

We've just completed a seven part sermon series entitled, *Be Encouraged*. And as we went through that sermon we covered a small section of Chapter 6 in the new book, *Prophecy Against the Nations*, and today we're going to pick up in the flow where we left off in that particular series. And the reason for doing this is because this is leading into the focus of this particular sermon series today, which is also captured by what is entitled, *Our God of Great Mercy*. That's the sermon series we're going into now. We heard about that in the prayer, a God of great mercy, thanking God for His mercy. And so today will begin that new series.

The reason we're going into this sermon is because this next section of the chapter that we let off on, and getting ready to go into, and will continue on now, has important lessons that we need to follow-up on at this particular time. And I'm amazed, always inspired by how God builds, leads, and guides and directs us and builds from one thing to another. And we're doing that in this particular case here.

It is about God's great mercy that is being extended to the world and to the Church that was scattered after the Apostasy. But we need to also grasp the great mercy God has extended to all of us through these years, to have now been brought up to this particular point in time that we're so blessed, as we talked about in the previous series here about being encouraged. God has been exceedingly, powerfully, mightily merciful to us. He is a God of great mercy. And that's what the chapter is getting ready to go into and talk about. And so He has given great mercy to all of us to be able to continue on, to be able to continue to fight the fight.

So the reason I'm mentioning this is because at this time there is a great need for the Church to grasp the lesson of God's great mercy in the first place, to be able to know that, to understand it with all of your being. If we don't grasp how merciful God has been to us we're missing a great deal that will affect our response to Him and how we think toward Him and His Son, how we live our lives and so forth. And so it's a matter of understanding who we are, what we are, and truly coming to grasp more fully God is exceedingly merciful to us. We are so blessed to serve such a God, truly! And so we have lessons to learn about this, to build upon. And one of the great ones is that we come to understand that if God has been merciful to us we'd better understand the importance of learning to be merciful to others.

Because there are so many things in how God works with us and molds and fashions us that we need to grasp, that we need to "see," that we need to be able to focus upon. And that should have a change in our thinking, a transformation in our thinking in how we think toward others, because if we're just on the receiving end of God's love, of God's mercy, of God's grace, of the favor that He gives to us in life and we don't *change* and become something different... Because that's the point of it all! We are to change to become more like God, to desire to be more at-one

with Him and that His mind, His life and that of His Son be in us. And that has a great deal to do then with this aspect of mercy, that if we're receiving mercy from God how could we not be merciful towards others in our thinking, in our attitude and how we treat others around us? And sometimes, sadly, miss the mark and miss it way, way too much.

So that's a mighty lesson that we need to learn more fully at this particular time now and focus upon at this particular time in the Body of Christ. This means that we are to become far more forgiving, far more forgiving as an attitude in spirit than we are now. It means we're to learn more fully about God's judgment rather than our own because we tend to judge as human beings. That's just the way we are. We judge. We judge all the time. All human beings judge matters around them constantly. Everyone has their opinions about things and they judge accordingly. We're to learn to judge as God judges. We're to embrace His mind, His being, His thinking, and judge righteous judgment as we're told in scripture to do, to judge righteous judgment. Not to judge by our own carnal, selfish human nature, but to judge righteous judgment. And that has to do so much in relationships and how we treat one another and how we think toward one another. So our own judgment upon others produces harshness and selfishness of spirit and it's not reflective of God's true mercy - truly isn't.

I'm going to read a few scriptures to you just to focus upon at the beginning of this particular sermon, and we'll probably go back to some of these later in the sermon because they say so much and things we need to grasp and understand more fully in our lives.

There is a verse in scripture that would be good, again then, for us to focus upon right now at the beginning of this new sermon series. It's Ephesians 4:32, and I'll just read it to you; the admonition here given through Paul to the Church.

Ephesians 4:32—And be kind one to another. So this is something we're to build upon. All that's stated here in this particular verse, we're to build upon at this time. This is to be a focus that God desires for us at this specific moment in time. "Be kind," because that's what this is about. Being merciful to others is about being kind, being kind hearted in how we think.

Be kind one to another, tender-hearted. Tender-hearted. We're not always that way. And God has allowed over the past many months for things to happen in people's lives from Church area to Church area to Church area, for things to emerge that bring out the reality that this is something at this particular time that we need to focus upon, something that we need to grow in. So we grow along at a certain point and then we're to grow more or we go along and we grow. But there are points where we go to another plateau of strength on a spiritual plane. And that's where we are now. God desires, wants us to understand and grasp the importance now of going on, learning more and applying this more fully in our lives, because He wants to give us more help so that we are a closer body, so that we are a closer family.

We need to have a vision of what God is doing in His Church! And I hope you understand what that vision is. What is His primary focus? What is He doing above and beyond anything else right now as far as the Church is concerned? Exactly what our name says - preparing, preparing us for His Kingdom that's about to come to this earth, preparing us for His Son to return to this earth. The Church is to be at a particular plane and level, as a whole, as far as the entirety of the Body of Christ, and God is bringing us to that. And we will be there, we will all be there, or we won't. And some won't! Some won't! that's a horrible thing. I hate that, as individuals go by the wayside, as individuals make choices in life and embrace something different because they want something different in their life and will throw all this away. Incredible! Incredible what we will do for something so little sometimes in life. The example of a bowl of porridge, a bowl of soup, to give up great blessings that God would otherwise give and offer? Just something so little, so small? And we think, "Now, that was stupid. That was really dumb, to give up blessings that God would otherwise give?" Think, well, I look at all the people who ever left. Some are just little things that get blown out of shape and get worse and worse and worse until individuals are gone. What a horrible thing when God is offering us so much at such an incredible time in human history. Staggers the mind sometimes.

That's why I look forward to a sermon that's going to follow this one, or close behind it, of some statistics and so forth of what's happened in the Church and to think about some of those things and relationships that we've had in times past where individuals have walked to God's house side by side, as the song says, as the Psalm says, and counsel blended sweet. Because when we're together... We share things at the Feast of Tabernacles, probably sharing more at that time than at any other time because more people come together and we're able to share in an awesome way. And we walk to God's house, we walk to Sabbath services together, or once we get there we're able to visit and talk and afterwards go out to eat together, or whatever it might be. And this "counsel" it talks about, "blended sweet." It's the excitement and the things we share, perhaps about sermons, perhaps about things that have happened in our lives, different experiences and so forth and the excitement of how God blesses us and works with us in our lives. And we draw closer together as a family. That's a beautiful thing...a beautiful thing. And God desires that more and more and more of His people, that we truly be very, very close together, that we be readied, *and* be ready for the coming of His Son.

That is the most momentous thing in God's plan that He has looked forward to in terms of time that we can't begin to grasp. Everything in God's plan is built upon, focuses upon His Son and what He was going to accomplish in time through His Son to create Elohim. Because there's no other way. And so this time that's in front of us is far, far, far more important to God Almighty than we can grasp. You can meditate upon it, you can think about it, and you can pray about it, but to grasp it to its greatest depths, you can't. You can't. You don't have the ability. God has to give you the help and the power of His holy spirit to appreciate that in a greater way, to embrace that in a greater way, but to "see," to grasp, to have what God Almighty has... But He wants to share a

great deal of that with us to the degree we can share. But we're exceedingly limited as physical human beings with this small, little brain we have. Incredible!

So "be kind one to another," a closer family, closer Body, and to get rid of the obstacles that interfere with that. And those things that interfere because of human nature and because of how we respond sometimes or act towards others has to change. We're at a time where those are to change, they're to be gone in our lives. We are to clean up our lives in a manner, in a way that I believe has *never been done EVER* to this degree in God's Church because of the coming of His Son and because of where we need to be at that point in time.

"And be kind one to another, tender-hearted." Not hard-hearted! Not harsh to anyone! Not harsh in how we think toward them or treat them - not any of that in our minds, in our being. Because if it is this isn't the place for you! What an incredible opportunity we have to draw closer to God, to become a stronger family. If you feel like you sense that this is family, just wait. It's going to become a much closer family, truly is. Much closer.

Be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another. I've given sermons about forgiveness, where no one, *no* human being has a *right* to hold anything *against* someone else with an unforgiving type of attitude and spirit. Only God Almighty has the right to forgive sin. Only God Almighty has the right to cleanse people's lives, in that respect, and to say, "It's gone," God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. (I hope we understand what I'm saying when I say that.) We don't have that right! We don't have the *right* to judge God's people. Now, that doesn't mean we don't have to deal with certain situations, but there's a proper way to deal with them, just as I have to in the ministry so often, as my wife and I have to in the ministry, and other ministers sometimes have to deal with in their particular areas, because it's a matter of an administration of God's government and God's way within the Body. And so we do those things. But it's not a matter of not forgiving. It's not a matter of holding something against someone. We always... even if it comes down to the point of someone being disfellowshipped, we don't want that! We don't want that for those individuals! We wish they would make different choices! We *desire* that they continue in the Body! We don't *want* them to give up what they've been given. We want them to be able to continue on. We love them, just don't love what they're doing. And it comes to a point sometimes in order for the Body to be stronger, in order for the Body to be protected and helped, things like that have to happen from time to time.

Amazing to me how much has had to happen since the Feast of Tabernacles already, let alone just prior to it. Still going on. Incredible!

"Forgiving one another." We need to be at-one with God, and that means we are more at one with one another in a family, the more we're in greater unity and harmony with one another. So this matter of being kind to one another, being tender-hearted, having a spirit that is forgiving of one another, you know what it means when you have to be of that spirit? When you don't hold something against someone? You don't take it personally. You recognize we all have our

weaknesses and our moments that are short in life and where something is done that is not perfect, that's not right, something is said in a way that it shouldn't have been said. But we're not to hold on to that and keep that against them.

Now, sometimes, again there's a balance in a lot of this. Sometimes some of those things may have to be addressed, and this sermon is going to talk about some of that. But the attitude toward them should never be one of condemnation. Because that's what we're talking about when we're talking about human judgment. Human judgment, our judgment, is so often one of condemnation, that kind of judgment. And we shouldn't have that attitude and spirit toward others. We should always have a desire of spirit towards others of forgiving, of not holding something against anyone, of not wanting to see someone hurt, of not wanting to see someone... whatever it might be. We'll talk about this more as we go along.

...**forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.** Goes right back to exactly what I said about mercy. If we grasp that God has been merciful to us we'd better be learning how to be merciful to others. If God, for Christ's sake has forgiven us, what are we learning from it? Are we learning to be forgiving of others or are we just on the *getting* side, the *take* side? Because I have seen that so much in God's Church in times past leading up to the Apostasy, going all the way back in Philadelphia, especially going into Laodicea, seeing those kinds of things take place - horrible - where people haven't been forgiving, where people haven't been merciful.

Matthew 6, another area of scripture that has so much to do with the message of this particular series. **Matthew 6:14—For if you will forgive people their trespasses...** It's about people, one another, others; it's not just men. Men and women, others, whoever they are. **If you will forgive others their trespasses...** It's interesting to note what's being stated here. This word "to forgive" is a word in the Greek that means "to leave alone, to permit." There's an allowance in your attitude and mind towards others. We *all* make mistakes. We *all* do things that are imperfect in life. We *all* have moments of stress or selfishness that come out in our life that are not good. Every one of us has those things happen in our life. And it's how we deal with that ourselves and it's how we deal with that toward others when they do it that's important. It's how we think then toward them, whether truly we're going to be merciful, whether we're going to take something personal and not let go of it - unforgiving. We're going to take it personal. We've been offended. We've been hurt. Well, those things happen, indeed, but you have to fight those emotions. You have to fight that kind of thinking and deal with it God's way.

"For if you will forgive," to leave alone, to permit. That doesn't mean that you agree with it. It doesn't mean you condone it. It's not saying that. So when someone does something, and this word "trespasses," it's a word that means, "a false step." It's not talking about some major sin that's been done toward you. There are ways of dealing with certain things of sin that we're going to talk about in this series as well. There are things that you're responsible for when there's a matter of sin that's been done by you or by others. You have a responsibility in the Church of God,

in the Body of Christ to deal with sin - in your own personal life and in that of others. You have a responsibility. You can't just sweep it under the carpet. If it is a sin, serious sin, if you will - sin is sin, but there are various levels of sin just as there are out here in the world as a matter of offences. Just like with driving. You know, someone can drive 5 mph over the speed limit when the speed limit is 70, and they may get a ticket for that. They may drive 50 mph over the speed limit. There's a difference there. There's a difference there and there's a difference in the severity of what can happen as a result, and there's a difference in severity of the penalty in life. And so it is with so much of sin. There are different things that affect us in different ways depending on what it is. And so, yes, sin is sin and it has to be repented of, but there are some things that are far more serious and there are things that are less serious that can be dealt with in a different way sometimes.

"For if you will forgive," to leave alone, to permit, "people their false step..." What's that mean? It's not just talking about sin. A false step against God is one thing. A false step if you will, against God's way of life, to do something that is false and not true, not live by the truth that God has given to us and we do something that is against God and take that false step... it's like moving along, walking along and you go on a different path, you go in a different direction. That's what it's talking about when we're talking about God and God's law. That's a totally different matter in life, if you will, as to work on the Sabbath. That's a false step against God, indeed. You've gone in a direction, totally in a different direction than what God said you should live and how you should live.

But sometimes we have something that is done towards us, something that's been done that isn't right toward us, something that maybe is said in a tone or in a way that isn't good, that isn't the way it should have been. How do you deal with it? Are you willing to let it go? You have to maybe address it, but are you willing to let it go and not hold on to it? Because we do have responsibility in dealing with things that happen to us. If someone comes to you and does something very harsh toward you and says something very harsh toward you, it doesn't mean you just let it go right then and there. There may be a need and a responsibility you have of talking to them, of discussing it with them. And sometimes by not dealing with it you create a different problem. Again, we'll talk about some of these things as we go along. But think about some of this in its context about human life.

And so it shows an attitude on a human plane in small things about being willing to allow for or to permit a wrong against you, a wrong step against you, a false step against you, something someone has wronged you in some manner or another that wasn't right. But how do you deal with that? How do you respond to that? What is your attitude toward them? How do you think toward them? How do you treat them as a result of that? Time to look at ourselves. Time to look inward at ourselves. And that's what we're being told here. This is on a small plane compared to what comes next.

For if you will forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Now we're talking about sin against God Almighty for how we're living toward God, our attitude of mind. We're to learn from that. God forgives us of sin, of things far more serious than someone perhaps getting up on the wrong side of the bed, not having their morning coffee, and saying something in a tone or something they shouldn't have said it in. Absolutely! People should learn to speak in better tone. But if someone, because of weakness at that particular moment, for whatever it is, something is stirred up within them... I mean, has anything like that ever happened to you in life where because you're under stress, for whatever it is, and someone comes along and you respond in a way that you shouldn't have because of what you're experiencing and so you take it out a little bit too much then upon them - maybe a lot upon them - and you didn't really deal well with the situation because of what you're experiencing because of your human frame, because the way you are as a human being?

And so might be just driving down the highway. I hear people talking about this often. And so often we respond to the people driving around us and how they drive because we've done the same things in our life, as a whole, most generally. We know what they're doing because we've done similar things in life in how we've treated people. And this goes on and on and on. It's about relationships. And in God's Church it's so important that we focus upon those in a way that God wants us to in how we think toward one another, as to whether we really love one another and how much we really love one another. Because if we really love others we're going to be willing to suffer sometimes... to suffer sometimes. To not to correct everything else in other people's lives. You don't have to correct everything else in other people's lives. What you have to correct is your own life. That's what God holds you in charge to do, as a whole, to correct your own life, to strive to make changes in your own life, to live your life better. We don't have a responsibility to go around and try to correct everything else in everyone else's life, but sometimes we can get in that mode if we're not careful, of trying to correct things in everyone else's life and not seeing ourselves for the things we need to correct. And that has to do, then, with judgment and how we judge others, and fail sometimes to judge ourselves.

But if you do not forgive men their false step toward you, their wrong approach toward you, their whatever it might be toward you. If you're not of a forgiving spirit, if instead you come back with a different attitude and spirit toward them, one of wanting to get back or one of whatever it might be sometimes, the way we respond, the way we react, perhaps in kind. We're not to do that. We're to keep ourselves in control and ask God for help to do so. And we fail in that as human beings, we truly do.

But if you will not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Ah, this is amazing, what's being said here. And sometimes we don't take it to the level and the plane that it really is. Because this is incredible, what we've been told right here. It really is because we're talking about the little ways we can treat others in our life and the small things, in comparison, of how we can hold something against someone else and not let go of it

and just hold on to it and have attitude. See, by holding on to something there's generally an attitude that goes with it. Oftentimes, it can be one of anger, whatever attitude it is. Sometimes there are attitudes that come along and then we're in an attitude of something that just isn't right in life towards someone else, and you can find yourself battling that then. But if we understand what it means to be family, what it means to be forgiving, what it means to understand that we all have certain weaknesses at times and maybe having to address it, yes, but not holding it against them, not allowing yourself to get into an attitude.

Is getting into a wrong attitude toward someone ever justified? Seriously? Is your self coming to a point where you are in a spirit of sin *ever justified* because of what someone else has said or done toward you? And the answer is, no. We *must* learn to be in control. Truly, that's what we must strive to do - of our attitude, of our thinking so that we don't sin against God by failing to love someone the way God says we should love.

"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses." That's big. That's truly big. Because it has to do with how we think toward others.

Finally, **Matthew 18:15**. This is one area of scripture that has *rarely* been lived by people in God's Church the way it should be! I mean *rarely*! Hardly *ever* in Philadelphia did I see it applied. Hardly *ever* in Laodicea did I ever see it applied the way it should be lived. And this one thing alone, if it had been lived more fully in both of those eras of God's Church, the Church had the potential to be far closer together as a body, far stronger as a body. But because this wasn't lived, great damage was done in the Body of Christ, because of people's neglect, because they didn't *do* what they were supposed to do. And so even here now, in this sermon series we're addressing this, because this is currently also for us a bit of a failing too often in the Body of Christ. And hopefully, we'll understand more why it's so dangerous and so harmful if we don't follow up on this.

Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, a false step, hurt you, did something hurtful toward you, whatever that might be. It's usually in words, sometimes in actions, sometimes both. Generally comes across that way no matter what. **If your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. ALONE!** Okay? That's God's way. That's a way of love. That's the way God wants us to do it as a matter of love in how we exercise... This is the *right* way of dealing with such matters. Everything else is false! Everything else is wrong and causes horrible damage in the Body of Christ. Oftentimes to a degree, and gets so bad that I have to become involved, or some other minister, evangelist, or whatever it is, has to become involved in people's lives because it gets so blown out of proportion by the time it is addressed. And that's just wrong.

So, in the Church, because this is happening from area to area to area in many cases in life, too much, and that's why we're addressing it now, because God wants us to focus upon it so that we

can learn the lessons that need to be learned, so that we can become stronger family in the Body of Christ.

So if someone does something that hurts you, that was hurtful toward you, said something, what are you supposed to do? Go tell someone else? Talk about it to someone else? Because that happens a lot in God's Church. That's sin. And really, it's despicable, disgusting sin, it truly is. It's hatred toward a brother. That's what it is. It's not love. It's a spirit of murder. And yet it's hard for us, sometimes, to grasp that. I "see" that in a very powerful way because I've seen it take place so often in God's Church, a spirit of murder. It's not a spirit of love. If you understand what 1st John talks about when it talks about a failure to love others the way that God says to love them, that's what he calls it. Says it's murder. To God, it's murder. To us, if we grasp it on a spiritual plane, it's murder! That's a horrible thing! We think we'd never murder anyone. We can do a lot more damage on a spiritual plane with a spirit of murder than someone on a physical plane in a physical world, because this has to do with the mind and it has to do with a brother and sister in the body, brothers and sisters in the Body and how we think toward each other, and to the degree, or whether or not we love one another in the way we should.

And so if we're exercising God's kind of love, there are certain things we will do when something has happened. And you know what I've found so often? So often if two people... if the person who hears something said to them, or about them, or something is said that cuts them, so often it's a matter of misunderstanding. *So often* in God's Church I've found that these things have begun as a matter of a misunderstanding of something communicated. And sometimes because of our nature we can take things in a way that someone might say in a totally different way than what they meant it. How often is communication misunderstood between people? It's often. It happens often in life that people don't know where someone else is coming from or why they might have reacted in the way they have to something that someone else has said, that someone else who said it didn't mean anything bad by it, didn't mean anything cutting by it, didn't mean anything harsh by it. They meant something totally different that was fully misunderstood. So, so often if people will just live by this basic matter of instruction so many problems can be resolved just like that. So many. But you know what happens when people don't do that? It festers. It festers and it builds up and it builds up and the attitude and spirit toward someone gets worse and worse and worse because it's not being dealt with the way God says to deal with it in the first place.

And the next thing is so often when you go to someone and say, "Hey," and remember it says "alone." *Alone!* No one else should hear it. No one else should be involved in it. And it's nobody else's business. But so often I'm amazed at how people want to chirp about other people, talk about other people. That's just disgusting sin, it really is. And we need to see it for the ugliness of what it is, it really is. Just like putting your head in a toilet that's full. There's a use for a toilet, and when it hasn't been flushed it's not pretty, okay? And it's just like sticking your head there. And if you can get the whiff of that there and see how bad that is when you get a close up view and your nose right down in it, that ought to say something! And on a spiritual plane in our lives

that's what that ought to be like! It just *stinks* to mistreat someone, to not treat someone the way God says to do it. It truly is. It's evil! It's of Satan. It's not of God. God's way is what He's showing us here. It's one of mercy. It's one of patience. It's one of kindness, tender-hearted.

We're not like that as human beings. I hope you understand that. That's the problem. We don't tend to be like that as human beings. On the contrary. We have problems, we truly do, and we're blessed to be able to begin to think differently, to have those problems changed in our lives, in our minds. What an awesome thing to be able to become more of the mind of God. We ought to just hold on to that with all of our being, "That's what I want! I want more of the mind of God, to be able to treat people in the right way, to love people with God's kind of love, not with selfish human love." Because selfish human love always has a motive of something it's going to get out of it. Not God's love. It's just giving because it's right. But not blind giving. There's responsibility in it, just like this.

And so, someone has said something, done something, and you go and talk to them alone. Sometimes it's a misunderstanding. Sometimes it's not. And if you don't tell them sometimes they don't know what they've done to you. So is their spirit and their heart of one of really wanting to hurt you? Is that why they did...? Or was it a moment of weakness and stupidity on their part? And if you can go and talk to them about it, so often you know what? You help them. You help them to be able to "see" something and say, "Oh, I didn't know I did that. I didn't know I hurt you by saying what I did. I didn't realize I came across that way and I don't want to do that. I don't want to be like that. I want to change. I hate that and I'm sorry." What an awesome thing! But you know what, when that's not done things just fester and fester and fester and they get worse and worse and worse until something blows up even worse and worse and worse and things get blown out of proportion to where *then* the ability to deal with attitudes and feelings and thinking toward others, it's a harder job then; it's more difficult. We make it more difficult for ourselves and for others around us.

Does that make sense, what I'm saying? It better, because that's the mind of God. It's the mind that He wants us to have in our relationships with others. And we have to think right toward one another. We have to really learn to love God's people! And to mistreat God's people, not to deal with them in the way God says to do it even here, that's sin. Sometimes the very thing, we can get stirred up by something, we can have something said and it just builds up inside of us and the attitude and spirit sometimes, really of anger and hatred, and we don't realize... "Well, I don't hate them." Or, maybe do you have a little bit of anger you're dealing with there toward them? Can you be honest with yourself and realize that you have some attitude there? That's a tough thing sometimes. And God just calls it what it is, and I see it for what it is - just murder. On a spiritual plane, it's absolutely murder. And when we can come to "see" that, that's a gift, that's a blessing. Truly is. And we'll fight against that more. We'll cry out to God for help more. Doesn't mean you're going to change overnight. You might fight certain things your whole life. But as time goes along you're going to see them clearer and you'll be able to deal with them more speedily

and God will bless you in the process, and He'll bless your relationships in the process, to draw closer and closer.

To go to someone to talk something out, that has to be done with a certain attitude and spirit too (I wasn't going to go into this until later on in the sermon), but that even has to be done in a certain way. You can't go in a condemning way. What's going to get resolved if you go condemning and wanting to chew somebody out? Because that happens a lot. People think, "I'm going to go to my brother alone!" I've seen some bad things happen when people "go to their brother alone," because they go there condemning and judging and are harsh to them and hard on them and don't even give them a chance to say, "Well, that isn't what I was communicating. I'm sorry. I'm sorry you took it that way." And by that time it's so blown out of shape. What a horrible thing that we can let something build up like that to where attitudes and feelings towards others and... Where is the love of God? What happened? We'll mention some of these things as we continue on. But understand the seriousness of it, that if we aren't of a forgiving spirit toward others and willing to go to a brother alone about a matter, to resolve things God's way - because that's how He said you resolve things in order to become a stronger family unit.

Husbands and wives have to do that in life. Husbands and wives who *don't do that* don't have good marriages. They have to learn to do that early on. They have to learn to discuss certain things early on. Does that mean certain things will never happen again? Hardly! Things happen. We have human nature always, always, always to deal with, to contend with, to fight. And it's ugly, and what it can do is ugly. It can be very hurtful. But if we can grasp what marriage is supposed to be like and attitude of parents toward children, what it should be like... We live in a world today where those attitudes, they're so far from the way it should be and how people should think there is not that closeness in life. That's why there is so much dysfunction in life. People don't know how to live toward each other. They don't know what builds right relationships and the work that's involved. It takes work. And the greatest work is against self. Truly is.

So, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. And be prepared, because it's not always their fault. Sometimes it's yours because you just took it wrong, because of something in your past, because of something in your mind, because of something in the way that *you* judge and think. I've seen that happen so often in God's Church, where the individual has gone and talked to someone, that thinks that someone has offended them. They didn't do anything wrong, you just took it in a wrong way because of your sensitivities, because of your thinking. You're in the wrong. So we have to be prepared. And that, again, comes back to judgment and how we think and why we're doing what we're doing in the first place.

So, "Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." Alone. Alone. Alone. Alone. Not to get on the phone, not to get on an email and start talking to someone else about what someone else has done to you. Please, please, please, please, as of today let that come to a screeching halt in God's Church. Because it happens. And sadly it happens way too much. When you do that you sin.

You disobey God Almighty. You disobey the instruction Jesus Christ gave. And that's not a small thing.

And so sometimes we have battles in life because we're not living what we should be living towards others the way we should be living it. And that's sin. And until we repent of sin, you know what? You get cut off from the flow of God's spirit in your life until it's repented of. That's what happens. That's why it's so important to deal with these things on a spiritual plane. Because you don't *want* to be cut off from God's spirit. You don't *want* God's spirit to begin becoming weaker because you're cutting off the umbilical flow there and the blood flow isn't what it's supposed to be. Because that's what we do, speaking of being begotten and having the flow of God's spirit in our life.

If you start quenching God's spirit, the power of God's spirit that can come into your life because of sin, we're fighting against God! We're fighting against the purpose Jesus Christ died for us! We're not repenting and desiring that flow to be very strong and powerful in our lives every day of our life. We have to deal with these things. And sometimes we unwittingly have cut ourselves off from the flow of God's spirit for weeks and months at a time because of wrong attitudes and wrong feelings toward someone else in the Body of Christ. I have seen it a lot in God's Church through time. And it still exists today. We're doing better, but we have a ways to go still and we have a point and opportunity to go to a higher plateau now in how we live toward one another and how we think toward one another, and how we treat one another. And so that's the purpose of this sermon.

Notice the end of this, once you've gone to them alone **...if he/she shall hear you, you have gained**, as to "win over," **your brother**. Because you did it out of love. If you do it out of spite, if you do it out of getting even, or you're going to go to your brother because you're going to show them and I'm applying what God says, "I'm coming to you... I want to talk to you about this because you have..." You really messed up, you know, in how you're treating them. There's a way to go to a brother alone. It's because you love them that you're doing it. If you love someone, how do you talk to them? How do you approach them? How do you deal with such a thing as this? And if you're able to resolve something, what an awesome thing. If someone can say, "I didn't mean it that way. Oh, I'm really sorry!" And even if it was out of neglect and stupidity on their part and they're just careless in what they said, but their heart and their intent wasn't to hurt you and they say that they're sorry, what a blessing. You've resolved it. You can draw closer together. And the other individual they'll see that you had enough care and concern to come to them. That's what they're... With God's spirit, that's what they will see. Now, if they have another problem and respond in a wrong way, that's another issue, isn't it? And that has to be taken care of in another manner, which, some of the verses that follow. But if we have God's spirit actively working within us, you know what? We'll work to resolve differences and draw closer together and be able to say, "I'm sorry." "I'm sorry. I'm sorry that you took it that way. I didn't mean it that way at all." Or, if they're able to say, "Yeah, I did. That was stupid of me. I don't know why. I got caught up. I said

something that way, that harsh. I'm glad you brought it to my attention because I don't want to be like that. I don't want to talk to anyone that way." You've gained a brother. If it produces a spiritual fruit it's supposed to, what a blessing. And that's what this is about.

So now having covered these very basic verses, let's pick up the flow of the chapter where we left off last Sabbath. We had been covering the section that was leading up into the point about the fasts of the Church that we entered into in January of 2009. And there is one little portion of the book that does have to be corrected there. I didn't say it as well as I should have in one portion. But we had two different fasts of three full days - not together. But we had three days of actual fasting in that January. One was the first Sabbath where we were told we were going to have a fast later on at the end of the month. So we actually had two different times of fasting and one was for one day at the beginning of the month and at the end of the month we had a two day fast.

So, anyway, I didn't explain that as well as I need to and I'll bring it up when I get to that point. But that's why I'm calling it "fasts," because there was more than one fast in the month of January of 2009. And first I'll be backing up and reading a paragraph on page 257 under the heading "At One With God." So we're going to catch up here in a little bit, but this is under that section "At One With God."

This experience of a dual test the Church had been given at the end of June in 2008 actually worked to launch the Church forward with greater conviction and focus than ever before. After another six months had passed, the Church had grown to a much stronger level of spiritual oneness with God. This was reflected in what the Church then did in early January of 2009.

Now we're going to jump ahead just a little bit to page 259 where we left off in the sermon series that ended last Sabbath. We're going to pick up the flow here of page 259:

This fast was a powerful tool to bring the Church into far greater unity and oneness with God's very purpose in moving forward in a second date for Christ's coming. In this fast that the Church observed, the desire as with all fasts was to draw closer to God through humbling oneself before Him, as one would focus more on their own need for growth, change through repentance, and transformation in mind (thinking).

That's why we fast. That's always the primary focus you should have in a fast. It's about self. It's about a desire to draw closer to God, to become more at-one, of one mind with God. And that means self has to change, repent, and grow and draw closer to Him. That's what we're seeking to do.

In this fast there were also many prayers that included a petition to God that He might deliver far more people from destruction in this end-time, both in the world and in the Church that had been scattered.

When I go back and read and go through some of these things that we've experienced and gone through and what the purpose was I marvel in how God has worked with us and how He's brought us along as He has. Because it's a process of teaching us. It's a process of this mind becoming transformed and coming to "see" and understand Him far more greatly. Going on:

That was God's purpose all along for the world and for the Church that had been scattered. Through this fast, the Church had been brought into greater unity and oneness with God's purpose. Yet the Church would not fully learn about all that God had accomplished until they could read the pages of this book, and this is long after God already implemented His plans to achieve the very thing this fast was directed to accomplish—that many more might be able to be delivered into the Millennium.

God actually did reveal a portion of this to the Church before 2012 that concerned the Church that had been scattered. God revealed that far greater numbers of those who had been scattered were potentially going to be delivered, although we did not realize at that time that this was not to happen for at least seven years or more from when it was revealed. If Christ's coming had been in 2012, only a much smaller number would have been potentially delivered into the Millennium.

I think about the Church that was scattered. It was already judged. And it wasn't intended that many be given an opportunity to live into the Millennium out of that body. Primarily those who were brought into a remnant were blessed to be able to escape and to continue on and to grow. But as a whole there was so much of the Church that had been scattered that wasn't going to be given that kind of an opportunity and that kind of a blessing to have deliverance, to have God see that they be able to be delivered into that period of time. On the contrary, there was much of it that was just simply to die and to wait another resurrection into the last Hundred Years when it talks about a time when there'll be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." I think of sermons I've heard about that and how people interpret some of those things sometimes, and it's just a lack of understanding of what that's talking about so often in people's lives and what has happened in times past that people believed or thought, that ministers thought that meant.

Because we hadn't yet experienced an Apostasy. We hadn't yet experienced all the things that we went through. And to be resurrected at the end of a thousand years, when you had be in the Worldwide Church of God, when you had had 10-20-30-40 years of life in the Church, and to come to that point in time where you came face to face with the reality of what it is you did and what it is you gave up, and what it is you fought against and that led into an Apostasy? It's on a spiritual plane "weeping and gnashing of teeth." To come to a stark realization of what you had done. Now, that'd be a horrible thing and I'm so thankful that God is going to offer many of those individuals an opportunity to live on into the Millennium. Not to be a part of the 144,000. There'll be frustration and hurt over that. And the only reason any of us have opportunity who were a part of Worldwide is because God has a purpose and God has a plan and He had a remnant He was going

to draw out of what had taken place. And it's because of His purpose, not because of something we did, that we earned it or that we're better than someone else. On the contrary.

It's just like a calling out of the world. It's God's calling and He'll call whom He will, whatever His purpose is. And so often it's not because of how good we are. It's not because of how great we are. On the contrary, God is going to reveal how great *He* is through those whom He calls. Just like everyone who's ever been a part of the Church. That's what God says about a calling in 1st Corinthians. You go through there and read that and it talks about some of those things. Not because of how great we are. On the contrary, God is going to reveal to the world, dumbfound and confound the world by how great He is, by what He's able to do in human beings who are not great, who are not the well known of the earth, who are not the leaders of this earth. On the contrary. That's a beautiful thing if you understand it. And that has much to do with why God's dealing with a remnant at the end-time, why we are as we are, of a size we are. Because it's not by might, nor by power, but it's by God's power or God's holy spirit that He accomplishes and does the things that He's going to do and bring to pass. We're just blessed to be a part of it. What an awesome thing!

So I think of all those individuals and the longing and the desire and what God has been doing. How much is that worth? Now, a lot of you don't know them. You don't know any of those people. I know hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them, if not into some thousands that we have met and known through time. Incredible! And to look forward to a time when so many of them may, indeed, have that potential in their life, if they'll make that choice, to live on into a Millennium? I don't care, what I have to go through in this life if they have that opportunity - so be it! I don't care how long it is. I don't care if something is prolonged even longer. I don't care, if it means that there is greater potential for more of them to have opportunity to come into that age. I don't care, because the opportunity and the blessing for them I count of far greater value. And I hope you do, too. And if you didn't live in Worldwide, if you weren't in the Church at that time, if you weren't in a period of time that came up to the Apostasy, try to embrace that and understand there are thousands upon thousands and tens of thousands of people who have been in God's Church a lot longer than you, who sacrificed, who gave, who did so much in striving to live God's way of life, but became weak at the end, toward the end, and fell asleep. I know what it's like to be awakened spiritually, to have been asleep. And I look forward to them, to those individuals having the opportunity of being awakened themselves.

So how much are you willing to sacrifice in your life and go through in your life to give opportunity in life to others in a greater way? Because that's what it's about. It's about God's mercy. It's about God's love. Have a lot of people I'd love to see at that particular period of time. But I hurt inside too, because I know a lot of them, as well, aren't going to be able to choose it once they *are* given that opportunity. Just because God gives it to 63,000 people doesn't mean they can humble themselves after so long a period of time. Because there's a lot of pride involved, and being asleep for so long it's a difficult thing to awaken out of that and to accept

what God has done, to be able to say, "Yeah, we always knew there were going to be two witnesses." Some will embrace that and some won't be able to swallow their pride and say, "You've got to be kidding me!" "They can't be!" "This is God's Church?" "How big?" "How small?" Because that's what comes across in people's minds so often. And they'll think that, "You've got to be kidding!" and they won't be able to receive it. They won't be able to embrace it.

How many out of 63,000? I have no idea. But it's going to happen. There may be many who *just can't humble themselves* and accept what God has done through the end-time here. Can't give it to anyone, but God's going to make the potential there and give the offering and make a way. So it's up to every person what they're going to do with it later on.

And so this has a lot to do with what I'm mentioning here, of what we're willing to go through for others. What are you willing to suffer through in life for others? Because God's love is about suffering; it's about suffering long. God has had long-suffering with the angelic realm, within the angelic realm, and long-suffering with mankind in ways that we can't even begin to comprehend. When all people turn against You - because as a whole, all human beings have except for one, Jesus Christ - and God has to work with them, to draw them out of that. Whether it be the prophets, the apostles, the people of the Church in the last 2,000 years, God's had to bring them out of that mindset that has been wrong in physical life to begin to work with them to change those things within them as they yield themselves to the process. Long-suffering. Going on:

There is a prophecy in Revelation that speaks of destruction that will take place in Jerusalem where a total of 70,000 people are affected. God said that 7,000 of them would perish in a great earthquake (a great shaking). If the date of 2012 had been fulfilled, this would have occurred within that literal physical city, as this would have then been fulfilled as a **physical type** for a physical city.

And the reason this is in the book is to help us as well, to grow and understand that there are many things that God can fulfill that are written in prophecy, some things on a physical plane, some things strictly on a spiritual plane, some things in both. God has great power and great leeway within those things He's given to bring about His word to make sure that it's going to be true. And that's sometimes hard for us to understand.

Now we're going to pick up where we left off last Sabbath in the sermon series, and this begins on the last sentence on page 259.

Since the date was changed to 2019, God then provided the means for the Church that had become scattered (a **spiritual type** of Jerusalem) to have the potential for 63,000 people to live into the Millennium in a continuing physical life rather than having to wait to be resurrected in the final 100 years of a second physical life. Yet this prophecy also reveals that of the total of 70,000 who are counted among this scattered group, that 7,000 **notable...**

We've had a sermon about that a long time ago talking about what this word means when it speaks of the 7,000, as a whole, and it's a word that means in English more of a "notable people, marked specifically by name." That's why they're notable, because God has marked them specifically by name as to who they are. In other words, they have been judged as to who they are. And you know, this shouldn't be a marvel.

But, anyway, picking this up again: So I'll pick up in this particular sentence here: "Yet this prophecy also reveals that of the total of 70,000 who are counted among this scattered group, that 7,000 **notable**," or marked; and it's a word that has to do with being "(marked and specifically named)," by name as to who they are.

And so I was beginning to say there a moment ago that I marvel about those who left Egypt, and of all the ones of a specific age. And we're talking about hundreds of thousands of people that God did not allow into, to enter into the promised land of a specific age. He was very specific about that. And that was hundreds of thousands of people in that age range, and it was very specific. If they were of a certain age they did not get to enter into the promised land. And it is no different today with a small number, that God has made it very clear here that even though there may be 63,000 that are given the potential, there are 7,000 who have already been judged because of what took place in times past, because of what they did, that they are not going to be allowed into a Millennium no matter what. Could God do that? Absolutely. It means they're going to die. It's not a small thing for God. God able to do anything He desires to do in human life, and sometimes it's hard for us to grasp that. Very specific in number. Anyway, that's what it's talking about.

And the vast, a vast number of those are people in the ministry. They're not going to be allowed to live on into the Millennium because of what took place. God's very specific about that as well, things that have happened, things that are recorded in Ezekiel, things that took place that led up to the Apostasy. Because the responsibility of that not happening *was* in the hands, in very large part, of the ministry, and that means elders who were in local areas all the way down the line, deacons and deaconesses, and so forth, who didn't stand for God's way of life, who didn't stand up for God's way of life in the way they should have when certain things were taking place. And so God's going to see to it that they... Indeed, there will be some weeping and gnashing of teeth in the Hundred Years because they're going to be resurrected and come to see that as ministers who might have served 10-20-30-40+ years, that because of what they did now they're going to have opportunity to live for a hundred years to do what's right, to get things together in a way, to learn major lessons in life that led to an Apostasy, and to repent with all their being for what they were a part of.

So again, it says here, reading on:

This will include many who did not "stand" as they should have for God's Church when they had the opportunity to preceding the Apostasy and in the few years following. Although

63,000 are offered **potential** to live into the Millennium, it does not mean that they all will accept what God offers to them, which means they must also accept His remnant Church and His two end-time witnesses, who are His prophets and the leaders He has placed over His Church.

Awesome thing to understand what God has given to us and to understand human nature and how human nature responds to so many things that take place.

I want to take this opportunity to say something while I'm on this point. May come out in some future sermons as well. But as it says here "These will include many who did not 'stand' as they should have for God's Church when they had the opportunity to." I think of the Church today and how important it is that we *stand*. It's so important to stand up to God's way of life, to not be embarrassed by God's calling, to not be embarrassed... I can't... That blows my mind that any might be embarrassed to be a part of God's Church, to be embarrassed before an employer, employees, family members, whomever it might be in life. If you are ever embarrassed that you keep God's Sabbath, that you stand up for God's Holy Days, that you live this way of life, that you are in the Church of God—PKG, what does that say to God Almighty? What kind of mind will do that? That's something to repent of mightily if that happens. And it exists in God's Church today. I'm just telling you, that exists in God's Church where sometimes people are embarrassed before others, before family, before people on the job.

If you don't stand, what do you believe? What are your convictions? How *deeply* are you convicted of your life in God's Church, that you are God's, that you belong to God Almighty and that you have a relationship with the Great God of the universe and with His Son Jesus Christ? Who are we to cower down to or be embarrassed before others? Where does that come from? What's in the mind that we'd be embarrassed that we're a part of God's Church? What does that say? We should *stand tall* in God's Church! Don't have to be obstinate about it, but you have to be firm about it. "No, I don't keep Christmas. I'm not going to have any part to do with Christmas," and not be embarrassed by that. You keep the Sabbath. You keep the Holy Days. You're going to obey it no matter what anybody else says, thinks, or does toward you. God comes first. God's Church comes first. Everything else is secondary in comparison. And if those things aren't first in our life, who are we, what are we, why are we here?

You know what? God will weed that out. We either have opportunity to change that and work on that now - because that's not going to be allowed to the coming of Jesus Christ. If you are embarrassed in your Savior, if you are embarrassed by His Church, if you won't stand tall and firm in God's Church no matter what anyone else says, thinks, or does towards you *why* should you be there and receive the awesomeness of the blessings that God has in store for you by standing and fighting to the end? We have some in God's Church who are not standing and fighting, and making it very clear, "I am in God's Church. I am in God's Church and you can think of me what you will, but God's Church comes first." God's *Church* because God comes first. "God's Church comes first in my life." Is it? *Is it?* Is being together with God's people first in your life? Is thinking about God's

people and developing closer family relationship with God's people, is that *first* in your life or is something else first in your life? Is it family members? Is that first in your life? Now, we have family. We all have families and you have to deal accordingly in life. But the Church is first.

What does that say to God? Why did Jesus Christ suffer if we're embarrassed in His Body, in His Church? Boggles the mind. And yet some of that still exists in God's Church. And I'm crying out because I understand, I know that's not going to be allowed to exist much longer. God is bringing everything to the surface. And *that* is despicable. Truly is. That is ugly. If God doesn't come first, if God's Church doesn't come first, then what are we fighting? What are we doing? What are we saying toward God?

So I think of all these who didn't stand, for whatever reasons. Pay check? A lot of it was pay check. A lot of it was a matter that they didn't want to shake things from headquarters because they might be demoted. Well, you going to stand for what's right? You're going to stand for God's truth? You going to stand for God's Church or not? That's what it comes down to.

And so we're judged, we're tried in those things as to whether or not indeed in our life God comes first. And anything less...?

So again, continuing on, next paragraph:

In this two-day fast that the Church observed in...

Now, this is the change that has to take place in the book. It's not early because there was an early fast. That was the first fast on the first weekend. I believe it was January the 3rd that year of 2009 when we had the fast for the Church to introduce, to talk about, to prepare them for the fast to follow at the end of the month and we had two days of fasting. So anyway, that's going to be changed to, actually, "late." It's going to be changed to "late" rather than "early."

In the two-day fast that the Church observed in late January of 2009...

And I don't remember who came to me last Sabbath to bring that to my attention, but thank you. I hadn't quite gotten to that point, but I appreciate that. So again:

...late January of 2009 the Church had considered participating in a three-day fast. And the reason it did not do so is because there was a desire not to take anything away from the incredible story of Queen Esther who had called a three-day fast for all the Jews who were in captivity so that they might be delivered from imminent destruction. These captives humbled themselves for three days and fasted before God by not eating or drinking for that entire period of time.

That's an awesome thing! But that's what's recorded for them through time, and should be that way.

It is an incredible story of how God then delivered them.

One of the most powerful means that God has given for people to use in seeking His favor, mercy, help, and intervention in life is to humble oneself before Him in fasting, prayer, and repentance. It is a **powerful tool**.

And I thought I'd just interject here that during that time period of the Year of Dedication, and at least one period of time every month for people to set aside and fast, think about what that did for your life and the strength it gave you because it should have delivered a great deal of strength and focus and helped you to go through certain trials at that particular time. Though some things might have been difficult, God brought you through. And that's why we had the past sermon series about *Be Encouraged*, because you're still here. Don't forget that powerful tool. Use it! Use it!

Going on, "Today is the third Sabbath since the First Trumpet of the Seventh Seal was blown." Wait a minute. Is that...? (What's that? God's love and mercy? Because I interjected, I copied something in here and I think I copied it in the wrong spot. Just a minute. It's on page what? 260? And the paragraph begins, "God's love and mercy?" Oh, the whole section. Okay. I've got that marked.) So what I just read completed that period? Good. Excellent!) Because I copied some things down and I didn't put it in a good place in my notes, so I apologize for that.

What I'm wanting to do, what I was attempting to do, which I may have really messed up here - because if I don't have this totally accurate... I went back and looked at that particular sermon that was given in January of 2009, and I don't have it word for word, I had my own notes. But as I so often do, I don't always go through my notes perfectly. I tend to deviate a little bit and give some different things that are being given at that particular moment in time. And so I thought it'd be good just to go back and pick up some of the things that we focused upon in that particular sermon because it has a great deal to do with some of the things we're reading here and going through at this particular moment.

And anyway, I'm going to read a great deal of this, but it's... Yeah, I messed up. It's not a computer error, it's my error. But I do want to go back and talk about a little bit of that because I think it's going to be helpful in the context of some of the things we're discussing here. And to me it's inspiring sometimes to go back and see where we were at that moment in time and what God was giving us that was really preparing us for things farther down the line. And I find that immensely inspiring and exciting when you can see some of those things take place.

So at this moment in the sermon flow here, and not reading, going on to that next section of the book that you just mentioned under the heading "God's Love and Mercy," I want to read something else here and it is not word for word because I did go through it and try to copy most of it down because we don't have pdf's back at that point in time, back in 2009, so I had to listen to it and try to copy it down. I have more appreciation for those who do the transcribing (Kalee

up in Canada, who does that). It's quite a job. So anyway, and those who also not just transcribe, but also translate the book. But transcribing is not an easy thing when you're listening to a voice and you're trying to get it all typed out exactly the way it's stated.

Anyway, having said that I do want to go in and read the introduction to that particular sermon and some of what was stated in that sermon that was entitled, *Fasting For Humility*; and I'm just going to read through the introduction of this. And you might want to go back to it at a later time and even listen to it, because I find it incredibly inspiring. So this is where I was stating here, going back to January the 3rd of 2009:

"Today is the third Sabbath since the First Trumpet of the Seven Seal was blown. Today is the first Sabbath of a new year on the Roman calendar, and today we're humbling ourselves before God. We are fasting. It's indeed so appropriate that we are fasting and humbling ourselves before God. We acknowledge by doing this that we are in a wilderness. As God took the children of Israel out of Egypt He has brought us out of Egypt, but we're still wandering around. We are not where God is leading us - not yet."

Now, at that point in time we fully thought it was 2012, but this means all the more when you realize what's being said.

"We are wandering around in a spiritual wilderness out here. Everything around us is so confusing, so upside down, twisted, and distorted, and we long for God's Kingdom being here. It's important that we continue to draw closer to God, that we keep on guard."

And I think of all the sermons that constantly talk about that, the need to be on guard spiritually, constantly on a spiritual plane. Going on:

"God has taken us out of Egypt. We have not reached the promised land. We are unique because we know how long it is before that time comes."

At least we did at that point in time. That's what we believed. We lived it all the way to that Pentecost of 2012. Going on:

"But nevertheless, we are wandering still and there are things that we do not know, things that God will reveal to us in His time."

And little did we know. But He let us continue to go on and to look at that particular moment in time. Going on:

"And I believe as a body, as a group we are better equipped now than we were several months ago to be able to follow in faith, to exercise faith more fully in our lives. What value would you place on that? ...do you place on that? ...of whatever you have to go through in life to be able to draw

closer to God? ...to be able to be more at-one with God? ...to have greater confidence and boldness in what you do, whatever it takes?"

Now this is referencing back to what happened several months earlier when the change took place because of the matter of Trumpets and Pentecost and understanding the timing of Christ's coming would not be on the Feast of Trumpets, but would be on a Pentecost, and what the Church went through as a result. So this is in context that we were "much stronger by this point in time in January than what we were several months ago when that happened." Because that brought out some things that needed to be looked at very closely in individual's lives, and some who failed because of that period of time, several in the ministry; too many.

So again, "We do not know where to turn or when to turn until God tells us. We do not know when to move forward or to stand still except God tells us. And we are learning *how* to do that better. God has been preparing us for that for a long time. So we humble ourselves before God and we know He will lead us in all these things. Not to worry, not to fret, but just to move forward in faith."

That's our lives. That's always been our lives, no matter what obstacles, no matter what comes along. And so I find this inspiring to go back and think about the context of what was being said then that really has a great deal to do with where we are now. Going on:

"That is the way it has always been. But we're learning things about faith that we have not known in times past. We have more fully learned *not* to trust in ourselves in judging *how* God leads us. We have learned more fully not to be offended in God's way of directing our steps," referring here then to the change of the Feast observance for 2008; talked about that.

So, not only were there certain things here addressed concerning Pentecost and Trumpets and when Christ would return, but also in that particular year of 2008 there was another rumble that took place in the Church that tried people. And that was that the Feast of Tabernacles was only going to be sponsored in a specific location for half the period of time, and the rest of the time people would keep it on their own. Boy, did that try some people! Is this of God? Is this something we can do? Or is this wrong? And some people judged it as being wrong. And because they did, they're not here today. And I'm talking about in the ministry as well. And so God tries us from time to time to see how we follow Him, if we follow Him, if we grasp how He works with us in our lives. And so there are judgments that people had to come to in their life. If you are told that this is a place you can come for a period of time to observe God's Feast of Tabernacles together then you're exceedingly blessed and you can keep it there. It didn't change the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles being eight days, counting the Last Great Day. It didn't change that at all!

It's just like people do, have done this past Feast. There are a lot of people, because of age, and because of inability to travel, or perhaps because of finances, that keep it in their home. And we have the means to do that today in a way that didn't exist in times past. They didn't have the

internet. Today we're able to keep in touch in a different way. And so if God tells His people this is how you're to observe it then we have choices to make. And it all goes back to what do we believe? Do we understand how God works with us? Do we understand God's Church? Do we understand how His spirit works in our life? And so there were people tried in that.

So I want to read that again, " We have learned more fully not to be offended in God's way of directing our steps," and referencing here, in change of the Feast observance for 2008, "not to be embarrassed due to pride because of the way God leads us," referring here to the timing of the revelation of the 50th Truth that I just talked about, "and God has been humbling us so we can more clearly see the need to follow Him in greater conviction of unity, oneness," and that we cannot afford to be in disagreement or to be judgmental of His guidance.

It really tries us then. And so God has tried us at different times how we follow Him, *if* we're really following Him, if we really grasp His Church and how His Church works in our life, how His ministry works in our life. It's always been that way in God's Church. From the days of Paul and Peter and John and the things that they taught and people who grasped that and people who failed to grasp that, and some that Paul had to mention by name because they no longer followed him, because they no longer followed the truth as he followed Christ. He made that very clear - early part of the Church. And so people are tried in, do you grasp your calling? Do you grasp how God has called you and how He's given you the truth through - candidly, through whom He's given the truth. That's just the way God works. It's not about lifting up Mr. Armstrong. It's not about lifting up any apostles. It's not about that at all. It's about do we grasp how God's spirit works in our lives? So people have been tried by that. And if people really grasped that in times past they would have never resisted Mr. Armstrong. They would have supported him more fully. They would have been "behind this thing," as he talked about, in a very powerful way. They wouldn't have been shaken by Pentecost, when it came along, as the majority of the Church wasn't shaken. The majority of the Church was excited by the change, had faith in the fact that this was God's leader on this earth under Jesus Christ and that God would reveal just like we'd received everything else through him, that God would reveal to him what we needed. And sure enough, at the end of that year, before Pentecost of 1974, Mr. Armstrong revealed it, "We're not going to keep it on Monday anymore, we're going to keep it on Sunday, on the proper day. This is what God has revealed to His Church," and gave the sermon and the scriptures that supported it and backed it up and revealed to the Church what God had revealed to Him. Because that's the way it had to come. It couldn't come any other way.

Anyway, incredible what we go through sometimes to learn how God works in our lives, to understand God's spirit, to understand the flow of God's spirit, to understand how we're able to be part of the Body of Christ, that there is a mechanism, a means, a way that God molds and fashions us in this life and how He's molded and fashioned the Church over the past 2,000 years. Going on in this sermon then:

"So today we are fasting. We are seeking to humble ourselves before God and seek more fully His forgiveness. Today is about soul-searching, which means we accept more fully the depth of our sins, of what we have done in our lives and our guilt for how we have let down at different times for not doing the things we need to do."

And at that particular time it was still talking to some who weren't with the program, who were still fighting and resisting what had happened back in June (late June) concerning the truth about Christ returning on a Pentecost. Continuing:

"So we have begun to more fully grasp the ugliness of pride." And it was a wake-up call for a lot of people at that particular time, to grasp how close... You know, we can hear stories about what happened in Worldwide. You can hear stories. Those of you who have never gone through those kinds of things, you can hear stories about things that have happened in Worldwide, or what happened in times past in scripture, but especially things that happened during Worldwide that we talk about a great deal, and even the change in the matter of Pentecost from a Monday to a Sunday. And you can hear about those things and the rumblings of the Church and it... though you believe it and you know it happened, to really grasp *how* some of those things could take place and how people could do some of the things they did and how there were people on two sides of the fence, that some criticized Mr. Armstrong because he didn't make the move fast enough, and others the fact that he might be going to and looked like he was going to make a change. Both rebelled - from two different sides of the pendulum there and went off on different courses in a different way, their own way - and didn't follow God's apostle, and didn't receive in the timing that God had given what was being revealed.

So again, we can hear these stories, but it's hard for us to grasp it. And some of us are here - not necessarily right here in this location - that came along even later than what happened here in 2008 when we came to a point in June, when a sermon had to be given early. Because it was supposed to be given - God had given to me very clearly that it was supposed to be given on Trumpets, a truth, a new truth about the awesomeness that Jesus Christ is not going to return on a Trumpets but on Pentecost. But because of what was taking place and some of the rumblings of some of the people getting some of the ideas of indeed there was a change coming, that it couldn't wait. And there were a lot of grumbling, too much grumbling that began to happen in the Church, just like they did back in 1974.

So we can hear things like this, but, you know, we all have to be tried at different times as to what we will do. So we've gone through things in 2012; you have. What an awesome thing! You may not have liked it, but what an awesome thing because of what you experienced and then this last series we went through to be encouraged that you're still here. Because it's by the power of God's spirit that you have that opportunity, and God's mercy that you're able to continue on, otherwise you can't humanly do so. It requires help from God. So be excited about those things, that you can continue on. And where we need to make some changes in our lives, make those changes.

Those who are not standing for God the way they should better make some quick changes, because I really don't think you'll make it to the next Feast of Tabernacles if you don't. I remember talking to two ministers - and I've told you this over and over again, because the lesson is so profound and so important - and I told them, "You don't have any more time. You have to decide right now who it is you support, what it is you support and back. Me, as a pastor and a minister in this area, who's continuing to hold on to the things Mr. Armstrong gave, or another way that says the Holy Days and the Sabbath are done away with and you can go now and eat your pork? So which one is it you're going to back and support? Because you don't have any time." And I could see the attitude, and I got a little stronger. "You. Don't. Have. Any. More. Time! The Church is depending upon you as to how you respond to what I'm doing, because I'm resigning. So what are you going to do and what are you going to support?"

God tries us at different times in our life. And He also reveals at times that indeed you don't have any more time. And I am crying out to those who are not standing - and we have too many - I don't ... I do care (please understand what I'm saying), and I don't - if we end up with fifty people who continue to go forward and are able to meet Jesus Christ at his return, so be it. If we have twenty, so be it. I know where I'm going. I know what I'm doing. And I know what some others are doing without question. But what are you doing? And I'm just using that to show you the numbers; it doesn't matter what the numbers are. So whether there be a hundred left... You think that's possible? That before this is over with over the next two years, that we might only have a hundred who are in the Church of God—PKG? I'm telling you it's possible. It's possible. And so we have to search out our own lives: What does God's Church mean to us? How much are we willing to continue to fight? You don't have much longer.

It's like being in a race. When I talk about races I think of the one I ran in Bricket Wood, 3½ miles. Killer! I'm a short... I'm not even a runner anymore, obviously, I can barely walk. But I think of this particular race we were on and most of the student body was involved in it. And if you didn't get yourself involved in it it was like something's wrong with you, if you're not going to enter this race. Well, some chose not to, but there was that kind of peer pressure going on there. And I'm a hundred yard, hundred meter (whatever it is) racer, 400, 440 yards, 400 meter, and anything beyond that I need a canteen or something to keep me going, some injection of something, because long distances, I've never had it. My lungs, I've inherited bad lungs. I know that.

Anyway, 3½ miles we ran. There were so many lessons on that particular race I'll never forget. We were only, like, I'd say maybe a mile into the race and an individual who had everything going for him, who was a student leader in college, a year ahead of me, had family, many in the ministry, one who was an evangelist. He had everything going for him, but he couldn't take not being in the first few up front. He couldn't take it. And it was so clear and so obvious I learned such a powerful lesson from that. He quit the race right there. Barely getting started. And I've seen that happen in God's Church over and over again, individuals that have everything going for them on a

physical plane. But that's not what's important, it's the spiritual plane that counts. It's what's up here and what's in the mind.

But anyway, not to get too distracted. A lot of other lessons along the way. But you know the one, the next biggest, greatest things is that last portion. I remember some hills over the farmland area we had there in the back, and all of a sudden we came up to this one area and the straightaway coming up to the finish area, and I was nowhere at the front, but you keep running. And there were lots of people out there still running. But that was the hardest part. The last half mile of that 3½ mile was the hardest part because you have to fight with your mind. Your body, especially if you had my body, it's crying out, "Stop, you fool! I can't go anymore!" And you have to fight against your thinking. Because you can, but your mind and everything is telling you you can't do this, and you can. And you know, our lives on a spiritual plane are ... you have to fight. You just have to keep fighting. And we're in the last part of that race. And I just *hate* it when I see people give up. I *hate* it when I see people not fighting. I *hate* it when I see people who are embarrassed to be a part of God's Church, who won't stand up to different ones at work or whatever it might be. And I think: Stand tall! You belong to the Great God of the universe! Who are *you* to cower down? Who are *you* to be embarrassed? You should be encouraged! You should be *excited* to be who you are, to have the power of God Almighty living in you! To be *blessed* to have God's spirit living in you! How awesome is that! What value is there in that? Who is it you should cower down to?

Why cower down to anyone? Why cower down to any human being, I don't care who they are, because you won't stand up to them? You can't do that in God's Church. You can't cower down to other human beings, because that says volumes if you do, it truly does. It says volumes to God Almighty and to His Son Jesus Christ who was whipped and beaten and bloodied and skin ripped off of his face for you! And so to have that in your life and to have that relationship with your elder brother, that he is your elder brother, that you love him, that you look forward to seeing him, what an incredible thing!

And to take that for granted? To take that for naught? And to not stand up to individuals, an individual or individuals who may not be there much longer anyway. You don't know. Now, hopefully people we know and love are going to come through all this, but oftentimes that depends in large part the favor their given, even though they might be obstinate and whatever they are in life. The best way you can help anyone in life is by living God's way of life faithfully with all of your being, with all of your might, to love God and to fight. That's the greatest gift, the greatest thing you can give to anyone. And God looks upon that in a powerful way, truly does.

So think about those things. Because, I'll just make it a little stronger: if you don't do it you will not be in the next Feast of Tabernacles. If you understand what's just been said, you'll receive that. Because there are things that God will bind on earth that He binds in heaven, and as His apostle I'm stating that very clearly, which I believe is by God's spirit as well. And I hate to see that happen to anyone in God's Church, to lose out, to lose out this far along, at this point in the

Church. What a horrible thing to not be able to continue on through the rest. But it's happened a lot before the Feast and it's happened a lot since the Feast, and it's going to happen some more. Don't let it happen to you. Fight! Fight! Ask God for power and strength to be able to stand fast and to repent of ever being embarrassed to be a part of the Church of God—PKG.

Naturally, I lost my place, and you can't tell me where I was because you're not following along. You don't have these notes. Want to read this paragraph in its full part here:

"So we have begun to more fully grasp the ugliness of pride and how quickly the human spirit can turn against God. We can turn quickly against His servants," now, this was a part in my notes but I didn't read it at that time. "We can turn quickly against His servants, against His truth. So we see we do not have all the answers to every way that God will lead us and how He will bring about the full end of this age." And I forgot to mention here there was another paragraph that was in my notes that I did read to you that wasn't in that sermon. So, anyway, I've read it.

Going on: "Most of you do not know the kind of danger we went through back in May and June in what took place in the Church, but we're to learn from that," and we're still to learn from that, "and become more convicted that never again, *never again* will we let down in whatever we did. *Never again!* We can't afford to. We are entering a time period - we are already in it - that we cannot afford to do those things." True then and true now.

Then there was a particular letter read, and I'm not going to go through that but it might be good to actually go back and listen to this again, because it's very inspiring what was stated and what was covered in this part of the introduction of that particular sermon. But I think we'll stop there today and pick up next Sabbath in this section in the book where it says - because so much of this has to do with going in this direction - that we grasp deeply this point about God's love and mercy. That's the next heading we're going to go through that's on page 260 there toward the bottom. And again, with this sermon that's entitled, *Our God of Great Mercy*, and to understand and learn from that, brethren, if we grasp how merciful God's been to us that we, at this time, need to ever be more merciful and loving and caring toward one another.