

Today we're beginning a new sermon series. It's entitled, *God's Form of Governing*, and this will be *Part 1, God's Form of Governing*.

Ever since the meetings that were held back in November that included all the international senior ministry I've wanted to give this particular sermon series. I knew that I was supposed to give this particular series and now we're at that point where it's time to do so. I also knew that I was to cover a small portion of what was addressed at those senior ministers meetings as well, as some of it's rather shocking. It was to me when I finally put together some of the things that we went through as far as some of our history, and rather sobering. It was definitely sobering and somewhat shocking.

A couple of weeks ago when I began to think about this series a little more fully, since I knew it was going to be the next series, I went back to review a very closely related series that was entitled, *Lessons From The Ministry*, or *Lessons From A Ministry*. Then last week after Sabbath services there was a big meal planned down there in Cincinnati, and a bit of a surprise of something that I didn't know was going on at the time until the very end, until it was too late, but I didn't realize that many had travelled into Cincinnati to help in celebrating my one year anniversary of being back, and a freer man at that. So I really did appreciate that, but I'm not real keen sometimes on surprises. But it worked out good.

But just before the line through the buffet was to begin a toast was given, and a bit of an embarrassment to me, I have to say, on my part. Those things are a little awkward. But in that toast to my being back the pastor who gave it went through a rundown in a review of the list of the names of the series of sermons that had been given over the last year. Well, it was at that point that I marveled a bit at the fact that the series entitled, *Lessons From A Ministry*, began to be given a year ago in mid-February. Sometimes I just mention that on the side because to me sometimes things are amazing how they work out because I don't plan ahead except to know that something's coming. Even this series here, I didn't know exactly when it was to begin, but this is the way it worked out, started planning for it, and sure enough, one year ago giving that particular sermon. Now again one year later we're going to build upon what was given back then.

That's the way it's been with a lot of things. I marvel at how God builds, at how He works in our lives and constructs what He is. It's an exciting process to live through. It's an exciting process to witness and to learn from because you can learn a lot of things by what God does and how He does it, just like in that series, talking about that and looking at the progress of things that God has given in an order; it's inspiring, it's exciting. Again, you can learn so much from those kinds of things.

Anyway, the title and subject matter of this sermon series to me is really quite profound. It's one subject that all must come to more fully grow in understanding and become in greater unity throughout the years of their spiritual development in God's Church in their spirit begotten lives. So this is a subject that involves one of the greatest areas of training and teaching, molding and fashioning, convicting and transforming that God has worked in my life to create in me. He does it in all of us if we recognize it. I think because of the uniqueness of what we've gone through, probably in a focused way as well in my life, because I've experienced some of those things, and I can look back and see and understand in a very powerful way what God has done, to come to understand in a greater way God's form of governing in our lives.

So as I think back to my very beginning in God's Church and the many years under the tutelage of Herbert W. Armstrong, as those who were in Worldwide had that training and unique experience, it is his sermons concerning this subject of government that ring out the loudest in my mind, in my memory. I can hear him. I remember phrases, things he spoke, things he said at (to me) every Feast of Tabernacles. He focused on this subject of government.

It is so important to understand and to understand why God wants us to grasp the importance of it, because of what happened from the very beginning, because there was a being who went against God's government and way of governing, if you will, and chose a different path and led a third of the angelic realm in his direction. Then God created mankind and mankind from the very beginning didn't want God's form of governing in their life and because of that we have suffered ever since, human beings! It's not just Adam and Eve; it's because of human nature. It's because of the way we're made and created - for a purpose. God made us this way in this weak form for a purpose! It's one of the things - there are so many things - but this is one thing above so much else, of everything else that we have got to grasp and be so deeply convicted of with every fibre of our being.

God must be first! Everything that emanates from Him, that comes from Him through life, especially through the power of His holy spirit, it's about government. It's about governing. It's about how we live life. God's laws are about governing, life, how we respond, how we respond to God, how we live toward God. Now, in time we're not going to need those laws, because that's just the way we'll be, because we will be in the form of the way God governs. We will be at-one with that and God will be in us and we'll be in Him for all time, but it's the point of getting there and coming to that point that there are things we must learn and be deeply convicted of.

So again, I think of Mr. Armstrong and those sermons that he gave over and over and over again. I also think of the Apostasy and things that followed after that and people who talk about God's government who either never got it or lost it all. That's the number one attribute that was attributed, the number one truth attributed first and foremost to Mr. Armstrong of the 18 Truths and there's a reason why. There is a reason why God had our focus upon that more than any other. This, after Sardis, this is what we were to learn. This is what we were to come to understand in a deeper way. This is the first. This is where you begin, in large part, to grasp and comprehend how

God's spirit works. This is something that I've always marveled at in God's Church, if we could have just grasped those things more deeply and been convicted of those things more deeply we wouldn't have had as many troubles and the kind of suffering within the Body that we had. But we've learned through that and there are reasons why God allowed for that.

So again, when I think of my life I think of this and I think of how important that was that that was embedded in my thinking very early on: God's government. And because of the respect of God's apostle, the respect to Mr. Herbert Armstrong, the understanding of how God was using, molding, and fashioning him to lead the entirety of the Church through Philadelphia, it meant that much more.

Then we experienced the Apostasy and those things that led up to it. Some of us experienced what it was like to be without a clear structure of true government within the Church, all of us who were a part of that, who came through that. We saw what it was like to have members and ministers without a clear focus of God's will for their lives, and of seeing what it was like for members and ministers to express their own opinions about God's form of governing in their lives, and that of or for the Church. A lot of opinions happened after the Apostasy because of the scattering and what took place. We had to go through a lot of things in order to get back on track, to get to a point where God could begin to work through us again as a body. That's why we had 3½ years, so that we could get things back on a right track and recover from, in one sense, what we had gone through, to shake those things off and to be so focused that we could then go forward with great power and strength and conviction about what was right, to do whatever is needed, whatever is right to follow God and to put God first, and to understand, indeed, His form of governing.

So as a result of that Apostasy and the aftermath, we witnessed much confusion, division, disagreement, doctrinal pollution, the twisting and distorting of truth, etcetera. It was a mad house, massive confusion, because the Church had lost that by the time of the Apostasy. We'd become so weak. So those were the things that took place. People wanted to build bridges, different doctrines, different ideas, and somehow you're going to come into unity and oneness with God by building a bridge to somebody else that has a different doctrine and belief about Passover or Pentecost, etcetera? It doesn't work. It doesn't work! God's spirit doesn't work that way. That works against God's spirit. So mass confusion resulted and continued on...and still continues to this day.

Yet in the midst of all that massive confusion, always in the midst of all of it was great ignorance (and that's the problem), of God's form of governing. It was gone. It was lost. So I think about my history when I go through things like this. I think about what I've gone through to get where I am, to be able to see what I see. And all, especially who went through the Apostasy, have to do the same thing. All who are a part now that came in after that can learn from those things.

I don't want to go too much farther before I do mention here as well, that this particular series is entitled, *God's Form of Governing*, but I mentioned a particular sermon that was given, a series about a year ago concerning *Lessons From a Ministry*, and the reason for that in large part is because we're going to go through a few of the things. As a matter of fact, the very beginning of that sermon is something we're going to repeat here today as I get into it, but the reason for that is because there is so much we can all learn. It's like what took place as far as God revealing to us the rightful place of women. Seven years later, it has been given to the Church, God's purpose, and God's mind and God's attitude to what is going to take place, and wanting us to grasp and comprehend what's going to happen at the return of Jesus Christ. That God's setting the world straight from that moment forward and He's starting ahead of time within the Church because we have to learn it within the Church and have things correct and proper. So a little bit has been added, on and on we go; things about the ministry, things about ordinations, things about responsibilities, and things that men and women serving God do, can do, should do that God is setting right in the Church first.

I marvel at that. I'm excited about that. I marvel at how God revealed those things to us, but I also understand in a very powerful way that we couldn't have had the series we just went through a week, a month, a year later from when God first revealed it because we wouldn't have grasped it in the same way. We wouldn't have been able to understand it in the same way. And sadly, I believe there would have been some who would have gone by the wayside because they couldn't have taken it at that time either. Okay? So God works in powerful ways because He loves us. He understands us. He works with us. He molds and fashions certain things in our lives so we begin to practice and learn it and then as time goes along it's time to reveal more. God's timing is perfect. God's molding and fashioning is perfect in our lives and it depends upon us as to whether we yield ourselves to the process. If we do, it's great; it's awesome.

So some of the things a year ago concerning *Lessons From A Ministry*, you don't have to be in the ministry to learn these lessons. That's what's so important to understand. Okay? And in some cases you can be thankful you weren't. Okay? Because there are many who have been ordained in time who could not handle it and have gone by the wayside for lessons to be learned. Okay? It does a lot of things to the human mind, even in God's Church. To those who are ordained and to those who aren't ordained there are lessons to be learned, because its coming to a greater understanding of how our human minds work, how we think, and why we think the way we do. That's why when we get to 1 Peter and start going into some of that, that's why I've talked about those things so often. If we understand who we are and what God's given to us that isn't the important thing to understand and grasp. There is something far deeper and far more important to understand about our calling, who we are, what it means to be begotten of God's holy spirit.

So anyway, great lessons to be learned. So we're going to talk about some of those things and some of those things are going to be talked about throughout this particular series, about *God's Form of Governing* because it's a powerful teaching tool. We in God's Church have never

experienced, we don't have a history - not in Paul's time, not in Peter's time, not in Mr. Armstrong's time - of God working with the Church in the same manner as He is at this time. This is unique to us. There are reasons why God works with people in different ways at different times too. This being one of them, that it's a matter of following God in faith and God revealing certain things and whether we are convicted of it as God gives it to us, if we are convicted of how God works and how God governs in our lives. There is much to be learned from that. So it has a great deal to do with whether or not when we're told to turn right we turn right, or whether we resist and dig our heels in, because many have gone by the wayside who have done just that, or turned to the left and we turn to the left. Now God is revealing to the Church things about women in the ministry and grasping that and supporting that and understanding this is just the beginning. There are things we don't know and don't grasp and understand fully what God's going to give as time goes along, but there's more to come. Whether it happens before Christ's return I have my doubts because we need more time to even digest what we've been given to this point in time.

So it will likely be after Christ has returned and he'll continue on to show us what families are supposed to be like, what marriages are supposed to be like, what home life is supposed to be like, what community is supposed to be like, because for 6,000 years it hasn't been like it's supposed to be. For 6,000 years it has not been what it's supposed to be. So you can't have the Millennium without setting this right first. Do you realize that? You can't have what God's giving in the Millennium and what He promises in the Millennium until this is set right first. This is the first thing that has to be addressed because it was the first thing that happened in the Garden of Eden that went wrong. Powerful, what it did, and it's the first thing that has to be set right so God's Kingdom will be right. Powerful if we grasp and understand.

So I'm mentioning some of this about the ministry because that's how we learn, that's how we are to learn in a unique way because within Worldwide, as an example, when someone was in the ministry, it was for life. It was like Mr. Armstrong's in it for life so we're all in it for life. Well, most all were in it for life because of health issues and so forth, different things that happened. There were people who no longer were given those responsibilities, but as far as the ordination, they were still recognized for that particular role, and so forth. But not now. And so it's a change. We have to adjust to the change. How do we do that as far as our human nature is concerned? Because of our history and our past sometimes we think that if something isn't a certain way that something's out of kilter, something's wrong. No, it's just a different way. It's just a different way. It's a different process. It's something else that God is working and speeding up the process of learning and being able to grow, because this life is not about ordinations. Being in the Church of God is not about ordinations. It's not what it's about. But God's form of governing and understanding that and understanding how God's spirit works, to yield to that, to want that, to embrace that, that's what it's about. Because that's how we grow, when we understand how God works in life.

So going on here. Where do you begin in a subject like this, in essence, in large part? What is the focal point of all this? What should we grasp above everything else in all of this? There's one thing that stands out above everything when you talk about God's true form of governing. There are some words, principles, truths that are going to come out in this series over and over that identify, clarify, instruct, and meaningfully lead to needed knowledge, understanding, and wisdom concerning God's true form of governing. The foundation and basis of God's form of governing, which is where we're beginning, which is the only place to begin, is a matter of God's love. God's love. If you understand the mind of God, the more you understand that mind of God Almighty and what comes from Him, how He thinks, what He is. When we come to more deeply grasp love, His love, there is so much we will come to grasp and understand and be able to work with far more easily as human beings concerning God's form of governing in our lives, in the Church, and so forth.

So again, over the past year we have focused a great deal on God's kind of love. A lot of that's led up to this point in time, candidly, for a purpose. That's why we've had much said about it. It's about God's true form of love. We have been reminded over and over that we are to be focused upon that kind of love in our relationships and repent where we see we have exhibited our own selfish love. We have to come to really understand a human love is selfish and it is not good. Though human beings are persuaded by, swayed by physical love, and have problems with this. I think of the Protestant world. They don't grasp God's love so they're swayed by things of carnal, physical love and they don't understand why they respond the way they do. They're reaching for something that they can't grasp and because of that they so miss the mark because there's a spirit world out there that screws up their minds and leads them in a distorted, sick direction, twisting what human love is supposed to be in the sense of how you act and how you respond to people. Because God isn't first in their life.

Anyway, it's something we come to grasp more deeply as time goes along. But anyway, again, this matter of human love, there are times when we see it in ourselves, our selfishness. It isn't enough! If you're satisfied with carnal, human love you're missing the mark because it's always, always, always, always motivated by and based in selfishness! And that's very hard thing for the human mind, and candidly, the human mind can't grasp that! I think of that one minister I mentioned, a well-known pastor in God's Church, riding from one Church area to another with him and talking about this love that Mr. Armstrong described when he made the comment, basically, he never understood what Mr. Armstrong was talking about, about a mother's love toward her child. In his mind, I guess, it just went shut because he couldn't see beyond that. I think, "What's missing?" Well, there was a measure of God's spirit missing there, a measure of understanding and revelation that comes from God's spirit in the mind because we should be able to come to see and understand as we grow that we're selfish.

You, me, we're motivated, apart from God, apart from conviction, apart from inspiration of God's spirit, we are, all of us are motivated by selfishness. You do what you do because you love self

first above everything else! Above everything else! When you're uncomfortable it's easy to make others uncomfortable around you. When you're not feeling good it's easy to make others feel uncomfortable. And when you love and you express certain kinds of love, you think, "Well, that's not selfish. It's hard to see. What do you mean?" Either you see it or you don't. I can't give it to you. I couldn't give it to that minister that day. Blew my mind! Blew my mind! How could anyone be a minister of God and not grasp what Mr. Armstrong said, that a mother's love for her child is her love for her child and it's selfish. You think, "Well, that's good." Is it really? Is it really? Will there be situations come up in life because of that love, that that child is going to be hurt, in relationship maybe to other people because that child is loved more than others? There'll be favoritism? There'll be things done that will tend to be harmful rather than helpful? I see that all the time in God's Church.

Why do we make the kinds of choices and decisions we do? Is it because we're convicted of one true way of doing things, of living, of thinking, of judging? That's where the battle is. It's not natural to the human mind, but God will give us His spirit in order to deal with things in a very balanced and sound way. We grow in that. It doesn't mean we're going to be perfect all the time, because you can't be. Because you know what? Your spirit fights against God. Your spirit, your mind as a physical human being fights and resists God's spirit! Mine does! I understand that! That's why I'm able to repent when I see it! When you see your spirit and your attitude fighting against God, that's where you have to repent. That's where you cry out to God, "Father, I want Your spirit, Your mind, Your thinking, Your kind of love."

That's what Paul was talking about, after twenty-five years as a servant of God, as an apostle of God he said, "O wretched man that I am!" He talked about this battle that was going on and how he as a human being fought in a different way that resisted God, that resisted God's way, that resisted God's spirit. Now, he had choices to make, as we all do. Do we yield to that or do we fight against it and yield to God? See, that's the key! Do we fight against that selfishness? Do we fight? Do we recognize the battle? Because you know what, if you don't even recognize the battle, if we don't see the battle, we just muddle through life and we just live something that's wrong then, but if we see there's a conflict there, we'll make sure that our opinions (I don't even like that word), our thoughts, our thinking, are in unity with God. We want them to be God's thinking and God's thoughts. We want them to be in harmony and unity with God's way. Then you're yielding to God's way because that's always going to be a choice in your life. Day in and day out, day in and day out, you make choices and decisions and you're either yielding to yourself, to your will, or you're making sure that that is in agreement with God's will and God's mind and you're yielding to that. If we just yield to our own selfishness, we can't grow. We'll become stagnant and we'll actually turn against God and go in a different direction in time. So this is what the battle is about -fighting self, fighting our carnal human nature.

I think of people who got tired and left God's Church. A lot of time they talk about, "You know, I just got so tired of hearing how bad I was, how bad I am." And, "How can you just listen to that

Sabbath after Sabbath, how bad I am? I want to hear something nice and better." Basically, it's like the Protestant world: "I want to hear good things, nice things. I go to church to hear nice things and good things." That's what people do in the Protestant world. "I'm tired of fighting and battles and things going on. I want to find some kind of peace right here and I want to hear nice things about how God loves me." And He does, but they twist that and they misuse that. "Jesus loves me; yes I know. For the Bible tells me so." You want to have these good feelings, not because you're obedient to what he said, but you just want to believe he loves you no matter how much of a clod you are, no matter how much you fight against him, no matter what you do during the other six days of the week, no matter how nasty and hateful you are to other people, no matter what kind of sins you do. You want to be able to hear it at least once a week, "He loves me." That's a sad life to live. It really is.

Do you see your nature? Do you grasp what your nature is like without God, without God's spirit? Because your choices in life, to recognize the battle, is always the matter of making choices. I want to make sure my thoughts are God's, that I'm in unity. That means that you're in unity with God's way. You're in unity with God's form of governing. That's what it's about. In unity with how His spirit works in your life, because there is a way that God's spirit works and it's about government, it's about what governs life and how life can be governed. The only way we can even have that in our life is to make choices to yield to it and to want it. You've got to want that in your life and you've got to make choices about it in your life. It doesn't just happen.

You don't just pray about it and all of a sudden you walk out and you're something different. It'd be like a robot programmed; all of a sudden your minds gone and something else has taken over. That's not what God's spirit is about. God's spirit is about choices. It's not about control. Satan is about control. The demonic world is about control. They want you to be enslaved through disobedience. They want you to be enslaved to your own carnal human nature. They want you to be enslaved to self because that's an evil. God's way is the way of true freedom, the way of true peace, the way of true joy, happiness, and fullness of life. It comes through this matter of understanding, starting here with God's love and how His spirit works in our life.

Anyway, let's turn over and notice what it says in John 13. So again, we're to repent when we see we've exhibited our own selfish love rather than God's love because we can exhibit one or the other in our life. God's love will only be able to be exhibited if we're close to God, if it's a matter of His spirit governing our life because we made a choice that it governs our life. We want it to be a part, in that respect, of governing how we think and how we live. God's laws are about governing life. Human beings have to have law. That's what I said a moment earlier here and didn't finish it, about a relationship with God, the four commandments. In the future when you're in Elohim that law is not there. You don't have to have a 10 Commandments you carry around and have to think about, because it is you, because it is God. It's the mind of God. Then how to get along with other human beings, of course then you'll be a member of the God Family. But we as human beings have to have laws that regulate our life, to recognize how life should be regulated.

It tells us how life should be governed, how to love someone else. That's about governing life. How we think toward each other, how we treat each other, what we say toward each other or about one another, it's all about God's form of governing. And either we yield to that process or we fight it and resist it. And what do we do? As human beings we fight and resist it, but we have to bring that under control. That's what growth and growing spiritually is all about.

**John 13:34—I am giving to you a new commandment.** That's what I'm kind of talking about here as well. You know, for mankind there's a need for law that reveals and helps define order. Order, it's one of those words. God's way is one of order. Things work in an orderly fashion. Look at the universe. It's not in chaos and confusion. There's a way that brings order in life and in relationships, and it's God's form of governing. It's the way we think. It's based on God's love.

**I am giving to you a new commandment, that you love one another.** Now, in one respect it isn't new, but for the Church, in essence, and to the disciples it really was new. It's like progressive revelation. Although there were certain things stated in the Old Testament and how we should think toward one another and how we should treat one another, to grasp this is another matter. And in that respect, just like when God reveals something different to us, it doesn't mean that it's not already in His book, it just means we don't grasp it yet because it hasn't been revealed yet. It's like this matter of whenever something is progressively given at any point in time and then all of a sudden it's there and it's revealed. It doesn't mean it's not in scripture, in the Old Testament, it just means we didn't understand the spirit of it. Christ came along to reveal the spirit of these things. So he's revealing something here of how we're to live life and what is to govern our life within the Church in our relationships.

**I'm giving to you a new commandment that you love,** agapao (ag-ap-ah'-o). It comes from the word "agape," or "ag-ah'-pay." People get in arguments about how it's pronounced. I think of an individual here (who is no longer with us), at one time got all upset because I was pronouncing it one certain way. "No, you're supposed to pronounce it this way." He thought himself an intellectual, I guess. At one point, his brother, wife, and himself sat down in their living room and were talking about some things and those things were important to him, you know, what's up here in human understanding or human intellect. I could tell you a lot of other stories, but I won't. I'll stop there. And you think, if you looked at that rather than God's spirit you miss the mark. You've missed the mark. People get concerned about things like that.

I think of the disciples. Fishermen? They weren't noted for their education! They weren't noted for being highly educated or even minimally educated as far as our world today is concerned, reading and writing and all the other things that might be involved in it. So their speech would reflect that fact and people judged them accordingly. The Jews definitely did, those who were educated, those who were educated in Jerusalem. "Oh, they're Galileans. Whatever came out of Galilee," basically. That's the attitude of mind. "Fishermen? Ah, no wonder!" See, that gives them permission then to dismiss everything they have to say. "Oh, you support this man? Well, I want to follow that too, then. If you're following then I definitely want to follow that." It's in the world

today. People are moved by, impressed by what human beings sometimes consider to be impressive. That's not what it's about.

Moses had problems in his speech. Did that take away from the fact that God chose to use him, that God worked with a man in a very powerful way to give some of the most incredible things revealed in scripture ever? Awesome! God didn't choose him because of how well he spoke. Amazing! The disciples weren't chosen for how well they spoke and what kind of an education they had, what level of education they'd attained. Because there are a lot of things you can receive in life, and especially if God's involved in it, that He's going to give to you that others are never going to grasp anyway. I marvel at that because it still happens in God's Church. I know of a minister who's been judged by his writing, because it isn't up to par with what some think it should be. And yet God's using him in a very powerful way. I think, "Hmm. Amazing." I'm not just talking about myself. There are reasons why. I talk about that often. I hated to write. I hated English. I loathed English. Still do! But I've learned to enjoy the writing only from the prospect or perspective of seeing God's inspiration in it, what God gives, and going from there. Then there are others who have education in English who can help out. Anyway, it's amazing how we judge as human beings.

So here is something that is progressively being given. "I'm giving to you a new commandment, that you love one another." Powerful, and like I said, it's from the word "agape," which is God's love. It's taken from that. So it has powerful meaning to it as he goes on to describe what kind of love this is because it's not just a matter of human love; it's not a matter of philia. It's not a matter of a form of human love that human beings just naturally can have toward one another by their picking and choosing and who they want to be close to and who they don't want to be close to for selfish reasons. Because that's what it is.

**I am giving to you a new commandment, that you love one another as...** How often we look at this. How often has God brought this out to the Church to teach us something, powerfully so? **...as I have loved you.** Agapao, again. **...as I have loved you.** We know what kind of love that was. That's why we talk about it was a sacrificing love. He gave himself for it, to die, to be beaten beyond human recognition, to suffer like that with that kind of a beating, and then to be hung up on a stake and then a spear rammed up in his side and to pour out blood on the earth. He knew what was coming. Incredible! Sacrificing. We need to learn to curb and seek to curb our own selfish human interests and love as human beings and yield ourselves to God's kind of love - and there is a giant difference. We need to recognize that if God's love is involved it requires sacrifice. The biggest thing you sacrifice every time is self! Your self desire. Whatever choice you might normally, naturally make.

If there is no sacrifice involved, then where is God's love? I'm just telling you, as a human being, that's where God's love is, is where there is sacrifice, for human beings especially, because you're giving in to something about what you otherwise might want to have. That's why we spend so much time talking about different examples in the New Testament that are given there about

this, to put other's desires above our own. I've given simple examples about things like that because we learn to have greater enjoyment of seeing someone else happy, fulfilled, and receiving something. Now, that's a catch-22 sometimes, because you have to be careful too, that you're not just, you know, giving in to people's selfishness. So there is a balance in that sometimes and you learn how to deal with that as time goes along, that sometimes there's a different choice for love because you don't want to cause a certain thing to be molded and fashioned with someone because they always get their way.

Like certain Jewish children that were running around in Jerusalem visiting over there in a hotel and they were tearing up the place! Crawling up the sides of this one hotel, nice place, during the days of Unleavened Bread, and the Harrell's and I, my wife were there. The children that came in for Unleavened Bread, to celebrate Passover season, they're running around. It was a madhouse. That's the only way I can describe it, very misbehaved, in a horrible fashion! I can still see it in my mind because there was this one staircase, real nice staircase going up out of the eating area, and nice banister, and kids were walking up on the outside of it with their parents watching. The kids on the other side, holding the banister climbing up the steps. If you can see that. They're not on the steps; they're on the outside where they can have an accident. And somehow, the question was asked about the children, and so forth, and it might have been some we were eating with, but just someone just flat out asked, "Why are some of the kids acting like this? We haven't seen anything quite like this?" And one man made the comment, he said, "Well," basically he went back to history, to the holocaust. He said, "Well, we have come to where because of what took place there," this was the reasoning, "that we would never ever say no to our children. That's what we do. We say 'yes' to our children but we will not tell them 'no.'" And he said basically that's the way they think. So this was orthodox thinking. "And because of what took place in our lives we tell our children yes." Okay. I could see what that produces and learned from that one real quick like. It's sad how people think.

So that's why I brought that up. There are times to say no, or times to do something different so you don't give something in a wrong way to others to where they develop selfishness, but can learn from it instead. But our main problem isn't that, as a whole, as human beings, but it requires sacrifice and it's about our own human nature and our own thinking because that's the sacrifice God looks for in our life. He's looking at the heart. What are you willing to do? How are you willing to act? What are you willing to give up? What are you willing to fight against? Are you willing to fight against your own human nature and sacrifice? Because that's what you have to do to experience and live God's kind of love. You really have to fight against yourself. That's what it's about. That's how it's accomplished. Otherwise, it's not going to come. It's not going to be there. You're not going to grow in it.

So it's always about sacrifice, for human beings. So that's the kind of sacrifice. It's not the blood of bulls and goats that God looks for. It's this that we're talking about right here. It's what we're willing to sacrifice to live God's love instead of selfishness.

**I'm giving you a new commandment that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. And by this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have agape...** That defines God's love. This is God's love, if you have God's love, agape, one to another. Well, how could you say it any better than Jesus Christ? He said it in the perfect way to drive the point home, powerfully so. Yet so few have ever learned from this.

Ephesians 5. I hope you see in the midst of this, even in those verses, exactly what this sermon is about, talking about a matter of God's government, how it works, the form of God's governing in our life, because it's about how His spirit flows through us. Because if we, as human beings, don't sacrifice in order to love someone else - and that means to obey God in the process. So often the sacrifice is a matter of just being obedient to God as well. Sometimes there are things we just do wrong in life and it's about how to love each other, but sometimes it's even practiced in a higher level, a higher plane, but it's always about God's spirit and how it works in your life. It's about how God's spirit can live in your life. It is about God's form of governing because God pours out His holy spirit; it goes through His Son Jesus Christ. They're in unity and at one, fully, completely. Jesus Christ, the High Priest, Elohim, in the God Family, fully executing God's way of life, God's mind on this earth through the Church, to the Church, through the ministry in the Church out to the Church. That's the way it's always been. That's the way it's always worked. The more we can grasp that and comprehend how God works in those things the more fulfilling our lives become indeed. That's one means, then, of leading and guiding and directing and working with the Church that then each one of us in our own lives, in our own homes, in our own situations in life have to choose how we yield to that spirit as well to live in our lives and how it comes into our life from Jesus Christ or through the Church—and/or through the Church—because sometimes it's a process that includes both and requires both.

**Ephesians 5:1—Therefore, be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, and this is the word for God's love, not human love. It's agape, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us.** That word, again, agapeo, because it reveals a kind of love, but only by the context do you know fully what its saying. It's about exercising God's love in your life. We have choices to make as to whether we do that or not, and if we do it, then as a whole we're sacrificing something. We're fighting against our own human nature somewhere. **...and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.** It's pleasing to God, a sacrifice. That's what we have to come to see that we have to do in our life for God's spirit and God's form of governing, or government to work in us, to whether or not that's what's governing our life.

Anyway, these two areas of scripture truly lay the foundation and basis for God's true form of governing because this is where it begins. This is the basis of it all. It's about God. It's about how God works in life. It's about bringing everything into subjection to that. We tend to resist that as human beings. That's just the way we are, but it's a matter of not only yielding to it, it's a matter of wanting it, crying out for it, fighting for it! That's why I make comments so often, that you've

got to want this way of life and you've got to fight for it! You're going to go through all kinds of battles.

Today we were talking with some here about the spirit world that's out there. It's stirred up. It just gets more and more powerful. The closer we get to the end of the age here it's just going to be stirred up more and more. It's going to be broadcasting at you! It wants to destroy you! It hates you! It truly does. There are going to be things go on around you. I think of someone who sent a kind of a comical comment here recently in an elder's report, minister's report, about what was happening to all of his electronic stuff, stuff going on. I know there have been times when we've had battles because I know where it's coming from.

God lets us experience some of those things. They have power! There are things they can exercise to a certain point and they will come at you in different ways in your life. They'll come at you, just like we were talking to some here the other day about someone else driving down the highway. Yesterday my wife and I were driving around and there were some crazy things going on all around us. You think, it's like I got this great big circle like a bull's eye on the side of a car. It's like what in the world?! But you know what it is. You know, they're not acting this way around others, but when they get up beside us it's like they just go nuts! Yeah! You get to a point where you realize where some of this stuff is coming from. People get stirred up and they don't know why. People get stirred up toward you and they don't know why. I hear this all the time. People on the job or people in the community, or whatever it might be, and they just let loose on you or treat you in a certain way. It shouldn't be a mystery why these things happen at times. It's because there's a spirit world out there and they have no power over it. They can broadcast to them, you know, because it's harder for them to get to you. It's getting harder and harder for them to get to you. They have to do it through other means that they can influence because they're finding it harder to influence you. The more you grow, the closer you are to God, the more you are fasting in your life and drawing closer to God with a desire and spirit to be strong in spirit, they have less and less power. The more you grow spiritually they have less and less power. Now, they can still bombard you. They can still throw things at you and you can, almost as it were, at times feel the pressure. Then that pressure can be there, but that doesn't mean you have to respond to it in a bad way, in a wrong way. Yet we do. I do and I have to recognize what's going on, and say, "Whoa! Wait a minute." It's out there. You've got to fight against it. You can't let it influence you in a wrong way, to get you in a wrong spirit or a wrong attitude or to get whatever it might be in life. You've got to fight! You've got to be on your toes.

There's a powerful spirit world that exists out there and you've got to recognize it. That's why I want to mention in the sermon here today, because it exists out there and it's getting worse. Okay? They're getting stirred up more and more. You realize that there are things they're learning as they go along here that they don't know and they're not happy about it. There are things that they will believe, though they continue to fight against it, things that Satan knows that he didn't

know. There is so much that that being knows today that he didn't, if you go back about 15 years, 12 years, he didn't know before because there's a way that God works in this world.

So these two areas of scripture, again, lay the foundation and basis for God's true form of governing. It's through God's kind of love working in one's life, in an ordered or orderly manner, if you will, because it's about order, because it always produces the same thing. God's love, God's mind will produce the same thing all the time on a consistent basis. It's about God's form of governing that can live and thrive then within us if we yield ourselves to the process, but it is all about government.

If God is not placed first and there is no sacrifice, no true giving, if you will, then the manner or order through which God's spirit can work will not yield God's form of governing in one's life. It won't produce the fruit that it needs to produce.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter 1. So asking the question: How and where do we learn and grow in this kind of love? Well, again, it begins in close physical family. That's where you first learn it, or individually, if you're alone in the sense of not being in a family, you're single, whatever it might be in life, but it'll be in relationships around you, people around you. Then, in a very powerful way, the family that is the Church, within the Church. This is our arena to really practice and live God's way of life.

So again, in a very large part, if we grasp it, it is supposed to be learned as well through the proper functioning of God's ministry. You can learn from that, whether in the ministry or not is immaterial. It's been one of my greatest teachers. Long before I ever became a minister even that process already started in life. So again, in very large part it's supposed to be learned through the proper functioning of God's ministry. And sadly, sometimes through the "dysfunctioning" of God's ministry.

I've learned both kinds of lessons, through that which is dysfunctional and shouldn't have existed, shouldn't have been happening in a certain manner, and also from that which happened in a proper way, in a right way. I think of two individuals who had good, strong influence in my life that I've talked about in times past. One Mr. Armstrong called in to headquarters to be the treasurer of the Church because he couldn't trust an evangelist. So he called upon a pastor out of Houston, Texas, Mr. Leroy Neff, who'd been an instructor at Ambassador College for a short period of time when I was there. I was only there for one year in that area. Then he was our pastor for one year before Mr. Armstrong called him in. He was a great example and one who sought to follow God's way of life, one who sought to live God's way of life and was a good example of that. I have high respect for him and learned a great deal through him and through his training and through his ministry. Then another was the one who followed him, John Ogwyn. So some of you may know some of those names, some may not, but he was the one who came in and was over that particular Houston church after Mr. Armstrong had called Mr. Neff into headquarters.

I think about our history. Isn't that dumbfounding? I still marvel at that, brethren. I didn't know what was happening back then. It wasn't until after the Apostasy and after years, not too far back, I began to learn and understand why, why Mr. Armstrong had to call in a pastor of a church area to be the treasurer of His Church, because he couldn't trust one evangelist at that time. And that was 1981. Incredible. Astounding what we've gone through. So depending on how long you've been in God's Church - look at Worldwide and going back - some of you have had different experiences, some of them good and some of them bad. I also think of ministers that I had been around, ministers that I had learned from, saw, if you will, how things should not be in God's Church because something wasn't right and certain things said or done that I knew weren't right with God. So you learn from that too.

So we can learn from someone doing something in a right way, but you know what, if you have God's spirit and you're in God's Church, you've been begotten of God's spirit, there are some things that aren't going to ring true in life that people do, that people say and how people treat each other. You can learn from that as well. You can be refined in that process or by mistakes. We all make mistakes as human beings and so you can learn from that as well no matter who we are in God's Church. No one does anything perfectly. I don't do anything, everything perfectly by any measure. None of us do, but it's a matter of seeking to grow and seeking to do it better and better all the time and that's another process. But to do things that are wrong? To do things that don't agree with God's way of life? When you see it you see it and there's no hiding it.

So that's why I made the comment, and I want to repeat it, because it's always been that way in God's Church. I asked the question: So how and where do we learn and grow in this kind of love? It begins in close physical family and also in close spiritual family within the Church. In very large part it's supposed to be learned through the proper functioning of God's ministry, and sadly, sometimes through the "dysfunctioning" of God's ministry, because if something isn't done right, if someone isn't treated properly, if someone is spoken to in a wrong way, told things in a wrong way then that stands out in a person's mind. You realize, "Whoa, this isn't right." It has a greater impact in your life than if it were not the ministry. So the point being is there's great responsibility that goes with the territory, to do things God's way, to strive in every way to do things God's way.

So now we need to review and build upon what was covered a year ago in the beginning of the sermon series entitled, *Lessons From A Ministry*. In the beginning of that sermon it was stated that we needed to pay great heed to the previous series about being watchful. So even before that there was a series about being watchful and being on guard spiritually. It just preceded that one and it was primarily with a focus of how we are truly yielding and working to exercise God's love in our life toward one another. So that's what was specifically stated.

I want to say something else that was stated there. It was stated that there are lessons we can learn from what happened in and through a process of how God has worked. Again, this is about an ordered or orderly manner. That's something that's going to be repeated throughout this series

because God is a God of order. His spirit works in a consistent, orderly manner. We don't as human beings because we're not always yielding to the way God's love or God's form of working in our life that we should be.

Going on, what was stated in that sermon. It was stated that there are lessons we can learn from what happened in and through a process of how God has worked with the Church concerning a ministry over the past many years, actually, now nearly seven years. Incredible! Again, some of this stated a year ago. It was further stated in the very beginning of that series more than any other tool that has been used within the Church to teach great lessons and to mold the Church, the ministry is one of the most powerful indeed. It has helped to teach and refine many in the areas of how God's government works and of the importance of doing things the way God leads and not by our own reasoning and human emotions.

I'm saying that fairly strongly because there are lessons to always be learned about this. The reality is we are a Church and we are a body and we have seen many things. We have experienced many things. In different areas people have experienced different things and they have to know how to work with and deal with all those things yielding themselves to God's love, God's mercy, and God's power. So I could repeat that statement again and again and again to you, and probably should throughout this sermon series, to help drive the point home that this is one of the most powerful means that God has given us in the Church of God—PKG to grow and to learn many things that otherwise would have taken years and years and years to learn in a normal sequence of events had it been like the days of Worldwide, because this is a different time. This is a unique time for God's Church because of how God's working with us and what He's molding and fashioning in our lives. Actually, there are opportunities that are given for growth that have really never existed in the same manner in God's Church. It's a means by which God has worked with human life, with human beings in a way that He's never worked with the Church before. To me, to live in this age and to experience this is exceedingly exciting, because I understand with this also is great potential to learn how to serve better, to learn much more about God and God's way of life and how to do things His way and yield to that process. To me, anyway, it's awesome.

Let's turn over to **1 Peter 1:1—Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ**. He put that out there. I think of an individual who came to me different times, within the ministry, at the very beginning when I began to talk about being a prophet. Basically his question was, "Why do you have to tell the Church this?" "Why are you telling the Church this?" Well, I don't know if maybe in his mind if he thought it was a matter of vanity? I don't know if he thought that I was taking too much upon myself? I don't know what the thinking was, but he had problems and difficulties that I didn't even fully understand at that particular time. But it's something that God does. The Church is to know. If you're an apostle, tell the Church, remind them you're an apostle. There's a reason for that. It's so the Church can be directed to God and how God is working on this earth. It's about God! It's about God's form of governing. We have to have a mind that is set toward God.

I remember Worldwide and the things of the struggles that took place and of people who did not respect the office. It's about the order that God gave in the Church regardless of the individual, but because Mr. Armstrong was God's apostle people should have feared speaking about him in wrong ways. I heard many things from brethren within the Church and from leaders in the Church that were geared toward negative comments toward Mr. Armstrong, year after year after year as I grew up in God's Church in the beginning.

I especially think of different times that things happened. I think of the tabernacle building, the building that God wanted to build that was dedicated to God. Mr. Armstrong was geared toward fulfilling some scriptures in Matthew 24 in a very powerful way. He was highly motivated and he was continually pushing himself and the Church to getting the gospel into all the world as powerfully as he could. He recognized certain things as well beyond that about things that began to happen as far as world leaders and how they think that you have to gear things toward, at least for him at that time in Worldwide. I remember some of the finances because he would take them right to the edge. He would take them right out the edge, "Use the maximum we can to do the maximum we can in the world." That was much of his thinking, and sometimes it caused some serious pause and consideration about the budget and what we were doing, because you can't push too far at times. So there's always this push and this desire. Those who were converted and had God's spirit and saw that vision, that was what they wanted too, but there were others who didn't and who didn't grasp what they were saying. I remember a comment that was made many a time because of the building and the construction of it and how it was eating into some of the finances in some other areas, and basically Mr. Armstrong was just sharing, "Well, we've got to do this in another area in order to accomplish this." He always shared those things with the Church. So basically in this particular case some were saying, "Well, I think God's trying to tell him he shouldn't build this building." But in my mind back then, being as young as I was in the Church, new in the Church, hearing such a thing from individuals who'd been in the Church longer than me, I thought, "How could you say such things about God's apostle? How could you say that God must be trying to show him something that he can't see when I know and am convicted in my mind that he is the closest man to God on earth?" And so someone else has their opinion, "Well, I think maybe God's trying to show him he shouldn't be building this tabernacle. That's what He's trying to show." It got built. Anyway, crazy how human beings can think.

That's just mild compared to negative things I've heard in times past. I remember one family I used to drive with and we used to call it "roast minister," or something to that effect anyway, and there'd be times after Sabbath services, driving back and forth people would just go on and on about the minister and what he had to say in the sermon and tearing him apart. You think, "You don't understand God's form of governing. You don't know what you're doing!" Come to find out this one family, a few years later, they still had their box of crosses and statues of Mary and they couldn't throw them away. They were still out in the garage. They couldn't come to a point of parting with their statues.

So we in God's Church, we're in this 100%. God's first, and not only that, but you have to fight for it because it doesn't come easy. You have to fight with all of your being if you want this. We still have some that aren't, who don't or aren't. God still isn't first where He needs to be. So we're tried in those things. What are you going to do? Maybe something else becomes first, maybe being drawn to someone else in the world around you that you're drawn to on a sexual, in a sexual way and you're ready to give up God for that. Incredible! Things that happen. Sick world. People are probably getting tired of me, hearing some of this, but this has happened a lot of recent time. When I say a lot, if it's one, two, three, or more it's way too much. Think, what kind of games are you playing? So do we all grasp within a body we all have battles to fight and God had better be number one? We're going to be tried and nothing is going to be held in secret. Nothing is going to be kept secret anymore because this is a unique time in God's Church. Anyway, God'll bring it to the surface one way or the other.

That's why I made comments about 2<sup>nd</sup> Tithe and so forth and assistance. Great, wonderful when it goes where it's supposed to, and when it's not supposed to, it won't.

**So, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.** Elect. Unique. Special. Select. By God! Chosen by God! You can't get any more awesome than that. If you've been chosen, called by God in a period of time, no matter when that is, even for those in the Great White Throne - awesome that they have opportunity to be called by God, to be drawn by God, to be resurrected by God at that time in order to have the opportunity we've been given now. But how awesome is it at the end of an age to be given such opportunity?

**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,** because God has a plan, a plan when He calls people, how He calls people throughout the ages. Few were in the first four thousand years! Very few! Then a lot more from the time of Christ and Pentecost on to the time of his return or the time of his coming - thousands and thousands and tens of thousands added as God began to work with the Church, and then the Millennium, and then the Great White Throne.

**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the spirit.** So there's a process how we're called, sanctified, set apart by God's holy spirit through the truth that He gives to us in the mind and our choice of it as we choose and make choices, **unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood.** So it's unto obedience, and so that's what follows. First of all God begins to draw us and give us opportunity to repent and to change, to choose a different way of life and to choose not to be selfish, to choose not to want this way of this world and to choose to want what God has to offer, to be in His Family, and then so we have that sanctification, being set apart in a very unique way, the ability to be forgiven of sin, and then unto obedience, a desire to obey God.

That's why I have no patience today with people who don't want to obey God. If they want to go out and sin and do something you're on your own! You're not only on your own, but there is a spirit

world out there waiting for you, wanting you to be separated from the Body of Christ more than ever. I'll tell you what, there are some things that go on in those situations that you don't want to be a part of, you don't want to have in your life, where they gain greater control of you, and sometimes your mind. You ought to fear that kind of thing, especially now more than ever, because it's happening.

People want to play games and leave God at a time when Jesus Christ is about ready to return, and not fight for this way of life? Instead, they give in to physical carnal lusts and do things that they know are sin, you know, and plan and plot how to disobey God, plan and plot to go to a hotel and be with someone else, to plan and plot and think ahead of time to be with someone else, to know they're going to sin, that's why they're doing it? Sick! They're probably listening today! Sick! That's all I've got to say to you for doing such a thing. Anyone else who contemplates such a thing, if you want to contemplate that, sick! It's not going to be allowed in this age. You will be separated. Now, whether you can come back or not, I don't know. I don't know. It depends on the level of your repentance, true, deep, heartfelt repentance and what you do and change in your life.

This is not a time for games in God's Church! That's why God has brought me back stronger! I hope you recognize that since I've come back I've come back stronger! For a purpose! It's about cleaning up the Church! It's about the Church of God—PKG. We're going to be prepared for Christ's coming in a very powerful way. We're going to be at one in God's Church in a very powerful way, more than the Church has ever been in 2,000 years. That's saying a lot, but I know that to be true, to be offered what they're going to be offered, because either we yield to that and want that and we'll be there or we're not going to get to taste of it until the Great White Throne. Something to fear. You're in this? Fight for it!

Put God first. Don't play games. God isn't playing games. God has offered us so much, that if we don't grasp it now, by the time that He's given us all the truths that He has, what are we? Those of you called since 2008, if you don't grasp what God has given to you that no other people on earth have ever been given - the kind of knowledge and insight and understanding that He's sharing with the Church in preparation for His Son to return, if you don't grasp it it can't be given to you. It's a spiritual thing in your relationship with God and how thankful you really are for what He's given. Because Peter, Paul, John, none of them, Mr. Armstrong didn't know, didn't have what you have. That's just the way it is. That's the truth.

Just the one truth about women alone. What an awesome and a beautiful and an incredible thing that God has given to us. When I went through that series, if there's no understanding in any of the scriptures whatsoever the truth is, the reality is that God has given to His Church by authority that comes from Jesus Christ through the ministry in His Church, through an apostle, that this change is being made, period. Whether you think there's anything in here to back that up or not is immaterial. It really comes down to that because that's the truth. I hope you see it's in here as

well, but even if you don't, I can't help that, because I know there are some who still struggle with it. Some listening today I know still struggle with it. I know that by God's spirit.

**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.** That's what God wants. He wants us to be filled with life. He wants us to be filled with His life. He wants us to have peace, His kind of peace multiplied in life. That's why Jesus Christ said on that last night, "Peace I give to you," but not the peace of this world, because that's a lie! It's his peace, the peace that can only come through the power of God's life and His spirit that lives and dwells within us, of His way of life, of His governing in our life that can produce this kind of peace. Peace be multiplied. So the more you grow, the closer you are to God the more you'll experience that fullness and richness of life.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** How often do we think like that? What an incredible God we serve! I can't help think about that so often being out in nature, walking through our subdivision, whatever it might be, watching geese fly over. I love it! Look at this incredible creation that God's given us to drink in day-by-day, things that He's made out here to make our lives richer and more fulfilling, enjoyable, like color, everything we experience in life, and to acknowledge that God gave that to us and shares that with us and yet desires so much more beyond that? And then to think about what we see? I think about people in this book in the past 6,000 years. It hasn't been until recent time that we've come to see God in a far greater way. You want to talk about something, progressive revelation, even on a physical plane that reveals something in a greater spiritual plane, this is it! The universe! The atom! Man didn't know about the atom. Paul, John, Peter, they didn't know what an atom was. What's an atom? They didn't know. What's a molecule? They didn't know. They didn't know small things, what they were, let alone the vast things that are out there in the universe. Incredible, the things that are out there.

Now, I don't know if you saw it last week, they're all excited. They found seven planets that are real close in this one area. It's called Trappist-1. Anyway, they're all excited because they found these planets that are very earth-like, that they believe at least one or more can sustain human life. They're very much like the earth. They're only 40 light years away. Oh, but they're excited today because they found this planet like the earth and 40 light years away. What's that mean? Oh, it means when you can start travelling at the speed of light you can get there in 40 years. But you've got to figure that one out first and at our rate of travelling through space right now it'll take 700,000 years. It's amazing what can impress mankind sometimes. Anyway! But they'd rather still believe they crawled out of a slime and not acknowledge the Great God who put them out there.

What I saw? I saw our future. What did I see? I thought, man, that's incredible! We have no idea what we're going to be doing in the God family. What are we going to be doing that's greater than the angelic realm? I don't know yet but I can tell you absolutely that it's for a purpose and by design and that we're a part of that in a very powerful and profound way! That's incredible!

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** How much has He given us? How much does He continue to give to us? How much does He want to give to us? How do we live our lives then in appreciation and thankfulness to Him? How much do we sacrifice in our lives for him? Because I'll tell you, within the ministry even we're learning more and more about serving in the ministry and serving in the Church - you don't have to be in the ministry to learn this - but it better be lived there more than any place else. There better be sacrifice. There'd better be some learning to sacrifice taking place, of what it means to love God's way to God's Church, to God's people because that's what it's about. That's what it's about. I am excited because I see so many learning that over the last few years more and more, understanding that more and more within God's Church. It's exciting, but not all have done it because they still have to learn that portion. Then our life is multiplied more and more then in excitement and boldness of life. Peace, beauty, inspiration.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope,** a living hope, not just a "lively hope," as it's translated in a lot of Bibles. It's a living hope. It's something we can live day-by-day. There is a hope there because of what we look forward to, the coming of Christ, the establishment of the Millennium. He's showing us so many things of the work. There's work to be done throughout the Millennium. There's work to be done in the Great White Throne that we don't even begin to grasp. We're not going to learn a lot of that until toward the end of the Millennium, but it's not going to be a picnic. And how is God going to do it? The more I learn about human nature the more I think how could this ever be done? How could this ever be done? God's going to do it. I can see more and more how He's going to do it.

But we've always had this idea that all of a sudden people are resurrected and they're just happy and it's a utopia on earth and people are just treating each other with love, love, love. Oh, no, they won't be! There are going to be a lot of hard things to overcome. There are going to be people who have such hatreds and bitterness and things done to them. When they're resurrected and they're able to see the people who have hurt them in ways that scar the mind, it's going to take time. Hundred years? I marvel that it's going to be done that fast, but I believe what God says and because of God's Family that will be so large by that time and the individual attention and help that people will be able to receive and the power that God's going to give to accomplish it, I believe it. So we have this living hope, living hope, learning more and more. I'm just sharing things with you as we go along.

I think of the Great White Throne and how so many of us have not seen it for what it is and don't grasp it to the magnitude of what it is, the beauty of what it is. I think of situations where people talk about God and how could God send Israelites in to kill babies, children, entire families, to wipe out a people - which they didn't do. But anyway, God told them to do that. But I know with the kind of perversions they had back then, with the kind of societies they had back then, with the kind of decadence and filth of the mind that people were living in those ages without God,

that that baby when it has opportunity in the Great White Throne is going to have far, far less to overcome and far, far, far greater potential to embrace God's Kingdom and be in God's Family than others because just because somebody's resurrected during the Great White Throne do not think for one second that they all come through it and end up in Elohim because they don't. It doesn't work that way. It didn't work that way in the angelic realm and it hasn't worked that way in the Church.

I think of all who have been a part of God's Church - many have been called and few have been chosen - especially over the last 2,000 years. I think of what I have experienced since I've been in God's Church and all of the people that I've known, even before the Apostasy, who left God's Church or were put out of God's Church long before the Apostasy. Thousands and thousands! Thousands that followed Mr. Armstrong's son and in absolute rebellion and evil and followed many other ministers then in rebellion and evil long before the Apostasy! Then, finally, the Apostasy and far, far greater evil took place. So if we think somehow that in the beginning of the Millennium or in the Great White Throne that it's going to be peachy keen, hunky dory in a utopia in the beginning, we don't know what we're talking about, but for those who have opportunity of it, babies and so forth who have opportunity to start learning the truth as they grow up in a better world, in a world where families are able to learn quickly in ways that we weren't even able to in Worldwide, of what brings happiness and fullness of life, when there's only one Church on the earth, well, people are going to have far greater opportunity to make the changes, but not everybody is going to choose it.

Anyway, going on, **verse 4. ...to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away.** "An inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled." We as human beings are so defiled! Our world is so defiled that we, sometimes even in God's Church, don't grasp how defiled this world is. Everything that's out there is not of God. There is no government. There is no system. There's nothing save God's Church that has anything that reflects that which is true and right and proper.

**...to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, in God's timing, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.** "Who are kept by the power of God." That means you have to be close to God! For that power to be there, to keep you, you have to make choices. You have to make choices to fight against your carnal, human nature. You have to make choices to want to grow. You want to make choices to get behind this thing, as I've talked about, more and more with all of your being and realize we're in a final stretch. I don't care if it goes past 2019. It doesn't matter! If there is a purpose that God gives that it's going to be greater for something learned, so be it! If it means more sacrifice on my part, more sacrifice on your part so be it! If it can make something greater for some, whatever that means, because I can see how things can, God could do things, just like what He's given to us in this period of time we have. I don't believe that, but I've learned. We should have learned that if there's a purpose for something and it's to a greater, far greater purpose for the Millennium,

what are you willing to give? What are you willing to sacrifice? I've decided a long time ago it's not my life, it's God's. It's God's.

**Verse 6—so you are kept by the power of God through faith**, what you believe, what God has given to you to believe more than any other age, **unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season.** So hopefully we greatly rejoice in what God gives to us. I believe we do, as a whole, within the Body. I think of just what God has been revealing concerning the rightful place of women. How could you not be excited by that? When you see the oppression in this world that's taken place and still taking place, where minds are so perverted and twisted that you look forward to the time that they're given freedom. There's been a lot of oppression, a lot of hurt and pain in this whole world. It's been ugly. It's really been ugly. Yet people want to embrace and think that this world's in pretty good shape and the stock markets going up. It's getting better isn't it? I mean, after all, isn't that what it's all about? I'm sorry; I don't share the same excitement at that part. The stock market's going up. The farther it goes up the greater the pride. Amazing! And the greater the fall. But there is greater potential in that for repentance when the time comes too.

**Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be, you are in heaviness through many various temptations** (trials). Well, there are temptations too for human beings out here, but the trials and tests and things we go through, you got to fight. You've got to be determined. **...that the trial of your faith...** and I just want to put this in perspective. What we have done in a unique way, what's taken place within the Church, within the ministry, there are great lessons from all of that to be learned because it's tried people in all kinds of ways. It really has in a way I've never seen, not even come close, during Worldwide because it forces people to dig down deeper in many cases than ever before. Incredible what's taking place. **That the trial of your faith being more precious than of gold that perishes**, but too often we want the gold. We want the money, or whatever we think will solve problems, or make life easier. That's not what it's about.

**...than gold that perishes though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, you love.** Do you love Jesus Christ? Can you tell Jesus Christ, God the Father you love them? Because it took me a long time before I could. It took me 12 years before I could cry out to God and say, "Father, I love You." It took that long because of the scars in my mind and because of my past and because of things I had to go through and overcome and conquer. I learned to loathe even back then that which was fake, that which was not true. I knew that whenever it came out of me it had to be very, very genuine indeed.

**Whom having not seen, you love, in whom, though...** I shared that because we all fight different things. We all seek to conquer and overcome different things. We truly do. We have scars deep down in our being that happened when we were young, that make us who we are and from then on we have battles in our life. We're molded and fashioned very young in life, and that's what we

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become. From then on we have the same battles the rest of our life because that's what we are, what made us when we were young, including the scars. That's why I rejoice in a world being made right, especially with family - husbands and wives, mothers and fathers - for people to be seen in the right light in the right way, men and women. It's long been needed to get straightened out, truly.

Again, **whom having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.** A lot of that joy in your life is going to be reflected in your thankfulness and your gratitude. How much do you thank God for what you've been given? To me that's one of the greatest sins in life, ingratitude toward God. A lack of understanding and that's because of our own selfishness. There needs to be a greater gratitude and thankfulness. Ask God to help you to grow in a greater gratitude and thankfulness for what He has given you, for what He's placed in your life, in you or in your life.

**Verse 9—Receiving the end, or the purpose, in essence, of your faith, even the salvation of your lives. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently.** I marvel when I see a verse like this because I know what we've been given. I think of what John had. I think of what Paul had. I think of what Peter had. They had so much, so much more than the prophets before them of old, of things that they knew and understood that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, they never knew. They never knew and understood; they didn't even come close to when Jesus Christ came and what he revealed to the disciples. I think of what we've been given, and that John and Paul and Peter still didn't come close to what we've been given.

**Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. I could go into a sermon on that one there, and kind of want to. But I can't. I have to keep going. ... and the glory that should follow.** I've been taking too many side trips already.

**Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by those who have preached the gospel unto you with the holy spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.** That's because they learn as God reveals things to His people and as God has revealed things to the prophets, and then to the time of Christ. They didn't know about the things of the time of Christ, that Christ revealed. They'd never heard those things. The angelic realm had never heard those things that Christ gave in His lifetime that He began to teach. Then they began to experience something, and not only those who have been faithful through time, but those as well in the demonic world. They'd never heard such things. Then the teachings of the apostles came along, and followed, things they'd never heard. Even now to this day they're learning things as God reveals them to the Church and they're excited, those who are faithful to God, who remained faithful, the two-thirds of the angelic realm. The others are less excited because they know time is screeching in on them and they know they're going to be set apart and they're not going to be

able to be around mankind, nor any life forms for 1,100 years. 1,100 years they're going to be removed.

**Verse 13—Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind,** something we have to do, we're involved in in our thinking. That's what it's talking about. Take control of your thinking. Seek to have your thoughts be God's thoughts, to be in unity and oneness with God. He says of man, "Your thoughts are not My thoughts. Your ways are not My ways." Or, "My ways aren't your ways," whichever you want to look at it. It's the same. We're just not like God. Our mind doesn't think like Him, but with God's spirit we can! We are supposed to, to bring our thinking into unity with God, because that has everything to do with the focus of this sermon.

**Therefore/wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober...** We should be sobered, especially to know where we are. That's why I cry out like I do and especially concerning sin. We're so close. Of all time to be sober-minded, to recognize this is not to be taken lightly, what I shared today about a demonic world. We should fear being turned over to them, opening ourselves up to that influence and that power because they're more powerful than we are. It's God's spirit that gives us strength and power and protection and might. We can't cut ourselves off from the flow of that spirit. They want you! They want at you!

**Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you through the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance.** Fighting those things! Fighting to come out of the way of this world. **But as He who has called you is holy, so you become holy in all manner of conversation,** which the word is "conduct" in the Greek, but generally comes out in what we say out of our mouths, how we think, how we talk and so forth.

So again, God called us for a purpose, to change, to become in unity or come into unity with Him, to be of the same mind, that our thoughts be in agreement with His thinking, His mind, His love.

**...and if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.** I think about God's judgment and how we need to make sure that we're in unity with that in how we judge matters in our life.

**Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct (conversation, conduct) received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.** So we know how we're called. We know how we're able to be forgiven and continue to be able to be forgiven. And how often do we thank God for that? Do you thank God for your Passover? Do you thank God you can go before Him and keep going before Him, and some sins pop up in your life over and over and you can keep going before God and you keep fighting? It's the fight!

It doesn't mean you're going to conquer everything. Some things you are not going to conquer at all in this physical life, period! They're going to keep coming up at some point in time, because of **God's Form of Governing, Pt. 1**

what we are, what our minds are, what they were made from our youth; there are certain things in life that are going to pop back up. But how you deal with it and whether you keep fighting - that's what it's about! You don't give up the fight! You keep fighting! That means you keep repenting, you keep acknowledging to God what you are and what you've done and your desire, your deep desire to have His spirit dwell in you, to live in and through you, especially toward others, that it's God's love that works through you. Keep fighting!

When people let down the fight, when they're not fighting, you make yourself a prey to another world. Truly do. That's what happens to people when people go by the wayside. It doesn't happen overnight. People don't suddenly leave God's Church. It's over a period of time. It means there are things that are being done wrong over a longer period of time where they started getting weaker a long time ago. And then a month, two months, a year, two years later finally the big one comes and they don't say no anymore and they just give in, become so weak, want something in the world more than something from God. Sad. Sad. Sad. That means we don't value and are not thankful for what God has given us and it's not worth the fight. What a horrible thing to think.

**...but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.** We're not like that. We have a lot of spots. We have a lot of things that are wrong in our lives. There are things in your life no matter how close you get to God that you still can't "see" until God shows it to you. There are things in our being that will never be able to be fully conquered and overcome. That's why we have to die and be made something different, spirit, because as long as you're in a physical body with a physical brain that works with the spirit in man that join together there, there are going to be things that you do as a human being. There are going to be battles you have. There's thinking there that you don't recognise in yourself yet. There are things about motive. There are things about where sin begins in the deepest recesses of our being in certain areas of our life that we don't even know yet. So God reveals to us as we grow, certain things that we're able to deal with and fight and then He reveals others to us and we're refined more and more, but there are some battles we'll have all of our life. Fight! How much do you want this way of life?

**Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.** Christ was foreordained, predetermined before man was ever put on the earth, before the angelic realm was ever created. Incredible. God had a purpose, and then a purpose after 4,000 years finally is made manifest. **...who by/through him do believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.** Another sermon, several sermons.

**Verse 22—Seeing you have purified your lives in obeying the truth...** That's how you purify your life. That's how you're called; you're sanctified by the truth through the power of God's spirit. God gives you the truth. You begin to be sanctified by it because you respond to it, and you make choices. Then it's a matter of continuing in that process. **Seeing you have purified your lives in obeying the truth.** That's how you purify your life. It's a fight! To obey the truth means you have

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to fight against yourself. **...through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.** That means it's unpretentious. It means it's not fake. See? It's real. It's real! You know, sometimes I make comment about this and some made some comments back and that's good because sometimes when you first start to do something you might feel this isn't real yet. It seems a little fake, but that's how you learn to do what's right. All serving is basically like that even within God's Church, serving others, helping others. It's not normal. It's not fully natural to do God's way of life, live God's way of life toward one another, but until you start practicing it and living it it can't become a part of you. So the more you do it then with God's spirit it becomes you. Before that, it's God, God's way of thinking, God's mind, the way we love each other. Not selfishly, but in a different way because that's just who we are. That's just what we are. In time your mind, in a way, becomes more of one that's just toward the Body, toward the Church. It becomes different and you grow in that.

**...unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart intently** (fervently). That's what it means, "intently." That says a lot. Do we do that? Do we fight our thinking toward one another that sometimes isn't right or is judgmental or hurtful or harsh or just not there? "See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently." How do you do that? You have to ask God for help. You have to ask God for help to learn to love the brethren in the Church more and more. If there is anyone you have battles with in your thinking and relationship ask God for help to see and think right toward them. That doesn't mean you ignore things that are wrong, because we all have things that are wrong in life, but it's how we deal with that God's way that counts, patient, merciful, etcetera.

**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word (the truth), the word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass.** Boy, if we could just see ourselves like that. The older I get the more grass I see. We learn that in time and with God's spirit you learn it more, far more. You realize you're here for a short time. I marvel since being baptized in 1969 how much has gone by and yet how fast it was because it really has been fast. We're not here that long, long enough to make choices and decisions that with God's spirit and the impregnation of His holy spirit that He can create something in us to transform our thinking so that we can be changed and resurrected into a family when the time comes. God doesn't need us. We have opportunity. We have blessings of life that we have within the Body, but He can do whatever He's going to do with whomever He wants. We need to see ourselves like that as well and just be thankful that we have the opportunity for as long as we do, whatever that might be.

That's why I understand, I know if I'm gone tomorrow so be it. The Church doesn't stop. It's going to have some rough time if that happens. It's always been that way. Hopefully the Church doesn't have to go through anything like that. Are you prepared to go through whatever is ahead? What would your questions be? What would your answers be? Well, pray that God doesn't let it happen, because it would be pretty tough at this stage. I'm not anxious to leave yet either. I want to see it through to the end.

**For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away. It goes by quickly. Make the most of it. Make the most of your relationship with God. Drink it in. Cry out for it. But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.**