, but where there are prophecies, they will fail. In other words, be rendered inoperative or be abolished. Just like God's letting us see even more so now. We understand this in a greater way now than ever before. Depending on the circumstances. Depending on a situation. Depending on what God is doing at a particular moment in time.

And where there are tongues, they will cease. Same word, same thing as being discussed here, "fail," "cease," whatever. I guess the word down here a little bit later is the same word. **...and where there is knowledge, it will vanish away.** That's the same word, "vanish away." It has to do with the same thing here, about "failing," is the word up here before about prophecy. But again, it will vanish, or in other words, be rendered inoperative or be abolished. In other words, there are certain things when it comes to that point in time. Doesn't mean there won't always be things to learn. That's not what it's talking about here. It's just like the use of it or what the use of a particular thing might be at any moment in time, specific types of knowledge or specific prophecy or even a matter of tongues.

I think of this matter of tongues sometimes when I think about what Paul had to do. Because to my knowledge, to what God has shown us, when Paul addressed the use of tongues God quit giving that within the Church, in the sense of languages and the ability to speak in languages. Because people began to misuse what was given. If you go back and read... Isn't that an awesome story? You go back and read, and especially in the beginning, there was a purpose in the beginning because of the gospel going out, the truth going out and people were able to speak in languages (which is what the word means), different languages. So they could be speaking and others would actually be hearing in their tongue. And that's really what was taking place, even on the day of Pentecost when Peter was

speaking. It was more of what they heard than the fact that different words were coming out of their mouth. But they heard. All these different - you read all those countries, the people that were represented from all those different regions because they spoke different languages - well, they heard in their own language. That was the miracle that God gave, the ability that they had to hear. And whether it be that of even speaking, it really is immaterial. But again here, what an incredible thing of something that was used for a period of time. But because people misused it in the Church Paul had to address it and basically told people they weren't to use this, weren't to do it anymore, weren't to misuse, weren't to abuse a power that was made available. And basically it was taken away from the Church at that particular time. It wasn't given anymore. But people tried to use a spin-off of some of that because it was all a matter of vanity, all a matter of pride. And Paul warned them about misusing it and abusing something that was no longer being given to them because they didn't use it right in the first place, as a whole. What a horrible thing that took place in the beginning of the Church.

And so I know of no other time when it was used. God always gave other tools, other instruments, even as He has today, people who speak in different languages. If He wants something translated into a specific language He's giving individuals who have the ability, if there is a need there, to be able to translate it. And so it's been for some time. It was that way in Worldwide as well.

Verse 9—For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. There is always so much more to learn, so much more to grow in, so much more that we don't know in so many of these things that ere even been altered, have different purpose. **But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things.** And so again, Paul is summarizing everything here in a very unique way, very unique fashion, showing here a growth and our ability to grow, especially within the Church, especially within the Body of Christ.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. So, again here, things as human beings that we don't grasp, that we can't see, that we can't know. A change is going to take place within us in time, once we're changed and become spirit. **Now I know in part, but then I shall be known just as also I am known. But now abides faith,** in other words, what lives in our life, in this physical life within the Church, **faith, hope, and love, God's love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

So I mention this because, again, in what we're covering here in the context of some of the sermon here is the ability to see ourselves, the ability to grasp things that we've gone through, the ability to measure different things in our life. And when things happen in the future that we respond to them in a positive manner, in a supportive manner because we recognize them as coming from God. Whether it be a matter of binding or loosening or a matter of something that just comes directly from God - which the vast majority of it comes directly from God. But He allows matters of binding and loosening as well so that we can learn from that process too.

So again, there are abilities and ways we can measure things in our thinking, in our lives. And at a time when we're very focused on prophecy, this is a good time to bring this up, for God to help us to see something in ourselves that's far more important - far more important than what we know or can understand or learn from Chapter 6 or Chapter 7 or Chapter 5 or Chapter 4 or 3 or 2 or 1. Those things are great to be able to "see" and to grasp and to know and to "see" things that God is doing and why God is doing it, to grasp and understand why we've gone through the things we've gone through as a Church.

But we really don't have to have those. We don't have to have those to be in God's Church. We don't have to have that knowledge and understanding to be faithful servants of God. We don't have to have those things to be able to continue on and to say, "Well, I then know. I know that this is the Church of God," because of what's coming out in those books, or whatever it might be, or those chapters, whatever it might be. We've proved that to ourselves long ago, or at least, indeed, we should have.

And that's why we're here today. That's why we are the small congregation that we are all over this world - small, small, small, puny, puny, puny when it comes to size, but great as far as the Body of Christ and what God has given to us to grasp, to see, and to understand. But even in all that how we think about each other, how we treat each other, how we respond to things that happen within the body, that God gives us opportunity to "see" ourselves, we need to use those opportunities. Because, brethren, there is nothing more important than understanding that *we are a family*. And that comes first in how we treat one another within the family, how we talk about one another within the family, how we see each other in the family, and that we truly are for each other in the family and we want to see every member of the body succeed, that that's genuine and true.

It doesn't matter what hang-ups in life anyone might have had in their life and what they've gone through in their life and what they may be going through now. Because we all have different battles. We all have different things we have to address in this life. But how we deal with them and how we work with each other is what's important in God's eyes. And so we want to yield to that process.

So again, we're going to have more opportunities of being able to see some changes within the body. Let's do it with great support more than ever before, you know, understanding that God's doing a great work within the Church to help us to learn more about ourselves, to help us learn more about one another, to help us to grow spiritually.

So, with that we'll stop today a little early.