

We are now going on to *Part 2* of the sermon series we began yesterday that was entitled, *Experiencing Good and Evil*.

To begin today there is a small portion of *Part 1* that needs to be repeated here as this will become the focus of what is covered here today. Thus far we're going through those things covered back in the 2010 Feast sermon entitled, *The Creation of Good and Evil* and building upon that. There is so much there and it takes time for such things to become deeply embedded into our understanding. As we come to more deeply grasp what God far more fully revealed to us back in 2010 then we'll come to more fully embrace what we must necessarily experience in physical life as we must.

It's an incredible thing to go back, as we have, and look at some of those things that God revealed to us and gave to us in that 2010 Feast because to grasp and comprehend the reasons why, the process, the timing, everything that God has done and did do in the creation of the angelic realm and in the creation of physical human beings, the reasons why they're made different and the purpose behind it that God gives to us in deeper understanding is absolutely incredible. Then to, if we really grasp why we're made this way, if we can grasp more fully the importance of the differences that are there between that of the spirit realm, in the sense of the angels that were created, and of human beings, it is absolutely incredible, awesome because God's purpose for each is fully different.

To grasp and comprehend that God is reproducing Himself, that He's creating a family, Elohim, that which He has longed for for so very, very long, to share life. That's why I think as we went through the particular series on marriage and then what we've covered here at the Feast, to grasp an importance, the importance of what marriage is all about, to understand God's great desire Himself and why He has done what He has in preparing human beings so that they could become a part of His family, to grasp the importance of family, to grasp the importance of all this and then as human beings to treat it in the manner that we do, marriage and the marriage relationship, is absolutely atrocious and sick. Yet that's the way we are as human beings. The basis of our nature is that of selfishness, and selfishness is evil.

So God allowed those things to happen in the angelic realm with Lucifer, who became Satan because of selfishness, because of greed, because of envy, because of jealousy, because of hatred, all that he did, all those things that stem from wrong thinking through free choice and why then we are necessarily made the way we are and why we must necessarily experience life as we do. Mankind was created to necessarily experience evil, evil in themselves, of their own nature. Evil that they can't even comprehend. Mankind can't comprehend that nature until God

begins to reveal it and even then it takes some time for people to really come to grips with and to grasp the depth of the ugliness and the evil of selfishness, to reject it more and more.

So when we're first called we really can't see it all. We begin to grow in that and the more we grow and the more we see self the more we see human nature around us, the more we recognize it for what it is, well, that's a process of transformation. It's a process that God takes us through so that we can become part of His family if and as we choose to do so.

So we'll come to more fully appreciate and understand the need to experience the pulls of selfish human life, and with God's spirit we'll come to more quickly acknowledge what we are and what we must seek to change and overcome. We will more readily own our own choices in life and admit more readily what and who we are. Each and every one of us, we have to go through that. It's not something that can happen in a few weeks. It's not something that can happen in a few months, or even in a few years. It takes a long time to go through this process that's referred to in Romans as a transformation, a creation in the mind that takes place by the aid, the guidance, the direction of God's holy spirit that enables us to go through such a process to learn to think differently, to grow in character, to grow in a way that otherwise we just could not as human beings of and by ourselves. It's impossible.

So indeed, God created us in such a manner that by nature we would become subject to our own nature, which is a selfish nature. It is inward, one that is fully regulated and motivated by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Our way. "My" way. That's an incredible battle through life. Once God even gives us His spirit, brings us into the Church, that becomes an incredible battle and it takes a long time to reveal various things that are deeply embedded in our thinking that are wrong. We come to a point where we can see those things more and more, but we can't see them in the beginning, and oftentimes when God begins to reveal certain things in us we resist and it takes us time to come to grips with it. There's agony and there is resistance, and there can be a battle that takes place there oftentimes because we don't realize how deeply entrenched "my" way is in "me," that we believe as human beings that our way is better than anyone else. We believe we have a better handle on life. We believe that if people would do things our way or see things our way, if our mate, our spouse would see things our way or our children or our parents would see things our way, or if the government would see things our way or if people within the government, the different parties and different things that go on, if people would just see things their way, "my" way, the world would be better, things would be better, things would run more smoothly because "my" way is better.

So it takes a great deal to reveal some of those things to us, to come to understand evil and where evil comes from. So it's important that we understand what it means, the process of human life in order to become part of Elohim is this process of experiencing good and evil. We must be able through time to experience both in order to make a true choice, a righteous choice in life, what is truly right. Even if the choice is wrong, as far as the way God has established it, it is the right way, the only way to accomplish this.

So the purpose of God's creation of mankind is that first all must experience evil. That's just the way it is, that's our first experience. We grow up with that. Now, we don't grasp it as being evil. We have a different definition as far as we're concerned in human life for what evil is. You ask people in the world and they'll give you different definitions because everyone has a different idea about what it is based on human judgment and judgment we have by our own way of thinking. That's why Jesus Christ talked in such a way, that his judgment is just. His judgment was just. He made the comment that, "I judge no man." "I judge no one," but his judgment is just because he doesn't seek his own will but the will of the Father, the purpose of the Father, the way God sees it, not the way we see it as human beings. Because the way we see it as human beings, our way is right, but we have to come to understand that, no, it isn't. There is only one way that is right. So we don't see evil for what it is.

People don't grasp the ugliness of sin. We just don't grasp it as human beings because it's just very much a part of life. It's kind of the norm. People do certain things and whatever that limit is we have in our thinking until it becomes evil, until we would consider it, "Well, that's evil." But we really don't see things in a measurement when compared and put side by side with God, with God's mind, with God's word, with God's truth, the way God says it is, with the way of God and only then, when we can begin to do that, which requires God's holy spirit, only then can we really begin to see evil and how ugly human nature is. The more we really come to see that the more we can enter into the battle to fight against it because it's in us, each and every one of us. We make the choice then, "I want that rooted out. I do not want that kind of wrong thinking," that is so automatic in the human mind. "I don't want it in my mind. I want to think differently, but to think differently consistently and always." So that's our goal and the only way that's accomplished is by a complete change from mortal to immortal, from physical to spirit life.

So that's why Paul talked about some of the things he did, the battles, the battles in the mind, and to understand that there is a battle in the mind. As long as we're in this physical flesh there's a battle. Some people just get tired of fighting and some people don't even want to admit what they are because the pride is so great. The reason people resist admitting who they are or what they are is because the ability to break through those barriers, that barricade, that wall of pride, is exceedingly hard. We feel vulnerable...vulnerable, if we would think of doing such a thing. It's like we're going to hurt ourselves somehow. So we put on this façade and try to give a reflection from our life of what people are seeing as being something that isn't real. We want this image and the human mind is just sick, and it stems from evil. So we all have to experience that.

So the purpose in God's creation of mankind is that first all must experience evil. That's what the vast majority of all mankind has experienced throughout the past 6,000 years. Most have never experienced true good, good that comes out from, good that comes forth from God Almighty. Because God, that's where the good is. It's in God. It's in His being, in His mind, in His way. So how on earth then can a human being be able to come to a point where they can experience such true good? Well, when asked that way we know the answer. We know that it's a matter of a process

that begins in a calling, and then is amplified at a time of baptism and the impregnation, the laying on of hands and receiving of the impregnation of God's spirit. Then it continues on and growth begins.

So we know of righteous people spoken of in the Old Testament that have experienced God's goodness, His blessings, favor, love, interventions, and mercy, and way of life as they learned and began to change in their thinking toward others. As they grew and obeyed God they were blessed to have His spirit in them so that they could experience for themselves what good truly is, what is the right and good way of life to live. Now, they didn't see it around them, as a whole. Most never saw it around them, as a whole, because they didn't have the environment of the Church.

Now, we have a great advantage in that we are able to see things as people grow and as people change and as they're transformed, for those who faithfully and continually yield themselves to that process. We are able to witness things that are good that come through a process that God has given the Church, a fellowship. But those of olden times, in that respect, so often didn't have others that they could see that in, didn't have others where they could experience that with, and so for them they really had a different kind of contrast that was made in their life. It was a matter of hearing God, receiving what God said, and realizing through the power of God's spirit this is a kind of good that I want. "I want that! I want to be close to God. I want God's ways." And candidly, for them, in many cases that yearning within them was very, very deep, because they were sickened by what they saw in the world around them.

Now, in this period of time, being as scattered as we are and as few as we are, we're blessed to really be able to experience that in a profound way because we don't have the kind of large fellowship groups any longer where there are hundreds and thousands and thousands that come together at the Feast of Tabernacles. We don't have that and so because we're so scattered we actually are experiencing more of the world around us and we can actually have a deeper longing for God's good because it becomes so clear to us how ugly, how ugly this world is and we want something different. Not just for others in the world, but we want it for ourselves. We want to be of a different mind. We don't want to be like this world. So it's good to think upon that and understand the importance then of experiencing evil around us as well. Not only to come to grips with that which is in ourselves, but in the world around us.

So we're very blessed at the end of this age to be able to experience evil. We really are because it can stir up a longing inside of you that otherwise would not exist if you didn't have God's spirit and be able to receive of the goodness from God, if you didn't have the ability to receive some of those things that have to do with the mind of God - and we receive that week by week in sermons and other means as well - where we're able to make a contrast and realize how different the world is from what God has planned for us through the Millennium and the Great White Throne and beyond into His Family. So we long for those things.

I think of the scriptures and it talks about righteous Lot who vexed his righteous soul from day to day. Why? Because of the evil he saw all around him all the time and because of that he had a greater longing and desire for God and that the world would be different and that he could be different. Awesome! Awesome to understand this, and so God is sharing with us the importance of why He created us this way. If we can grasp these things then we can grasp the value of a human being being able to experience evil because only in that can you ever learn to properly or rightly or justly so ever begin to choose good because otherwise there would be no contrast and there would be no choice, but God has blessed us to have it come to that point in time where we can make that choice. But it's absolutely essential, an absolute must; it's necessary to experience evil. And even to grow spiritually it's necessary to experience evil. It's incredible to understand this.

Again, these people of old were able to experience various things from God and the environment around them as well and longed for what was right and the good life to live that they longed to see the world have that they knew the world didn't have. So from the very beginning, following the rebellion and disobedience of Adam and Eve, their two sons Cain and Abel are mentioned. It didn't take long before the depth of ugliness of human nature became full blown in a very sick, demented, and evil deed. Incredible. It didn't take all that long.

Let's turn over there, Genesis 4. There is so much here. There is so much here, as we've heard in some of the sermons in things mentioned before the Feast, of things that go back to Genesis 1, 2, 3, and 4, and in through there, 5 and 6, that are like an outline for human life to learn from in the rest of the Bible, through the rest of time there up through the time of the Church and so forth, and those things that were revealed to the apostles.

Genesis 4:1—And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and gave birth to Cain, and said, I have acquired a man from the Eternal. And then again she bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep... And I'm just going to interject here Cain was the firstborn and there was that in a relationship that regarded Cain, that was about Cain, that wasn't good because he was born of dysfunctional parents, parents that rejected God's government in their lives, parents that were cut off from God's spirit, parents that made great mistakes as all parents do in physical human life. So Cain came along, and just to be quite candid about it here, there are some things here that pushed him in a wrong direction, or moved him in a particular direction, not because of what he did later on, that that was to blame upon the parents, but because of that environment he grew up in a very wrong way. His mind, his thinking was very wrong, and how he was treated and how he was looked upon, especially in this case by his mother, and this first child born into human life, if you think there wasn't something there, well, God has made it very clear there was. That's why it's written in the way that it is, "I have acquired a man from the Eternal." He was special. He was special and that hurt him.

And then again she bore his brother Abel, and Abel was a keeper of sheep. He raised sheep, in other words. **And Cain was a tiller of the land,** of the ground, a farmer. One farmed and one raised sheep.

In the process of time it came to pass that **Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Eternal.** Now, again here, there are attitudes, showing some basic things about human beings. Here it is at the very beginning, because what happened here is something that can be seen through time, of those who have a desire toward God, of those with whom God is working, and the rest of the world. Here it is with two brothers and attitudes in thinking are revealed. So, "In the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Eternal." So people would look at that and say, "Well, isn't that a good thing? He brought of the fruit of the ground to God, first fruits, or whatever it was to God, before God, or presented some special offering before God, to the Eternal?" **And also Abel, who brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat,** in other words, the best portions. That's why it's written in this way, "the fat," the best portions of what he had of his flock. **And the Eternal had respect,** and this word means, "to look upon as to receive," **Abel, what Abel had in his offering.** He had respect unto Abel and to his offering. There was something better, something unique, something special about how Abel did this as compared to Cain.

...but unto Cain and to his offering He did not have respect, as to this here is just the opposite in its meaning then. It's "to look away, or did not receive it." God would not receive it. The spirit wasn't right. The attitude wasn't right so He wasn't going to receive it. You know, it's just like prayers. If prayers are selfish and based on get, get, get, do you think God's going to answer it? If they're not in agreement with God's purpose and God's will in life is God going to receive it and accept it? Things that are given to God, if they're given begrudgingly or out of necessity and not with a right spirit and a right attitude. You know, people can go through the motions of tithing and giving of offerings, but if it's not done with a right reason, if it's done by constraint because, "Well, I have to do this," you know, "and if I don't I might be disfellowshipped, you know, if I don't tithe. It's going to become obvious at some point. I might get disfellowshipped so I'll give a little bit here and there along the way." That's still going on, not giving full amounts of tithe to God, not a full 10%. You know, maybe 5. I had someone recently that's what they were doing. That became too much for them. They just couldn't do that. Or not giving of holy day offerings, not obeying what God says there. So if the attitudes aren't right or someone gives it begrudgingly because, "Well, I have to give this so I'll give a little bit here." That's not worshipping God in spirit and truth and love and a desire for this way of life for the right reasons.

So was the difference here between Cain and Abel. Cain didn't have a right spirit, didn't have a right attitude.

So let's go on **...but unto Cain and to his offering He did not have respect.** In other words He looked away. He didn't receive it. **And Cain was angry,** he was angry, **and his countenance fell.** He kind of went away in a huff, you know, went away in a huff. Sometimes people do that.

People leave the Church that way; they leave in a huff because they didn't get their way. God says to do something in a certain way and they don't do it like they're supposed to, and they know what God's laws are. Anyway, incredible the mind of human beings, even sometimes with God's spirit.

Verse 6—And the Eternal said to Cain, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? You know, "Where is this attitude coming from? Why are you responding this way?" If, notice this, **If you do what is good...** If you do what is good... That's the way it is in the Church. If we do what is good, **will you not be accepted?** And the word here means, "lifted up." Won't God lift you up? "Will I not give you favor and help and mercy in life? Won't you be accepted and be lifted up?" You know, if God has any dealings in our life we're lifted up. Who in the world has that? Who is it that's in God's hands, in God's care? Who is it that can receive such a thing from God? Well, those whom God has called, called to be transformed, called to change, called to grow in Godly character. How awesome is that? Sometimes we don't embrace it for how awesome it really is.

If you do what is good, will you not be accepted? And if you don't do what is good, then sin will lie at the door. That's just the way it is in life if people don't do what is good, don't have a right attitude, don't have a right mind in how they're seeking to worship God and to truly be honest and truthful before God, and others as well, in who they are, what they are in life, just being open and true. But see, that means you have to do good in order to do that and if you're hiding things, if you're doing things that aren't right, if the mind and the attitude isn't right then something else is going to come. Sin. It's at the door. It's just there knocking constantly.

And it will long after you. Interesting how this is written. In other words, meaning, "Sin will seek after you." This is what its saying. It will seek after you. If your attitude isn't right it's there already; it's deep rooted in your mind. Selfishness. Evil. **But you,** notice this, how it's stated, **sin will seek after you,** if you're not right, if you don't have the right motives, if you don't have the right desire toward God then sin lies at the door and it's going to seek after you unless you get a hold of yourself and repent. **But you are to rule over it.** We are to rule over. We're are to take charge of our lives rather than letting our lives control us, rather than letting human nature control us.

So that's what growth is all about. It's learning to take control of our own lives. It's learning to own our own choices. That's what it's about. We go through a process of learning how to own our own choices, to repent when we need to repent, to fight against sin, to fight against wrong attitudes and so that's a process. We're to rule over. God desires us to learn to take control of our lives, not let life control us, not let the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life control us because that's what human life is like. That's what controls the mind, and people don't even know it. That's why they can't even grasp really what evil is or what real good is, because they can't see and understand the ways and the purpose of God in life.

Then Cain told Abel his brother to come to him in the field, you know, come into the field. So here it's a set-up. **And there Cain stood up against his brother Abel and killed him.** So he plotted. He plotted! His motivation for inviting him out there, for bringing him out there, for whatever it was to see, was to kill him, to do it away from everyone else and to be alone and hopefully not to be seen to kill his brother. You remember God asking him, "Where is your brother? His blood cries out from the earth to me," because even here Cain tried to lie to God.

Hold your place here. There are a couple of other verses that would be good to take a look at here in the New Testament and what it has to say that sheds a little bit of light on some of this. But we'll come back to some of this in a moment, just to think about it a little more fully, a little more deeply. But here in **Hebrews 11:4** it says, **By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain**, because he was seeking to do good. He was seeking to be right with God. Cain wasn't. He was just going through the motions and his heart wasn't in it whatsoever. It doesn't say that he gave the best of what he had in any fashion or form. His attitude wasn't like his brother's, who gave of the fat, who gave of the best of what he had to God because his spirit was right, because he wanted to honor God and thank God for the blessings that God had given him, for what he had, a totally different mindset. "So by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," a sacrifice. Sacrifices that are a sweet smelling savor to God, of why we do the things we do and why we don't do the things that we strive not to do.

So again here, **By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous.** That's awesome, his attitude, right thinking, because God received it and he was living by faith. He had a desire toward God. He was following through with it. He was offering up sacrifice because he believed God, and God received it because of his spirit, because of his attitude. So he obtained witness that he was righteous. **God testifying of his gifts.** So it's God that declared He received his gifts and that he gave the best of what he had. God knew what he was giving and the attitude behind it. **And by it, he being dead yet speaks.** Just like here. He's still speaking - what he did, how he thought, how he lived and God testifying of his gifts.

1 John 3, over here just a little bit. **1 John 3:11**, it says, **For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.** It's always been there. It's always been there from God. That's how we should live as human beings, to love one another. **Not as Cain...** See, it goes all the way back to the beginning, all the way back to the beginning, showing this is where it's manifest, how ugly and how evil human beings can be, the mind and the selfishness of human beings. **Not of Cain, who was of that wicked one...** So what was his mind? It was of Satan. He had that same kind of thinking, jealousies, envies, anger, resentment, bitterness. Boy, when those things come in the mind God wants us to seek His help, His power, His spirit to fight those things even in the least little bit of resentment, even the least little bit of jealousy that might begin to raise its ugly head in your mind. When it does understand how evil it is. And if we really are convicted of that, how evil it is, we'll work to take control, we'll work to be in control, we'll

cry out to God even more so to fight against it, to be able to conquer it, to fight against the sin because such thinking, such a mind, it's just evil.

That's why God gave us the example of a spirit being first, of Lucifer who did what he did and became Satan, an adversary to God. His mind set always, once he did that, because of being spirit, always against God, always fighting against God's purpose, always spreading that which is a matter of deceit and lies and twisting and distorting and trying to get others to think the way he does and that spirit that he broadcasts then to mankind, to people. Here Cain was fully ready to receive it because his attitude stunk because his motives were wrong because of an evil mind that he chose to have, you know, to nurture himself, to pamper himself, to allow himself to be filled with envy and jealousy to the point that he would rise up and kill his own brother. That's the kind of evil that lives, exists in selfishness.

And why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil. Evil. Not good. Abel was striving to live what was good. Abel was striving to do what was good. He was fighting to do what was good. He made a choice for God and God's way of life and God was blessing him and helping him in that process, but Cain wasn't. Cain wasn't because he chose selfishness. He chose his own way, so much so that he took his own brother's life and God makes it very clear here that his works were evil because it goes back to the selfishness. That's where it stems from. **...and his brothers' were righteous.** That's the contrast. His brother was striving to live what was right. Was he perfect? No. None of us are, but when looking to God and seeking God's help in life, desiring God's spirit, desiring His life, desiring His way of life and believing what He says, believing God, choosing to believe God, well, that's an awesome thing.

So again here, Abel was living what was right and good before God. He was experiencing good. He'd already seen the evil. He'd been experiencing evil, not to the degree that others had later on, but even then he was able to make that choice. He knew what happened in the garden. He knew what happened with his mother and father to a degree, to a point there, and some of the story that was there, and some of that story that was still being told, that was passed down to others as to what had taken place. And he chose God.

Then several hundred years later evil had filled the earth and this is incredible. There was only one, one person who was striving to live what was good and right on the earth. That's dumbfounding. We don't know how many people there were, how many thousands upon thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people there were by that point in time. So there was only one who was striving to live what was good and right on the earth.

And 2 Peter, I'll just read this to you, 2 Peter 2, and then we'll go back to Genesis here. **2 Peter 2:5** it states **And God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness.** First was Abel. Cain hated that. Cain hated that his brother was, you know, goody-goody two shoes type thing. That was just more than he could bear. That's why he killed his brother. He loathed that. He loathed that he wasn't the same way as he was, you know, choosing

evil, choosing a different kind of thinking and way of acting and so it made him look worse. It wasn't a good reflection then on Cain; it made him look worse, and he knew it made him look worse before God because it was. It was bad. Cain was. But Abel here was righteous and that made Cain look worse, and Cain knew it. So people tend to really hate when someone is really doing what is right and good, because they know they're not and if you won't go and do the same things they do and you won't participate in some of the kind of things they do then they turn against you and scriptures talk about that. If you won't go to the same excess of evil as they do then you're looked down upon, you're an enemy.

And so it says here, **God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness, and then brought upon the flood upon the world of the ungodly.** Ungodly. An evil world. Evil. Evil filled the earth. Incredible!

Genesis 6 now, moving ahead a little bit here a couple of chapters. **Genesis 6:5**, and it says, **And the Eternal saw the wickedness.** Now, in the Hebrew that just flat means "evil." **And the Eternal saw the evil of mankind, that it was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually.** That's just the way people thought, totally selfish, totally bent on self-serving and treating others in a wrong way, in a horrible way as time went along, the mind becoming so set, so perverted in how people live life. Noah was different and God said their thoughts, they're just evil continually in how people think and how they're acting and what they're doing. It doesn't have to go into more detail than that. It was so evil, the mind had become so evil after people living so many hundreds of years like they were that it was better to destroy the earth and destroy mankind because otherwise the potential for becoming Elohim was becoming less and less and God's purpose for creating mankind is to become His Family, Elohim, and if the mind becomes set, so set in evil that it can't be transformed and nothing can bring it to a point of true change, then it's better that it not exist.

So it says here, **And it repented the Eternal.** That's a very poor translation here in what it says. It's actually saying that in order to make things right, because of the extent of the evil on the earth, and in order for God to "comfort Himself of His sorrow." That's what this word "repented" really is about, "comforting Himself from such sorrow," because of looking upon mankind and seeing what mankind was doing and hurting each other and closing off their potential and ability to be resurrected in the Great White Throne, to a point of being able to have offered to them the potential for eternal life. You know, if such minds become so set they can't even be resurrected at that time, well, that's what this is all about. So His desire then was to stop this hideous cycle because there was only one man left and something had to change and be changed on the earth and all these things there to teach us, and God having done them to teach us, knowing what would happen. God knew, but those things are there for us to learn from.

Again here it's actually saying that in order to make things right, because of the extent of the evil on the earth, and in order for God to "comfort Himself of such sorrow," or from such sorrow, from all the evil of mankind, and to once again set things right upon the earth. So that's what this

means, this word "repent," "it repented the Eternal," that He was going to set things right upon the earth because it's a hurtful, painful thing watching people destroy themselves. Parents sometimes in life, in the world, they see a child going the wrong way and they're just destroying themselves. I think of those who get on drugs and a parent can't do anything about it and they watch their own child destroying themselves, destroying their future, destroying their life and those around them, and the hurt and the pain and the suffering that goes with that. It's a horrible thing.

So translating this correctly let's read it, **And the Eternal saw the evil of mankind, that the evil of mankind was so great on the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually. So the Eternal sought comfort from His sorrow of having made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart,** in other words, that mankind had now become so evil. **So the Eternal said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and animal, and all that moves, and the fowl of the air; for there is need to be comforted from the sorrow of having made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Eternal.** He was, again here, as he was the eighth preacher of righteousness. He was seeking to live God's way of life. He spoke of God's way of life but no one listened. No one listened. No one cared, in that respect, not even his own children. They were there by family. They helped Noah. They worked with Noah as a physical family, just as sometimes happens in this world when people come into the Church, but they didn't want any part of this God and that way of life. They wanted to live their own ways of life but they still worked with him and helped him, and they had a kind of a physical relationship there to a point and that was it.

So down in **verse 11** it says here, **The earth was fully corrupted before God, and the earth was filled with violence.** In other words, all that is wrong and evil. All that is wrong and evil being made manifest. So it wasn't just in the mind, in the thinking anymore, it was in the activity and the actions of people constantly. **And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; and all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.** They had corrupted their minds. It's a horrible thing for the mind to become so corrupted and to become so set in evil that no matter what happens around them they will never choose God, even when given the opportunity. That's incredible to understand what God has given to us in that.

So again, only a few through time have really experienced the way of true good in and through their lives, and they did so in a world filled with evil and God molded and fashioned them. So he worked with them in a unique way, as I mentioned a moment ago, but it's through this process of experiencing evil in the world around them and repenting of it in their own life, when they saw it in their own life because they didn't want that in their own life. They loathed that, as it talked about, again, Lot. He wasn't going to participate in the evil that he saw going on around him, and he vexed his righteous soul day by day because he so loathed what mankind was doing and how people thought and how they treated each other, and he wanted something different. But he

could only change himself. He could only work on himself. And so he did. And that's what we have to do; we have to work on ourselves.

So sometimes that great contrast between seeing something that is from God and seeing God's way, and then seeing that which is in the world, the evil that's there, to get a stomach full of that and to loathe and to hate it and to desire so much that it be different, and then to grab a hold of, if you will, God's word, because God says He's going to offer it and give opportunity for it to become different. His purpose and plan is that the earth become different, that He's going to send a Messiah, that He's going to send His Kingdom and there's going to be a city that God is going to build that is filled with righteousness. Now, you know, and people grabbed a hold of that because they longed for something like that, such a world, and they believed God. That was attributed to them as righteousness because they believed God and tried to live their life accordingly then and that's what we do.

So again here, only a few through time have really experienced the way of true good in and through their lives, and they did so, again, in a world filled with evil. But it's through this process of experiencing evil in the world around them and repenting of it in their own life that God's mind and thinking, if you will, can be developed. That's an awesome thing to understand! This can only happen if one makes such choice for God's ways and chooses to reject one's own ways and the way of the world as well with that, obviously. But everyone has to come to a point where they reject their own ways and embrace God's.

So this indeed has been the history of mankind and of those whom God has called to change and become transformed. That's God's desire.

Romans 12. Scriptures we read often. But in the context of what it's saying here, let's see what it says. Some of the verses we're going to read now in scripture here, it's about this subject matter then. It's about what we're talking about, the importance and the ability of experiencing good and evil, that first we have to experience evil in order to ever make a just choice because one can't make a just choice unless they experience it. You can't do it just by knowledge and receiving knowledge and say, "Oh, yeah, yeah. That's what I want." It doesn't work that way. It's by what you have to experience because of what's inside of us. And only because of making the choice then can God work with us and bring us into His family. It's an awesome thing and process whereby God has made us and works with us to bring us into His family. It's perfect. It's beautiful when understood. It's hard. It's difficult. There's incredible suffering. There's incredible anguish that goes with it, but it's only through experiencing that and making choices along the way between self, selfishness, evil and that of God of being outgoing and true and just and righteous that one can have opportunity then to become a part of Elohim.

Romans 12:1—I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. God isn't looking for sacrifices to be brought to Him, though individuals have been judged accordingly by it, just like we talked about with Abel, in the mind

with those whom He worked with, but he has shown and revealed through time then it's in the mind and that we're to become a living sacrifice, to learn to sacrifice. Just like the sermon series talked about of the kind of love that a husband is to have towards his wife, and candidly, that a wife should have toward her husband, is to love the other as Jesus Christ loves the Church and that's a sacrificing love. He gave his life, he was beaten to a pulp in order to give us what we have, in order to give us the opportunities we have, in order to give us the ability to be forgiven of sin and to continue in a relationship with him and our Father. Incredible.

Again here, this thing about a living sacrifice, He says, "...that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." That means there's a choice to be made. Are we going to strive to love that way? Are we going to strive to give to others that way? And if people can't do it with the two closest in life that they should have, and that's in a marriage, that's the closest relationship, in that respect, a human being can ever have to build upon, and God says it has to be done as a matter of a sacrifice. Then we're told in the Church to become a living sacrifice indeed. So we carry that even further because if we can't learn it there how in the world are we going to be able to do it in the rest of the family when children come along? And that's why many families fail and many families then become dysfunctional. And we see that in the world, sometimes too much so in the Church. People give in to the dysfunction because they're not doing what they should be doing and not being a living sacrifice, not sacrificing as they should for their children, for their spouse, or whatever it is, their own way, their own selfish way. Whether it be for their own selfish comfort because they don't want to be bothered, "I don't want to be bothered with having to do this every day and work with the children every day. I don't want to be bothered with that. I don't want to be bothered with having to rear a child the right way. It takes a lot of time. I don't want to be bothered with having to train children how to sit still in Sabbath services, how to begin learning to do things in a good way, in a right way. I don't want to have to be bothered with that. It's just too much work." Where is the sacrifice? Where is the sacrifice? What is the thinking? It's not good. What is it? Ah, it's evil. There's good and there's evil, and we have to repent of the evil and we have to fight against it and embrace the good.

So again here, **by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God**, acceptable, God will accept it. There are things that God won't accept in our lives and He tells us they have to change. ...**which is your reasonable service**. We're called into the Church, given opportunity that few in 6,000 years have ever been given, isn't that reasonable service? Isn't it reasonable that we should learn to treat each other in certain ways? Isn't it reasonable that husbands and wives should learn to respect God's way and God's word and to treat each other in certain ways and to fight against our own selfish human nature of mistreating others, of seeking to be in control of things? And the reason we want control is because we want things done our way. A wife wants things done her way and so she tries to control certain things in life or a husband seeks to control. It's this mad, mad battle that takes place because people want their own way so they try to control certain things around them. On and on and on it goes. It's a vicious cycle of life. Sick. Sick. Sick. Perverted. Evil. Evil! Not good.

Verse 2—And be not conformed to this world. Don't be like the world, God is saying. Don't be conformed to its ways because it's evil. It's not right. The thinking isn't right. The system isn't right. The process isn't right because it's based on selfishness and doing whatever you want to do, going your own way to that point that people are taught, "Well, you can come to church just as you are." "You can come to Jesus just as you are." "Don't worry. Come Sunday morning. Come for 15-20 minutes and give your heart to the Lord and that's all that you need to do." And then go back out and be your own miserable selfish self for the rest of the week and mistreat people and be ugly. Anyway, sick world.

Be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind. That's why I try to let people know we are called to be the pacesetters of a new world. We don't go by what the world tells us is a standard when it comes to anything, something as basic as fashion. They're not going to dictate to God's people and God's Church and yet people are pulled toward that, you know, toward flimsy dress and how people wear things and some of the casual approach, too casual sometimes then that people can take. Even in worshipping God we have to be careful. There's a balance in there. I've been trying to give that for some time here, and even before the Feast. There's thinking involved here: Do we seek to honor and glorify God or do we want our own way, whatever that means for us, for us individually in our own thinking?

Sometimes it just crops up that some things in society, in the world, happen out here, and dresses go up, you know just below the butt - way above the knee, let's put it that way. So these styles change and people are pulled toward it and they think that's good. They think that's the way they have to be. They think to be something different makes them stand out and they think that they're ugly or they think that they're just not in style. See, this, the reason I'm using this as an example is because this reveals what this verse is about in showing how powerful the influence of the world is. That's just one little area that people can more readily see.

There are a lot more that are very deceitful to be able to see and understand that sometimes I cry out about that I know people don't see. It's about this liberal mind out here and a conservative mind. Both going in their direction, in the way the world thinks, are not right, though it's better to be more conservative than it is to be too liberal. To allow yourself to do things without restraint and to do whatever you want to do. It's better to have some restraint in life in many things than to go too far the other way.

So people get caught up in these things and they listen to news and they don't understand what they're judging and how they're judging. So I can't even go there. It's either in your mind and it's right and you're growing in it and you're starting to understand it, or you're just not, but maybe here with the thing about style and about dress someone can understand it because that's very physical to point out look how, look at the impact this has on you. If it comes out that there is a style that you're supposed to have black eyes, you know, put the make-up on so thick that your eyelids are just blacked out, and maybe the mascara, the thing on the eyebrows, all of a sudden there's a style where it just it flips up on the sides. You know, it goes straight out to the side then

it flips up maybe three inches. You just make a black mark right up your forehead. And that becomes, "Oh, this is the in thing to do."

Then, maybe, if that's not enough let's start hanging some things on our ears. Let's start hanging all kinds of things. Let's make it bigger. We don't have to just have holes going into our eardrums, let's make them through the ear lobes. Let's make those really wide. Let's see how wide we can get them. Let's see how far down we can get that dangling part of the ear, because that's the style. Oh, and I don't like my skin the way it is. I'd like some different colors in here. I'd like certain pictures on me and my body. I love this person so I'm going to put their name on here. How long did that last and you've got to change that or rub it out or something or, you know, because that's the way human beings are. We're dumb. We're selfish. Selfishness is evil and it's dumb.

God says, "Don't be conformed to the world." Don't get pulled out here and think you have to be like the world. We are the pacesetters, if you will, because God's revealing to us how life is supposed to be lived, and we're supposed to be a reflection and a light of that, so we don't care. God tells us and He gives us one simple word that shows how we're to be. It's a matter of moderation within whatever time period we live. So we seek to be whatever is moderate; not overly conservative, not overly, you know, liberal. There's a balance in there within the world even, as we live within the world. We look upon that word as a matter of moderation, but it's so hard and such a battle sometimes for people.

So sometimes we have a difficulty because parents don't want to tell their own children: "Well, they're going to be laughed at in school if they have to wear a dress that's a little bit longer. Life is going to be so much harder for them." Well, I'd hate for them to think in their minds that somehow they're different and they're not like all the others and that somehow they might have to go through someone that teaches them, "Hey, this is a better way and this is what you reflect." And sometimes people won't do that and then they begin to think, "Well, that's just too hard of a measure on people in the Church, you know, to have them wear certain things." So we go through all kinds of things and that should show us how powerful it is a pull to become conformed to the world.

You have not been called into the Church to be conformed to the world. You're to be different. You're to put God first. You're to stand up for God's way of life and either you believe that and seek to live it or you don't.

So I could go on a lot more about that, but I'm not going to because I just don't have the time. The message here is about the importance of experiencing good and evil, and there's a lot of evil in this world. Sometimes we just don't recognize it for what it is and we're to strive to hold on to that which is good, to be changed.

So it says here, again, **And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** So you're not only to have your mind renewed and to work to think differently, if you have children you're to work with them to help mold and fashion their mind right in the first place so that it doesn't have to go through as much as what you had to do to get your mind right because you're so screwed up by the time you're an adult. That's the way we are. Our minds are messed up by the time we become adults. God calls us then as an adult, and the longer we've been an adult the harder it is to change some of the thinking. So what an awesome gift God has given, and a responsibility to work with, to work with, to work with, to work with. I'm not a broken record but just to get the point across - to work with our children, to work with them, to teach them basic things in life, to help mold and fashion their minds because that's the job, to work with. Is it easy? No, it's not meant to be easy. It's not meant to be a cakewalk. It means you're going to have some resistance along the way. How do we receive God? We resist. You fight against self. Do you think children are any different with their human nature that they have? Think they're not going to resist along the way? But you keep working with them and you find out ways to work with them and to help them and to encourage them in the right ways and to spend time, whatever it is, communicating various things.

Anyway, **Be you transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove... Prove!** Like proving oxen. Like going out here and someone then, a farmer, that buys a huge tractor that he'd been wanting for a long time. I think of combines because that's what I used to run and I've seen such a change from the time that I drove a combine. Matter of fact, the first one I was ever on as a kid was one that was pulled by a tractor. It had to be pulled by a tractor and had to be hooked up to the tractor, and the thing that turns around the back there that operates everything within. Anyway, you'd hook up this shaft on to the tractor that would turn and it would turn the things within the combine. It was made to turn the wheels and the grinding machine, the grinding part of it that sifted, helped to sift the wheat and so forth. Someone would have to set up on there oftentimes on the combine part and one on the tractor. Well, I've seen a lot of changes through time just in that area alone. What they have today is dumbfounding. So someone, a farmer who's gone through those things, lived all his life and he gets something new, and has all these new-fangled things on it, he can do a better job, he can do it far more productively. They want to go out and prove the machine. They can't wait to go out and try it.

That's what God tells us about His way of life and we should look at that in the same manner Sabbath by Sabbath, holy day to holy day, that we learn something new and we're excited about it and we want to put it to the test. We want to make changes because we want to hold on to that which is good, meaning we want to make some changes and apply and do and work those things that we learn, put them into practise. Parents for children, husbands toward wives, wives toward husbands, you have to make changes. They won't just happen. You have to conscientiously think about what those changes need to be and so prove what is good, that which comes from God, that which you hear Sabbath by Sabbath and holy day to holy day. So we hear those things and

realize, "Well, I'm not in line with that. I'm not in full unity with that and I need to make some changes here." If you don't make the changes then you're not proving what is good.

So God says we're to prove. In order for the mind to be transformed you have to **prove what is that good** (it comes from God), and **acceptable, and perfect will of God**. God is perfect. His way is perfect.

Verse 9, let's read that one: **Let love be without dissimulation**, in other words, without hypocrisy, unfeigned. Why do we have to be told that? Because that's the way we are as human beings. It can so often be with hypocrisy. We want to get something as a result of something we do or say or whatever, or we want to be recognized or we want someone to like us for certain reasons and is not really for the true motives. It's not because we should just be a certain way toward all people. Too often there's this get factor in our thinking.

So it says here, love without hypocrisy. Another word here, "unfeigned," unfeigned love. Not pretentious but genuine and true because it's genuine, what you're saying and what's coming out of you, not because you're trying to get something for self some way because that's just evil! It's not good. God's way is this way, "Let love be without dissimulation," without hypocrisy, unfeigned.

Abhor that which is evil. You know, if we don't we'll just keep doing it. I've used this over the years. I've talked about smoking because oftentimes people are called into the Church and they're smoking. That's a tough thing to conquer and overcome for the human mind. It's a very physical thing but it's the mind that if you can come to understand this in a simple matter like this you can come to understand this in many levels of life, until you come to the point where you hate the evil, the wrong in it, and what's bad about it, you're going to keep doing it. Until you come to acknowledge certain things are evil you're not going to fight against it. You're just going to give into it all the time. So we have to become more convicted, more committed to the realization and the truth certain things that are wrong in this world, why they're wrong, and how they hurt, and to learn to abhor. You've got to come to where you hate and loathe it, otherwise, you still love it. You still love the evil. You still love the wrong because that's why you keep doing it. That's what you want. That's the way we are as human beings.

So this growing process, this process of experiencing good and evil is an awesome thing, because there is absolutely no other way that we can become Elohim, that we can enter into the God family. We have to go through this process of transformation and that's by choice, and then it's by choice as to whether or not we go out here to prove, to put to practice, to work that which is good and that comes from God that is true according to His will.

Abhor that which is evil, cleave, cleave. We've talked about different things about cleave, to cleave like glue, like glue, to be drawn together in such a manner. ...**cleave**, to become one with, in that respect because that's what happens when two things are glued together. They become

one and that's what we want. We want to **cleave to the good**. We want to become at one with what is good that comes from God.

Verse 21, Be not overcome of evil. Remember what God told Cain? Sin is at the door. You're going to let it be there. If you're not doing what is good you're just going to do evil. So don't be overcome of evil. He said, in essence, you're to control, take control of yourself. You're to control that thinking and not let it control you because it seeks to control. Sin seeks to control us. So, "Be not overcome of evil." Don't let it conquer you. So there are choices there. God gives us the ability at some point in life to begin to make choices. Otherwise we're just lost in the world and we're going to always do selfishness because without God's spirit that's all we can do as human beings. We're always going to be motivated by selfishness and that's evil. That's not God's way. It's evil. It's the mind of Satan. Satan is fully selfish. God is revealing to mankind that to become a part of Elohim you can never, never, never, never have any piece of that in the mind. It must be rooted out.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. That's how we conquer evil, with good, with God's way. It's powerful. That statement is so incredibly powerful. That God enables it to become a reality with the help of His holy spirit and through our choices then to participate in doing what is good.

Galatians 6:7—Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows, that shall they also reap. For one who sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. You know, if it's selfish that's what happens. If you're doing, working, sowing something to selfishness, you're giving in to your selfishness, then it says here, "One who sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," because it never produces what is good. Selfishness cannot produce good. ...**but one who sows to the spirit**, you know, yields to, sows, does, works that which is of the spirit, because it comes from God and seeks God's help to do something different, to do something right because we can't change ourselves. That's why we have help from God's spirit to dwell in us, to give us the help we need. We have to cry out and want it, but God will give us that help and it's a battle. It can be a battle every day but you keep battling until you've conquered.

And so it says here, **but one who sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.**

That's where it leads, keeping in that battle, keep working at sowing of the spirit, doing what is good, seeking to do what is good, participate in that which is good and we will conquer, we will overcome. **And do not let anyone be weary in well doing.** Sometimes people get tired of doing what is good. They become weary in it. Why? Because it's not easy because you have to fight. You have to do things. You can't sit back and rest and relax or ignore it or escape from it. You have to be engaged in fighting against self. You have to be engaged. You have to make choices to engage in change. Change doesn't just happen. That means you have to change things in your own life and that can be a discomfoting thing to selfishness, because it is. But we're so blessed when we're able to do and experience then the good. The more good that we're able to experience the richer, fuller life becomes.

So it says here, **do not let anyone be weary in doing well. For in due season we shall reap, if we don't faint**, if we don't give up. That's what happens to everyone who goes by the wayside. They give up on something. They give up on fighting. They give up on working on self. It's easier, in their thinking, just to give in to it and do what you want to do and not battle anymore, and not battle this world, and not battle people around you and just do what they're doing. You know, just give into it and live life like they do because God's way's just too hard. That's what they do. It's a choice. What do we want? Do we want what God's offering, what God's giving, what God desires for us? Choices. Choices. Choices, and owning our own choices.

And as we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all. We're to learn how to do good. That means to live God's way of life toward others around us in all of our practices and things we do in this world. ...**especially unto them who are of the household of faith**, even more so. Now, that begins at home, again. Isn't that amazing? It begins in marriage. It begins at home, and if you're single or whatever, then the Church is your great arena of life to practice and live these things and we're able to have fellowship with others who are engaging in the same thing hopefully, and prayerfully. And if they're not then those things will begin to stand out and you'll make other choices then in fellowship.

So it says here, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." That begins at home. Spouse to spouse first, and then to children, and children to parents and then adults and parents and children and everyone together in fellowship in a Church environment.

James 1, let's notice what it says here about some of this. This is incredible, some of these things that we read all the time in times past in different kinds of sermons and so forth, but in this kind of a context here, of experiencing good and evil, it helps to drive home the point of why God made us the way we are and the importance then of going through this and embracing it, not running away from it, not fainting, not giving up in it but embracing it and understanding the value of where it's leading.

James 1:12—Blessed is the person who endures temptation, testing. For when they are tested, they shall receive the crown of life... Now, through James here you have to be careful that you don't read into what's being said. Context. The context, as in all places, like in Romans, there are those who become so confused between things that James has to say about faith and works and what Paul has to say. The context is different in what they're talking about and yet people read some of those things because without God's spirit they just twist it up anyway. It becomes confusing. They don't understand what's being said. So you have to understand what's being said here in context. That becomes clearer in the context, by continuing on and reading and then things become clearer, what's being spoken of.

"For when we are tested." So here it uses the word "temptation." It's about what we do. Let's just go on. Let's notice here, it's about human nature. It's about selfishness and how it works in our

life. But it says, "Blessed is the person who endures testing." It comes from evil. We go through a process of making choices and if we endure that and continue on and continue in the fight, this is what the story is. "For when they are tested they shall receive the crown of life." So it's not a matter of something here about being tempted and maybe stumbling and tripping up or being tempted to sin. It is about that in a different kind of context, but you have to understand what's being said here.

"For when they are tested they shall receive the crown of life." In other words what it's saying here is when you go through various things and you go through and you have your human nature, you have the pulls of the flesh, you have the pulls of the mind, you have the thinking of a human being that is selfish, and yet if you engage in doing what is right and you fight against that that's where the test in life is, in that respect, and you're pulled toward evil and if we grasp that and we choose to fight against that and we continue to go through those tests, the experiencing of evil around us, the experiencing of evil in our own life and dealing with it and fighting it and addressing it, and we endure and we continue on, "he who endures this process," he who continues to fight at this process, and when it's all said and done, when you've accomplished it you will receive the crown of life. That's the context.

...which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. So it's a matter of what do we love? Do we love God? Do we love His ways? And if we do then we're going to endure this process of what we're experiencing. And so, does life get hard? Absolutely! Do we feel like we've gone through a wringer sometimes? Absolutely! I think of a couple teachers this week who have to go back to into this world and what they have to deal with these children, and especially considering their ages and what they bring to the classroom and what people have to deal with today. It's mindboggling. It carries a tremendous weight and load then upon a teacher. It really does and I feel for them, and especially in that environment, a horrible environment, in that respect, and they have to deal with that. That can wear you out. So people, whatever you're doing, whatever your job is, whatever people you're around sometimes it just becomes the oppression, the pressure, the stress, it's so great, and it wears you out day by day. But you know what? For God's way of life, because we love God, we love His way, we have chosen to go through this transformation, this process because transformation requires the experiencing and the continual experiencing of evil around us. And even that what comes out of our own minds because we have to make the choice to fight against that day by day by day. And as every day goes by we can grow. Sometimes people look at their lives and think, "Well, am I growing? Am I really overcoming?" You're here. You believe God. You're still in the fight. Absolutely, you're growing and the more you put into it the more you'll grow, the more you'll conquer and overcome. Incredible and you'll receive the crown of life when it's all said and done, **which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

Let no one say when they are tempted, when they are tested, I am being tested of God. It doesn't come from God. Evil doesn't come from God. He created things in such a fashion, as we've talked about, and this is the whole context of what's said, so that we can learn and so that we

can make choices. Otherwise we can't become a part of Elohim because it's about the mind; it's about what comes through all this and what can be given in a spirit life forever that is so important. It's what we go through to get there and it has to do with choice after choice after choice many times a day, the choices we make and the pulls that are there in human life, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," that we choose to engage in, to fight against that is indeed like a testing and being tempted by our own nature to let down, to give up, to whatever it is. But we continue to fight. There's that choice then.

So then no one can say in these things that God has put this before them, that God has done it. On the contrary, He's let us live in a world like this for a purpose, but it's because of the choices, the choices that Lucifer made and then the choices that Adam and Eve made, and the choices that all selfish human beings will always make. It's about self. It's about our way. So we're blessed then to learn and to grow.

So it says, don't say that such a thing comes from God. Yeah, we experience a lot of things and sometimes people can think that way, that God's doing this and putting this before them. Oh, be careful. Be careful. ...**I am being tested of God, for God cannot be tested with evil.** He doesn't test with it and He can't be tested with it. It's contrary to God and to God's mind and God's being, but we are because of our selfish human nature. We can be tested with it because "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Selfishness. ...**neither does He test anyone, in context here, with evil.** God doesn't do that, but He's placed us in a world, in an environment where we're free to make choices, because it's only through the freedom of making choices that we can be changed, that we can be transformed, that we can become a part of Elohim. That is absolutely beautiful to grasp and comprehend, why God made the angelic realm as he did and why He made mankind physical as He did in physical existence in life with the potential to become spirit forever in the family of Elohim.

...**but every person is tested when they are drawn way of their own lusts and enticed.** There's the battle, a mind that fights and resists God and your choice, your choice to acknowledge that, your choice to admit that about self, your choice to fight against that, it's all about our choices and to own our choices, not to blame others, not to blame parents, not to blame some other member of the Church, and not to blame a spouse: "Because you're not doing 'this,' or you're not doing 'that,' blah, blah, blah," and the drama that people get into. Just accept it for yourself, for your changes and what you have to do in your life and yield to the process that God says and to understand this isn't meant to be easy. Becoming a part of Elohim is not easy. We have to engage in warfare. We have to engage in spiritual battle. That's what it's about and so when they are drawn away of their own lusts and enticed that's how a person's tested, tempted, whatever word you want to use here. But you have to understand it in its context.

Verse 15—Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin. That's exactly what God was telling Cain. He was telling him about what sin does and about what a wrong attitude and a wrong spirit does, wrong thinking does. It leads to this. Sin is at the door, but you're to control it. You're

to take control of your life. You're to fight. **Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift, everything that is good in life, everything that is right and just, and every perfect gift is from above.** God's truth, God's way, it's a gift. It's what He's offering us. It's up to us to grab hold of it and to grasp its value, to be thankful. You know, when someone's given a gift it's a matter of being thankful and grateful for it. And if we recognize the magnitude of what God is offering to us, how much more.

Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. It is absolute. God's way, it is based on His love. It is based on that which is outgoing, never selfish, never inward because, candidly, the bottom line is that's just evil. So we have to experience and make choices between evil and good. There is no other way to become part of Elohim.

So God has indeed created us in such a manner that must necessarily experience evil and even as we're being transformed we must necessarily continue to experience evil around us and from our own selfish life and have to address those things and admit those things, and go to work and constantly be at work in battle. Battle is work. So again here, He's created us in such a manner that we must necessarily experience evil, evil in the world around us and evil that exists deep in our minds that's the result of our nature that is ruled by "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." It is indeed ugly and it is evil and we have to make constant choices to fight. To fight means you have to work. You have to work at your marriage. You have to work in relationships with your children and molding and fashioning them in life. What an incredibly great responsibility that God has given there and opportunity to be part of such a thing. Then to work at relationships within the Body, within the Church, as we read earlier, "especially the household," those that are of faith of God in the Church.

But then in God's time He brings mankind to the point of choosing if they will live God's ways, embrace change in their thinking in order to truly think differently. It does in time become a free choice. But for most human beings in the past 6,000 years, they haven't been given that choice yet. They've just experienced a lot of evil. But one day they're going to be given that opportunity of free choice and we have been granted that already. How incredibly blessed are we? And so it does in time become a time for free choice. With this experience of evil there is much suffering and sorrow, a lot of suffering and sorrow in life. It's hard. It's hard, but it's in the battle that change comes, that transformation can take place, and in no other way.

So it's through this experience that we can more effectively, more readily, more fully become transformed, come into greater unity and oneness with God and His Son Jesus Christ, through this process of making such choices. We have to make the choices and we have to own the choices and we have to be grateful for the opportunity that we can do so. This is awesome to grasp and understand.

What's being given here in this sermon is marvellous; it is powerful. What we're building upon in that sermon that was given so many years ago can now have greater effect and more power in our lives than ever before. Sometimes we want life to be easy. It's not going to become easy until you're changed. Then it'll become easier, but your job is going to become far greater too, but you'll be equipped to handle it properly, righteously so all the time.

So choices, choices, choices, and I think about before the Feast, I think about different ones commenting about all the battles sometimes that people are going through. I look upon it in a context of what has been covered in this sermon. So be it. It's not meant to be easy. If I go through various things in life, which I've gone through many, and whatever has taken place (as I've mentioned so often), I wouldn't change some of the hardest things for anything in the world because of what they have molded and fashioned within me as a result of God's spirit transforming my thinking, my mind. I embrace those things. Not while I'm going through them. Sometimes they're very difficult and they're very hard, but always with a knowing that I'm in God's hands and things are going to happen then according to God's purpose and God's will. I choose to yield myself to that process knowing what it will produce, knowing the good that comes of it, and embracing that, because that's where the transformation comes from.

So sometimes we just try to fight against some of the hardships of life and you're not going to be able to make your life fully easy. You're going to go through different hardships because of the world around you and it's through those experiences of those things that you go through that you can actually be made stronger and wiser and far more filled with God's mind and God's being and God's purpose as you yield yourself to the process because it's through such hardships and through such difficulties if—if, if—if you do it God's way and engage in battle the way God says to do it that awesome change comes about, that incredible growth comes about in our lives. Now, if we run from it, hide our self from it, try to ignore it or try to hide, or to escape from it, well, we just prolong the process and weaken our ability and potential for growth and we magnify the potential for something different, or the ease. That is to give up, to quit, to latch on to something else. It happens every year.

Romans 8:18, it says, **For I reckon (consider) that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*** Sufferings? Absolutely, when you're battling evil in your own mind, if you're doing do. Now, sometimes we just make the anguish harder because we don't engage in the battle. If we continue to put up with and tolerate evil and you wallow around in it and you won't address the change because it's uncomfortable or you just really don't want to do it, the suffering is greater. The suffering is greater, but God says here, gives to us a reality here. It says, **I consider that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*** Do we grasp what's ahead? Do we grasp what God is offering us and hold on to that and desire to battle and fight then?

For the earnest expectation of the creation, it's not a "creature," it's a word "creation." **The expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.** There is still a creation going on. The world doesn't know that. They don't even think there was a creation, but even for those in the scattered Church, you know, people think about a creation they think about what happened when Adam and Eve were put on the earth. They don't realize, no, there's a creation ongoing and we're in that creation because it's the creation of Elohim that it's all about in the first place. So when we're called to be transformed there is that creative process that's taking place in our mind and that takes years and years and years, and it's through much suffering and the experiencing of both good and evil and the choices we make along the way, always choosing good, if we're always choosing it. But the reality is we don't always choose good because of that evil nature that's inside of us that we have to battle.

For the creation was made subject to vanity for the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. In other words, the coming of the first fruits and then that which is going to be beyond that when others who go on in the Millennium look forward to the manifestation of the sons of God that are going to be resurrected or changed, those who are alive at the end there before the Hundred-years are resurrected then into spirit life.

For the creation was made subject to vanity, the creation, mankind. God's purpose of bringing about Elohim was made subject to vanity. It's what it's saying here. That had to come first, the experiencing of evil. ...**not willingly,** not of its own free will, **but by reason of Him,** because God has a perfect plan, because it's His purpose in order to bring about Elohim, that it had to be done this way, **who has subjected *the same* in hope.** So when He calls us there is that unique thing that works in our lives, this hope that can work within us. Awesome! **But the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.** So we go through this process of experiencing good and evil and making choices for good. As we continue to do that there is this process whereby more and more we're taken out of bondage, the bondage of corruption of the human mind and making those choices. We don't want that kind of a mind. We don't want a mind that thinks that way, selfish and inward.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors together in pain until now. You know, welcome to the club! Sometimes people feel so down and are beaten up and we do sometimes as human beings. Sometimes my wife has used an expression like this, "You're not alone. You're in good company," because that's the way it is with all of us. That's the way it is with all of us. We're in good company with one another because that's what we've been called to. And so we do go through a great deal just as everyone who has ever gone before us has had the battle, the groaning, and the things that take place there. So it says, "The whole creation groans and labors together." That creation isn't about the world. It's about those whom God has called and what's taking place inside of them and the change that comes in no other way but through groaning and laboring in pain until we're born.

...together, it says, until now, in pain. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the spirit. So it's talking about us. ...even we ourselves groan within ourselves. Recognize it. Own it. You know, accept it. It's just what you're going to experience and then respond and live and exercise God's good toward others, God's love toward others. Ask for help to accomplish that, because that's how you win the battle. **Even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by/through hope, if you will. But hope that is seen is not hope.** For if a person sees, if it's already there, then what do we hope for? **But if we hope for that which we do not see then we with patience do wait for it.** It's that process whereby we grow, we mature. It's through that patient process of realizing this isn't meant to be easy. It's meant to be difficult. It's meant that we experience evil in the world around us.

Sometimes people can get to a point where they think, "Well, how bad is life!" Things seem to go so wrong. It's like being cursed almost and things can be so bad and so wrong sometimes it seems and we go through so much it seems we battle and things come our way and at us. Yeah, they're opportunities for growth, opportunities for change, opportunities for transformation, opportunities for choices. And the more you make the right choices, the more you mature, the more you grow in Godly character. That's the way God has given it. Sometimes we don't see it fully; we don't grasp it because we're in the moment, but in time we come to see it.

Verse 26—Likewise the spirit also helps our weaknesses. God helps us along the way but we have to cry out to Him and that's what we do in those times when it becomes so great, the stress is so great, the pressure is so great. We just cry out to God to deliver us because we can't deliver ourselves and we have to get back in focus and realize it's all for a purpose and it's about the choices and about the opportunity to live the good, to experience the good. So we want to grab a hold of that experience because the evil is not hard. It's always there. It's in the world and it is in us. So grab hold of the good; overcome the evil with the good, as we read earlier.

For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. In other words, there is that within us as God's spirit works in the mind that will help us get refocused and redirected. There is that anguish sometimes that's so deep inside of us, and that's good too, because there's that struggle that goes on as we grow. It's in the mind. It's in our being and that's why we have to keep being focused and keep holding on to that hope of what's in front of us.

Verse 27—And it that searches the hearts knows what *is* the mind of the spirit; God knows what's in the spirit in our mind, in our being, the spirit essence that He gave to us that's unique. Then with His holy spirit He helps us to deal with those things and to battle those things and to be able to be focused properly and to have proper vision. "And it that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit." God knows. **...because it makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*** That's how God's spirit works in us, makes intercession, reveals to us, helps us

to see the mind of God, to understand the mind of God, to grab hold of the hope that's in front of us.

Verse 28—And we know that all things work together for good—good—to those who love God, and to those who are called according to His purpose. That's where our hope and our strength is. Hold on to those things.

So yes, we go through a lot of hard things and we shouldn't be surprised living at the end of an age, knowing a spirit world is so stirred up. We have opportunity to grow more. That means you're going to go through more. That means it's going to be difficult out here. That means when you leave the Feast here and go back home it's going to be difficult this next year. It's not going to be easy, but understand what you're going through as you go through it. You know, Satan wants to distract us. He wants us to go off course. On the contrary, with God and holding on to this way of life and making the right choices, we're actually going to grow forward more if we will do those things and hold on to the good.

We have opportunity for incredible growth between now and the time of Christ's coming and we need to look upon those things that happen around us in that context, opportunities, something that Satan cannot grasp. Learning to rejoice more. Learning to look at those opportunities, not liking them as they're happening, no. I mean, who in their right mind likes to go through hard time and suffering? But understanding, having that knowing, "I have opportunity to grow." Hold on. Do the good. Respond in the right way. Keep fighting because that's what this is all about. We're almost through it to a new age. So, beautiful verses here.

Verse 29—For whom He did foreknow, He also did predetermine *to be conformed to the image of His Son.* That's what we have. That's what we have going on inside of us. We don't recognize that. It's such a slow thing that takes place in the mind, but that's what we're doing every time we choose what is right, every time we choose to obey God, every time we choose His way of life, every time we make the choice to fight against our own selfishness, our own human nature, our own evil pulls, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

...that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predetermine, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified. How greatly blessed are we to be a part of something so great? **And whom He justified, them He also glorified.** God's purpose to take us through the entire process, to be fully glorified, to be in His Family.

What shall we say of these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? That's an incredible thing to understand. **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered him up for us all,** you know, this experience of great evil upon Himself, **how shall He not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.** We just keep fighting and keep moving forward.

So incredible verses here as it just continues on in talking about some of these things and what God has placed before us, the opportunities of life we have. I think of some scriptures over here in 2 Corinthians. Let's just turn over there. It goes on to talk about in Romans about this battle and this relationship we have with God that is so powerful and so strong. I'll just read this verse right quick like here in **Romans 8:36—As it is written, for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.** That's how we need to see and view things. It says, rather, **in all these things we're more than conquerors through Him who loves us,** through God and Jesus Christ and God the Father living in us and we dwelling in them. **For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life...** How persuaded are we? What will cause us to become side-tracked or to let up or to faint, as it talks about, to give up?

It says, **For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,** in other words, nothing, **nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God,** from God's purpose in our lives, **which is in/through Christ Jesus our Lord.** So powerful verses here of what it's talking about.

I believe we'll stop there. There is so much more that could be said, that scripture after scripture, as I talked about even in 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians. 2nd Corinthians talks about some of these things and a process of life we go through. It's about this battle, ongoing battle and this experience of good and evil.

So what an awesome thing to have understanding of why God created the angelic realm as He did, and why He made us different, why we're made physical first, of a creation that's still ongoing of those that God has been working with over the past 6,000 years. So let's continue to rejoice at this Feast, thankful for the experience of good and evil, that we understand that we can enter into battle to live the good, to choose the good, and to own our choices in embracing God and God's way of life.