

Today we're going to begin a new series. It's about the subject of marriage and the reason we're going into this at this time is primarily because God has been leading us to more fully see and understand that since the Kingdom of God is about to be established on this earth there are those things that need to begin to be addressed and more fully established as far as His way of life at the very beginning.

So the Church is being blessed to be able to focus on these things, to have these things established within the Church, to understand the reasons why some things are taking place in the way they are and being addressed in the manner that they are, so that this is already set and as the things continue on then it'll have a smooth transition and we will have been prepared for all of that. So this is one of those subjects. Obviously, this is for those who are blessed to be able to live into that new world, a new age for mankind.

So, since well before Passover this year God has revealed that this subject about marriage needs to be covered, needs to be addressed within the Church, but first there were some things, a few things, quite a few that we needed to go into about the real life story of Jesus Christ, and so we went into those things around the Passover period that led up to Passover. Then we went into a related series about His death, the truth about the death of Jesus Christ in another series that followed. So that took up a lot of sermons over a long period of time. So this one has been waiting, in waiting (so to speak). Then as we have gone through this period of time, because of those two series especially, God began to reveal that this particular sermon here about marriage indeed needed to be addressed.

But there are things that began to happen during that period of time that God began to manifest some things within marriages. I found that unique, in one respect, but it's something that's happened many times in the past in God's Church, that when God is preparing something He prepares and molds and fashions us and allows us to see things that we might not see as well. Sometimes it's for the purpose of helping me to focus when I see that there are situations taking place, as an example, within the Church, and God brings things to the surface to see this needs to be addressed and here is what needs to be addressed and here is what the answers are, and so because of this long period of time those things have become clearer, more succinct, in that respect, more absolute, if you will, as far as how things are supposed to be, what things need to be changed, and so forth.

This new series is entitled, *The Institution of Marriage*. The institution of marriage, it's awesome, it truly is, what God has given to us, what God gave to mankind and why. I wrote in my notes here, I said, "Right now, today, as I am beginning to work on this sermon," because it was a couple of weeks ago, a little over, but I wanted to write this down because I found it inspiring, "as I am

beginning to work on this sermon I am thankful for and moved by the fact that today is the 42nd anniversary of Laura and me." Awesome! So that was a couple of weeks ago while I began to work on it, and it was exactly as I began to work on it, at that particular time that God began to help bring all this together for me to address. In thinking about those 42 years, I made the comment that I am, in writing here, "I am somewhat confounded. And that is with the definition that means 'to be annoyed,'" to be annoyed "by the fact that there have been so many, or too many, if you will, cases in God's Church," too many, is a better way of saying it, "too many cases in God's Church where people have not come close to living up to the standard of marriage that is expected of those who are supposed to be dwelling in the temple of God." So again, those things even became more manifest during that period when those two series were being given.

Let's first consider the word "institution," especially as it pertains to marriage: "An established custom, law, and/or system."

I'm going to read to you Genesis 2:24 to begin this. You don't need to turn there, but I'm just going to read this verse quickly. From the very beginning, because Jesus Christ quotes this later on, but God made this at the very beginning after creating mankind. He said, **Genesis 2:24—Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall become,** as it is, not just "be," **become one flesh.**

Next it would be good to consider the word "marriage": "The legally or formally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship of a union between a man and a woman." Awesome! But I'm going to give another definition here because this pertains to what God has revealed as His definition, if you will, of what a marriage is to be and how it should be seen and understood as far as what He has given to mankind: "The legal and/or formally recognized union through a vow," through a vow, "through promise between a man and a woman to share life and live together by forming a uniquely exclusive, single family unit." There's a lot said there. There's a lot to be gleaned from that in understanding, what God has given to us as human beings.

Now, something I want everyone to understand as we go through this sermon, I don't know fully all what's going to come out as far as different kinds of situations and things that happen. This is not a sermon to try to go through every kind of facet and thing that people need to understand in marriage, how to have a better marriage. If you grasp everything that's being said here that's the framework for having a better marriage. So I'm not going to discuss a lot of things about detail and special situations. Most of its going to be geared toward two people who are in God's Church because you see, once the Millennium has been established, once the Kingdom of God is on earth, that's what most people, as a whole, through a short period of time, are going to be brought to, to understand as they come into God's Church by the millions, and hopefully over a billion, maybe two, in the very beginning as people continue to learn and understand and these things are focused upon in the world because they're going to be focused upon very powerfully so. This is the building block of society. This is the building block of life. This is where God begins to lead,

guide, and direct people in life. It's in families for great reason and great purpose that God has established things in this manner.

So again, I'm not going to go into every kind of detail of things that happen. There will be some things mentioned because they need to be addressed now and just in what time remains, but I think some have made comments and been wondering about what's going to be addressed, and is this going to be a "how to?" Well, in some ways it is if we grasp what is given over all, what God has given. The responsibility is upon each and every one of us to drink in of God's way of life, to live God's way of life toward others. If we can get that message and we understand what God has given then this will make so much more sense and give us far more understanding of what God's desire is for us in our lives.

Let's turn over to Matthew 19. So indeed it is God who established and set apart the institution of marriage for a man and a woman that is to create or form a uniquely exclusive, single family unit in society, in life. Now, exclusive in the sense that it's separated from other families. It is to be a matter of society. It is to be a matter of a way of life that we all live, but there is something unique about each family unit that God wants us to grasp the importance of that is to become one. God uses something very physical to teach something that goes way beyond that, that means much more than that. It has to do with the family. It has to do with the unity and oneness of a family, one family, exclusive, unique.

Matthew 19:1—It says, **And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee and came into the borders of Judea (Judah) which is just beyond Jordan. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them.** So we've gone through some of this here just recently, not too long ago, talking about some of this journey that Christ made. It talks about that which he was doing. He healed them. I'm struck by, as I go through something like this, I can't help but think about how that (and I've made comments about it in times past as well), but this age is different than that age and what God was doing and that is a matter of healing. I've made comments that this is not an age of healing. We don't go to hospitals; we don't go out to different places and lay hands upon people, because God is not working that way. Healing is an individual thing in the Church between an individual and God. That's why we have anointing and when people are sick they ask for anointing. I've seen all kinds of things that God has done within the Church. Sometimes, especially as we get older, sometimes the answer is just no. We're coming to an end of life and there are things you learn by what you experience in life. If God took us away from all the experiences of things that are difficult we wouldn't learn as we should, we wouldn't grow as we should, and especially considering what God is preparing us for and that which we need to grasp and understand in the mind in our thinking toward other people. But that's another sermon or series.

Verse 3—**The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting (testing) him, saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?** Now, when it talks about tempting or testing, this word that is used in both ways, there are different attitudes that people have when

they put someone to the test. In this particular case here some people were genuine when they asked a question and they were trying to test to see how does this fit with what I grasp and understand about God? Does it fit? Will his answer be something that is sound? Because they have heard he well may be the Messiah. He may be the Christ. So they wanted to know: "How will he answer this? What will he say to various questions?"

Now, there were others that were more like the news media today. I don't care what side you look at; it doesn't matter. And be careful, people, that you don't get caught up in the news and believe everything you hear because very little of it has anything to do with what is true and what is right. You have to be careful you don't take sides. You have to understand where people are coming from - from the right and from the left. I can go to RT news, as an example, Russian. I know where they're coming from on certain slants they give. China's news. It's quite obvious what some of the slant is going to be. They favor certain parts of the world and certain people. That's easy to grasp. It should be easy for us to grasp where the left is coming from and the right is coming from and that neither one is sound and balanced and right!

This world is so screwed up right now! You're seeing civilization fall apart. You're seeing humanity fall apart in a way that people haven't been able to see in times past because of technology today and everybody can hear anything quickly, speedily. If it's not fast enough let's tweet about it. So everything is out there wham, wham, wham, how people think, what they think. And who needs that? You're just bombarded with what people think.

I'm sorry, but I can't help this when I start talking about something like this (because it doesn't have a whole lot to do with marriage), but you think about some of the things that are taking place out here and what people think. They ask people on the street, "What do you think about North Korea?" Who cares? People have no knowledge; they probably don't even know where it is. They couldn't even look on a map and tell you where in Asia it is. You could probably give them a whole world map and some would probably point to some areas in South America or down in Africa or higher up in Europe. They don't know where it is! Where is North Korea? Where is South Korea? Anyway, I'm just trying to be a little facetious there. It's south of north.

So there were people like that back in this time, too, especially those having to do with the Pharisees and Sadducees, but not always. Some were genuine. It's very obvious by what they said and how they said it. Others were trying to entrap or to trap. They had a narrative, a way of thinking and their question was geared toward trapping him, of finding something that's wrong that they could twist. "See! See what he said? Did you hear him? We heard him! We heard him say, "Destroy the temple and in three days I'll build it back up." Anyway, some testified that's what they heard. Liars! I don't want to use "fake news." Liars. Anyway, people lie and people twist things because they have a different agenda. So the same is true with Christ and how people questioned him. So sometimes you can pick up quickly on that and realize where they're coming from and why this word is being used as it is, "to test," because people test others in different ways. Sometimes because they're genuine and they really want to know what they're saying, to

get to know them. Others have a different narrative, a different agenda, and they want to put a twist to it. So, anyway, that's what they were doing to Christ.

So they asked, **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Haven't you read...** Now, that's a slam to their pride in this particular case here. So the fact that they were Pharisees and asking this kind of reveals a little bit by itself. But it doesn't have to always, but in this particular case here he's saying, "Haven't you read? You're a Pharisee. You fancy yourself to have certain understanding above and beyond that of the Sadducees and the Zealots and others out here. Haven't you read?" And so he asked the question: **Haven't you read that He who made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man shall leave father and mother,** and that word "to leave" means "to leave behind." What does that mean? What do you mean you leave, leave behind? **...and shall cleave...** Now, I love this word. It's from two Greek words. It's a combination of two Greek words. One means "to unite or glue" and the other "toward or together," and so, "to unite or glue toward together." That's what it's talking about. Cleave. Unite. It's like being glued together as one.

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be, or as it is, **become one flesh?** That's God's purpose. So he's quoting something that God said at the very beginning. The same thing we quoted when we started in this series, the first scripture we read, because God is telling mankind something very profound and very powerful from the very beginning about a uniting of two people in a family unit that is so unique and has such great purpose. And, actually, this particular series here sets the stage for a sermon that will be given at the Feast this year as a follow up, to give deeper, clearer, more meaningful understanding of God's purpose from the very beginning. It's awesome! It's beautiful. And if we understand those things then hopefully and prayerfully we'll take them more seriously in the manner that God wants us to as human beings.

Again, God's purpose that these two, that they should work together as one unit—one unit—a team, a family, a family unit in unity and purpose, working together. It's awesome, when you understand that.

Matthew 19:6—So then, they are no more two, in the sense of going their independent ways and living life as they choose and going in different directions, whatever it might be that people choose in life, which is all perfectly fine to make choices and decisions in life, all the freedom that God gives us to how we live life, where we live, whatever, but everything changes when two people come together as one, as one family, as one unit for one great purpose. Their purpose is to be a singular purpose, not divisive and going off in different directions, not fighting and tugging at each other in life, but to be one, to be brought together in purpose and direction, to be brought together in agreement and to work on agreement.

Because agreement doesn't come easy between human beings. You have to work on that. Day after day after day you have to work on that. That doesn't mean, as most people tend to take it

with human nature, we need to work on them. No, we need to work on this, inward, because you know what? The only thing in life you can really change with great meaning and purpose is self, this. Do you try to change someone else? And generally the way people go about it is so bad, so wrong, it should show them right away. This happens a lot in marriage, brethren, I'll just tell you. People want someone else to change. They see the things that the other person's not doing that they want them to be doing: "You should be doing that," or "They should be doing this," and "I'm doing this, and this, and this, but what are they doing?" I cringe when I hear things like that and I cringe a lot because I hear it too much when there are problems.

Again here, it's incredible, God's purpose. ...**so they are no more two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together...** God has joined them together because God made and created the institution of marriage, made it possible for a man and a woman to come together to become one unit, to become a family for a purpose in God's plan in what was going to take place on the earth. And how many have ever followed the way God said? Very few. Very few through time. People get married and go off and do things and they have a semblance of certain kinds of things and some find certain measures of happiness and fullness, maybe, at different times, and then they lose that. It takes work. Those who put various kinds of work into it, without even being called, obviously, the more the work they put into it and think in the way that God gave man to think about it in the first place on a physical plane—I'm not talking about a spiritual one—the more they'll be blessed. It's just like anyone. The more individuals do things that are right, it doesn't mean it's because they believe God, but do things because there is a morality in life and how people treat one another, and if they will strive to live good and decent towards others, they will be blessed in that. They'll have a greater level of happiness.

How much more is that made possible with God's spirit, with the mind of God, understanding the purpose and the direction that God has given to us as human beings? The potential is so far greater, so much greater. **Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man put asunder.** "Let not man separate." That's what the word means. "Divide," that's what it means. Don't let anyone divide it. Don't let anyone separate that, and especially the two who are in it. They aren't to divide and separate it. They're to do something different.

Then they said unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? "Why did Moses command?" Well, there are certain things he allowed, but to put the record straight, he didn't command anyone to do this.

And he answered them, Moses, because of the hardness of your heart (your hearts), speaking of the people, **allowed** (permitted) **you to put away your wives.** So he's talking to men. It was a society that's so much different than what we see in the world today.

We were discussing something here the other day. We saw some paintings. I don't know how many of you have seen the movie, *Big Eyes*. There was this artist that had children that she painted that had big eyes. I believe this was back in the '50's, but it went into the '60's. Anyway, it's an

incredible story because it shows what the world was like at that time in the United States. The first time that she got a job painting it was some baby beds, baby cribs, and the employer basically asked her, "Is this okay with your husband?" In essence, "Do you have permission from your husband to do this, to come to work here and to do this painting?"

See, today people don't think that way. So even as some young girls were coming out of the particular theatre and my wife heard them, they were discussing it. They couldn't believe it was like that. To these teenagers, its like, "Why does she allow this?" They couldn't understand it because they didn't know what society was like back then in the late '50's and the '60's. It's quite a story about a struggle that took place through time here, which women started working more during the period of war, World War II, and things began to change, but it was slow. And the freedoms that were there were not so free. And basically people don't understand that the vast majority of human history has been one where men have had the control. Men have oppressed and been over women, very much so, and it has not been the way God has intended or did intend from the very beginning.

So we've talked about that in sermons in times past. Those things have created great problems in marriage life - horrible problems. Marriages as a whole haven't been close to what God intended because of the thinking of mankind and the way society was, and especially in the time of Christ as well, because the time that he was living in was very much like the time that existed a few thousand years before that up till then and it's been the same in the couple thousand years that's followed, almost. So this phenomenon of what society is like today is new, as a whole, to the world. By chance? Coincidence?

There's a great God who's preparing a world for a change, not just the Church. He's preparing the world for a change because there are attitudes that can't be waited upon to be addressed when Jesus Christ returns. There is thinking that needed to begin to change before Jesus Christ began his return and came back to this earth. There'd be far more to change and it'd be far more difficult. This is a shove forward preparing for Christ's coming. That's what it is.

So a lot of the things that have been happening in the last couple of hundred years in the world, and especially in the western world, are part of a design... part of a design of the Great God of the universe who is preparing for His Son to come to this earth. It's not by coincidence, not by chance. It's a marvel, and a lot of it associated with the timing, as well, of God giving technology to mankind.

Because God gave technology to mankind and it is a most sick and distorted thing on earth for human beings to think how great we are that we've been able to do all these things and come up with all this understanding of science and things of technology. No, God opened the door. That's why it took over 5,800 years for things to begin to change in a very rapid pace. They've been changing faster and faster and faster. God prophesied about those things toward the end that man would have like chariots that would run to and fro in ways that man couldn't comprehend, and

you look out here on some of these exchanges of freeways and going over each other and they just get higher and higher. They don't make them wide enough when they make them. By the time they're done they need to double the size. Anyway, there's constant construction. It makes everybody so happy in life.

But we live in that kind of a world, a world of such incredible technology where knowledge multiplies so quickly, so fast. God told about these things because He intended a time when He would unleash things upon this earth - all for a purpose. The coming of His Son and the establishment of His Kingdom on this earth. These things haven't been happening by coincidence or chance or by man's great intellect and great ability. It's because there's a merciful God, just like a person being called and being able to understand the truth. There are things you cannot see until God lets you see it until God opens up the mind through the spirit that He has given, talking about the holy spirit, and there is also a spirit in man that God has power in as well to give and to give that which is greater to human beings, and sometimes to specific individuals and human beings, who people "Ooh and ah," of, Einstein, or whoever it might be, Stephen Hawkins, different ones and all the incredible things that have taken place.

You can go back through and look at different things that have happened in science and technology and things that have happened and it's not because they were great or so smart. God gave people things for a purpose and for a reason. Some people would listen to this and think, "You mean you're crazier than all get out." Well, you don't have to wait too long and find out that, no, you're the one that's got it wrong. But anyway, that's not what this is all about. God reveals truth and in time He's going to reveal a whole lot more.

So he told them, again, backing up a little bit here, **He answered them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts allowed you to put away your wives.** "Because you're hard-hearted. You're not living God's way of life. It's not because you grasp and comprehend God's way of life; it's because you're hard-hearted. The stubbornness you have, the minds you have, it's because of what you are and what you're like that Moses allowed it, permitted it." God allowed Moses to allow it and permit it, to Israel. **But from the beginning it was not so.** "It was not God's purpose. It was not God's intent. It is not God's desire for mankind at all. It is because of the hardness of your hearts," and because of the way society was God allowed them to do it.

Verse 9—And I say unto you, whoever shall put away, and the word means "to divorce," to put away, **to divorce his wife, except for fornication...** Now, the Greek word is "porneia," immorality. I'll just take you back in time. This has been a difficult one for the Worldwide Church of God. Worldwide Church of God went through a lot before it ever came to the point of addressing this word "porneia" and what it was all about because of the way society is and because of the way other religions are and some of their ideas about divorce. Well, let's go back a ways. Why? That great, big church that started over 325 A.D., and their attitudes and so forth about celibacy and those who were to be their religious leaders—whether it be men or women—how they were to live

their lives totally unnatural and weird and sick and because of that a lot of sick and weird things have happened throughout time in history with that big church.

Well, let's just stop with King Henry VIII. What was the big thing? "You can't divorce. You can't divorce her!" So there used to be an expression, and I can't remember the exact order, but it was something like, "Beheaded, died, divorced," whatever it was. Anyway, two got their heads cut off, if I remember rightly. Anyway, King Henry, he did not like that rule. He did not like it. He realized that to be a king and to continue on something has to change, because "I'm going to have my way and I'm going to have whatever wife I want to have and I'm going to divorce whoever I want. And if they're treasonous and they've committed some kind of treason then we'll chop off their head and I can remarry. Or if somehow they die and it seemed like natural causes then I can marry again. So the pope won't have one on me." But it finally gets to the point where out of total righteousness, "We've got to have a different church. We've got to have different religious leaders, because the Vatican, the pope, they're off base, so let's start a new one," one that's friendlier to divorce. What a sick world!

So this thing has permeated through time and through history. So the Church has struggled with things because of some of this. A lot of it's because of that Church and things that filtered down through other religions. There was a time when, going way back, this was hard. This was not an easy time. To be called into God's Church, at one time, if two people had had previous marriages it was hard. If they had families, two different families, two sets of children, they were told they had to divorce because the original marriage is the only marriage you could ever have. If they were already married then you just have to be single for the rest of your life and the other person you were married to and had children by and you might be in your sixties by this time, you have to separate and that second marriage is not recognized because only the first marriage is recognized. We've known people in the Church like that. I think of two up north where both the man and the wife were in the Church, but they had to separate and live that way for the rest of their life. So, this has been difficult.

Then we get into an age where so many different kinds of situations happen in the Church and so many people in the Church, that all kinds of things began to happen and there was a need to address this thing of marriage and how do we address all these crazy things that are happening? It's been hard. I'll just put it this way. It's been very difficult, very hard. It hasn't been easy. It's been difficult for the ministry. It's difficult for Mr. Armstrong to know what direction to go and how to do some of these things. And finally they did studies into some of these things concerning "porneia" and how to deal with various things in marriage and all the different circumstances, because when you have that many people scattered across the world in all the marriages that existed in God's Church, it was a difficult thing, because no two situations are ever alike and there were so many unique things going on out here. What do you do? How do you address this? We've gone through a lot to get where we are today. It's been a part of a process, but it's been a part of a process of God leading His people out of Egypt - farther and farther away from that

which has caused problems and difficulties in understanding, because if you think a certain way and you have certain ideas that kind of come along with you out of different churches and church organizations, which a lot of it, again, still stem from that one big church, and that's what was happening, to break free from all those things and to be able to see the truth for exactly what God's purpose and God's spirit is has not been an easy thing. It takes time to go through that kind of transition of the mind, even within God's Church. We went through a lot during the era of Philadelphia in those matters, and on into Laodicea, and then another bag of worms towards the end of Laodicea, a latter part of some of those things leading up to the Apostasy and things going in the wrong direction.

So God is just making something very straight here as Jesus Christ is speaking, "From the beginning it was not so." There was a different purpose. So now we're back to that. This thing of "porneia." What is porneia? Well, it does have to do with immorality and it can have everything to do, obviously, with that which is physical, in that respect, of an individual that goes out and commits adultery. Its porneia, immorality, betrayal to the worst degree in a marriage if somebody goes out and does something like that. What they're going to do and what do they address and whether or not they're able to divorce as far as the Church and God is concerned then becomes an issue. But it's also on a spiritual plane, something that the Church really didn't grasp back then when they started addressing things to do with porneia, as a whole, and when individuals might be able to divorce, when they might be able to have a marriage brought to an end.

So we've gone through a lot in the Church to get to the point where we are now, where God had brought us to this point in time. That's why this series is being given because we're going to address some of those things, the way it's going to be in the future. The way it will be in the future. This is the start of stabilizing those things, of establishing those things more firmly, more solidly within God's Church.

So he went on to say then in **verse 9**, again, **And I say unto you, whoever shall put away his wife, except for porneia... and shall marry another, commits adultery.** So the only way, the only means by which a marriage can come to an end, legally so before God, is if another mate, the other mate very clearly does this, "except for porneia." And obviously matters of adultery and so forth, those come to the forefront, but there's more. Going on, **and shall marry another commits adultery; and whosoever marries her who has been put away does also commit adultery.** You know the world doesn't understand any of this and this really isn't for the world. This wasn't something that was being established for the world because the world wasn't following God at this time. These people were not in the Church, but Jesus Christ said the way it should be. He said, "Because from the beginning it was not so, but it's been allowed," so as far as the world is concerned, because the world is not following God, but in God's Church another matter.

So whoever who puts, again, been put away, also the other person commits adultery as well. So what does this mean for the world? Nothing! Who's trying to live by God's way? Some are trying to live by what they believe their church says or whatever it might be and they play their games and

so forth, but people basically do whatever they want to do. They live ever how they want to live. People don't even bother getting married now a days. As far as Europe is concerned, I think a lot of Australia now, and it's happening more and more in the U.S., people just don't even bother getting married. It's much easier to dissolve it if it doesn't work out. And people don't even think about being married until you die. Its like, "That's far. You've got to be kidding me! It's going to go for as long as it goes." They don't foresee that they're going to be with the same person when they get old and take care of each other and whatever it might be. That's not in their minds, in their thinking, because they can't think that way anyway. People generally can't think about getting old in the first place until you've arrived. Then it all comes and hits you. Life begins to hit you in a different way.

But people can't think that way. A young person in their thirties, forties, they can't think that way. It's impossible, as a whole, without God's help, to think in the ways that God intends and wants people to think about a subject like this. So there are certain things that are just kind of foreign in a lot of people's minds in the world. So this is for the Church. This is for those whom God calls. This is for the way it's going to be when Jesus Christ returns.

Because these things will happen in the future. They will happen during the Millennium. I think back to earlier times when I first came in the Church in '69 and early '70's and some of the ideas people had about the Millennium. It's like it was going to be a utopia and if you do start to do something wrong somebody is going to tap you on the shoulder and say, "Wait! Whoa! Put on the brakes. Don't do that. This is the way, walk you in it." It's like you don't have a mind. You're going to have something there with you all the time tapping you on the shoulder every time you get ready to sin. It's not going to let it happen. Give me a break! Is that the kind of world God wants? A bunch of zombies who don't act on the way they really think? Because then God can deal with that because that reveals the true spirit inside of them and if they don't want His way He's not going to make them and force them to live His way of life against their will. You don't want this way of life? Sayonara. Auf Wiedersehen. Dos Vedanya. Don't let the screen door hit you in the butt on the way out! Get out quickly. That's what that means. Don't stand around too long. I don't know if you've heard that expression or not. And some, that might hurt their ears. Anyway, it's a reality.

So anyway, continuing on, **His disciples**, it's amazing what took place here in this conversation, **His disciples then said to him, If this be the case of the man with, or in other words, toward,** which is what the word means, **his wife, then it's good not to marry.** "This is too much!" It's better to live how you want to live and don't get married, like the world thinks today in Europe and Australia, and more so in the United States now. Don't get married because that's pretty hard; God's being pretty hard here, telling us stuff like this. Isn't it better that we just don't get married then because this is just too much? It's asking too much in human life. And of course, they were being a little more righteous about it, like, it's better to remain single and celibate and whatever for the rest of your life than to get married. Anyway, I wonder how good that would go for most

human beings. Some have tried it, even within that great church. It didn't work out so well. Some sick things have come from that.

Verse 11—But he said to them, All, that's not just the word for men, that's added, **All cannot receive this saying.** Not everyone can hear this. Not everyone can receive it into their life, **except to those to whom it is given.** Awesome! I'd say God's Church has never focused on this. Never. Never. Never. Because it's only given to the Church, that's who it's talking to. That's whom Jesus Christ was preparing this for, a message, understanding, giving knowledge to His Church. They can receive it. Because why? It takes God's spirit to grasp these things. It takes God's spirit to grasp what God said in the beginning. It truly does. To grasp it and to live it the way God said to live it requires God's spirit. Human, selfish, carnal human beings can't receive this. Not at all.

Matthew 5. So again, it's quite incredible what has been given to the Church, what God is giving to us even now as we prepare even more so for Christ's coming and what the world is going to be like, especially in this area of life, when people come to understand more fully the vow, the promise they make to another human being, and at the same time make that same vow and promise to God Almighty and to Jesus Christ, because that's what they are doing! It's not a small thing. So who can receive this? Only the Church can because people in the world don't know the truth. They don't understand God. They don't understand Jesus Christ. They don't understand what's taking place in this world. They don't understand the truth. They don't understand the truth about Christ's life and the truth about Christ's death and when they hear it they don't want it. "You're going to do away with my day and a half belief of Good Friday to Sunday morning? Not going to happen! Our kids are going to go out and find the eggs and we're going to continue to have them hidden so they can have their fun, innocent time. There is nothing wrong with that." It's a sick world. So God's not in the picture.

Matthew 5:13—You are the salt of the earth. Who is that talking to? It wasn't to the Jews of that time. "You are the salt of the earth." When Jesus Christ spoke, when Jesus Christ taught, as a whole it was for the future because even the disciples could only receive a portion of what he was saying at this time. They could only grasp in measure, to the measure God was drawing them and giving them certain abilities to see and understand things in a limited fashion. They believed that he was the Messiah, but limited, because when he died they no longer believed that. They stopped believing that truth until God charged them up again and helped them to see and brought them to the day of Pentecost and gave the impregnation of His holy spirit.

So when Jesus Christ speaks it's spiritual, it's on a spiritual plane, though people in the world talk about some of these things and can have certain understanding in a limited fashion, of things they try to do themselves, as much as different ones write books about how to pull yourself up by your bootstraps type of thing, a mentality. All the books I read long ago by Dale Carnegie, they've gone by the wayside. But different people had different things about what you could do as a human being and how you could improve yourself, which is true on a physical plane, but not on a spiritual one. *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale, things like that, there's

some interesting things in those things of things that people can do on a physical plane, but it's not about God. This is about God and this is about a need for God's spirit to understand the things that are being said.

"You are the salt of the earth." We're to be different. There is something we're to do, as small as we are, as small as God's Church has always been. And if we understand God in the picture and what He sees and what He looks at upon the earth, rather than destroying it He sees the salt of the earth through which He is working and He has a purpose of those with whom He is working; they are the salt. And if it weren't for that and they weren't there it would be like what happened in the days of Noah. There would be no purpose for humanity, but God has a purpose that He's working out and He works with salt. He blesses us to become the salt of the earth.

You are the salt of the earth. Again, if that wasn't around what would be the purpose of having this? **But if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall anything be salted?** So can you imagine the food there is kind of bland, and you want a little more with it? If it's just white and nothing happens there and there's just nothing to it, you'd throw it away. This salt's no good. That's what he's saying. **It is, therefore, good for nothing but to be cast out and trampled underfoot by men.** **You are the light of the world.** He wasn't talking to the Jews and he wasn't yet fully addressing the disciples. They were being prepared for understanding this and he was teaching and telling things that the world had never heard, in that respect, in a way that the world never heard it, but he's getting ready to tell something on a spiritual plane here that people never understood. He's starting to open up a way. After 4,000 years of mankind he's starting to show things of their purpose and intent on a spiritual plane. This is a big change with humanity, with mankind, because God wasn't doing this in the previous 4,000 years. These things weren't being taught in the previous 4,000 years. Some things that Christ spoke of that are recorded in the Old Testament as far as prophetic things and things that applied to Jesus Christ, they weren't understood by the world. They didn't grasp those things but on a very limited plane.

You are the light of the world. Well, who can be a light in the world? Only those who have light! It's the Church. **A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a measuring container, but on a candle stick,** like a bushel basket type of thing, whatever the size is of the container and you put a candle under there. You don't put it so the light can't be seen. That's the example that's being given here, **but on a candlestick,** that's what people do. Today we have lights. Just flip a switch. **...so that it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before others.** Is he talking to the Jews, talking to the world? Not yet. It's for the Church. It's for those whom God calls, to those to whom it's given as he made comment later when he was talking about marriage. The only ones that can receive this are those to whom it's given to receive it. Others can't receive it so it's only to the Church.

Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good work. So who has good works? They're only good if God's in it. Truly, when it talks about good works, works that are productive, it's talking about things that are on a spiritual plane, things that are happening in an

individual's life of something that, first of all, comes from the only true and Almighty God, who Jesus Christ says there's only one good. That kind of good is what is being spoken of, that which is true and right that can live through a person that others can benefit from because of the changes you're blessed and able to make in your thinking, in your mind in how you may treat someone, how you may speak to someone, or not speak to someone, or not treat someone because you're relying on God's spirit in asking for God's help in your life. ...**that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** He's the source because it's about glorifying God, not you, not me, not any individual, because it doesn't come out of us. It comes from God. If something is truly good and lasting and meaningful and inspiring and fulfilling in life that has something of this kind of impact it comes from God. The source is God. It's God's spirit.

Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law... so what do the churches teach? "He came to do away with the law! We don't have to keep it anymore. We're not captive to it anymore. We're not in bondage to it anymore. We're free! Whew! We're liberated! No, no, no, you don't have to keep the Sabbath. It's been done away with." Isn't that amazing? You think, that's the one. The holy days? "Don't you understand, you poor creature, you don't have to go to the Feast of Tabernacles in October and tell your boss and you maybe lose your job. That's just not smart thinking. You're not bound to those things anymore. Jesus Christ came to show us something different. You're under grace now." This fuzzy feeling thing of grace. "You're under grace now and you're not under that Old Testament law." And we know the story. So you start saying, "Well, okay. You mean it's okay if I go out and take your car because stealing is okay?" "Uh..." "You mean you can go out here and murder people and that's okay? I can lie and steal and cheat. You mean God did away with all that?" People are so stupid! People are so naïve and they don't want to go the extra mile. They don't want to go the extra step and ask something like this. Some of them that are so self-righteous, "Oh, you poor thing. You don't have to keep the Sabbath day, and in a Church like that, especially, that people aren't welcome to come in, anybody. You going to let me come in?" "Well, no. You have to contact the ministry." "See! See what kind of a group of people they are. It's a cult to be so restrictive like that. You're free to come as you are. Sunday mornings? Just come as you are. That's what Jesus wants. Have you accepted Jesus?" I mean, what do you mean?

It's a sick thing and it's about the Sabbath and it's about the holy days. They look down upon you. People get to know you they look down on you as you poor, ignorant person that you should believe in the seventh day Sabbath. You're like those Seventh Day Adventists or the Jews. "Are you a Jew? Don't you believe in Jesus?" I'm saying this for people in the future, because, you see, that's the way the world is. "Are you a Jew? You don't believe in Christ?" Some of the first things I was asked at one point in time when I took a three year sabbatical. It's like, "Are you a Jew?" Well, what if I was? They keep the Sabbath. They keep the holy days.

So he told them, **Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets,** the things that are written in the prophets because they're going to come to pass. The things written in the

law, man's going to come to live by that or not and not exist. People have choices. **I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.** He, himself, in a very powerful way was going to fulfill much, so much of what was written in the prophets through time about him from the very beginning.

Verse 18—For truly, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the law. It's like saying not one comma, not one apostrophe is going to pass from the law that God has written until everything is fulfilled and accomplished that it pictures, that it foreshadows in the future. So all those things will come to pass. And once everyone's in God's Kingdom, in God's Family the law then is fulfilled. That's what they live. They can't live anything else. That's what they live because it's them. It's who they are. **...until all is fulfilled. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teaches others so, they shall be called least by those in the Kingdom of Heaven,** so the commandment to keep the Sabbath and people who keep Sunday, a different day. But they don't think about this. They don't quote things like this. They don't even like to go into these verses. You won't hear that on Sunday morning if you were going into a place of their worship because it raises some questions and some issues that they don't really want to address, but if you bring it up, oh, they'll address it. "You poor thing..."

But whosoever shall do and teach *them*... How? How do you do that? Sometimes people think it's by what they say, that somehow you have to be spiritual and religious and you have to talk about things in a fake sort of way, maybe sermons. It's good to talk about - don't misunderstand me. If something is inspiring and something comes up and you haven't heard, and people get in a conversation and it's natural and it's good, fine. But sometimes people can think that they have to talk in a certain way and that they have to talk about certain things and push certain ideas or they need to be a teacher of certain things here and their own ideas about what God is saying. We've had a lot of that in times past. We've had a lot of that since the Apostasy, especially the beginning after the Apostasy. That's why so many aren't with us to this day because they couldn't come into unity and oneness with what truth God was giving to His Church and they wanted to believe other things and they wanted to build bridges with other groups that had different ideas.

"But whosoever shall do and teach them..." You do it not by what you say, not by what comes out of your mouth. That can reflect what's inside. That can reflect some of these things, but it's by your example. It's by what you live. That's what helps and teaches people. Even in the world you're the salt of the earth and in time those who know you and know what you have gone through, when God draws and calls them and they knew what you went through and maybe the hard time they gave you for keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days, whoever it might be, family, whatever, friends, co-workers on the job, well, there's going to come a time when they're going to come to understand why you did what you did, why you took the stand that you did. God's going to bring those things to their memory. They're not going to forget. Those things are cemented there. They're going to be totally there when the time comes.

So it's by our example. People see things that we do. They know when you take the Sabbath off, when you won't work on Friday night through Sabbath, the Sabbath day. People around you, they're observant to those kinds of things. Sometimes we don't think they do, or they don't know about that because they haven't talked to you about it. They see. They observe certain things. So that's how you teach. You teach by example.

In marriage you teach by example, by what you live. Sometimes that example is good and sometimes the example is bad. Sometimes what is taught is not what should be taught, because of what people can see from it and maybe learn and think that, well, "so and so" is doing this and I know that they did that or whatever it might be in life. I'm not just talking about marriage, but this subject is about marriage. So people by a wrong example can let down and that's bad. That's hurtful and harmful, but it's by doing things that are right that people can be encouraged by and see something and think, "That's what I want. That's how I want to be. That's what I want to live." **...the same shall be called great by those in the Kingdom of Heaven.** That's what it's talking about. It's about that which is coming.

Verse 20—For I say to you, that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Again, Jesus is telling something here they had no comprehension of what he was discussing, what he was saying to them. The disciples didn't understand. They learned a lot of these things later. They were able to understand them later when they had the impregnation of the spirit and Jesus Christ had taught them more that forty days that he was with them as well, things that aren't even recorded, vast things that aren't recorded, as it says. After the day of Pentecost then with God's spirit all these things came back to them and they could see them, they could understand them, and they could teach, as their job was, others of what was true and what was right before God and about God's family and what it means to become a part of God's Kingdom, God's family.

And so he says, "Your righteousness has to exceed theirs." So the Pharisees were very, appearance wise, righteous to others. It's kind of like today you see people going around and they want to appear righteous to other people and pray in public, everybody around in a café all holding hands and praying. I loathe things like that. Now, they don't understand what they're doing, but they think they have to do that. They're taught, in essence, that they have to do this. But Jesus Christ said, "When you pray, go into your closet alone before your God," because it's what you're communicating to your Father, to your God, that He wants to hear, not something seen in public. It's not a matter of how you are made to look. It's not a matter of how I've seen some who take a blanket and put over their head and go up to a wall and they're going back and forth like that, but that's what they have done, people have done. They do things like that to be seen of others. They feel good about that. That's their reward, as Jesus Christ said. That's their reward. That's all they're going to get out of it because it has nothing to do with a relationship with God Almighty.

So being pious and walking around kind of with hands folded and wearing a white collar and a black outfit doesn't make anyone righteous, but a lot of people like that. They like to be seen of

others as being righteous, "Oh, he's a preacher. He's a holy man," or wearing an orange outfit, you know, "Oh, they're holy men." They're going to go up there and bang the gongs and they're going to go up here and spin wheels and all of these prayers that go up before their god, you know, that's somehow religious.

There have been people in the Church who've been impressed by individuals who wear orange. I think, "Are you out of your blooming mind?" One was an evangelist in God's Church! Impressed by him, the Dalai Lama, because of all his knowledge, because of all his wisdom, and because of his stature in the world and how the world saw him. Sad. Sad, the world, especially those in God's Church if they begin to go off course into different ideas about different kinds of people. A lot of people don't know this about different ones, of things that happened in times past. At the time I thought, "What on earth are you doing raising him up in esteem like that? Why are you doing that?"

Anyway, we have been through so much. God isn't impressed by how people appear to be righteous. God isn't impressed by those things, period, anyway, anything that even comes close to that. It's quite the opposite, but He'll work with us in God's Church. He'll work with us in His Church to help us to change from those things that we think we have to be or that we have to say, such as, "blessed be 'this'" or "bless 'that'" or different things that people say. We don't have power to give those things. We don't have the ability. You can go and pray about certain individuals and ask God to give them certain favor in certain circumstances and so forth, but you know, people have these sayings sometimes and they don't know what they're saying. Be careful! You don't want to send out the wrong kind of signals. You don't want to say the wrong kinds of things to people. You want to be true and right before God because it comes from here, because it comes out of here, because of conversion and a right spirit with God. So it is with everything in our lives.

You say, "What does this have to do with marriage?" Everything! Everything! Because God wants what is genuine and true that comes out of us. Are we perfect? Not a one... or not a two in any marriage, but you're to work toward those things and you're to work together and you're to learn to love each other and you're to grow in that love toward each other, and that's to become stronger, and your family unity is to become stronger and stronger the more life goes on. The bond and the oneness that God desires that a man and woman be able to experience becomes greater and greater, and so this thing about a façade of religion.

That's why I made comment here and went into this in the first place because sometimes when you see something you want to see it because it's true and right, not just because people come to Sabbath services and they behave and put on their nice behavior cap. It's because of what you live all during the week. That's what God wants to see. He wants to see what is genuine and true and right that comes from your heart that comes out of your mind. Then that example others can see. If there is encouragement or something that happens in life they will be encouraged by it at the right time when God helps them to receive that.

So he said again, **For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of God.** So it's not by appearance. It's not by how people look. God isn't looking for us to appear righteous. He wants us to be righteous. And candidly, that doesn't come from within. A lot of it comes because you're just; you're forgiven of your sins. You know that? A lot of what God attributes to you for righteousness sake, as righteousness, is because He forgives you of your sins and now you're cleansed. Now you're filled with His mind and His life, His spirit. I hope that makes sense to you because Paul talks a lot about faith and about what real faith is and about where righteousness really comes from. It comes from what we believe. Because you believe the truths, God attributes that to you for righteousness. It's because of what you believe because you're convicted of those things and you make stand for those things in your life - the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and far, far more than that, understanding of other things that are given concerning women, that that bondage is being removed that's been there for nearly 6,000 years in the world.

Verse 21—You have heard it's been said of old time, You shall not kill, and whoever does kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause... So some think, "Well, I had cause. I had cause to be angry! I had cause to lose it! I had cause because they caused me to! And so I didn't respond maybe as well as I should have and I got loud and I cursed at them. I cussed them out." This has happened in marriages within the last year in God's Church that have had to be addressed in God's Church. Some I may not have heard about. Hopefully, none of you are guilty of that who are listening today that I don't know about, but God does. The point being is if I heard about it, it's been dealt with. Some are in and some are out.

This is not a small thing with God, how we live our lives. How we live our lives especially in this institution is exceedingly important to God Almighty, especially within His Church amongst His people, obviously, for they're the only one who can receive this. So, "whoever is angry with his brother," and basically in the Greek this is a very bad translation. It's one thing to become angry about a situation. I become upset with certain things that people have done, but not to the point where you are angry with them, not to the point where you rail against them or whatever it might be. You can hate what people have done, but not hate them. There's a big difference. Sometimes we all fail in various ways here even on a spiritual plane, but that's what we're to grow in.

So "without a cause"; in other words, for no real reason, for no just cause. Basically, as a result of it comes through wrong judgment in the first place, selfish judgment that so often happens in people's minds. In other words, sometimes people just become angry and lash out at individuals and curse and swear, and whatever it might be in life. Sick world. A lot of this bombards people in God's Church, and you have to be careful because you can take that stuff with you and you can take it home to your mate, whatever, and lash out at them because of how things are happening in your life. So we have to be on guard as God's people.

So, **whoever is angry**, as it says here, it makes it very clear in scripture you're really not to be angry. You're really not to take anything out upon someone else in a harsh and judgmental and evil way in the sense of because of your selfishness, because of harsh judgment, or whatever it might be. There is a time to address things. There is a time to address things in life and bring things out in the open and so forth, but how you do it and what you do we have to be on guard. Where we do it wrong we have to say, "I'm wrong. I'm sorry." Apologize.

And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca! It's a word that means to express contempt, to look down upon in judgment. It happens a lot where people look down upon someone else in judgment and find fault, express contempt toward them, at them, and maybe to others in talking to others then and expressing contempt about someone else that you have toward them, toward an individual. You have to be very careful about such things in life. It says, **shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, You fool!** This has to do with finally it comes out. You speak it openly in the sense of how you attack someone verbally and judge him or her openly, condemn him or her openly, **shall be in danger of gehenna fire.**

Then dropping on down to **verse 27—You have heard that it was said of those by old time, You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that whosoever looks on a woman to/toward lust, that's what it's about, after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.** It's in the mind. It's of the spirit. So today such things bombard us in a way that the world has never known. Driving down a highway you see a sign. It affects the mind. You go by a shopping center and you see all kinds of things, and on and on it goes. Then these little machines here, a computer, on the Internet, things that people are bombarded by that come by, and it's easy to click on to something and go on to something else that we as human beings shouldn't do. This happens a lot and it happens too much in God's Church. It's something that people have to fight against and ask God for help to change their thinking and their minds, to heal them.

It goes on to say, **and if your right eye offend you**, it's a word that means, "be a cause to sin," it's what it's talking about, "pluck it out," **pluck it out and cast it from you.** That's pretty drastic. It's not what this is about at all. I don't know how you see with one eye and then, "Oh, sinned through this one here," and pluck it out, you know, get rid of it, and somehow now I'm going to be clean. And if I do it again and both eyes are gone I guess it'll solve that problem. You're not going to look on anyone to lust after them. It's not what it's talking about!

...and cast it from you, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not for your whole body to be cast into gehenna. That's what the word is. It's not "hell." It's a word "gehenna." The Jews at that time understood full well what that was all about. They understood how that area, the Valley of Hinnom, was used in the Old Testament and how that it was a place of garbage, and it was burned and there were times that there were bodies of criminals and different ones who were cast in there to be burned. So if you think of a place where your body is going to be burned because you're going to be judged, it puts a different perspective on things, that this is your judgment, that your judgment is death, that your body is just going to

be burned up in a trash heap. Basically, that's what its saying. That's what it's supposed to conjure in the mind. It's not a place where you have little things running around with little pitchforks and little red ears and poking you for the rest of your life because you live on into eternity at all. It's about a judgment that is an eternal judgment because it lasts for eternity and you can't have life again after that.

We understand that, but those listening for the first time have no idea, words that are translated as "hell" and what they mean in the Bible. It blows my mind. It's so simple to look up. It's so simple to find the word "hell" in the Old Testament that's translated into English as "hell." Over and over again it's the word "sheol" in Hebrew, and it only means "a hole in the ground; and most often refers to a grave." Then there's "hades" in the New Testament out of the Greek. It's the same thing. It means the same thing as the word "sheol" in the Hebrew. These are simple things, but people in the world don't teach these things, that that's what you're going to go to. That this is about death. It's about dying. It's about a need to be resurrected from that death and that dying and your body returns to dust again just like God said, "Dust you are, to dust you return." They have no idea what gehenna is all about.

And if your right hand offend you, be a cause to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. I knew of a person one time that tried to cut their arm off right there because —they had a little help from a spirit world—but because of their interpretation of this, and it was like, “It caused me to sin,” and so they started cutting it off. Nuts. Crazy! This is not what he's talking about. Sadly even most of the Church has never understood what this is fully about. **And if your right hand offend you, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish.** So within a body that God wants us to see, He is working with a spiritual Body. It's referred to in Corinthians and Paul refers to it and talks about it, about a Body that is made up of many members and that we are to be this body, the Body of Christ, the Church of God. If it comes to a point in time, regardless of what part of the Body it is, if it is something that is a cause for sin and does not repent and does not change it's better for that portion to be cut off from the Body than for the sin to spread within the body and cause others to be drug along and lose out or turn.

I think of the Apostasy and what happened there and there is a great example of things that happened. That's why God has given a time, for there are times for disfellowshipment from the body because its better that a certain part be plucked out, or plucked away, or cut off from the body than more of the Body being hurt by that. I think of every time there's been rebellion in God's Church very rarely is it just one person. Very rarely, as a whole, is it just one person, when it's had devastating effects upon the Church. So often it's been one that's been larger, three or four, five or six, depending on how large you are. If you're in a particular area of thirty people, four, five people is a lot of people. I've known of areas where whole churches, hundreds of hundreds of people have gone at one time. Incredible, the things that have happened through time in the history of God's Church.

Then it goes on to say, **verse 31—And it has been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife let him give her a writing of divorcement.** So everything that's been gone through here to this point in time Christ has been teaching that which is on a spiritual plane that the world can't receive. They can't understand it that the law has not been done away with, that it's going to be magnified and fulfilled, in that respect, and then he begins to break that down and talks about an example here, about adultery, that the spirit part of that is of the mind. It's not just the actual, physical act. If you've done that you actually committed adultery long, long, long before that in the mind spiritually, on a spiritual plane. And who can do that? Well, it's not talking about the world, again, it's talking about people in the Church. The message is to God's people and what happens on a spiritual plane to people.

So it says here, **But I say to you that whosoever shall put away his wife except for (save for),** same thing here, the cause, **porneia**, talking about that again, **causes**, or has made **her to commit adultery**, if she remarries, **and whoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.** So there are specific things that are geared toward a Church, that are geared toward people in the Church that's a message for God's people and how we're to live our life.

Let's notice some of what Mark had to say. Mark 10. All this based on, geared toward the institution of marriage, not for the world, but for God's people, for the Church and things we're to see and to grasp and to be on guard about, to work on, because it takes work. You know, being called into God's Church, living this way of life, it takes work. It doesn't just happen. We don't just go to Sabbath services back and forth and then during the week somehow this all just kind of sunk in and changed us. You have to think about things and make changes in your life in how we act and how we behave and what we pray about.

Like I mentioned some time back about there are things that we should know in us that we need to pray about on a regular basis. You need to know your major weaknesses. If you don't know what your number one weakness is and your number one battle is at any moment in time you're in trouble. If you don't know what your number two is you're in trouble. Now, you don't have to list everything out like that and say, "Well, I think this is one. This is two." Maybe they tie. Don't worry about that, but you need to know what's at the top up here and what you're like and who you are and what your battles are because if you don't know where your battles are you're not battling it. What are you fighting against? What are you praying to God about on a daily basis? I'll tell you what, when you see those things and you pray about those things God blesses you and helps you to change and address those things, and when you see yourself slipping you go back and pray about that particular area again, whether it be number one, two, or three. You might be able to bring number one under great check for a long period of time, but I'll tell you what, if it's you and who you are it's going to raise its ugly head at some point in time and you're going to have to address it again.

We're human beings. We have weaknesses. That's why we pray and cry out to God for help to fight in those things, to be of a right mind and right thinking. So these things don't just happen because

we hear them. They happen and the change comes because we pray about them and we're being honest to God about it, truthful to Him about it, we're crying out to Him for it because we know we need this help. Just like the holy spirit, if you don't cry out that you need God's spirit why would He give it to you? If you don't ask for it today, why give it to you? If you don't understand the value of His spirit being in your life today to receive what He has, or tomorrow, and the next day, and asking God every day for the help of His holy spirit in you, then why give it to you if you don't treasure it, if you don't understand its value, if you don't appreciate and embrace its value - God's life in you every day? And so there are things we have to pray about and ask God for. There are things we have to fight. This is a matter of being on guard and being watchful. If we're not doing these things and we don't know number one, number two, and maybe three, four, five, six, and seven, they're just kind of splattered out in life sometimes and pop up every once in a while, you pray about them and you ask God to help you fight them. If there's something you need to make right and do better because of it, you go out and do it.

I did say Mark, didn't I? **Mark 10:1—And he (Jesus Christ) rose from there and came into the borders of Judea/Judah on the other side of the Jordan.** So another account here, something, this is what's being talked about. **And the people gathered together unto him again, and as was his way he taught them again.** So that's just what his way was. When people were there he would teach, he'd give instruction, guidance, and direction, and talk about God's way of life. **And the Pharisees came to him and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? For they were testing him. And he answered and said to them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses allowed us to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said to them, Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept, this command, this instruction, is what it means. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. And for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.** Again, that word "cleave." Awesome! You know, to unite, talking about glue together as one, **and the two of them shall be or become one flesh; so then they are no more two, but one flesh.** United, glued together, one in purpose, one in what they share, one in what they're doing, and united as a team, as a family. That's what a family is, it's to be a team. It's to work together in a united fashion for various kinds of goals in life and various kind of things you want to do together and accomplish together. There's a unique sense of sharing that God gives to human beings in that kind of environment that can't be experienced anywhere else. It just can't be. It's a unique experience in life that God affords.

Verse 9—Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate (divide). That's what the word is talking about here, "put asunder," don't "divide or separate." **And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he said to them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commits adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she commits adultery.** So he showed the balance here. It's not just about the men in things that are talked about here. The instruction is to men and women. In God's Church it's to men and women.

It's how we think and what we do then. So this is all equal. One is not better than the other. One is not less than the other. The instruction and guidance and direction that God gives in a family, in a marriage, is to both. That respect there toward each other is of the same level and not one better than the other. The only time that anything comes into account is in the matter of government that comes from God. Only then. Now we understand in those things, if we understand how the flow of God's spirit works. We're learning that in the Church more than ever before. A long, long time ago, thank God, He helped me to understand how it worked in the Church through Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong, then the evangelists, and then out to the Church. It's God's flow. It's how God's spirit works. There was never a truth come along about Pentecost that could come from an evangelist. There was never a truth come along that could come from any of the senior ministers, the pastors, and so forth, the preaching elder, an elder. God didn't work that way. It had to come from Mr. Armstrong. We can learn lessons from that. That's the flow of God's spirit because that's how God governs and works with His Body. That's how Jesus Christ worked with the Church.

So we have learned that in a very powerful way within the Church and we need to. We need to grasp and comprehend how God's spirit flows in life. It does in life as well in a marriage because there has to be a certain kind of order. So until or unless God reveals something different about how that is to be addressed it still comes through, in the sense of order, through the man in the Church, through a husband. But when does it ever have to be used? Where is there ever a need for the exercise of government? It has to be pretty drastic, especially within a marriage, for that to even be exercised because everything should be a matter, as a whole, of sharing and so forth. We understand now within the Church if a woman is ordained and a husband is not you know the flow of God's spirit, that's the way it works. It comes through the one ordained if the other is not because it's a matter of God's spirit and how it flows to bring about a cohesion of government and unity on a spiritual plane within the Church.

Now, in time as we go along God's going to give us more understanding of those things, but that's what we live. That's what the Church has lived for a long, long time. But it's been abused, in a lot of cases, because people have not understood that a husband and wife are here to come together as one and they are to be unified. They're to be unified as one. They're to share together as one. To share in life, to be a family, it's a matter of sharing and how people work together. We're going to address some of this as we go along in this sermon because it's all a matter of understanding how God's spirit works. And I would say, as a whole, that it's been highly abused within the Church even because of lack of understanding of what is required. It's kind of like the ministry and what happened in Worldwide, what happened in Laodicea, because the flow of God's spirit and how it worked was not a matter of something that was done in a right way. It wasn't seen in a proper manner, in a proper fashion. I'll have to save that for the next part here, to go into it. It's about all we can address here today so we'll stop there in Mark and continue on with *Part 2* next time.