

Observing Another Feast

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Feast of Tabernacles Sermon - 2017

This is the first service of another Feast of Tabernacles, a Feast that we are so blessed to be able to observe in the closing age of mankind. This may be our last great observance. We really don't know. But we've been preparing for this final phase of the ending of 6,000 years of human life.

We've been blessed to be called at the end of an age. Mr. Armstrong understood that we were at the end-time, and God blessed him mightily to give us certain prophecies and so forth that helped us to grasp and comprehend where so many of the nations of the world came from and how they fit into things that are happening in the end-time. So we've carried on from that time, from the time that was established and re-established through Mr. Armstrong in so many ways, because the Church was dying out during the age of Sardis, during the period of Sardis. God raised up Mr. Armstrong for the Philadelphian era of the Church.

Then we came into the Laodicean period when we had what was prophetically given to us to understand that it was a time of abomination of the temple, Abomination of Desolation, as we understand it. We didn't comprehend what that would be when it talks about a great falling away that would occur, an Apostasy within God's own Church and though we spoke of it we had no idea that it was going to be as great as it was, as devastating as it was. So today the Church is exceedingly small. It's a remnant. It's a left over portion of what was there before, a very, very small left over portion. So much of that is just for the simple reason that God is going to make it known at the end of time here that what He brings about and what takes place at the very end of this age now is by His might and by His power, not by a large group of people, not by a group that has a lot of ability to reach out in the world in a very powerful way. God is the one that has to magnify whatever goes out. God is the one who is going to give what needs to be given in the time that He wants it to be given. So we're blessed to serve in this end-time. Though we be small God will accomplish what He's going to do. We're just blessed to be a part of it and that's awesome.

We don't understand why. It's like when we're first called. We don't know why we're called, why someone else wasn't called. We know people. When we grew up, before we were called, we understood, we knew when we were given the truth that there were so many others who live life better than what we did. Yet we're the ones whom God has blessed to call. We don't understand all that and neither do we have to.

It's by God's choosing for God's purpose, and so much for the very purpose of God, even also showing then by the apostle Paul, that not many mighty, not many great are called. Again, for the same kind of purpose, part of that being that God works with those that can be worked with in the sense of not being great and mighty because the great and mighty tend to rely on themselves.

The great and the mighty of this world who have accomplished great things tend to rely on themselves and think that they're accomplishing and doing things. God's going to make it known that it's by His great power and by His great might that things are accomplished, that we're able to come into His Family. We can't do that. No human being can do that. It's the gift of God. It's by God's grace and by God's great work in our lives that change can be made so that we can become something different than what we were.

So we are incredibly blessed to be here at this Feast of Tabernacles, a small, scattered remnant group. How incredible is that? How awesome is that, that we are so blessed? So often we just don't grasp how really, truly, deeply blessed we really are and what we have been given. So we are here to observe another Feast of Tabernacles. We are so blessed to be at a time when we know that the end of man's age is about here. Man can't govern himself. Everything we're seeing, everything we hear in the news today is being magnified in the sense of making it clear to the world that we can't govern ourselves. Man can't govern himself successfully. The world is in chaos. Society is breaking down more and more. Governments are breaking down more and more. Nothing is being accomplished. The only thing that man can think of is a reset, which happens in history at different times. War, and to take the focus off of the fact that things aren't working and that man can't make changes properly. So people begin to focus more on war to change their circumstances, to refocus the world again. It's a sad, sick thing about human life.

So here we are at the end of man's age, and the end of Satan's as well, because thankfully that rule over mankind is coming to an end as well, the power that he's had for nearly 6,000 years. So this indeed may be our final great observance. Sometimes the way things are going in the world, you think, are we going to have one more or not, because I felt very good about the fact that we're going to have this Feast. Whether we have one more? We just keep moving forward and God will reveal to us what we need when we need it. He will show us what we need and how far we must go. We believe with all of our being - I believe with all of my being that Jesus Christ is about to return to this earth in a very, very short time from now. But I've also believed in times past that he was coming at another time and he didn't. And so, indeed with all of my being I do hope and pray this indeed is it and that we don't have to go through more.

If we'd known what the Apostasy was going to be like we wouldn't have wanted to go through that. We would have cried out to God, "Please, don't have us go through that. Please, don't let us experience that." Yet we did and for great purpose and there are things that are going to be accomplished because of that, things that are going to be taught into the Millennium with power and strength, that wouldn't have the same kind of power and impact if that hadn't of occurred. If that had not occurred it wouldn't have the same powerful lesson with it as what's going to exist all through the Millennium and the Great White Throne. So it was worth it. It was worth all the suffering and hardship that people went through, what we went through, and what people went through that are wandering around out there in a wilderness once again who were once a part of Body in fellowship. And yet one day they're going to glorify God in a very powerful way because

what they have learned through it and what they will learn through it. When they come to see it they'll glorify God and be thankful for what they experienced, for the hardship and the suffering that they went through for all those years since the Apostasy and that's coming.

So perhaps we will have one more Feast to observe and perhaps we will not. Perhaps we'll have to keep it in our own areas, our own homes. We don't know yet, but at some point things are going to get very difficult on this earth, and it's going to be far more difficult than what our minds can comprehend. Just as when we spoke of in times past within the Church about an Apostasy, about a great falling away in the Church, we had no idea the devastation, the heartache, the suffering, the difficulties of what we would go through. So at this point in our being able to observe another Feast of Tabernacles it's good to say, "Greetings to all of you, God's people, and welcome to this Feast of 2017! We are so blessed to be here!"

So what kind of Feast are you planning to observe? Because we are to observe God's Feast. There are things we are to do and to think about when we come before God and worship Him and observe the times that He's given us to observe. So observance isn't just a matter of keeping a particular day, knowing that a particular day at sunset has come and another sunset has gone, but there are things we are to do conscientiously in our mind in the way God wants us to do it. So it's not just a matter of warming a seat and hearing a service. It isn't a matter of just coming together at a particular location, if we're so blessed to do that. There is so much more. At the beginning of this Feast that is something we need to think about. That is something we need to focus upon at this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

So again, what kind of Feast are you planning to observe this year? For those of you who are scattered and not able to be with others during this Feast period but instead are at home - and there are many of you who are scattered who are older, there are matters of health that restrict people from coming, perhaps in some cases maybe finances. But as a whole most because we've gotten older and there are many because of various sicknesses and so forth and illnesses and being very unwise then to travel. But what an incredible thing that you're able to observe this with the kind of technology that we have, even if you're not able to see as so many are still so blessed to see because of technology, through the YouTube, and be able to watch on your TVs, your monitor, or whatever it might be, your own computer. But to be able to even see the sermon, we didn't have that same kind of ability last year. We started that after the Feast and we've been very blessed to get it up and running. God has blessed us mightily.

I think of times past when people weren't able to go to the Feast of Tabernacles. I remember one Feast in the very beginning at a particular point of time, at the birth of our first child, our daughter, that it was right during the Feast of Tabernacles and we weren't able to be there. I had gone to Big Sandy to keep the Feast and my wife was back home. Back then it was just something that you felt you had to do; to not be there was like committing some kind of great sin. Yet there are times through wisdom, because of understanding various things that God has given to us that we are to remain back in our homes and are not able to travel, not able to attend. So Laura was

alone. So after that first day I knew I had to be back there with her so I went back and sure enough there was a birth then, somewhere toward the middle of the Feast, if I remember correctly, part way into it anyway, and we learned a lot of lessons from that, of not being able to go. Some of those things have affected our ability to be able to help others, to realize there are times you are not able to travel to the Feast.

God has revealed things as well since that time about what it means to have certain kind of fellowship wherever you are in the world. But back then, as I was getting ready to say, we didn't have the ability to listen to sermons. We didn't have things that were going to be stated and things that were going to be given. How blessed are you to live at this age where you do have those things? Thank God for that. Thank God for the ability and blessings you have throughout this Feast, of what you're able to receive, that you're able to receive it and be fed, especially in these times, because we need all that we can receive all that we can from God Almighty and what He feeds us and what He gives us in nourishment. We are so very blessed.

For, again then, a lot of you, you are scattered and are still able to hear the sermons, and even a lot of you who are scattered you are still able to be with some other brethren on occasion throughout the Feast, and some of you are in some areas where you're so close together that you are able to meet together, so that's even an added blessing, to have at least a portion of fellowship with some others. That is a great blessing!

So if you are one of those, which there are more, who are so blessed that you're able to observe this time with others then we need to think about that because there is more required of us in order to observe this Feast period than if we're just by ourselves. There is more required. There is more needed in how we observe. That's what we need to focus upon today. So it's exceedingly important then that we understand that coming before God and how we worship Him then, if we are able to meet with others and have fellowship, that we do it in a way that honors God, that's pleasing to God.

But before we look at some of those things in scripture and so forth of the importance of how we observe this Feast, if we're so blessed to have fellowship and be in fellowship with others this Feast of Tabernacles, it's important for us to look at a couple of things as we begin this Feast of Tabernacles. This is something, the first thing we're going to look at, back in Deuteronomy where God talks about the Holy Days and the seasons He's set aside for us to observe as His people.

In Deuteronomy 16, we'll begin back there and this is something we don't go into that often as maybe we did in times past, when almost at the very beginning then of every service there would be a period of time when we would come before God with offerings, and those things would be spoken of. It got to a point where it wasn't very balanced and it wasn't very good in some cases because there began to be competition - even at the Feast of Tabernacles, because people would send messages and those who were over the various Feast sites would send messages to one another of how much per person had been given at their Feast site. It almost became a

competition and some kind of a badge of honor if an individual was able to be in a site where more was being given per person and if they could by what they had to say perhaps encourage people to give more. That's not the purpose! Those things got way out of hand and they became very unbalanced. God has given us, then, greater balance. It's something we know that we're to do and we have various ways in which we do it. Some just send it on in to headquarters, or, you know, to the Church. Some are able to give it in their own areas. Yet the fact that it's done is what is important, but let's take a look at some of the things that are stated here today then in this.

Deuteronomy 16:1—Observe the month of Abib, the first month of the year that God has given in His holy calendar of how to keep time, how to keep the appointments that we're to have with Him when it comes to holy days and Sabbaths and so forth, but this here is about the Passover, not a high day but the beginning of observance of time that God set aside. And this, this one has so much meaning because before we can enter into a right relationship with God, before we're able to come before Him and truly worship Him, truly, in any annual holy day, everything has to start here first. Everything in our calling begins here first. God's plan is so beautiful. Everything and how it's laid out is so incredibly awesome and beautiful.

So it says here, **Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the Eternal your God, for in the month of Abib the Eternal your God brought you out of Egypt.** So we learn from this and we look back at something that happened physically when God raised up Moses to lead the children of Israel out of a physical nation where the children of Israel were in captivity. God uses that in a powerful way to teach us that which is spiritual that is far more meaningful than what took place back there physically. Now the things that took place back there are astounding, to go through the Red Sea, to have a Red Sea part, for the entire Egyptian army and Pharaoh to be destroyed in the Red Sea. That's incredible, the power and the might of God to lead the children of Israel by a pillar of fire and a great cloud, one in day and one in night. Awesome! Perhaps two, three million people, maybe more. We really don't know the total number, but vast numbers of people. We can't comprehend that. We really can't. To see that kind of movement in what they did as they travelled? We just can't comprehend it.

So, anyway, it says, **for the Eternal your God brought you out of the land of Egypt by night.** In the night. During the night. So the greatest part of that movement as God was working with them was during the night. It's not talking about the Passover specifically itself, because it's talking about (and it does have a duality to it), but God is using that which is about Passover to start it and giving us understanding then of something that happens, again, on a spiritual plane. God calls us out of this world. This world is in darkness, in the night, and He brings us into the light, into the day and He calls us out of spiritual Egypt, out of captivity, because we're captive. We learn about our human nature. We learn about the pulls of the flesh. We learn about the pulls that are in this world, the way the world is and the way mankind is, and we realize it's not God's world. It's not God's world at all. God calls us out of that blindness and out of that darkness and begins to

reveal things to us, brings us into the light so we can grasp and understand and begin to change through our Passover.

So it begins with Passover. So that was in the night, indeed, when the children of Israel killed the lamb, put the blood on the doorposts, and so forth, and those things that happened, but also in the night God did actually lead, because after the daytime portion of Passover, as soon as the sun went down they began their journey - on a high day - out of Egypt. That's when they began their journey, actual journey out of Egypt, but it begins with the Passover. That process of God opening our minds, when He begins to open our minds and we begin to understand things we never understood, we first have to come to understand the sacrifice that makes it possible for us to leave Egypt, to begin that journey. Because that journey and that ability to observe the holy days and the timing that God has given to us, to have a relationship with God can't start until we have observed or have kept or have received the Passover into our lives. So that's an awesome thing to understand.

Verse 2—You shall, therefore, sacrifice the Passover. So again, this is following the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, because when it talks about offering the sacrifice the children of Israel did not offer the Passover lamb as a sacrifice. On the contrary! And there are ministers, many within God's Church in times past, who got so messed up with things like this. They didn't understand the simplicity, yet they should have very clearly and very easily, of what God is saying, but because of sin and because of things that people do the mind begins to be foggy and begins to see in an unclear manner and begins to rely on self and one's own ability to see and to understand and does not rely upon the power of God's spirit to reveal and to keep one in the truth because we have to be close to God in order to be kept in the truth because we can lose it and go off course. If we begin to sin and begin to cut ourselves from the flow of God's spirit we'll begin to rely on self. That will lead us away from the truth of God. It has happened to so many before us, and so many year by year by year, too many.

So, **you shall, therefore, sacrifice the Passover unto the Eternal your God.** So this is talking about that which follows. This is talking about what they prepared for in the afternoon. Once they learned the truth, once God gave them things about the sacrificial system, then He began to reveal to them how to observe annual holy days and those things that had to do with feasting, like the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a time of feasting because they brought together and offered up sacrifices to God Almighty and they ate of it. They were able to partake of that - certain portions. Some were fully offered to God, other things were a part of something dedicated to God but something they were able to partake in just like us. We're able to partake in God's way of life. There are things that God gives us to share in of those things that are unique to us as His people, as God's people.

But here it's very clear what it's talking about. It says, **You may sacrifice unto the Eternal your God of the flock and the herd.** Now, how anyone could ever get tripped up on that and begin to think this was speaking of the Passover only is foolish because God sacrificed that lamb and Jesus

Christ himself sacrificed of himself, the Lamb of God. It wasn't something that anyone else gave and did. So it's not something that we are able to or the children of Israel were able to sacrifice. It was something that God gave as a sacrifice to us. Then what follows that has to do with the sacrificial system and those things that are sacrificed and offered up to God. Then the story goes on, **of the flock and of the herd**. So you couldn't offer anything having to do with a herd of cattle or anything like that, a bull. That wasn't something that was a Passover. It was maybe during that period of time because the Days of Unleavened Bread follow the Passover, and oftentimes it's referred to as the Passover sacrifice because the first holy day that's observed in the year is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the sacrificing and some of the preparation of those animals began on the Passover afternoon, and then toward the evening when the sun went down then they were able to begin to partake of various things in the Passover. Incredible!

So, again, all this that was given to us. Do we grasp what these things mean? Do we appreciate? Do we embrace the meaning of these things? In the period of what we refer to as Old Testament time for Israel it was clear that this would be in the place where the temple was located. So that's what it talks about, as it says here. Let's read this verse here: **you shall, therefore, sacrifice the Passover unto the Eternal your God, of the flock and of the herd**, and then the rest of the verse, **in the place which the Eternal shall choose to place His name there**. So there was a specific way to observe what God had given. But again, so many of these things that are given, it's not just for something that was physical; it's something for us to learn from, to learn more deeply from. "...in the place which the Eternal shall place His name there," and so for so long, like the tent in the wilderness, the tabernacle in the wilderness, wherever it was located, taken down and put back up again, that would be the place where God chose for the children of Israel to observe. They couldn't just go off and observe various things on holy days. They were to come together at a specific place at a physical type of temple, if you will, and then later on the one built in Jerusalem, as David had a desire to build a temple and Solomon did the building.

So we know these stories, but there's more to the story. There's more to be learned from that, speaking of "in the place which the Eternal shall choose to place His name." So again, incredible meaning, "in the place where the temple is located." What does that mean for us then? Well, we understand, as a whole, we grasp those things. We're blessed to know and to understand that which is spiritual. So it is a physical matter of a physical location. In the beginning it was. So we learn from that. We learn from that. For so many who came out of the Worldwide Church of God, for them it was very much about, when you talk about the Feast of Tabernacles there was this concept, this idea, well, there are certain Feast sites and that is where God has chosen to place His name. We were still very physical in various things of how we observed.

I think of some of the first period of time when God began to break some of that in us, break us away from some of that bondage to that kind of thinking because some of that even exists to this day, that idea that no matter what happens, no matter how bad your health is, you've got to be at a certain location where the Feast is being sponsored. For this year, as an example, whether it be

in Orlando, Florida, or whether it's up in Canada, Niagara Falls, or over in Australia somewhere, or over in the Netherlands somewhere, wherever it's organized, that somehow individuals have to be there and to not be there is a horrifying thing in their minds, especially when we're talking about individuals who have come out of the Worldwide Church of God and have been drawn along. In other words, they came to the point of the Apostasy and they experienced those things. Yet there are still things that God is taking us out of, just as we came to understand about God Almighty has eternally existed and no one else has. So God is continuing to take us out of darkness into the light. It's a long process even for the Church to go through that.

Again, for so many who have come out of the Worldwide Church of God in times past that's what it meant. It had to do with, very much so, a physical location because God chose to place His name there, didn't He? Oh, it's so much more than that. It truly is. So again, it's not just about a physical location for a Feast observance. It's far more than that.

So for us, for the Church, where is the place God has chosen to place His name? Put in that kind of a question it becomes far more simple, doesn't it? It's far easier to grasp and understand what is being said. We have something click in our minds that, "Oh, yes. Where does God dwell? Where has God chosen to place His name? Ahhh." That is so incredible. You can be anywhere on the earth and observe holy time in fellowship with God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ and learn the things we need to learn, set aside a specific period of time from sunset to sunset and strive to learn and grasp whatever we can of God's way of life. So it doesn't have to be in a specific location, but we have tended to think about those things in times past.

So in us, in His Church, the Church of God, we are so blessed. Wherever the Church is God has placed His name in His Church - the Church of God. That's the temple. That's where God has placed His name, wherever the Church is. People are by themselves, they're part of the Church, wherever, scattered in the world, whether it be in Orlando, whether it be along the Gold Coast, wherever it is, that's where God has placed His name, wherever the people are. At home perhaps with some sickness, whatever it might be, just old age and not able to get around as well anymore, God is there too. Wherever we are, whoever is impregnated with God's holy spirit God is there. God has chosen to place His name there. So we're blessed then to share in, to observe time that God has given to us in a very unique way on a spiritual plane.

So that's where God has placed His name - in His Church. We are so blessed to be able to have that at this Feast of Tabernacles wherever we are, wherever God's people are.

Verse 3, going on from Passover then it says, **You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread therein.** There are still people today in some of the scattered groups that go back and forth on this thing. "Well, it doesn't mean that you have to eat it every day. It's just when you do eat bread it has to be unleavened." No, it says to eat it, eat it seven days. That's how you learn. You're reminded every day as you go through it. It's not like some period during the Millennium that all of a sudden you can quit serving God, that you can

somehow quit partaking of and eating of the bread of life and that you can somehow start sinning. No, this is a period of time that we're to learn about coming out of sin, of getting sin out of our life and so you do it every day. You do it every day of the seven day observance. It's amazing what human beings will begin to reason sometimes in their own thinking.

You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shall you eat unleavened bread therein, even the bread of affliction (for you came forth out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you might remember the day when you came forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. So we are to remember those things and think about those, not like the children of Israel did in being physically taken out of the land of Egypt. We're to think about the process. We hear about those things, about coming out of sin, about coming out of this world, about things we have to address in our own life and the change that needs to take place, that we're to become unleavened. Our lives are to become unleavened, not just eat unleavened bread, but to be reminded in a very powerful way for seven days that this is a time to focus upon something that God wants to focus upon in the beginning of His plan, that once we received of the Passover into our life, once we've received the forgiveness of our sin we're not to sin any longer. We're to continue a process of coming out of sin. We're to keep going, to keep moving away from sin. Sometimes people get caught up in sin and they go back to sin. No, we're to fight. It's in the fight. It's not that we're never going to have sin again; we all have sin in our life, but as time goes on our lives become more refined, but we'll always see things about our nature because our nature is one that is selfish, and by definition that which is selfish and inward has to do with sin, where we don't love in the way we should love and can love. So we're constantly being reminded of where we fall short day by day in our lives - if we can just see it. We understand this is a continual battle, a continual fight, and a continual desire to repent of what we are and to latch on to and desire something that God is offering us, something different - a new mind, a new life. That's what we choose. We choose God day by day by day.

So going on here it says in **verse 4—And there shall be no leavened bread seen with you in all of your borders seven days.** So it's not even to be around and that's a great admonition. There shouldn't be any sin in our life, but we know that there is. We know that we have to repent. We keep fighting and we're able to continue to have that Passover in our life and be able to go before God and ask for forgiveness of sin and to keep fighting and to become more refined and more at-one as we grow and become stronger in spirit and time, and we just continue to grow in God's way and become more convicted of God's way. **...neither shall there anything of the flesh which you sacrificed from the first day at even remain overnight until morning.**

Then **verse 5—You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates...** So here was something that they were being told because, you see, this is not the Passover it's talking about. It's about that which starts with the Passover day, and starts in the afternoon that goes into the actual sacrificial system and those seven days that follow. Everything begins with the Passover. But when it says, "You may not sacrifice the Passover," it's referring to that which begins and goes

into the First Day of Unleavened Bread and continues on for seven days, that Passover period of time of the year. We call it the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the Days of Unleavened Bread, but we understand the distinction between the Passover day itself and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It says here that "you may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates." So here is something that's making it very clear because God told them that when it came to the Passover, wherever they were, they could kill the lamb and eat of the lamb on the night of the Passover, and that's not a sacrifice. They don't go out and offer it up to God. It's not like the sacrificial system where things are offered in the place where God places His name and things are offered up and there is that which is then cooked in the various ways that they did and then the children of Israel were able to partake of it. This was to be done in a certain place, in a certain location and for so long it was done in Jerusalem. So when they observed the Feast they had to go to Jerusalem and they were able to take of in such a massive way sometimes, the way the food was dispensed throughout the entire city and people able to partake of the Feast period.

Again here, **You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates**, the Passover lamb, which was God's sacrifice given to them, they could partake of and eat in their homes wherever they were, but not on the high days, not during the Feast of Unleavened Bread period. That was to be done in a specific area. That's what it's talking about here. **...which the Eternal your God gives you.**

So God actually magnifies the importance of offering sacrifices during this period of observance in the place where He has chosen to place His name. The importance of offering sacrifices, that's a part of observing what God has given to us. So for us we learn something awesome, "in the place where God chooses to place His name." We are to observe a period of time and to offer sacrifices—not physical. It's about us and what we offer up to God. Those sacrifices, when we're in fellowship with others especially, has to do with our fellowship with those with whom we're able to be around and sacrificing of self. Awesome to understand these things, a focus that God gives us especially during the Feast of Tabernacles in a way that we don't have in any other period of the year. We do have that, the Days of Unleavened Bread that last for seven days, but we basically just come together on the two days, on the first day and the seventh day. But the Feast of Tabernacles we have observed differently for so, so long. It's a time we do come together, as a whole, and observe it throughout that seven days. We have sermons that we're able to hear for seven days plus one, obviously in the Feast of Tabernacles period when we talk about the Last Great Day.

So again here, **Deuteronomy 16:6—but at the place which the Eternal your God shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even.** So it shows here the beginning of a process, that which they prepared the animals, they began preparing them, and as soon as the sun went down on Passover day they could partake of them. See, it starts at the Passover. It's to be tied in with the Passover in understanding that everything begins at the Passover. Then when the high day begins, then and only then could they begin to partake of the

sacrifices themselves and to begin to feast. So, **at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt.** When did they come out? Beginning at that time. They didn't begin that journey out of Egypt until after the sun set on Passover. So God ties all these things in in such a powerful and a beautiful way. It really is awesome.

Then going on, **Deuteronomy 16:13**, then we come down to the instruction regarding here, the Feast of Tabernacles. **You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in your corn and your wine.** So it's after the great harvest throughout the year, especially into the fall harvest. They're to come together then at this particular time. Again, God picturing things about the salvation of mankind and that which is going to be greater during the Millennium. Because we're here observing things that begin at the start of the Millennium. The Feast of Tabernacles is about that period of time, for that 1,100 years because it goes into the Last Great Day as well. We're blessed to be here to observe those things.

And you shall rejoice in your Feast, and so a part of observing this Feast is to rejoice. We're to be happy. We're to be filled with a joy because we're able to observe this period of time, whether we're at home, wherever we are, but even more so if we are so blessed to be together and have the addition of the fellowship then to even rejoice even more so in that respect, of the opportunity and the blessing God has given to us, but God will bless us to rejoice wherever we are, truly, and especially in the things that we receive in here. But there is a focus that God wants us to have when there is more than one gathered together in the observance of this particular period of time. **And you shall rejoice in your Feast, you and your son and your daughter, your man servant and your maid servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates.** We are a family. It's everyone! So we remember, we're to remember everyone. We're to remember those who are not able to be with us if we're gathered together at a different site. We're to think about them, to pray about them, perhaps to have some kind of contact with them if we know them and are close to them, to be able to call them up during the Feast and just to share some things with them.

What a blessing to keep in touch, to be able to keep in touch with various ones who don't have the same blessing you have in being able to be with a larger group because it is a great blessing to be able to be together and it is difficult when you have sickness or age as a factor and you're not able to travel like you did before, and to remember those hardships and difficulties that others go through. That's the way we should be. We are a family!

Verse 15—Seven days shall you keep a solemn Feast unto the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal shall choose. It's not about a physical place, again, though we go to physical locations to meet together so often, but for us it's on a spiritual plane because it's about where God chooses. He's chosen each one of us to be a part of His family. We are to observe then any holy time in a very unique way with God, with Jesus Christ, and with others if we're blessed to be with others. So again, **Seven days shall you keep a solemn Feast unto the Eternal your God in the place which the Eternal shall choose, which the Eternal your God shall bless you in all**

your increase and in all the works of your hands, therefore, you shall surely rejoice. So we are blessed in all the works of our hands, to live God's way of life, first and foremost. What does that mean for us? That we're able to think about those things that God has given to us at a particular time like this, when we're able to receive a message every day. We're so blessed to think about the increase that we've been given as we continue to fight this fight because it has to do with the works, the work that we do, to keep fighting, to keep moving forward, to have a desire to be watchful and alert and to stay close to God, to do the things that are necessary for change and growth, to continue to fight and repent and not let other things pull us down. No matter what it might be in life we continue to move forward. We continue to follow God.

"Therefore, you shall surely rejoice. So God has given us this time as a time of reflection, which has everything to do with even the meaning of this particular period of time and what God gave to the children of Israel in the Feast of Booths, as it's referred to sometimes, the Feast of Tabernacles and what that is to teach, that it was to teach them on a physical plane, as to teach us on a spiritual plane. "Therefore, you shall surely rejoice." So this is a time of reflection, to think about everything that God has given to us, to think about the abundance. This is the time of year, God says, after you've brought in of all your harvest. So there's physical part of this and there's spiritual. Where are we? How blessed are we to continue on this path? Because there are people that aren't with us that were with us last year. Where are they? You're blessed to be here. How blessed are you that you're able to continue on, that you're able to continue on and to receive of some of the things that you are able to receive of? Well, that's awesome to understand.

So it goes on here and speaks about some of the things that we're to learn. But again, "all the works of your hands, therefore, you shall surely rejoice." So God has given us this time as a time of reflection, to rejoice. So sometimes then if you're able to travel to a different site you're able to recognize then physically the labor of your hands, the work of your hands and what you did throughout the entire year because you obeyed God, and God enables us then as a result of our efforts physically, our jobs and so forth, that we're able to save aside that which enables us then to come together to rejoice before Him. So we're to rejoice in those things and be thankful for what we have starting on a physical plane, but to recognize the spiritual significance of that and what it means then on a spiritual plane to share and to observe this time in a magnified way, how incredibly blessed are we?

Then we come to additional instruction. **Verse 16—Three seasons in a year shall all your males appear before the Eternal your God in the place which He shall choose.** Again here, for us we recognize then those three seasons. We understand the period of the beginning with the Passover and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then we come to Pentecost later on, the second season, and then the fall season, that entire season that goes into the fall, and we have Trumpets and Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, a longer period of time, a magnified period of time, a time that works toward that from Passover on because it all works toward this period of time, toward the Millennium, toward the Great White Throne, toward the

salvation, the full salvation of all mankind that will receive God, that will listen and receive God. So this is the time that brings it all together. That's what it's talking about. So again, we're able to do these things, as it says here, "In the place which He shall choose." We're blessed to be in the Church. We know that God has chosen each one of us and chosen others to be a part of this Body. We're able to share with others in the Church.

How blessed are we that we're not alone? Because for so long throughout time, when you look at the different individuals through time I can't comprehend what it had to be like. I think of those starting with Abel, and then continuing on down to just when you get down to Noah, the only one, the only one with whom God was working! Who did he share with? He could only share with God. He wasn't able to share with others. His family didn't receive it though they worked together in some of the things they did, as many do even in families. But it doesn't mean you share in what's important. It doesn't mean you share in this way of life. There are many people who were called who work together in families and work to accomplish things and things they work together to build, and so forth, in life, a family, whatever it might be. But perhaps only one is called, but how blessed are we that we're able to have what we have? A family, a large family in that respect compared to what they had back then. But we are small, incredibly small. We're just a tiny fraction of what we used to be in Worldwide.

Continuing on it says: **in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in the Feast of Weeks, in the Feast of Tabernacles period, in other words, and they shall not appear before the Eternal empty/empty-handed.** We understand this has to do with that which we thank God in. We give something, an offering to God as a matter of just recognizing that we're to think in a certain way. It's not about the amount, though the amount becomes important to each one of us as to what we do and what we decide, but it's about what it's to teach us that's so much more important, and the ability to share, the ability to understand that we are a family and this is about a work that God is doing and we're thankful to be a part of and that God has called us, and chosen us, where God has chosen to place His name. How blessed are we? So in a physical way we're able to respond to God and thank God for what He is doing. He tells us to think about that three times in a year.

That's why it boggles my mind sometimes when I think of individuals who don't do that, who don't set something aside and give it to God. Anybody can save a little bit, something. I don't care if it's a dollar bill. There are things people sacrifice for all the time because they want it, whatever it might be, whatever people desire.

I think sometimes, you know, I like Starbucks. It's probably no secret, but it's expensive sometimes. The coffee isn't as bad as some of the drinks that people come in and get. Sometimes I see people with a whole bunch of children come into a Starbucks and they buy all these different kinds of drinks and some of them are so expensive. I think, "How in the world can you afford that as large a family as you have?" It doesn't matter the kind of vehicle they're driving out there, they're going into Starbucks to get all those things. I don't understand that. But people

sacrifice for different kinds of things. How much more to what God has given us when we see God in the picture and the reasons why we do what we do?

I think of somebody just here in this past week, it's come to my attention, that hasn't given anything at a holy day for well over a year now. I think, what are they sharing in? How can anyone do that conscientiously and not give something to God in a result of just the fact that God says to do it? God commands us to do it. I don't care how poor we might be in life, to not do something and share something that God tells us to do? As I said, a dollar? A pound? A euro? Whatever it might be? I can't comprehend not doing that and yet people do and they cut themselves off from the flow of God's spirit. As soon as they do that they start cutting themselves off from the flow of God's spirit. I think of that individual, how unbalanced they're becoming in things that they say and do sometimes. Well, they have little bit of grace for a little bit of time here but it will be addressed. Either now, between the actual period of the Feast, because this is being pre-recorded for those of you in Australia and Europe primarily, and some others as well until we get the process going here as we had to last year as far as video's and the audio is concerned.

So I'm of need, of great need here. I need to record a couple of messages here for the first day, the first two especially. Here, this welcome, if you will, the fact that we're observing another Feast and bringing that to everyone's attention and giving this greeting to everyone that is able to receive it because New Zealand begins the Feast first, then Australia, and then it goes to Europe, and then finally we're able to observe it here in this area and then by the time that we have a couple days go by then we're able to have some sermons where they can be put up, loaded up and finally Australia can get it, and New Zealand, because that's where it starts first, so they can begin to receive the messages we actually have during the Feast. So this is all pre-recorded. I don't have a large audience. A matter of fact, I don't have any audience that I can see.

So going on here. Again, it blows my mind that people don't obey this, because it's so basic. It truly is. **Every one shall give as they is able, according to the blessing of the Eternal your God which He has given you.** So it's physical, but it's also spiritual. What are you able to give according to the blessing of your God? What are we able to sacrifice and give to God, in honor to God, to observe these days? Well, that's what so much of this sermon is about here today because if you're able to be with one other person there is more you can sacrifice to the Body. Where God has chosen to place His name there's more that you can do. There's more that we are supposed to do and expected to do during this period of time as a part of rejoicing in what God has given to us. That has so much to do with the fact of what He's given to us to be in control, in more control of our own lives. We're to be in control of our lives, to draw closer to God, to have more of His spirit flowing through us and the good that comes from God to flow out toward others and that they're able to receive of that. So we sacrifice. We're to sacrifice of self more when we're together with more of God's people. That's what we're to do.

Let's go on here now. Let's also look at, because we need to do this every year when we observe special time like this, Leviticus 23, because God wants us to focus upon and think about those

things that we may know very well in many respects, but we're to do it year by year by year, to focus on some of the things, as Mr. Armstrong would say, "Why are you here?" Why are we here? Because God commands us to be here. It's a time that He set aside for us to be able to come together to learn, to grow, to be molded and fashioned, to honor Him, to serve Him, to observe the time He's given us to observe, to learn from it, to understand His great plan and how we fit into that and how we fit into it with others as a family, in the place where God has chosen to place His name. How awesome is that?

Leviticus 23. I don't get tired of going through these. To me thinking about God's plan, seeing the meticulous way in which it's organized and brought together is so moving and inspiring. There is so much here and it's just...it's awesome. It really is.

Leviticus 23:1—And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them concerning the feasts, and this word means "appointed times," or "appointed meetings." It's not the word for Feasts. We know all this. It's a word that means appointed times. So God set aside appointments for us to keep with Him, and appointed meetings when we're to meet together with God, before God, and with others whom God has called and chosen to place His name in.

So, **concerning the appointed times of the Eternal;** in other words, they're God's appointed times; He has given them. **...which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations,** times to come together. If we're by ourselves we are to come together before God. We're blessed today with technology to be able to receive even messages that God has given to us, but it's a time we set aside, of the high days, from a sunset to a sunset, or on a weekly Sabbath from sunset to sunset. We observe that time and we come before God in His appointed time to worship Him, to thank Him, to set aside that time for special purpose, not like the rest of the time during the week, or during the year. This is unique. This is special and we observe it differently in the way that God tells us to do so.

...you shall proclaim to be holy convocations even these are My appointed times. God says, "They're My appointed times that I have given to you." **Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation,** of convening. It doesn't mean that you have to always be in a specific location. You can be by yourself and convene before God in prayer or an ability to hear a sermon. It's time we set aside and dedicate to convene before God, to hear what He has given to us, what He's prepared for us. So it's holy because God is in it. It's a holy gathering together because it's about a fellowship, first of all with God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. It's a fellowship because He gives us more of His spirit at that time and He'll pour out more understanding to us at that time than He does during the rest of the week. When it comes to annual holy days, He gives us more during that time than any other time of the year. This time especially during the Feast of Tabernacles, God pours out more of His spirit upon His people in our lives than any other time of the year. We are so blessed because we have messages every day, and

sometimes twice a day, on the first and the last day. **You shall do no work therein; it is a Sabbath of the Eternal in all your dwellings.**

Verse 4—These are My appointed times, or, These are the appointed times of the Eternal, even holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their, same word, in their appointed times. So when do you do it? In their appointed times. We do that which we're told to do and give whatever it has to reflect upon.

Verse 5—In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even. It's a word that includes two evenings. We understand what that is. There are always two evenings that we are concerned about in the observance of any time that God has given to us, any period of time, whether it be Passover, a high day, the Sabbath. For the Sabbath, weekly Sabbath, we know it's from Friday when the sun goes down to when the Sabbath is over at sundown. So it's between the two evenings that we observe it. What a beautiful word for God to use, "bane ha erebyim," "between the evenings." The Church hasn't understood those things. It never understood it during the period of Philadelphia, didn't understand it as a whole during the period of Laodicea, and did toward the latter part of it when God began to give it to us toward the end after a period when we came into a time as a remnant, when we began to come together. But even that period of time we came to understand we went past and went beyond a period of time of Laodicea into a different age unique to us, unique to the remnant Church.

Sometimes we don't understand what's been given to us. We don't grasp the history of the Church. We weren't around during some of those times. So sometimes we don't grasp how richly blessed we are, how incredibly blessed. Just the one thing that God gave to us to bring us more out of the captivity of what Satan lied to the world about, that there were three in the godhead. It's taken time to get rid of that garbage. It took away from the greater meaning of what God has been doing throughout the ages, of things we can't even comprehend with time and what God Almighty, the only Self-Existing Eternal God who's ever existed has done. He said, "And there is no other," so Jesus Christ, and there wasn't any being called "the holy ghost," that existed throughout time. That's God's power, the holy spirit. Jesus Christ never existed until he was born of a physical mother, Mary. That's when his life began and the world takes away from the meaning of those things and takes away from what Jesus Christ did because even within the scattered Church they think that he was, whatever that means, God in the flesh. What does that mean? He gave up his godhead to become a human being but he was still God and he was in flesh. It's hard to understand even what it means now, what they think it means. No such thing. Incredible! Born of God, his Father, the Word. We'll talk more about that later on in the Feast.

But anyway, so here is where it all begins, the Passover again. Beautiful. Beautiful. This is a time we're to be so thankful and rejoice in what Christ made possible for each of us to experience here at this Feast because it began with him. That's why we're able to be here at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 39 then, jumping on ahead: **And in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land**, yes, physical, but much more for us because we're to learn the physical aspects of things we do as well as the spiritual that God has given to us. So what about what you have gathered in spiritually in your life? What about what you have gathered in? How much has God given us? How much has God given to you? Do we see it? Do you see it? And candidly, the more you see it and the more you grasp that this is a time to think about and reflect upon those things because this is the time to be able to rejoice more. So God wants us to reflect upon these things because He wants us to rejoice more. He'll give us the ability to rejoice more because that's what we want to do. We want to do what God has given to us and so we think about how we're able to be here, how we're able to be here at this moment in time, whether you're by yourself or with others, it's the same, to rejoice in God's Feast. "I am here. I am able to continue to fight on. God has give me such blessings to address and tackle various things in life and I am able to continue on." How blessed are we?

So again here, **gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep a Feast unto the Eternal seven days**, to Yahweh, to the Eternal Self-Existing One, and toward Jesus Christ now. We understand he's a part, he's in the godhead. He is Elohim and things that are so awesome to understand that we'll talk about more later. **On the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath**. So that's the period of time we're observing. **And you shall take unto you on the first day the boughs**, various things here how some of these things are referred to, but it says some translate this as "branches." It's not branches at all, yet it's neither the boughs nor the branches, but we'll come back to that a little bit later, **of good trees, the branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days**. So this is about reflection. This is about grasping what it is that God has given to us and reflecting and thinking about those things in order to rejoice before God. So when you pray every morning here at the Feast, or whatever time you do pray, but especially as you begin your day think about some of those things. Think about how you're able to be at this particular moment in time, how blessed you are.

So the first matter that God has us address once we acknowledge the need to obey Him and to observe this time is that we observe His Feast, again, by rejoicing. It's a part of observing this Feast. If we don't do that we're not obeying God, we're not observing it in the way that we should. We're not worshipping God as we should. This is a part of our worship of God Almighty, to do as He's commanded because He is in it and He'll give us power of His holy spirit to be able to receive more through this period of time than any other time. So we are to work to make certain that the environment around us is kept in one that is rejoicing in the Feast, that we think about this, not just momentarily when we pray, but then to give us that boost to think about those things, to reflect upon those things in everything we're able to do, especially when we're with others who are able to be as a part of the family rejoicing together with us at the Feast.

Nothing is to besmirch or tarnish that spirit. Nothing! So it becomes critically important how we observe it because every year there are situations that happen where people get into entanglements and little battles and skirmishes and sometimes some pretty big battles and hatred exists and anger exists, and jealousies exist and frustrations exist and gossiping exists and hurt, and those things should never, never, never, never be, but they always raise their ugly head. Will you be guilty of that at this Feast of Tabernacles? During this period of time will that happen to you? Because you have to be determined that no way, it will not. It will not happen. It will not happen. You will not besmirch God's Feast and the period of time He's given to us. Anyway you're determined in your mind to rejoice before God and to sacrifice, sacrifice of self, not to become offended, not to become jealous, not to become envious about anything, not to become upset, not to become angry. Because then, what are you giving if you do that? You're just being selfish if you do that. You're taking it in and you're taking it to yourself. It's not a matter then of worshipping God. So those things are not to be in our life. So we need to think in those terms, to understand what it means to be able to rejoice in God's Feast and what it requires then in our life.

So let's notice a little more closely at that verse, **verse 40—And you shall take unto you on the first day the boughs of good trees.** Again, that's not the word in Hebrew. It's mistranslated. It's the word for fruit. It's translated like this nearly all the time, fruit. So you're to take the fruit of certain trees. We know what fruit is. Then it goes on to say, **and branches,** which was the word for "hand or palm" **of palm trees, and the branches,** and proper translation here **of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days.** So we've talked about this in times past.

As it goes on to say here in **verse 41.** It says, **And you shall keep it a Feast unto the Eternal seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. And you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.** So this is something to be done at the time we're doing it. **You shall dwell in booths.** Now, this was taken in a totally improper way, in that respect, not in the way that God intended it to when some began to feel that, well, you're to leave your home, you're to go to a place where God has chosen to place His name, whatever Feast site it might be, and that began to be the thinking more than what was really supposed to be the thinking, but we have to learn that way. We start out physically first. We start out by physical understanding of things, and sometimes, obviously, that's not the full understanding, but we begin to see things physically before we can ever start to understand them spiritually. It takes time. It depends, too, when God begins to reveal certain things on a spiritual plane. There are certain things that God doesn't reveal for a time, and then in time He begins to reveal it and then He reveals more of things even on a spiritual plane that we thought we understood spiritually but He magnifies it even more. So it's just an ongoing continual process of learning.

So it say here, "You shall dwell in booths," meaning "to continue or abide," as it talks about here. So there was this idea that well, if you're staying in a motel room that's in a booth, that's in a

temporary dwelling. Well, there is something to be learned from that and we can learn from that, but we can't use it in the wrong way because it's not about that which is physical and the purpose of them and what they built when they went to observe the Feast. It wasn't about a temporary place they were living in and dwelling in. It was about what they were to construct when they built this thing out of branches and just a little thing where you could sit and contemplate, think about, reflect upon. So God said to build this little thing and have some fruit there as well because you're to learn from this. So you're to have some palms on it, you're to have some branches here and form it in such a way that you can put it together and have a place to sit and to think about whatever. It doesn't have to be a long period of time. You don't have to be there all day long, just whatever time like you might spend in prayer, or whatever it is, you go and you reflect upon God making it possible for you to be here. That's what they were to do. So they were to build these things.

This is translated so many times, a couple hundred times, as the word to "sit." **You shall dwell in, sit in booths.** That's how it's given. It's not a matter of living there. They didn't live in these booths. That's not what the lesson is.

Again here, **You shall sit there for seven days.** In other words, each day of the Feast you're to go sit there and reflect. **Who are Israelite born shall dwell,** that means "to continue, to abide, to sit" **in/with booths.** In other words, for those seven days it's to be done, **that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell (continue) in booths.** And so, "to continue in," stayed in temporary dwellings during their journey. So they were to learn from that by sitting there. The very thing God is telling them, "You're to reflect on this. This is what you're to do when you're in that booth, when you're in that little thing that you're to put together with the branches and the twigs and weave together and put the palms in for the shade, or whatever it might be, to make it more of an enclosure and a place to sit, and the fruit that's there. You're to do something. You're to think about something very specific. So that's what they were doing.

So here they were dwelling in booths, not living in them, but sitting there and to reflect upon something. So He's giving very specific instruction here. He said, **that your generations may know.** So what are they to do when they sit there? You're to think about this. This is what they're to do. This is why they're to do it. There's a very specific purpose, to think about that every day of the Feast that they think about the fact that they look back upon, that they consider how they're able to be where they are as a people. They're to think about what their people went through when they were brought of the land of Egypt, that they did have to dwell in temporary dwellings. So this little structure was to remind them of something that happened long ago. Not that that was a structure there to dwell in themselves, or live in, but they're to reflect upon how they are able to be where they are.

And we're to reflect upon how you are able to be here. How are you able to be at the Feast of Tabernacles? How are you able to be able to observe this time and the rejoicing that should be there then? How blessed are we that this continues on, that God continues to work, that there's a

remnant at the end of an age, that we're blessed to be a part of a remnant. How blessed are we? The ability to rejoice more in God's Feast. The ability they had as they thought about those things then, to think of all the generations that had gone by, and here they were, they were still able to do this as a people. They hadn't been conquered by other nations because God was blessing them. We haven't been conquered. We're able to go forward conquering. We're still blessed to do that, not because of how good we are, not because of how great we are, but because of God's purpose and because of a remnant that He's going to bring through it. And if we will hold on to what God has given to us and cherish it and rejoice in it He'll bless us to continue to go forward.

So how blessed are we to be able to continue to move forward? As He says then, **that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to continue in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God.** So God blessed a remnant that continued on. God blessed in raising up Mr. Armstrong and the Philadelphia era, and then Laodicea that was able to follow that, though it began to become so weak and so lukewarm. Then to be awakened out of that, to be able to come out of that, the worst time that ever happened to God's Church through an Apostasy when someone at the head of the group, of the organization, did what they did to try to take everything back into darkness. We were blessed to continue on, not because of how great we are, but because of a purpose that God has and God had to call us and choose us to be a part of that as well. It's something that God chose to do, not because of anything special we've ever done. It's just a matter of God's purpose and we're blessed to be a part of it.

So again, the point of all this, the Israelites were to look back at that which was temporary for them, for the Israelites, as they had no permanent place while in the wilderness and now they were in a permanent place. What a thing to rejoice in. And what a thing for us to rejoice in, to recognize where we are in time, what's about to take place. We're about at that period of time that the Feast of Tabernacles pictures. That all this has brought us to something far, far greater than what God did in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt. This is spiritual. This is bringing us to a point in time where God's Family, where the Kingdom of God is finally ushered in on earth. Awesome to understand these things!

So we're to look forward understanding that man has been given a temporary body as well in which to dwell. Once called we have the opportunity to eat of the fruit that God gives to us on a spiritual plane and to look forward to a permanent dwelling in God's Family. We're almost there, where the first phase of that is going to be accomplished and then for those who continue on in the Millennium, how blessed are you to live in that age?

So an exceedingly important matter that we are to note and focus upon at this Feast, and our greater ability, again, to rejoice in it, in the manner that God desires and commands is that we recognize what it means if we are so blessed to be with others, to share with others whom God has chosen to place His name. It's not just about us. It's about others. We're to think about that, to recognize the sharing that we're able to have.

So something needs to be repeated that was stated in the introduction. If, on the other hand you are able to meet with others then how you observe this time becomes far more important. You are with others of God's people. How you interact with them, fellowship with them now becomes exceedingly important as a matter of how you will be worshipping God and His Son during this period of time. So, paraphrasing a little bit here in some of what was said, but that was the thrust toward what was given toward the very beginning. This is what we're to do. This is what we're to think about.

Let's turn over to **Hebrews 10:7—Then I said, Behold, I come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—so this is about Jesus Christ, To do Your will, O God.** We all follow steps in that. When God calls us then this is what we're to do. We're to follow that example. We're to do the same thing. We're to begin to desire God's will in our life, not do things that are just pleasing to us and being selfish in life. We're to do God's will. That has to do with sacrifice in this physical life, in this physical body.

Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings for sin You did not want, neither had pleasure in them (which are offered by to the law), then he said, Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God. That's what it's about. God desires for us to do His will, to seek to want to be in unity and oneness with Him, to do His will, not ours, to be focused on His purpose for life. **He takes away the first so that he may establish the second.** So Jesus Christ, again, doing away with that sacrificial system because it's not in that that did any good at all. It's in what happens in the spirit in the mind that's important. **By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.** So it's about our Passover and that process that begins, that leads us to this period of time and is leading us into God's family, into the Kingdom of God.

Then on down in **verse 14** it says, **For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified.** How blessed are we that we're in a process of being perfected until we either die or are changed. **Whereof the holy spirit also is witness to us; for after He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Eternal. I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them,** How awesome is that to understand, that we are so blessed to begin to have things written in us in our being, in our minds? We are so incredibly blessed. **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.** So again, awesomely incredibly blessed.

Having, therefore, brethren, boldness, it's a word that means "liberty," **to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.** Again, we are so blessed to have the entire process from Passover to the time when we finally are not just being begotten, because we're not there until we're actually born into that family.

Verse 20— it goes on to say, this liberty we have, **by a new and a living way**. That's what lives within us. We are to be focused upon that which we are so blessed to have in our life. ...**by a new and a living way**. Yes, we're able to be forgiven of sin, but now to walk in a new and a living way. That's what we are to do at the Feast of Tabernacles. That's what we're to do every day of our life, but we're to focus upon those things even more so during this Feast period, that we're to walk in a new and a living way, primarily toward all others in whom God has chosen to place His name. That's what becomes more important of all because if we don't do it there then we're not doing it in the world at all like we should. This is our arena of life within a fellowship that God has given to us because we don't have that as a matter of something we're able to do directly to God and Jesus Christ because that's a matter of faith. That's a matter of the spirit. It's not a matter of something we can see and deal with on a physical plane, interact with on a physical plane. We do it on a spiritual plane, but what's very real to us in life is that which we're able to do day by day, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles, because we're around God's people. That's where God dwells, where He's chosen to place His name. So how we are around others has everything to do with how we worship God and how we think toward God and how we're obeying God.

So, **verse 21**, going on, and **having a High Priest over the house of God**, let us draw near with a true heart. So we're to rejoice before God, we're to have this true heart, a right heart, a true heart, not something that's deceiving, not something that's not being genuine, but something that's true. So how we interact with others has to do with whether or not we're truly being true in our being, in our heart, in our mind. **But with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, because of what we believe. We're doing what we're doing because of belief and the sacrifice that comes from us because of what we believe. ...**having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water**. So this process continues on in our life throughout every day of our life. **Let us hold fast the profession of our faith**, hold fast the calling that God has given to us because that's what it's about, it's holding on to this that God has given to us, that we're able to continue to live by His way of life, by His word, by His truth. So much of that truth has to do with how we live toward one another, doesn't it? It truly does. ...**without wavering, for he is faithful that promised**. Not going back and forth, learning to be stable, learning to become more stable, learning to do things consistently and toward one another on a consistent basis and to continue to fight to get rid of the sin.

Verse 24—**Let us consider**—notice— Awesome! **Let us**, you know what that word means in the Greek? **Let us think about**. That's what it means, to consider, to think about **one another**. That reflecting back that they did when they sat down in that booth? To think about how they're able to be there and how we're able to be here and how we're able to share in a fellowship together, what God has done, what God has done especially at the end of time here with a remnant group. We're to think about one another, **to provoke**, that word means to stimulate. It's from a Greek word that means "to sharpen" - like iron sharpens iron. It's not by what we say. It's not like being a

teacher and look how I can talk about the sermons or I can talk about spiritual things. It's not about that. It's about how we live. It's by what we live, if you strive to live this way of life.

Sometimes it's a matter of just going to your brother alone and saying, "You know what, I'm sorry. I was wrong." Do you know what? That sharpens iron. Iron sharpens iron there. You're showing that I'm doing something. I'm humbling myself. I was wrong in what I had to say. You're reflecting here this is what you're supposed to do, and so you can stimulate and move and motivate others to do the same thing when they do something wrong. This is good. This is healthy. To say, "Hey, I'm sorry." It's good to be able to say that when you're wrong. People who don't? It's tough because you have to come to that point in time when you're able to say, "I'm sorry. I was wrong in what I said and what I did," whatever. It's living God's way of life that becomes an example, an inspiration to others that stimulates, that moves others.

Sometimes we take it as being what we say, that somehow we have to be spiritual in how we talk about certain things. It's good to talk about a sermon if something applies and it's genuine and it's true. Fine. Good. But to think that we have to somehow talk in spiritual terms, or whatever, that's not real. Generally it's not true at all in how, in what we're doing. So we're to be true, of a true heart, and we're to think about one another. So if we're really thinking about one another then there's a way we're going to act toward them. As it says here, **Let us think about one another, to stimulate, to sharpen - What? - unto, or as the word means here, in or through agape.** God's love, not ours, but God's love has to be dwelling within us. The ability to practice, to live something, the ability to humble ourselves, to go to someone, as an example, to say, "I'm sorry," is something that requires help of God's spirit as a whole, to do it in spirit and in truth.

There are so many other things then I could speak on, I could talk about, of how we can live. Just the fact of how we're living God's way and striving to be an example to others can encourage others. How we listen to a sermon, how we observe, how we listen. You know, it's something as simple as that, that we're attentive, that we're paying attention, that maybe we're taking some notes on occasion and writing something down, or on occasion whatever it might be, or that we're following along in a Bible. You know, someone just sitting there like a bump on a log. And I'm sorry. People are turning over to pages right now. I'm just saying that sometimes that doesn't really help young people, perhaps, doesn't help someone else. To say, "Oh, it might be good to follow along. Maybe there's a process here where I'm able to learn more and be stimulated more, be sharpened more in what I'm listening to and what I'm hearing." Because it is healthy to follow along. It is healthy to read and follow along in a Bible or on an iPad, or whatever it might be, to follow the scriptures as they're being given because there is something about looking at something, that if we're able to, that it helps to get it into our minds. There are more avenues, more ways then for the mind to click, as it were. Even on a spiritual plane then to grab a hold of that which we can do on a physical plane that helps us to drink in what is being given. We're able to be more attentive then. That's good. It's kind of like if we're at home listening to a sermon and we're back in our recliner and we're hearing a sermon and we're not even watching it at a certain

point in time and maybe closing our eyes a little bit, that doesn't stimulate anyone. That just causes others to think, "Oh, what's going on there?" And so it's by our attentiveness.

All kinds of examples of things we can do to be an example throughout the day in how we live, that we're striving to live God's way. That's what it's about.

So again, this drawing near to God with a true heart, and by the example, by thinking about others and a desire here then. What it's telling us is to desire to be a right example, desire to live what is right because it's right. You don't want to be a bad example. You don't want to hurt someone. So think about that. Just like the Israelites were to think about certain things. Think about what it means if you're a wrong example. Think about the hurt that you're going to cause others. Think about the shame that you might cause others by certain behavior and so forth.

So, **unto, through God's love, unto in/through...** "In" or "through," that's what that word means. It's the same word used up there. I don't like the word "unto" or "to." It's the word "in" or "through." **...through agape**, in other words, requires God's spirit and God's love to do what is right toward others, to think right toward others and to behave right. It's not a matter of just thinking. That thinking needs to follow through with actual action, with work, effort on our part.

...in/through good works. That's how we do it. It's by what we're living. It's by the example. I've tried to stress to the ministry so often the importance of example. It's not about what we say as much as it is by what we live and by what we do in our example, whether it be ourselves or our family and what others see, because people see those things, how we live toward others, how we think toward others, how we behave and act in services, how we behave and act in our fellowship toward others. All those things are so important. It's about sharing. It's about being with others. It's about how we treat others. It's about how we act around others, and all those things. But that has to do with whether or not we're being true before God and living this way of life.

So to rejoice at God's Feast and observe this time together in the manner that God desires and even commands we must sacrifice of self. It's not about ourselves and getting our way or doing what we want to do. We still can do things but be with God's people. What more can we desire? There are times to do things by yourself or be alone, or whatever, and so forth, but there are times to be together too. Whatever the time is we have when we are together there's a certain way we're to live. So we must sacrifice of self in order to truly love and genuinely give to others.

Verse 25—Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but encouraging; that's what this word means, "encouraging." Some of that, again, is more about our example. That's how you encourage people, by doing the right thing, by seeing the right thing, by seeing the right thing reflected in you - God's mind, God's love reflected in how you act and how you speak about and toward others. If people see you talking wrong about others, what does that do? Well, it can be discouraging, it can be disheartening. I think of the term, "Drama. Drama. Drama." I hate, I loathe the drama, if we understand what I'm talking about there. But the good

things, the right things, those are the things I like to think upon and look upon, even toward God's people. Now, there are times I don't have a choice, but I have to look upon some of the others because of the job and the responsibility I have. But again, I don't like those things but I do what I have to do in order to help to ensure, to make sure that we are striving to be at one, where there is a need to, when I'm supposed to. Other times things just go, they just happen and we don't insert ourselves. We stand back and we observe and God will manifest what needs to be taken care of when it needs to be taken care of in various things that take place in life.

But as a whole there is a way of life we're to live toward each other and it's to be good, it's to be right, it's to be positive. There is a certain way to think toward others. It speaks about that in scripture quite a bit, doesn't it, about how we are to think about and act toward each other and certain things we're not to do in the way we treat one another and what we say about one another. There are things we're not to say and there are certain things we are to say. That's what we need to strive to practice and to live.

So it says here, **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.** This used to be taken as a matter of, well, this is strictly about that people who don't come to Sabbath services anymore. Well, that's not specifically what it's about, or those who don't come to the holy days anymore, or don't to "this." It's more than that. It's about the fellowship because there are times of fellowship that aren't just on the Sabbath. Well, whatever it might be. There are times it's about fellowship and about the time we spend together. Sometimes people can't wait for the sun to go down so they can go out and do something else with somebody else rather than being with God's people when they have an opportunity. So it doesn't even have to be on a Sabbath. You know, perhaps somebody is having some kind of an activity and people have an opportunity to be together. Sometimes people won't even sacrifice for that. They just go home and sit back and watch TV, whatever, go do something else, whatever it might be, go paint the house. That doesn't mean you have to be at everything, but we should want and desire, where we can, to spend some time together, and especially if there are several invited to be together at a particular point in time. Then that's good and healthy. Some aren't sacrificing for that. Some ministers aren't sacrificing for that. Instead, they'd rather do something else, go take, do, whatever it might be, not God's people. It might be something else about something else, whatever it might be.

I've known of people who in times past, who couldn't attend a Feast of Tabernacles because they had too many cats at home they had to take care of. They had too many dogs and couldn't get the dogs taken care of, so they had to stay back with them. What does that say to God if one has the ability to be together with God's people and doesn't do it? Astounding!

So where are our priorities? Are our priorities about worshipping God, honoring God, serving God, being where we have opportunity to rejoice and be together with God's people at different times? Like I said, it doesn't mean you have to be at everything. But if you're not doing it and you're getting farther and farther away from doing something like that, then you're just wrong. See? If we go to the Feast of Tabernacles, have opportunity to be there, and we're off at Universal City

or Disney World or Sea World and we're going to all these things and rushing around as quick as we can as soon as services are over and it's about myself or you know, two or three of my family and I'm just going off to do this and doing that, and we know of some certain things that maybe brethren are doing together at different times and we're not doing it. And then we're too worn out when we come back to be together with anybody and the Feast goes by and we hardly saw anybody except at Sabbath services or at the meetings, well, think about that. There's a balance in there. Sure, it's good to go out and do some of those kinds of things, but it's good to be balanced in it as well, isn't it? And to sacrifice for God's people too and to learn to love more so God's people.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. So some can tend to, when they become spiritually weak, to drift away from being together with God's people. It's about what we're able to share together, fellowship together. ...**and so much more as you see the day approaching.** Especially I think about now. We want to do that now more than ever, truly.

Let's turn over to Ephesians here, **Ephesians 4:30**, that says, **And grieve not the holy spirit of God.** God gives us His spirit especially at times like this, a desire to work through us. He wants to pour out and will pour out more of His spirit upon us during this period of time than any other time of the year. That, to me, is an astounding thing. And so, **grieve not the holy spirit of God**, what God's striving to work in our lives, **whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.** Notice: **Let all bitterness...** It shouldn't be at the Feast of Tabernacles. No bitterness. No bitterness toward anyone. Especially during this time period, you dishonor God, you dishonor the Body, you dishonor the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. If you allow bitterness toward someone else to begin entering into your heart and your mind during a time like this it's the opposite of rejoicing in others and rejoicing in the fact that we're a family, that we're able to be together and share together in God's family. ...**and wrath**, this word "indignation" in the sense of justifying one's self or perhaps some perceived injustice done by somebody else.

You know, sometimes we're so edgy. I heard of something here recently that someone said to someone else and it was an attempt to put something in a proper term about a judgment about a particular matter and someone went off on a different tangent and brought something else into the issue. They were offended by something that someone else had said and they had to go talk it out. Well, it's a good thing they talked it out, but the fact that the individual brought up something to put a better balance in the conversation, the other person became offended by it and took it in a wrong way. Sad. That was sad on their part. They're not living God's way of life and they were judging the other individual in a way they shouldn't have been judging them. We're able to do that so quickly sometimes as human beings, and that should not be the case.

So again, these things should be put aside, as it says here, the judgmental attitudes and being scornful and just sometimes just turning ugly toward someone, hateful toward someone else. That just blows my mind! To turn hateful toward someone else in the Body of Christ? To turn

hateful toward someone in whom God has chosen to place His name? It can't be among us. It can't be in us.

So it says to get rid of these things, **and anger, outcries, outbursts**, harsh reactions to things, and slander, you know, talking down about others, putting others in a bad light, it shouldn't be in us. ...**but put away from you, with all malice**. In other words, all intentions of evil. Put it away. There are things that need to be put away from us and that needs to be thought about. We need to think about those things during this period of time more than any other. And notice, **And be kind one to another**. That's how we're able to rejoice. God will give us the blessings and help in that. So this is something to think about when we think about one another, by how we're going to act and think about and whether we're going to sacrifice of self or whether we're going to take things personally and become offended and become angry. Well, that's something to think about during the rest of this Feast, not to let those things happen but to do this, be kind one to another. Be determined in all matters to be kind, gentle, not selfish, not to have any outbursts, not impatient. We all have to watch that. I have to watch that. You have to watch that.

And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, tender-hearted. Have a tenderness, not a quickness to judge. Some people by nature have a tendency to judge quickly and harshly others. You have to get rid of those things. ...**forgiving one another**. Be forgiving, of a forgiving attitude, not wanting to hold something against someone else because often that has to do with our own sensitivities, of jealousy, of envy, of harsh judgment, and then to not be of a forgiving attitude. It's better to put things aside and give. Even if someone has done something wrong, to give the time, to give them some space if need be. And hopefully they'll get back to this right attitude as well and be able to share and rejoice together as well in the Church - and at the Feast of Tabernacles especially God tells us to rejoice. We need to think about that. When you're with others of God's family where God has chosen to place His name, it's something we have to think about. So you have to think about it at this Feast every day, of how you're going to be around others and that you want to yield yourself to the love of God living in and through you to be a right example to others. Iron sharpens iron. That will be encouraging to others when they see you're rejoicing before God because you're living what is right.

So, **even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you**. Who are we to hold anything against anyone else?

Ephesians 5:1—Therefore, be followers of God. We want to have that mind in us. We want to have the mind that truly gives and sacrifices. God has sacrificed for us from the beginning of time, when He created the angelic realm and knowing full well what would happen in the angelic realm first. God sacrificed peace in order to bring us to this point in time, in order to bring us into what's getting ready to take place on this earth so that the Kingdom of God can be ushered in. Awesome to understand these things, what God has sacrificed for us. So indeed, we're to sacrifice. We're to be followers of God, to desire His mind, to desire His way of thinking toward

others and toward one another, not to be the way we are as selfish human beings, to turn inward. Not at all.

So, **be followers of God as dear children. And walk in agape.** Walk in it. You can't think about, you can't think that up. It has to be in you because you're asking God for help, you're repenting when there's sin, and you want to live this, you want to live right toward others and you're thinking about others and not placing yourself first in matters but placing other's desires, interests above your own oftentimes. That's sacrifice, not always getting your own way but doing it for others. Then you find out you're able to rejoice in that. There's something in that that God gives through the power of His spirit to be able to rejoice in that.

...and walk in agape, as Christ also has loved us and has given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. Those are the things that are pleasing to God. Those are the things that God sees and the sacrifice we make and why we do it - for Him, for His name's sake, for the Church, for His Church, for those in whom He's placed His name, those whom He has called and chosen to dwell in.

So how do we magnify our ability to rejoice at this Feast of Tabernacles? Well, it is in how we will dwell together at the Feast. It will be in how we treat one another and in how we fellowship with one another. It is in how we stop to consider, to think about, and to think upon the incredible blessings God has given us, has continued to bestow upon us, and how blessed we are to be able to have such fellowship, to have such a family in the first place.

So indeed let us be deeply thankful to God Almighty and His Son, Jesus Christ, who have enabled us to be here before Him, to worship Him, to observe this Feast, another Feast of Tabernacles, to be thankful, and to be thankful toward them in all those to whom God has chosen to place His name, to be thankful for everyone whom God has given. Let us rejoice before them in spirit and in truth with great gratitude of spirit, brethren, and heart during all eight days of this Feast season.