

When we were in California I wanted to announce we had an ordination out there of the first fully Hispanic minister that's been ordained to the Church of God-PKG. So that was awesome! So anyway, that was exciting out there, exciting for the Church in California. Manuel ordained out there, lives in the West Central part of California. And California is a *long* state. We had the opportunity of being in the Oakland, San Jose area. It was really great seeing everyone out there. It's been great seeing everyone in all the different areas. To me it's amazing because in many respects I feel like it wasn't that long ago we were over here at the Hilton Garden Inn here in the Erie area. Time goes by. You don't even think about the things, the period of time, and it doesn't seem like it was that long ago.

I think this is the one area now that we have been in that I've not seen this many young people, children. This area has *really* been blessed! So, great to see all the young children. I mean, it's awesome. And from everything I've seen, exceedingly well behaved, well mannered. Awesome! And that might give a plug for the Feast. I hope that goes for the Feast and all other Church areas, because I haven't heard the same thing from all other Church areas, because I'm hearing some that are running free, doing things they shouldn't be doing, and parents need to be more responsible. I see parents here being very responsible and kudos to you! I that a good term? Anyway, congratulations to all of you for a job well done. Truly, good to see this. So again, we need that to be in all areas though, too, and especially at the Feast of Tabernacles because, you know, you get that many people together and it's very easy just to let children take off and do things and run around, and that's not the place for it. You know, if you want to do that, take them to a park - even before services start - but not in the place where we're meeting. So we want to set a good example. So that's what it's all about. Again, have to say here, I've been very, very impressed. Because I'm talking about very young children, and a lot of them, so this is awesome.

Today we're continuing with a new sermon series entitled, *Take Action*, with this being *Part 2*, because this follows up on what we have been going through in the series before this, and actually several sermons that we've been covering. But I think especially this last one that we went through before this about owning our own choices, owning our choices, if you will, the decisions, the choices we make. I'm still astounded sometimes how that people go through various things and have a difficult time owning up to the fact, well, who decided this? Who made this decision to do this? You know, you're having all these difficulties, you're having some problems here and you're suffering because of it, who made that decision? We all make our own decisions in life and we're responsible for them. If something doesn't go right, who is responsible for that? If we're unhappy about it, who made you unhappy? It's not something that somebody else does to us. If we get angry, who makes us angry? We can't shift the blame on other people. And that's a natural human response that we have oftentimes, of things that happen, but we, ourselves, if we

allow ourselves to become upset by something it is something we have allowed ourselves to do. And we have to acknowledge that and we have to ask help as well so that we can change, so that we're not doing things of that nature on a regular basis, if we're having wrong responses to things.

So again, we have to own our own choices, and primarily in every *wrong* choice that we make, because that's what we're talking about when we have *wrong* responses to something, *wrong* words that are spoken when something takes place, someone says something to us or we just react back because something's happened and we take it out on someone else that's close to us. Wrong actions, again, wrong thinking, all these things, we're the ones responsible for it if it comes out of us, and no one else is to blame.

But once we are able to do that a big part of this then is able to just acknowledge the fact that "I did it." "I did it to myself." Or, "I've done the wrong thing. I've responded improperly in a wrong manner that wouldn't please God." And so what do you do? Well, that's the reason for the sermon, *Take Action*, this particular one here. There are things we have to be active about; we have to acknowledge what we've done. We have to go before God and begin praying about it, and ask Him for help to change, to become something different. And that's a part of what we're going through in all of this.

And that's why we've had the fast. And I thought I'd mention too that because of the fast some have misunderstood certain things about the timing of it. Whenever I have called for a fast or do call for a fast, as a whole, it's not the Day of Atonement. God calls for that day. Okay? It is from sunset to sunset. I may mention, as I have, that the fast is to be done, as a whole, on a particular Sabbath, in a Sabbath period. It can begin well before that on Friday. It can begin or it can start on Sabbath and end on Sunday. As long as you have much of your fast within that particular Sabbath. And in this particular case we actually gave a couple Sabbaths. If one doesn't work out and you already have plans because it was kind of a last minute kind of thing to go ahead and do it on another week. The primary thing is you're crying out to God for help. You're humbling yourself before God. You're learning from the process. Fasting is an act of humility. It doesn't take very long when you enter into a fast and you're thirsty, you're hungry, you know you need sustenance of some sort, you want it, your body desires it, and you're telling it no. There are things to be learned from that.

And one of the primary things you're to learn on a spiritual plane, be reminded of, is that you can't go a day without a relationship with God. If you go day by day without a relationship with God, if you're not looking to Him for strength in your life, power in your life, sustenance spiritually in your life, then we're missing the mark there. And so again, what an awesome tool that God has given us to humble ourselves before Him, to be reminded of that, to understand, "I need God." And you're using a tool that God has given to humble yourself, to be of a humble spirit, to acknowledge things in your life (like we're going through Isaiah and discussing), "I need help. I want to change. I don't want to be the same way."

I'm still dumbfounded of what God has been doing in the Church in the sixth end-time prophetic period of 1260 days and now in this seventh period, that it began very powerfully, if you will, with cleansing in the ministry, those who things came to the surface; some totally, absolutely shocking to me. Still talk about it. Still hear people mention certain things and it's dumbfounding what can happen in people's lives. And yet God will bring those things to the surface, especially now at this particular time. Because this is the time that God is preparing for the return of His Son and He's preparing us, as a people, to be ready for that. And that means we have to be ready spiritually.

As an example, if we're going to live into a new age we're to be the right example of what the Church is all about, of what it means to bear the name of God, the Church of God, to have been in the Church for a period of time. It isn't going to be like it was in the past.

I'm going to back up just a little bit here. Today we were talking about.... Because when I come into an area like this, history starts flooding back. And we were talking about an evangelist that came into this area to visit one time and his primary motivation for coming to *this* area was because he needed a chaperone to take him over to, I believe, it was Rochester/Syracuse. I don't remember, maybe it was Syracuse, to go to a Hickey Freeman... Freeman Hickey? Whatever it was, it was suits over there, this particular type of suit. Hickey Freeman? Is that the name of it? Anyway, a particular kind of suit that a lot of people out there in Pasadena seemed to like at that particular time and there was an outlet over there. And so, and because he was trying to get credit on a certain airline I also.... He wouldn't fly into here, so I had to drive over to Cleveland to pick him up, came here. And we were discussing how that he basically didn't want children in the house, so we got rid of our children. No! We didn't! No, we didn't get rid of the children, but we did have someone else take care of them because he made it clear by certain things he had to say that basically he didn't want that around when he was staying with us at the house. And there were some others things involved and I'm not even going to go into.

But the kind of selfishness that existed within the Church blows my mind. And this individual that weekend had to deal with a situation where (might as well), his own daughter had run off with a well known individual in the Church, a minister in the Church in Pasadena. He was probably in his mid-forties, fifty, whatever - forties, mid-forties; she was a teenager. His own daughter. Having to deal with her running off with this man that was well known. If I mentioned the name everybody that's been around the Church would know him well. Had a great deal of responsibility at headquarters.

These kinds of things were going on in God's Church! People playing "church!" Coming to Sabbath services and *not* living God's way of life. You can't live a lie like that and things not get cleaned up. And so it got so bad... That's why I even mentioned today here when we were driving around. 1978 and that Bible study that Mr. Armstrong gave, his battle - which most of the Church, we didn't know, I didn't know at that time - was with the ministry! He *saw* what was happening in the ministry. He was getting feedback. And that was in 1978! That was so important to him, looking back and understanding it now, because whatever the ministry is like in an area is how the Church

is going to be. They're going to *follow* that example. They're going to follow. If there are certain things being done, there are certain things being taught. And it took an Apostasy to clean up the Church, to get us to a point where God could take the Church into a final period of time. And had to get rid of ninety-some percent, ninety-nine percent of the Church, almost, as it were, to cleanse it up, in order to start cleaning a remnant and to shake us to the core of our being. That's what God did.

And now there's another cleansing going on in these last two periods that have been taking place because God is not going to allow the same thing that took place over a long period of time, which are lessons for us, which will be lessons in the Millennium, and showing very much so why God has to govern this earth and the Church through 144,000. That's *exactly* why there are going to be 144,000 here working with Jesus Christ, under Jesus Christ. And *much* of that is going to have to do with teaching in the Church Sabbath by Sabbath and annual Holy Day to annual Holy Day - so that those kinds of things that happened during the period of Philadelphia are never ever, *ever* going to happen again. Where an unfaithful ministry will ever have a foot in the door to go out and do the kinds of things they did! There will be a ministry, but God's going... It's going to be known quickly if they begin to go astray, and it'll be dealt with quickly. Not like the individual that was transferred into this area as I was leaving, who was here for about six months whose language, the things he spoke, the things that came out of his mouth, the kind of sexual connotation or, I don't know... the terms not coming to my mouth right now - innuendo's of things he would say that were just *filthy*! And there were people that were making comments, "Well, I didn't know we had to rate the sermons before we could bring our children in to hear a Sabbath sermon." And I tried to correct those things, but he didn't listen. But he was allowed to continue on, and then just a few months later then we had the Apostasy. Those kinds of things should never happen. And the reason that even happened? Because he'd been in one part of the world and he messed up there and hurt the Church there, so they sent him to Europe, to another part of the world to mess up the Church over there, and then sent him here to help with the Apostasy in this area. Amazing! Things that take place!

Those things are not going to happen in a new world. And we in the Church are to be faithful to God in how we live our lives. There can't be this moving around in the courtyard, circling around the temple and acting like we're in God's Church. And so even to this day, even as of *last* week, every week - I believe every week since I've been out - back, if you will (I like that better), ever since I've been back dealing with people of being suspended or disfellowshipped. Now, I'm really excited when I see people repent and are able to be brought back. Because we're experiencing that now, too. But there are some who aren't going to come back in this age, just aren't going to come back. I know God's not going to allow it they've gone so far in some of the kinds of comments and things they've done. It's just not going to happen, that kind of hypocrisy and that kind of lying spirit.

So we have to be truthful to God. And I hope we understand what's been taking place, that we need to be sober-minded. And if you're doing the right things, you've nothing to fear. If you're striving to live right before God, no one has anything to fear. But if people aren't living right and they're lying to God, I'm seeing some amazing things where God's bringing it out in the open in some incredible ways. Things are coming out in the open. They're being brought to light. And they need to be.

So, we're to live faithfully, right before God. That doesn't mean we don't have problems. Every one of us has battles. Every one of us! We have human nature. We have battles. We have things we have to fight. And it depends upon whether we're fighting or not, doesn't it? That's what counts. Are we fighting or are we allowing ourselves just to live day by day - drama, drama, drama - and not really addressing the changes that need, not taking any action in our life to change and become something different? Now, if you're taking action in your life and you're crying out to God for help to reveal things to you, then that's what has to happen. That's what we have to do. Because we all need change. We all have to be transformed. That's what transformed is all about. The word "repent" means "to think differently." That's what God wants us to do. It's ever that process always ongoing in our life.

To me, it's an exciting process. And as we yield to it we become stronger and stronger, more convicted of God's way of life, God stirs up His spirit in us more and more. But there are some things that *just can't continue* in life, if they're there. And that's what's taking place in the Church right now. And I'm excited by it. I'm excited by it because the Church needs to be clean, always. We should strive to be clean. We should strive to want to wear white, white raiment. Not that we can fully, but when we do see sin, how awesome is it that we can repent and ask God for forgiveness and it's gone and you keep moving forward, you keep fighting. It's about a fight! You have to *fight* against self!

Anyway, so again, if you have never experienced hypocrisy around the Church, you're, in some ways, unique, because it's *always, always* existed from the very beginning. It wasn't very long, didn't take very long and the apostles had to begin addressing it within the Church. That's why so many of the things written, especially Paul, and some of the things he wrote about addressing hypocrisy. Well, Peter addressed it as well later on. There are different ones that had to address several things. James, John, they had to deal with those things on a regular basis because of what was happening in the Church. And there have always been those who have been called - not many chosen - those who've been called and there are those who just haven't continued in the fight, haven't sought to be transformed and changed. But there are those who have. And up to this point in time, as a whole, or a few years back, they are going to be a part of the 144,000. See? And then there are others now who are coming along who have opportunity to be the foundation, living on in physical life, of the Church in the Millennium! Awesome opportunity! Incredible!

So let's pick up where we left off last Sabbath in Isaiah 58, because it is a subject about fasting. It's a subject of humbling ourselves before God, of crying out to God because it's one of a

recognition, "*I need God. I not only need God, I want God. And there are things I will do in order to fight that fight.*"

And here it talks about then in **Isaiah 58:1—Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.** And I've tried to, in the last sermon, begin to point out certain things that excite me about these verses because this chapter has never been understood to the degree that it has been in this era, this particular time period, if you will, the Church of God—PKG. And to me that's exciting because it helps me to understand even more so that this is written in a very powerful way to us and to those who will follow in time, but especially to us, to learn the lessons that we need to learn, as I talked about a moment ago, of things in the past - that history doesn't repeat itself. And if we truly desire with all of our being to be there at Christ's return we can be, and on into the Millennium.

And so again here, I think of the apostles. They cried aloud. They were crying out. When you read things that Paul said, he was crying out. In those letters he wrote, he was pleading, he was working with, he was trying to lead, guide, direct, correct, and everything else in what he had to say to the Church, to help the Church. And so it has been you look at Mr. Armstrong's life, you hear Bible studies and sermons and so forth and he cried aloud on a regular basis. Because we need to "see" ourselves. We need to understand we have to change. We can't stay the same way as we are. We have to change the way we speak, the way we think, the way we act, the way we conduct our lives, the behavior that's there. We come to a point where we recognize, "I carry God's name. I'm a part of the Body of Christ. I'm a part of the Church of God, the called-out ones of God!" We carry His name. People know! If they know you're in the Church, they know a little bit about you, what kind of an example? What do they see? Does it reflect that? And that's what it comes down to. And so again, we have a desire to "see" the things that need to change in our life where we can become more refined.

Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and that was not forsaking the ordinance of their God. I think of times past that led up to the Apostasy - *that was the Church! THAT was the Church!* That's the way the Church was in the 90's and late 80's. After Mr. Armstrong died it started going downhill very rapidly and God allowed it so we could learn from it. He allowed it so we could learn from it. Awesome what can be learned from it. As I mentioned so many times, my major training and teaching has been what should *not* be done in the Church, how a minister should *not* be in the Church, how they should *not* act in the Church, that that shouldn't be the way one acts if you're serving God.

So, anyway, "They delight to seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness." And so it got to a point in time before the Apostasy the church was playing Church. That's what it was. The church was going through the motions playing Church, but it wasn't living what it should be and it wasn't crying out to God in spirit and in truth in the way that it should have been. And because of that the Church went to sleep; we all went to sleep

eventually in time. The food wasn't there. It wasn't coming down to us. And that's what we can't afford, any of us, to do in our lives.

Verse 3—It goes on to say then, **Why have you fasted?** So let's take this up a notch. So if someone is coming before God, keeping the Sabbath, the Holy Days, going to the Feast of Tabernacles, going through the motions of these things, then He brings up the issue of fasting and why are you fasting? Why have you fasted? Or people are asking, in other words, but God brings it up here about the subject of fasting. And so the question is asked by individuals, **Why have we fasted, they say, and You do not see?** And so this has been a common thing that happens. People fast for various things. They want certain things from God. They desire certain things from God. Even some of the scattered groups out here have had fasts and called for fasts because they want something from God. You've got to want the right thing. God tells you what you should want. God tells you what you should cry out for. See? And it's not to *get* something from God in the sense of, whatever, in your life, whether it be a job, or whatever. You want to draw closer to God so that He will bless you in your job and whatever choices you make in whatever it might be, or to open up certain doors for you in life. And you can certainly beseech God in those things. But to receive a certain favor from God, that God should give us certain healing in our life? There's a group of organization that's asked that they be given the power of healing within the ministry, within the Church, to fast for that reason. Is that the right approach before God? No. It's what God is showing here.

So, **Why have you afflicted your souls, or Why have we afflicted our souls**, the question is being asked by individuals, **and You have not acknowledged it?** So it's like, "We've gone through the... We're doing these things so why aren't we being blessed?" **Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure**, in other words, what it really is saying here in Hebrew, basically, is you're seeking after your own satisfaction. You're seeking your own way or something you want done in your own way; and perhaps it's even in a relationship or whatever it might be, but you're striving to get your own way or something that you want for selfish purposes or selfish motivation. It's not about giving. It's not about something you're going to be able to grow in and accomplish and better serve God. ...**and exact**, and this word here means "to oppress" or "to seek to impose your own will or control over others" Maybe it's on the job, or whatever. Or maybe in the family, or someone in the Church, or whatever. So **you seek to exact all your labors. Behold...** So this is the answer, **You fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.** In other words, to get your way.

You shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. In other words, God didn't give it so that somehow He owes you something, somehow you can go before Him to get your way in a matter or you want something out of God. Again, God shows us the things that we should want. And what should you want? The truth. His spirit. His life living in you. He says that's the right thing you should want in your life. Is that what we want above everything else? Or do we sometimes want something different? What's the most precious thing you can receive from

God? It's His life in us. That's the most precious thing you can receive from God, *His life dwelling in you* so that you can think right, so that you can act right, so you can be a kind of a light and example that one needs to be. Because we can't do it on our own. That's the most awesome thing you could desire in life, is to have the power, the life, the mind of God living in you. And then when that's there, you know what? When we live that way and think that way and we're more in one with God, then everything else begins to fall into place in life and God can bless us in the other things we might otherwise desire in life. Awesome to understand that. But sometimes we put the cart in front of the horse because we don't really grasp and understand or have the right motivation in the things we do.

And so it isn't to make our voice to be heard, but it's a matter of crying out in humility because it's the right thing to do. God has given us tools whereby we can draw closer to Him, whereby we can change some of the way we think. But we have to acknowledge we're thinking wrong, that we want to change our thinking so we can draw closer to Him. Do you have battles in your life? Do you have things you want to change in your life? In your conduct? Are there things you want to refine to do better? I don't care where we are in life in our growth, are there things you want to do and do them better than what you are right now? If you don't, then something is wrong with you spiritually. Because as long as we're in this human body there are things we need to improve upon, there are battles, there are things to fight, there are things in the mind and responses to things in life around us that we can improve upon and do better. Does anyone have perfect speech in the way they respond to everything around them in life? James makes it pretty clear we don't. There's always improvement there, to do better. So wherever we are - just beginning or we're in this halfway to a certain point of our growth (and we don't know where the end is though; you don't know if you're halfway or a third of the way or a tenth of the way into whatever you're going to have to live through in your life until the end comes or your change comes), but you keep fighting, you keep striving to change because you keep acknowledging there are things inside of me that have to be changed. "I want to change. I want to do better."

I hope your prayers are that you desire to be more at-one with God. That means to be in agreement with Him.

It goes on to say then: **Is that the kind of fast that I have chosen (verse 5), a day for a man to afflict his soul?** Is that what it's all about? Just to afflict your soul and to go without food and water and then because you do that it's kind of like God owes us something? And then if we don't get it, it's like, "Well, why do I bother doing it?!" It's not what it's all about.

Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Eternal? Is that what God is looking for? Is that what God wants? That's kind of like the sacrificial system. "Is this what I want, for you to go out here and slaughter these animals, and that somehow because you're doing that and you'll pay for, you know, a bull..." expensive... Because back then, you know, a bull, they're expensive. "You want to offer something up for Me, toward Me, to Me and because you put more money into it

does that mean that I should then give you something because of that? You kind of earned it? Because you're willing to do something above and beyond or the fact that you're even going through it on a regular basis, Holy Day to Holy Day and you're bringing in sheep and you're bringing in cattle, or whatever it might be, and that somehow I'm delighted in this? And then you go out and you live the same way of life as before? Is that what....?" See? We learn that, don't we, in the Church. What kind of sacrifice does God want? It's about self. It's about a willingness to sacrifice self and our own desires, in that respect, in order to love others, in order to give, in order to become at one with God.

Verse 6—Is not this the fast that I have chosen? ...to loose the bands of wickedness, Isn't that what we should be praying about? That means we have to look at ourselves. That's like crying out to God and saying, "Father..." It's not trying to get something wrong from God, it's trying to do what is a matter of God's will. God wants to help us to change. He wants us to become something different. Just like when we're first called He tells us to bury the old person, the old man, the old woman, whatever it is, and to come up out of water in newness of life, meaning we have a desire to walk in a new way of life, to act differently, to live differently toward others around us. And so God wants to bless that process because you can't do it on your own. You try to do it on your own and before long you're just going to be out in the courtyard walking around the Temple. Like what happened to the Church, people were doing it on their own. Ministers were doing it on their own. It wasn't a matter of crying out to God. Got to a point in time where people thought they were so good about what they were doing there really was no acknowledgement that they needed God anyway. It got to a point in time where ministers felt like, after Mr. Armstrong died, well, he was a good teacher and I learned a lot from him. If they would even say that! There were minister who wouldn't even begin to acknowledge that! And yet everything that they knew that was true came through that one man because God gave it to him to give to the Church. He was a lot more than that, should have been a lot more than that to them. Mr. Armstrong was a tool through whom the Church, and even to this day, was able to receive what we have so that we can build upon it and grow even more. God's apostle. Awesome what God gave to him and through him.

So even that, those kinds of comments that were commonly made by individuals after the Apostasy even, and long before, because it got to a point in time where nobody wanted to use His name and they actually got rid of a lot of the material, the literature, because they didn't want to remember. Well, what are you trying to forget? The truth? Amazing!

So is this not the fast that I have chosen? ...to loose the bands of wickedness. What does that mean? ...**to undo the heavy burdens?** It's all about individuals. It's all about us. It's about what we do that's wrong. The heavy burdens we put on others, or that we put on ourselves by our *stupid* choices sometimes that we make. We sometimes do dumb things that don't agree with God's way, and then we suffer because of it and it's like, "Well, yeah, but that's because..." Whatever. Something else, some other event, some... It's like this comment that I used to loathe when I heard it in the Church, when individuals that go out, whether it was somebody on the job

or a relative or whatever, "Well, the Church won't let me do 'this!'" Oh, really? Amazing! "The Church won't let you do this, huh?" It's like, "I don't have a mind and I'm just a zombie and the Church isn't going to let me do this and I have to do what the Church tells me to do." "I can't do that." "I can't..." Well, what do *you* believe? Do you have a mind? Do you use your own mind? Do you have some responsibility in this in the choices you make? Is it what the Church does or doesn't let you do?

I've heard this about me, as well. "Well, Mr. Weinland said you can't..." or whatever, or, "You have to..." So it's not that, "I agree with God and it's what I believe. It's what *he* said." Or it's what the Church says. Amazing! Blows me over! Well, what do we believe? Do you understand what I'm saying? Amazing! But I used to *hate* that expression whenever I heard it, because every time it was ever said I knew what was going on. I knew where they were spiritually. "Oh, like you're kind of a spiritual zombie? You don't have a mind of your own? You're not kind of responsible for your life, are you? What are you doing in the Church?" And oftentimes those people were gone. And this day they are gone.

So again, "is it to loose the bands of wickedness?" The things we're doing wrong, they need to be done right. Improper actions. Improper speech. I'm still amazed sometimes when I hear stories out here, the things that are happening, of some of the *foul things* that come out of people's mouths and some of the things they will say to others...and sometimes to the one who's closest to them, their own mate...their own mate that they feel justified in being able to say harsh and cutting and hateful things toward. That should never, never, never be in God's Church. So if somebody is doing something like that, do you go regularly before God and cry out to God, "Help me to change! I don't want to be like this!" Do you fast and go before God and say, "Father, I'm humbling myself before You. I need help. I can't do this on my own. I've proven this because I'm still doing this and I don't want to do it. I want to be different! I want to *change* my response and my attitude and the things I'm saying *because I know that's wrong!* I know that's wrong to do! "To undo the bands of wickedness." Do we fast for that reason?

I'm just telling you things out here that should never, never, never, never, *never, never* be spoken of, should never happen, never come off the lips of anyone in God's Church, to mistreat a mate, to talk to them harshly, demeaning, ugly, cursing at them. No excuse for that. And you know what? God isn't going to allow that to continue on if it's happening out there. You either change - I'm just telling you - or you will not be there... you will not be there at Christ's return. He's not going to allow it. He's cleaning up the Church. So either we have a deep desire to change those things.... Why should anyone receive the benefit, the blessing, the reward of something *so great?* Now, before this period of time, as I mentioned, it was to become one of the 144,000. Is that owed to anyone? Was that ever owed to anyone? Never. Never. Never. And now it's a matter of those who are able to continue on and for people to know that you lived in the period of time of the Church of God—PKG at some point. And you have the opportunity at the end of an age to be a part of something so incredible, a small remnant of an incredibly larger Church that had existed

before that, and to receive the recognition that you're going...that anyone who lives through this period of time is going to receive at the other end? And if we're not living right, why should we be *allowed* to live at that point? Into that new age?

Because, you see, I believe with all my being not only should a person not be offered that, but a person should die so that they're not allowed for that to take place in their life. Those are strong words, strong words. But we need to realize how serious these things are, the power of life and death that's in God's hands and what it means to carry God's name, the Church of God; that it's a very serious thing and we should honor that with all of our being. And we should *want* to live what is right, and we should *want* to fight the fight. Because what's coming is far, far worse than what we can grasp. How it's going to be around us is far, far worse than your mind can even conceive of. And you're going to need God. You need God now on a spiritual plane, but you're going to need God on a physical plane to live into a new age. And that's what God is offering to those whom He's called, to have opportunity, favor, and help to live through, to make it through and live into a new age.

I think it'd be a very hurtful and a very unjust thing in every way for someone to have the kind of opportunity they're going to have, to live a lie in the future, who lived a lie up to the time of Christ's coming. Do you think God's going to allow that to happen? So we need to take it just that seriously in our life to realize it's an awesome thing. It's a thing of great responsibility, but great opportunity to bear God's name, to be a part of the Church of God, it truly is. To be a part of something that so few have ever been given in the past 6,000 years, especially in the last 4,000 years - 2,000 years, I'm sorry, because it's really only been the last 2,000 years that individuals have even had opportunity to be called into the Church. Before that it was just individuals here and there that God chose to work with on the earth. Very, very few. And then the Church began and that's where most of the work began as far as the preparation for the 144,000, or the continuation of that.

So we have to realize what we've been given. How awesome! How precious! How much do we value God? That God looks down upon our lives and gives us what He's given us? To give us the truth? All those ministers out there who went astray, who did what they did and Mr. Armstrong is no more than, "Well, he was a good teacher. I learned a lot of things from him." Says it all, doesn't it, if you understand. Spiritually, it says it all. Think, no, everything I have as a foundation came through that great teacher of God. Great teacher! One who sacrificed mightily for many, many years - not to be worshipped, but to be respected in the manner that God used him. And I do with all my being to this day, because I know how God used him. I know the truth I have. It comes from God, but there's a way we receive it and the way we embrace it, and then the respect and the things we learn as a result of that, and then what God gives us as a result of our thinking.

And so again here, we haven't even gotten down to where we were last week, have we? ***Is not this the fast that I have chosen? ...to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and that you let the oppressed go free?*** It's like asking, "Do you know who you're

oppressing by your behavior, by your actions, by your speech? Do you realize as a human being that you can be oppressive to others?" I sometimes think about individuals that I've known of who are very controlling - not just a little controlling, but very controlling. And it's hard for them to come to see themselves. And yet I see that taking place in the Church, where individuals are coming to see themselves about certain things. But sometimes there are certain personalities - that's why we went through the sermons and talked about aggressive, passive-aggressive, passive, and so forth, and assertive, and what that means and how people see themselves sometimes. But it's a very human thing oftentimes to try to control things in life around us, to control a way a mate may respond to things or act toward us, or children react to certain things. And there has to be a certain amount of control, obviously, in children's lives, but there comes a point in time where that begins to wane and you have to do other things.

But I'm always amazed how it's so hard for the human mind to really see itself for what it is until God begins to break through. And He brings things to the surface that aren't pleasant. Because when people have to start seeing, when you have to start seeing some of those things about yourself, it's not a pleasant thing to have to go through, but it's a needful thing and it's something you should want. If there is anything where we're wrong, where we need to adjust something in our lives, don't you want that in order to become a better person? In order to become a more loving, a more caring person, more genuine person toward others? We should. And we should ask God to show us, "Show me my sin. Show me..." Be careful. Ask for mercy in the process. I learned that very early on. Ask for mercy in the process.

...and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? God says that *you* do this! This is something *you're* to do. And so much of that, that we're to do, has a matter of being able to see ourselves in a spiritual mirror and realize change has to take place. And that's why I'm fasting, because I want to change! I don't want to remain the same way that I am! We can change! That's why I hated what one minister used to say, that served under for a time, that, what is it, "The spots on a leopard..." Is it a leopard that has spots? I said something wrong sometime and I don't remember what I said. But, anyway, spots on a leopard. He said....What's that? Zebra's don't change their stripes either, but this individual had a saying about a leopard. It was like somebody is doing something in the Church and it's, like, well, they're never going to change because a leopard never changed his spots. Whatever. And I thought... I didn't say it to him because it wouldn't have gone through, but I thought every time, "Well, where is God's spirit in this? Because they *can* change. You're restricting them from the ability to change. You don't see them as someone that you're serving that can change." And we can all change in God's Church! That's what God has called us to, to change. We don't have to stay the same as we are. So, yeah, we can change a lot of spots.

"So that you break every yolk." And that word, "yolk," it's a word that is also used as "yolk," but as "being heavy," something heavy, "something that weighs us down." Sometime we not only weight

ourselves down because of what we do in life, but we weigh others down in life too and we make life harder for them. It's like carrying a burden, the yolk.

So it says, ***Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry***, that we look beyond ourselves. You know, that's what.... We see the world out here, it's suffering, and that should be our primary motivation, our desire to be a part of something that we have opportunity to help change in the world around us. That's what God's called us to. We have great opportunity. And so, again, to be motivated, to be moved to that. ...**and that you bring the poor who are cast out of your house?** To look forward to and desire that individuals are able to be brought back into fellowship, into the house, the House of God. It should be a burning desire within us.

I have great desire to see the opportunity being given to so many thousands and tens of thousands of people. That's one of the most exciting things I can think of, because of the fellowship that happened in the past. Others have never had it, one day they'll receive it. The world is going to begin to receive it and God's going to begin making great change, obviously, from the Millennium on, but those who were a part, to be brought back and to have that opportunity? All of a sudden the mind to be opened up and to charge forward once again with added knowledge and greater insight than ever before, to take off where they... Not only from where they were when they fell asleep, but in a very short period of time to be quantum leaps ahead because of what they can receive spiritually because of what the Church has been given to this point in time. Awesome!

And that when you see the naked, that you cover him; matter of care and concern toward things that people might go through rather than being harsh and judging of others, like the spot thing, you know, where they can't change their spots, a leopard, "They're going to be doing the same thing again." No! Have some patience. Give time. If someone has done something foolish, if someone has done something that's been revealed, pray for them. You have a desire that they be able to see what they did and why they did it and how they've hurt themselves and you're ready to receive them. You know, that's the most awesome thing, the most exciting thing that happens when someone is separated from the body for a time and things can begin to happen, certain things are said to them, that if they can deal with it, if they can look at it and say, "Yes, you're right, and then acknowledge that and they themselves begin to change. What an awesome thing when they can begin to be clothed again." See? I marvel sometimes that I have known of so many people in the Church who wouldn't go to a brother or even a mate - to even their own mate - or to go to the ministry and discuss something because they're trying to protect someone or they're trying not to bring something out in the open because they don't want to....

The common thing that used to happen in times past was this idea that your friends with someone but if sometimes by being really close to some you know certain things that are happening in their life that are so wrong spiritually, that they shouldn't be doing, so what do you do? Ignore it? Or do you desire to see them be able to come to grips with it.

Do we have a responsibility in going to our brother alone? So many in times past that's... That's the major thing throughout Philadelphia and on into Laodicea that was not practiced in God's Church. To humble one's self with the right attitude, not of condemnation, but because you knew it was a responsibility to go to your brother alone and say, "I know this... This is awkward for me. I don't know how to address this, but this is something you did. This is something you said. It's wrong. You know it. I know it is. And it's hurtful, but I have a responsibility to discuss, to come to you..." And that's a matter of love. You know what that does? If someone is cursing and saying things that are wrong and you say, "You know, we don't do that in God's Church. And you know it and you're doing it out here in public?" or "You've done it in your home and I heard it. It hurts me. I don't enjoy this, having to come to you and talking about, but I have a responsibility here." Hopefully they'll be shamed enough to repent. Because, you see, if they don't they're gone. They've already cut themselves off from God's spirit if they're not addressing it in their life. And so if we don't love a brother enough to be able to say something and say, "This is hard. This is difficult, but this is wrong. We don't do this in God's Church. This is not the way we are. This is sin." Make sure it's sin, see. But so many in times past would never go to a brother alone. Sad. Sad. Sad.

"So that when you see them naked you cover them," that's how you cover them. If they can come to a point of repentance, to shame, to be ashamed enough to repent, then that's the way they become covered spiritually. Because if someone's naked it's because of sin and they're not doing anything about it. When people live in certain kinds of sin and they begin to cut themselves off spiritually from God, that's what happens. Sin cuts you off from God. And they're becoming weaker and weaker. And so the love is to say something so that they are able to repent so that they can be clothed again spiritually. That's what this is about. "And that you cover him." ...**and that you do not hide yourself from your own flesh?** That's why I talk oftentimes about the fact that we are family, "our own flesh." See? Or whether it be in our own physical family, see. Even in our own physical family, if you're concerned for their spiritual wellbeing.

So this is where introduced the fast last Sabbath, the fact that we need to fast and these are the things we're fasting about. See, I need help. I want to draw closer to God. I need this on a regular basis, to be able to fast. I think about through the Year of Dedication that we had there and we were given this as a goal, and there are those who did that, and there are some who didn't do it as well. There are some who didn't apply themselves, at all. But if we do it in spirit and truth and because we're wanting to change, then God will bless us mightily. And it's something you really can't live without. It's like your prayer life. That's why I asked last Sabbath about praying... or two Sabbaths ago about prayer. Is it something that we're doing on a regular basis, on a daily basis just to cry out to God. And it's not a matter of length of time, it's a matter of what's in your mind, that you're crying out to God and letting God know, at the minimum, "I need Your help today. I need Your spirit! I *want* Your spirit! There are things in my life I want to change!" And you know what that does? That opens up a whole new door about prayer. And depending on how much you

need to change depends on how long that prayer is going to be. That's partially a joke and partially not, because it's true.

Verse 8. So if we do those things, what does God say? If we will look at ourselves and strive to think differently and live differently toward one another and towards others in the world around us, **Then shall your light break forth as the morning.** Because, you know what? If that's not happening the light isn't there. The light just isn't there like it should be. If we're not making changes and being transformed and crying out to God, and not addressing certain things in our life and asking God to... What is it? What's the number one thing you would like to change in your life? Do you know? If you don't know I feel sorry for you right now. You should know what the number one thing in your life is you're wanting to change right now, whoever you are. And whatever that is you need... And what's the number two thing? What's the next thing behind that that you're fighting, that you're asking God for help to conquer and overcome, to become stronger in as far as a right example and doing the right thing? Whether it be in speech or in thought, in attitude? Because we're talking about attitudes we get into as human beings, attitudes that aren't right.

Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health, that word is "healing." It's about healing. And we talked about that in the past sermon here, that there is this power that God has. His desire is to heal us because our minds, because of the way we are, our minds need to be healed. Of and by ourselves we're, as that one word we looked at, we're incurable, as far as the human mind is concerned. It takes God's spirit to heal the mind. I love those scriptures, the ones in the previous chapter here that talk about healing and the desire God has to heal us. It takes His spirit to make us think differently, to help us think differently. But we've got to want it! Not only want it but we've got to cry out to God for it! For this transformation. This is what this is. This is about transformation and change. These verses here, this is how it's accomplished. This is the process you have to go through on a spiritual plane to yield yourself to the most productive transformation you can have in your mind, in your being.

Then shall you light break forth, if we do those things, **break forth as the morning, and your health, your healing shall spring forth speedily.** The growth, the spiritual growth that follows such things is awesome! It truly is. That's how we make our greatest spiritual growth in life, by fighting against and conquering things in self that have to be changed. And *then* we become a more useful, a more productive servant of God, tool in God's hands to the benefit of others. ...**and your righteousness shall go before you.** What's that mean? Well, there is going to be an example there that people are going to be able to see and be moved by when they see certain things and they know certain things about you and the change that you have made and how you're living and the example... I think of different ones I've seen changes in people's lives. As I go back in time I think of different ones that I've known of that are with us at this point in time, and I think about the different changes that people have made and it's inspiring to me. Because I know it takes God's spirit to do that. And because of that, of the life they're living and

what they're doing I think, "What an example! Awesome! *Awesome* what we can do with God's spirit as God helps us to change and become something different and the example then that's there."

"And your righteousness shall go before you." That's what it's about. It's about an example we can then be, how God can use us in that regard to help others. Because people see things and they see change and they recognize things in our life. And that can give motivation to someone else. ...**the glory of the Eternal shall be gathered together unto you.** It's sometimes translated as "rear guard" and so forth, but really the Hebrew word is here, it's about being "gathered together." It's something that God desires and wants to give to you. So again, "The glory of the Eternal shall be gathered together unto you." What more? How much more exciting can life be, than to think that there is that which you're receiving from God, a glory? Because when you grow spiritually that's a glory, because it's God. God does it. God lets us share in something that we don't have of and by ourselves. And the proof of that is when people quit praying and quit fasting and quit striving to change, and in time they're gone because they get cut off from God's spirit, because they're just living life in a lie out in the temple - not in the Temple area, but out in the courtyard. And in time....

I have seen hundreds, I mean hundreds and hundreds and thousands of people that I have known and experienced this with them, been in God's Church and then gone because of wandering around in the courtyard. And you can't live your life in the courtyard. We have to be in the Temple - *in* God and God in us. And so there is a glory there, just as there was in God's temple. I think of Moses at different times and some of the... and Aaron and some of the things that took place and what God revealed to them on a physical plane of something, a glory that was there, of power that was there, of something they experienced on a physical plane but all symbolic of something far, far greater, and that's a spiritual glory of God, His power to change us, to give us something, a different way of thinking, a different mind, a different motivation.

So again, **The glory of the Eternal shall be gathered unto you.** What else would we want in life? What is richer in life than that. Nothing! **Then shall you call...** What do you mean call? Cry out to God, pray to God. It's a matter of prayer. It's a matter of a relationship with God. **Then shall you call and the Eternal shall answer.** And God is there to give. God is there, because it's being done the right way, it's done according to God's will. It's God's will for these kinds of changes. That's why I think about certain scriptures that talk about whatever you pray and God's going to answer and God's going to give it, some of the things that Christ said along those lines. And people take that, well, it's like... God's not saying you can just pray about anything in life and He's going to give it to you. Says, pray, you ask, and God will give it, in essence, summarizing it. That's not what it's about. It's about it's always in the context of God's will. And God's will is to give us His spirit, His life to live in us. His whole purpose, Jesus Christ's purpose to die was for that. The reason he died was not just to forgive us of our sins. That was just the beginning. The purpose was so that God the Father and Jesus Christ could dwell in us, live in us. And whenever we sin and

we don't repent or we live life out in the courtyard and kind of go through the motions and we're not really being transformed and changing and crying out to God to change us, then we'll begin to live a lie and hypocrisy in our life that isn't real. And God isn't there then.

Then shall you cry, and the LORD shall answer... the Eternal shall answer. You shall cry and He shall say, Here I am. What an awesome thing that you know where God is! *What an awesome thing that you know where God is!* Do you understand that one? How blessed are you that you know where God is, where God is working, what God is doing? Because there are thousands and thousands who were in God's Church many more years than most of you today in PKG, who don't know where God is. They don't have any idea. Not the slightest idea where God is. "You shall cry, and He shall say, Here I am." How blessed are we to be able to have that in our life? Awesome. **Here I am; If you take away from the midst of you the yoke.** So how much more then does that become that much more important to us when we grasp that on a simplest of planes, to even understand it beyond that as far as things we must fight in our life. ...**you take away from you the midst of you the yolk and the putting forth of the finger.** Isn't that what human beings tend to do? "You did this." It's the pointing the finger. That's what it's talking about. It's so easy to point the finger. It's somebody else's fault. Somebody else is to blame. "The Church *made* me do it." That minister, he made me do it. He told me I can't." "He told me I have to do that." Oh, really? Where is your brain? What are you responsible for in your life? Do you...? Anyway.

So be very careful in finding fault with others or looking down upon others or saying someone else is the cause of something in your life, of disappointment or whatever, or... think about that. Think about that. Ask God to help you to "see" those things when you maybe are prone to put forth a finger and not even know it. That's something to ask God for. He'll probably show you. I'm just kidding - He *will* show you. If you ask and desire that God help you to "see" if you're pointing the finger at somebody else and you come to see a motivation of *why* we tend to do that as human beings - because we tend to do that. And so often it's about shifting guilt. It's about shifting our own personal responsibility. So often it's about feeling better about ourselves. The human mind is amazing!

So again here, a part of this "taking away from you the midst of the yolk," involves this as well, **the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity.** Speaking vanity. It's about self. We like to talk about ourselves. We like to hear about ourselves. We like to raise ourselves up, whatever it might be. Now, we have conversations. I understand. Please, there's a soundness and a balance in these things. But what is the primary motivation? There are things to share and so forth, but sometimes the way we are as human beings that's where drama comes from. Drama. Drama. Drama. And then someone heard me talking about drama-drama-drama, and it's like, "Well, you don't want to hear it. You don't care about my problems." Yeah, I just want you to quit causing drama in your life. That's all I desire. Do you know what's causing the drama in your life? Sure I care, but do I want to hear it all? Not a bit. Not really. If you're doing dumb things and foolish things and disobeying God and a lot of your drama is because of your disobedience to God, I don't

have to live through the drama, to hear the whole story, to understand what... Do you realize what you're doing wrong here to cause all this? Why you're feeling this way? Why you're responding this way? Do you not know what you're doing to yourself?

And if you draw out your soul to the hungry... I think about where we are now. You draw out your life. I think about where we are right now and some of the sermons we've had and a focus we have about a book that's coming out and a desire to help this world, a desire to get something out as much as we can, and that we're behind it with all of our being, and then I think of sermons about work; where's our motivation and what do we do? What do we want to do if we're able to do it, if we have... if we're young and have the health and so forth, the motivation and desire, you know, to do it.

I think of situations where I've heard people talk about they had to work 30 hours a week and how hard it is. I think, "What are you talking about? It's hard to work 30 hours a week at a job? And you think it's tough when you do that?" Now, I hear some that are working, you know (I'm not saying people have to do this), but I'm just saying I've heard of some working 60, 70... You've got to be careful of that. You can do too much. You have to have balance in your life as well. But for a period of time to do something if you're able to and you keep focused spiritually? Fine. So be it. But what's the motivation? Is it so we can do more with the calling we have?

I remember a time in the Church where this began to be played down so much that it was like, well, the only reason you're here... it was like minimizing the importance of tithing and giving of offerings to God. And the reality is, yes, we were called. We were called to be a part of. You know, that's what God gives to support His work. He calls people to share in it and some of that, not just some, but really, some of the largest portion of that has to do with what we're able to all share in together. We're all able to be a part of it through a system! It's a system that God established. And God has blessed us mightily with what we're getting ready to do. A lot was saved up over 3½-4 years to help us to do that. But you know, we're getting ready now to push forward and this is what we're called to be a part of, we're able to share in that. To me that's an exciting thing.

And so sometimes when I hear certain things about some, how difficult it is to work and how... and some who *won't*. I think, whew... Anyway.

And so if you draw out your soul to the hungry... Our life, sacrifice our life in order to help give to others? That's a large part of what the Church is about isn't it? A small, small group is going to be able to help in a very powerful way so many people. That's what God's doing. He's letting us share in something that's absolutely astounding, and He's the one that made us so small, for a purpose and by design to show that He's the one who is doing it. But He gives us the opportunity to share in it. And then the reward and the blessings on the other end of this are far beyond what you can ever begin to imagine.

And if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and seek to, as it is, satisfy the afflicted soul... So who's afflicted out here? This whole world is afflicted. Suffering! There's incredible suffering going on out here and people are blind to it. They don't understand why they're suffering. I think of Lot when it says he vexed his righteous soul day by day because of what he saw. And this is a large part of it.

Then shall your light rise out of darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. So there won't be any darkness in any of us, we'll be filled with light, which means we'll be filled with God's spirit as we go through this process. What process? The action we have to take in our own life - of changing self, of seeking to change what we are as a human being, to become something different. Still going to be a human being, but not selfishly motivated like we are naturally as a human being. We want to become motivated by God's spirit.

Verse 11—And the Eternal shall guide you continually. I was thinking about that this morning. How awesome it's going to be... How awesome it's going to be to one day always... always, always, always dwell in God and God in me one day when we're changed. It'll be that way through time, on into time, age-lasting, everlasting, if you will, God dwelling in us. Because as human beings there are varying degrees right now that God dwells in us. And it has to do with us. It has to do with where we are spiritually, where we are in a relationship with Him, where we are in our being transformed and our seeking to conquer and overcome.

And whenever there's sin then we just cut ourselves off and we have to go before God. And we're cut off until we repent. And then sometimes we suffer for a time because God lets us experience the suffering of sin. You know, when God forgives He doesn't take away all the time, sometimes He does, but so often He doesn't take away the suffering you're going to have to experience because of your own wrong choice. See? So sometimes, and oftentimes we make wrong choices, and then there's suffering that follows it for a period of time because if God took away everything, all the suffering all the time, there is so much we would just never learn as a human being and we wouldn't grow like we need to. But this helps us to learn and to grow through a process, that there is great suffering that goes along with sin. And oftentimes there's even a greater struggle than that follow sin. Because once there's sin, and then there's repentance, then the struggle can... and until you conquer. And the desire is then to conquer the sin, to conquer the wrong thinking that leads to sin.

"And the Eternal shall guide you continually..." God's always going to be there then. And that's what our goal is, is that we follow God's guide, live according to His will for all time - nothing more beautiful. ...**and satisfy your soul in drought.** So when things are difficult around, physical and spiritual, there are things that happen there in life to us, especially in what we're getting ready to go through. ...**and make your bones fat: and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.** And the most important of this is spiritual. And that's what it's really talking about. That if we do those things, if we enter into those kinds of battles - and God feeds us spiritually and dwells in us more fully— the more you fight against

yourself, the more God will dwell in you. The more you fight against yourself and make changes, take that kind of action in your life because you acknowledge and you own up to your own choices and you're fighting against the wrong ones and you're seeking God's help in that battle, the more God will live in you, the more God's spirit will live in you, the more you can grow spiritually. It's not a put on thing. It's not a fake thing. It's not something you have to talk about to make it work or to make it... build it up, or whatever. It's just there. It's a power. It's a life. It's a way you think. ...and shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. What an awesome thing that God's... it's like you're continually being fed; you're continually growing and being strengthened more and more.

And you shall build the old waste places: and you shall raise up the foundation of many generations. Beautiful scriptures. ...and you shall be called, **The repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in.** What an awesome opportunity! Now, those who are going to be resurrected as a part of 144,000, this is them in a very powerful way. Those who live on into the Millennium, who are a part of the Church, this is your life now even on a physical plane spiritually with God in you, of what you have opportunity to do, to begin doing it physically and spiritually in your service.

The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. If, goes on to say here in verse 13—**If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your own pleasure on My Holy Day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Eternal.** And so it's not a matter of just "going to church." It's not a matter of walking around in the courtyard. It's not a matter of just going through the motions. It's a matter of the purpose for it all in the first place. It's a matter of *why* we desire and *why* we crave it and *why* we want it and desire it in our life, that this is the most important time of our week. The most important time of your week is when? It's when God feeds you. It's when God nourishes you. It's when God, by the power of His holy spirit, does something that is so awesome on the Sabbath day when we're able to hear things that He's given to us and He opens up our minds and blesses us to drink in of what He has for us.

And our ability to receive it, as I mentioned so many times, just like the Feast sermons. See, they're already done. Now, they haven't been fully given. They've been pre-recorded, but your primarily not going to be listening to those anyway. You're going to be listening to those that are going to take place on a daily basis. And so for most people we're going to be hearing the ones that are given live. So our desire with all of our being should be to pray about those sermons and what is given to us so that we can have one of the most awesome Feasts ever! But even beyond that, brethren, is what we're going to be able to receive out of it individually, whether it be Sabbath by Sabbath or Holy Day to Holy Day, that we do call the Sabbath a delight because it's our delight to come before God in fellowship, yes, if we're able to do that, but most importantly before God, that we're able to drink in what He gives to us.

I think of some of the Feast sermons right now. Some of it partial review, some things to be built upon. But what God has given us is absolutely dumbfounding! And where we are right now is

dumbfounding, if we really "see" it, if we really grasp it and where we're going and what God is doing in us. It truly is.

So, anyway, as it goes on to say here, **and call the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Eternal.** How important is this day to us? Holy... **the holy of the eternal, honorable; and shall honor Him.** And a lot of that has to do with how we think about each other, how we approach each other where we have opportunity to fellowship. Honorable and shall honor Him? ...**not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure.** In other words, it's all about what God's giving us. It's about the opportunity we have because of the design that God has given us for the Sabbath in our life, why it's there in the first place. ...**not speaking your own words.** So the time we spend listening to what God has each week, each Sabbath. Awesome! Awesome! Awesome!

Then shall you delight yourself in the Eternal. So it has to do with our attitude of mind toward God and what God gives to us, how much we cherish what God gives to us. **Then shall you delight yourself in the Eternal; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth.** You see, when I give something like this I think, well, what does that mean to us? We hear something like this and we think, "Well, yeah. I'm doing 'this,' I'm doing 'that,' and that's what I think." And then I think of all those who've gone by the wayside. I think of all those who have gone in the last four or five years. They thought the same thing. They would have been able to hear this at that point in time before they left and think that they were right there, that they're doing the right thing, that this is their mind. That this is how they think about God. And I look at their lives and think, "You weren't even close. You weren't even close."

Then shall you delight yourself in the Eternal; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the Eternal has spoken it. So what an awesome calling God has given to us, and so much of it has to do with our mind and attitude toward Him and whether we treasure what He has, and how much we really treasure it. Because how much we treasure it, just like in what we've gone through today, if we listen, if we're able to hear, I know what our prayers are going to be this following week - more so than what they were maybe before you fasted, if you've already fasted - which most have probably by today have. I think some are still fasting next week. I know some overseas definitely are. But I think there's some, because of different plans they've had and so forth - and that's fine - it'll be next Sabbath.

What are you fasting for? What are you fasting about? What did your fast consist of? Did you go before God? Because if we didn't, if any of us didn't go before God and ask God for help to see ourselves more clearly, if we didn't have at least *one* specific thing that we're focused on that we want to change in what we're doing in our life, then we missed the mark on the fast and probably should do it again within the next month before - not just counting - Atonement. I hope you understand what I'm saying. It's a matter that our fasts, because of *why* we fasted and we humbled ourselves before God because we know we need help. We know we need to change.

So what is the number one thing in your life that you really want to change, that you prayed to God about and said, "Father! Help me to change this. *This* is what I've done. This is what I do to... This is what I've repeated," or "This is what comes out of my mouth at times." Or whatever it is! "This is what I've spoken to someone," or, "This is..." whatever battle it is you have. I don't care what it is. Because everyone has battles. Everyone has things that have to be changed. *No one* is in spirit yet! *No one* has been changed from mortal to immortal yet. And as long as we're in this carnal human body we have selfishness. So what selfish thing is it that you went before God about? What is the most important, number one, selfish thing in your life?

Because if you don't know what it is... Well, you may say, I have a whole list and that doesn't... Well, that's fine! Somewhere, probably, if you really go through that list you'll find that one really needs to be at the top! One is more important to conquer and fight and overcome right now, see, and address more with God and be open with God and let God know. Because you know what? God already knows. He just wants to hear it from you that you want help to overcome and conquer it. See? God knows everything in your mind, everything you think as a human being. See? Truly! He knows your motivation, things that come out of you, and He wants to help us to "see" what's in us. Because He makes it very clear to us - we already went through those scriptures - where we don't know. There are just things that we just can't see and don't know and God has to show it to us.

And so the most important thing about sin is to be able to come to understand the motivation of what led to that sin. It's up here. And only God can show that in spirit and in truth. And so it's a matter of just crying out to God more and more to a point in time where it gets to where you hate the sin so much, you love what is right so much that you come to a point where you conquer certain things in your life, that you would *die* before the sin - that you would prefer that - than to dishonor God.

Let's back up to Isaiah 55. So again, I hope we understand what the fast was all about, that the fast was about examining ourselves individually - *only* ourselves. Because that's what a fast is about. That's what this whole thing, that's what this whole chapter has been about. It's about what things "*I'm*" doing that "*I'm*" making it harder in life on someone else around me. Because that's what it's about! It's about burdens. It's about undoing the heavy burdens, the pointing of the finger, all the things we do when we judge others harshly or we do something to others wrong or we're trying to control certain things in their life rather than trying to control ourselves. And God is saying, "Look at yourself!" That's where change takes place. You have to change yourself. That's the only thing you have potential to control. You can't control others. You can't give this way of life to anyone. You can't *make* anyone think a different way, no matter what you do. You really can't. But you can work on yourself. And that's what it's all about.

Backing up to Isaiah 55. So again, fasting is a powerful tool that God has given us to humble ourselves. And it's really, it's just crying out to God in one of the most humble forms that we can do as a human being and saying, "*I need help!* I need *You!* I want *You!* I want *Your* power, *Your* life within me to help see what it is in my mind, why I..." Whatever thing you're trying to conquer,

think, whatever motivation in life as a human being. "Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life," all motivation starts there. That's where it comes from. But we have to grasp it in the mind to conquer it.

Isaiah 55:1. So again, as I mentioned, fasting is a powerful tool that God has made available to us to draw closer to Him and this is how we're to use it. And this is the purpose of it all. And then as we do these things then God can bless us. That's what He's talking about, this light and so forth, and that more spirit, more of God's life can live in you and then, candidly, God can work with us and bless us in other things in life. And the things we really desire in life, God can then begin to lead us and help us in those areas. He knows what we need, and even what we want. Some things we want we shouldn't have. Some things that we might want in life may not be the best thing for us, you know because it may hurt us spiritually. There are certain things that sometimes happen in our life that are there so we can "see" things in a better way spiritually, that we have opportunity. Because otherwise if certain things work out in our life in such a way we can begin to look to ourselves and take our eyes off of God. And that's the way so much of it works. That's what happened to Philadelphia that went into Laodicea - in the end of Philadelphia and those that lived on into Laodicea.

And so again, coupled with fasting is obviously the powerful tool of prayer. And you can't have fasting without prayer; so again, prayer is such an incredible tool as well. And that's why we're backing up to **Isaiah 55:1—Listen, everyone who is thirsty...** So how thirsty are we? Do we want God's way of life? Are we thirsty for God's way of life? Are we crying out for God's way of life? Do we want to drink in what He has for us? **...come to the waters. And he who has no money, Come, buy, and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.** In other words, there's nothing you can pay for it. God just gives it. It starts with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. No one can pay for that. There is nothing you can do to earn it. God just offers it. So every time we sin we can repent and go before God. What an incredible blessing that God gives to us. And if we are then thirsty for God's way of life and we want more of it, we want to draw closer to Him we have to tell God, we have to cry out to God. And so much of that has to do with why we went through in Isaiah 58 about fasting, why we did it. Because we want to change. We want to be transformed.

I hate selfishness! I hope we can all say that. I hate my selfishness. And I have selfishness as a human being. And anyone who can't say that as a human being, I'm speechless! That's the beginning of change, is to realize we need help. We're selfish! There's not a one listening today who's not selfishly motivated in life. Every one of us is! That's just the way we are! That's the way God created us by design! That's an awesome thing - created us by design so that we would be selfish. You think, "Well, that's God's fault then!" No, there's something we're to learn from that...something we're to learn from that that's going to be expounded upon at the Feast again a little more powerfully.

So, Listen, everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters. And he who has no money, Come, buy, and eat. Yes, come and buy wine and milk without money and without price. God just... He wants to give it. He wants to give that which is on a spiritual plane of such incredible value. There's not one person listening that can really grasp that value to the depth that it really is. But we can strive to and we can strive to appreciate it and grasp it more and more and grow in that appreciation and the value we esteem it to be.

Why do you spend money for that *which* is not bread, and your labor for that *which* does not satisfy? A lot to think about there, as human beings. Anyway, goes on to say, **Listen diligently to Me.** "Listen diligently to Me." You have to work at listening to what God gives. We have to put work into it. We have to put effort into it so that we can hear what God is saying. We have to fight against self in order to hear what God's saying because if we aren't living the way we should be the week before we come to Sabbath services, if we're not esteeming the Sabbath in a higher way as we grow Sabbath by Sabbath, then there are things we're not going to be able to hear because of sin, because of things we're not fighting. And so we hear words but we don't "hear."

Do you think that happens to people in God's Church? That they hear words and maybe have a moment of, "I like that, what was said," and not get a thing on a spiritual plane? Because it happens. It happens all the time. Happens all the time and people continue to go by the wayside because of this. They hear something and they don't "hear" at all. I breathe deeply because I've seen so many. I think of this area here. I'm excited when I come back into areas and I see those who have continued in the fight. I see two over here and two over here, who have been in the fight a *long* while. And two back here too, but I haven't known you as long. Been in the fight for a long, long time and you keep fighting. Do everything perfectly? No, not a one of us has. But we keep fighting. You get knocked down; you get back up. You keep fighting. You go through hard things in life and you keep fighting because you *want* this way of life, because you desire this way of life. And God blesses that. God works with that. Awesome!

Listen diligently to Me and eat that which is good. That means you've got to put work into it to listen, to "hear"! And a lot of that just has to do with fighting self! Because if we're not doing what we need to be doing and what it talked about later in chapter 58 then we can listen to a sermon like today and we're hearing a lot of words, a lot of talking, and maybe even like some of it, maybe you can like all of it and not "hear" *one single thing* on a spiritual plane. That's dumbfounding, but that happens all the time. And I know it's happening today somewhere because this is not over. I know the refining, the cleansing, is not over. Now, individually we want to be refined. Individually we want cleansing. And so we cry out to God for that, and that's great. But there are some who aren't really crying out for that. They don't "see" that they need it. They don't grasp the importance of the fast and what it was about, that they should have been looking at themselves. Incredible!

Incline your ear, and come unto Me. So something you have to work at. You have to be diligent about desiring to hear God, fighting against self, and desiring... You know it talks about the

"fatness" here in the verse before and, "Let your life delight itself in fatness," in what God is offering us, because what God is offering us is awesome! And it's being offered here. It's not being offered anywhere else. It's being offered here. It's where God's spirit is working, very powerfully so.

Incline your ear, and come unto Me. Hear and you shall live. And so we have to make the choice, "I want to hear. I want to hear spiritually what's being said. I don't want to deceive myself. I don't want to not be fighting against and trying to conquer and overcome my weaknesses, my number one, my number two, my number three weaknesses," and whatever those things are in crying out to God about those on a regular basis, trying to fight and overcome them. "I want to hear. I don't want to be cut off from God's spirit." **Incline your ear, and come unto Me. Hear and your life shall live and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.** So again here, that's what God's desire is, is to work with us until we become a part of Elohim. Age-lasting life. God dwelling in us from then on, having achieved and accomplished that which God's design is for us in life anyway, that we be able to be a part of His Family.

Verse 6—Seek you the Eternal while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. That's about prayer! So is God near? Well, how blessed are we that He is, that He's a prayer away? Every time. What an awesome thing to know, to have a kind of confidence that you know that you can go before God any time you choose, any time of day, and God's there. He desires to hear from you. He loves you. He's working with you. He wants you to succeed. He wants you to be there at Christ's coming. He called you for that purpose. He called you for that purpose, to be there. And I think of how many have said, "No. I don't want to be there." I think of how many have come into PKG and ended up saying, "No. It's not exciting to me. I don't want that. Going to go off and do something different." Amazing!

So what does it say when it says this in **verse 6? Seek you the Eternal while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way.** So what is the wicked? Anyone who sins and continues in sin and is not fighting it and not trying to overcome it - not fighting the battle. **Let the wicked forsake...** Fight against the wrong way! Fight! Fight to change! Cry out to God for help to change! That's what the chapter is all about. This is all leading up to Chapter 58 that we just went through. It's all leading up to the purpose of a fast and why we... what we're doing and what our motivation should be.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. It's so easy in the Church of God, and has been ever since I've been in it, whether it be Philadelphia or Laodicea and now this final period of time, to be able to hear something like this and *not* "hear" it, to be able to read something like this and not "see" it, not really grasp what is being said. It's more on a physical plane where it's taken in a different way. "Let the wicked forsake his way." And it's like, "That's somebody else! That's not about me. That's about... That's almost like it might be about the world and God's talking to Israel, 'Let the wicked forsake their way!' but not to the Church of

God." Yeah, this is to the Church of God! See, that's what we need to hear. It's to any mind that has sin.

Do you have sin in your life? Are you in Elohim yet? It's a pretty simple answer. Yes, I have sin in my life; you have sin in your life. Thank God we can go before Him when it raises its ugly head and say, "Father, forgive me," and thank God for our Passover and thank God we have a Passover, and thank God we're able to be able to be forgiven of sin, that we can even repent and that God desires to work with us. That's what we're called to, and that means change. His desire to help us to change, to become something different. So, "Let the wicked forsake his way." Absolutely. We don't want our way. I don't want my way. If we want our way that's even greater wickedness! Evil! "...and the unrighteous man his thoughts." So where is the unrighteousness in our life that we need to get rid of? If it's our way, "my" way, then it's not God's way. My way is not God's way. My way, my selfish ways are not God's ways. And do we have that in our life? Absolutely. Because that's why Paul said after twenty-five years serving God as an apostle to the gentiles, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" And he goes on, "I thank God through Jesus Christ." He explains how. He knew how, but he was acknowledging what he was. He saw in himself we all have this. We're all able to look in a mirror and see things that aren't good. I hate... I hate ugliness of selfishness. Selfish motivation is just sick! It really is. And to change, to be able to have that change in our thinking to where we learn motivation because we're crying out to God to do the right way, to think the right way, to love in a right way.

How often do you pray to love God's people? How much do you love God's people? How much? It's a good thing to ask yourself. Is there room for growth in that? Is there room for growth in how you love *all* of God's people and how we think about them and how we desire for them? What desire do we have for them? That they *are* family? That we're in this together? That we are so blessed to have such a family? How much do we love others? How much do we...? What do we...? How do we think towards them? Awesome to ask those kinds of questions. Because a lot of it reveals how much we love ourselves, how selfish we are sometimes as human beings and how much that needs to be conquered and overcome so we can be more like God, to think more like God toward His Family.

Because, you see, I'm telling you something that is awesomely awesome here. How you think toward others in the Body is how you think towards God. It's the kind of love you have toward the Great God of the universe and toward His Son, Jesus Christ, see? It's measured *exactly* that way. We can deceive ourselves as human beings and in God's Church thinking, "Oh, I love God and I love God the Father and I love Jesus Christ," and if we think that we love people in the Church in a different way and we don't grasp what we're doing - because this is where we're tested, this is where we're tried as to how much we love God, His servants, those whom He has called, those whom He has patience with. Because, you see, He has patience with me. Those whom He has mercy upon, because He has mercy upon me, see? So, a lot being said there. That's years and years and years and years of sermons in the last few things I just said. Years and years of sermons

that hundreds and hundreds and hundreds never heard. They heard the words but they *never* "heard" it. Incredible!

Read it again, **Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Eternal, and He will have mercy upon him, to turn to God.** That's where we need the help to change and become something different. That's where we receive the help to think differently. ...**and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon.** God showing we need forgiveness of our wrong thinking of wrong... of failure to love in a better way. Because if we don't love as God loves, you know what? That's just a failure to love. And those are the things you need to repent of, the failure to love the way God loves us, the way that God loves all of His people. And I fail in that, and so do you, because I'm not God. But I *want* to be more like God. I want to have more of the mind of God, more of the thinking of God. And every one of us should have that desire.

And God says then, **For My thoughts are not your thoughts.** Sometimes we think we understand; sometimes we think we "see" it and grasp it all, but there is so much we have to grow in. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts." That's why we should want to do everything God's way according to God's will. **For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Eternal. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways.** Now, if we think we understand that, we really don't. It's like grasping the universe. *That's* the difference. We only "see" God in a very small way, brethren. We really do. There is so much more. And there is so much we can't grasp and we can't contain it. We don't have the ability to. We can strive to grow in that and strive to appreciate it more and more.

Let's just stop there for today. So with that we'll pick up next time when I speak with *Part 3* of this series.