

There was a new series that we were going to begin with today, but as I was working on that it became clear that there is another sermon that needs to be given first, and that's this one here. It's a sermon that kind of bridges the gap between some very strong messages given at the Feast this year and that series that will follow next. I've never experienced a time like we've been through and what we've been going through leading up to the Feast, let alone during the entire Feast where the Church has been given the kind of strong admonition and correction that it has. I hope we understand that God does that in His mercy.

So in this interim between the series that's coming up and the Feast sermons that we had we're going to review some verses that most of you heard this past Sabbath. I say most of you heard this past Sabbath because it was given first in Europe on the weekly Sabbath, and I think it was just before the Feast, entitled *The 7th Day of the Feast*. But that wasn't played across the US and other places until this past Sabbath. This sermon today is entitled *God's Mercy*.

Now, after we review the scriptures from that particular sermon that I mentioned, *The 7th Day of the Feast* (we're going to go through some of those first), the next thing that God wants us to see and understand as we choose to move forward, for those who do choose to move forward, is what we'll cover after we get through these verses.

So first of all I want to go back and look at Proverbs 29:18. We're going to review that. Most of you here in the States, Canada, and so forth, heard that sermon this past Sabbath, and so we're going to spend a little bit of time, again, reviewing this admonition, this encouragement that God's given to us.

In **Proverbs 29:18** it says, **Where there is no vision the people perish**. As I did mention at the Feast or before the Feast and even during the Feast at times, there are things that Mr. Armstrong gave in the past that ring in my mind, and this is one of those. But this word "perish" (sometimes when you dig a little bit deeper, to me, it's amazing what God reveals), but it's also translated "are made naked." We do that to ourselves. If we lose focus, if we lose the vision that God is offering to us, gives to us, there are reasons for that. We become spiritually weaker and as we become spiritually weaker there are things we're doing to ourselves in our own life.

Because God offers us everything. He makes everything possible for us as far as His way of life. He wants to give us of His holy spirit. He desires with all of His being to give us of His spirit because that's the only means whereby we can grow and change and have vision, the kind of vision He wants us to have. So when there is no vision in one's life it's because of something they're doing that's wrong. They are restricting the flow of God's spirit. They're hurting themselves and because of that then they can't see as they should.

This thing about “being made naked” is a good translation because it does carry with it that meaning. It also carries with it other meaning, as we talked about in that particular sermon, “undoing, letting go, to let loose, to neglect.” So where there is no vision that’s what a person has done. They’re neglecting something in their life that they should be doing, repenting, whatever it might be, trying, looking at those things as we heard in the opening prayer that are a part of our life, the one, two, and three especially at the top of the list. We have others as well but there should be that thinking in our mind, what are the things that can trip us up the easiest as far as our nature is concerned, as far as our thinking is concerned and battles that we have had in the past. And then after that we have five, six, seven, or whatever it might be beyond that. But there have to be the ones that are the largest in our lives that need to be in the forefront of our mind.

So we let it go, we let God’s way of life go, we begin to let loose of it. You think, of all times a time to hold on to it, to grab on to it with all of our being, this is it. God has given us some guidance and direction, correction.

So in that sermon the question was asked: “So what is it that without vision one can lose, let go or neglect? This is basically answered in the last part of the verse: **but he/they who keep the law are blessed.**” As the word is “happy,” yes, “blessed.” It’s about being blessed in God’s way of life and it’s about keeping what God has given to us. So we’re not going to let go of something, we’re not going to be found naked or neglect those things that are so important in our life if indeed we’re keeping God’s way of life, if we’re keeping the law. As it was mentioned, things having to do with His law has to do with the truth that God gives to us. If we’re living the truth He’s given to us, living all that He’s revealed to us then there’s not a problem. We’re going to be blessed, we’re going to be able to see, and we’re going to be able to have the kind of vision that God wants us to have because that’s what stirs us up. The more we can see, the more we can look forward to what God offers us and the potential for being in His family and the fight that’s maybe in our hands right now of various things you have to deal with - so what? What God is offering us is so much greater but we have to be able to see that more clearly. We have to have a desire for that, a vision of that that is so strong in our minds that we’re as those people mentioned in Hebrews 11 and so forth where it talks about, “They looked for a City whose builder and maker was God.”

That was their desire. That was their vision. That’s what motivated them, and if that isn’t our greatest motivation then we’re missing something, we can let other things get in the way. As I talked about, the things that get in the way today in large part in people’s lives are some forms of drama. It’s just so rampant in this world today. It’s rampant on TV. It’s rampant in movies. It’s rampant in the news. I’m amazed how many times it pops up and how they themselves acknowledge there’s drama, drama, drama. It’s a killer spiritually if we’re not careful.

So the question, again, was asked: “So is anyone being sloppy, negligent in how they follow or choose to believe the instruction, the guidance, and direction God is giving now and that He has

given to us in the past?” Because as it was brought out in several sermons, this is happening way, way, way too much. Two more people in this past week now being suspended and one disfellowshipped, and there are more to come. For those who don’t respond, to those who don’t listen to God, those who aren’t making change in their life, this is it.

As I mentioned during the Feast, this is it, and God is bringing these things to the surface and they’re being dealt with. Either we’re really in the Body and we’re functioning within the Body as we should be or we’re not, and if we’re not there is no sense in playing games anymore. There is no sense in wandering around blind out in the courtyard, and maybe farther away than that. So we’re following through and doing what needs to be done to cleanse God’s Church.

Then we went on with verses that followed in that sermon. **Proverbs 1:22**. It says, **You simple ones, how long will you love being simple minded?** “Showing little judgment” is what it means. How long? Sometimes because of what some are doing they’re showing little judgment, little soundness of mind. We’ve been through so many sermons before the Feast as well talking about this matter of soundness of mind, how much we need it.

And the scorers, a word that means “to belittle, to dismiss, to make light of.” In other words, not necessarily thinking that way in the sense of understanding what they’re doing, but by their actions and by the neglect are scorers, because of how they’re treating what God is giving to them. So making light of it, that’s what this word means, making light of it, not seeing the importance that’s there, not treating it with the importance that we should, dismissing it. You know, “It doesn’t apply to me.”

I think of, sadly, even some elder’s reports that have come in. Most are taking things very seriously and applying it to themselves and recognizing the importance of applying the things that they’ve heard to themselves, as one individual told me when someone came up at the Feast, which I mentioned. The individual went to an elder and said during a particular sermon, “You were probably thinking about me during that sermon.” He said, “No, I was the only one in the room.” In other words, that’s all he saw, was what was being said to him. He took it personally. He wasn’t thinking about others.

Now, had some that was written as well that basically was a hope and a desire that others in the Church would begin seeing the things that they need to see to change and to grow but no real comment about self. See, that could be, potentially, a problem, because we see how this might apply to others, but we don’t see that it applies to us, every one of us. If we don’t take it personally in that regard and we’re thinking about others who need to make some certain changes in their life then we tend to make light of it because, “It doesn’t apply to me as much as it applies to some others in the Church.” That’s wrong thinking. That’s a wrong focus...wrong focus totally, and if you’re not careful it’ll trip you up quickly if it hasn’t already.

How long will scorers take pleasure in scorning, and fools, again, as I mentioned in that particular sermon, basically just a word that means to be stupid. Because we’re really stupid if

we neglect what God has placed before us, if we don't fight this fight after being ever how long you've been called and a part of God's Church and at a time of all time in all human history to not use what we've been given, to take it seriously. We would be most stupid to neglect what God has given to us. Yet there are people out there being, candidly, stupid. I mean, there really is no other word for it, just stupid, not very bright. I have a hard time understanding that and yet I don't.

...and fools/the stupid hate knowledge. Because there is knowledge that God gives to us that we're to apply to self. There is a sound that has been going out so powerfully before the Feast, a sound that God has been giving during the Feast, and it's up to us to hear it and to receive it.

Then He goes on to say, **verse 23—Turn at My reproof**, “My disapproval, My rejection,” because there are things that God won't accept. He just won't accept if someone is living in sin thinking that they can do various kinds of things, misuse, borrowing, stealing from God, as I've had quite a few more now acknowledge that's what they did, have done, because those things were brought out during the Feast and they're sobered by it. I let them know that there are those who weren't allowed to come to the Feast because of that very thing and that they better be very thankful that they're not being suspended for what they did. The reason they're not is because of what's in this sermon today. Okay?

It says, **Turn at My reproof and I will pour out My spirit unto you, and I will make known My words unto you.** That's all we have to do. It means just turn away from what we're doing that's wrong, turn to what God is instructing us in and the change that needs to take place in our life, repent, and God forgives us and we can go forward and continue to repent and we can continue to go forward and become stronger in spirit.

Verse 24—Because I have called out to you, and God has been calling out very powerfully so, and it says, **and you refused**, in other words, “Refused what I told you,” what God's told us. He says, **I have stretched out My hand...** That's what God's been doing. Mercifully so He's been stretching out His hand.

Everything about this sermon entitled *God's Mercy* is so meaningful because that's what this is about. **I have stretched out My hand and there was no attention given to it.** You think, how could that happen? All the things that have been said before the Feast, all the things said during the Feast and no great change in some people's lives, no real zealotness to change those things that they know must be changed, must be addressed, need to be addressed in their life? If they're ignored at this point in time it's over with, it's over with in this age for them. Many have been called, few have been chosen, and still going on.

Verse 25—You have set at naught all My counsel; basically, ignored it, haven't applied it to yourself. God gives us counsel. He tells us what we need to do to change in order to grow, what we need to focus upon, what it is we need at any moment in time in our lives, and says, **and you would none of My reproof**, “You would not receive My correction.” That's a horrible thing. And

that word “you have set at naught” is that word translated “perish” back up in verse 18 that we read earlier: “Where there is no vision the people perish.” They “set at naught,” they let it go. They become naked. They make themselves naked by what they’re doing. “You have set at naught all My counsel.” Incredible.

Verse 26—I also will laugh at your calamity, your distress; I will mock when your fear comes. When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. They shall they call upon Me and I will not answer. It comes to a certain point in time where God says, “No. Gave you every opportunity. Now we’ve gone too far.”

They will seek Me early, but they shall not find Me, because they hated knowledge. That’s basically what the truth is when it comes to a matter of someone continually over and over again not listening, not changing, not turning to God and not repenting. Then basically this is the answer, “You just hated knowledge. You hated what God was offering to you,” **and you did not choose the fear of the Eternal.** That’s a choice. Do we choose to fear what it means to be cut off from God’s spirit, to be apart, no longer a part of God’s Church? Is that a fearful thing, that we think that we have the potential as human beings of doing that? Because all do.

They would not receive My counsel. They despised all My correction. Therefore, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way... Just like certain things that sometimes happen in people’s live and even within the Church. A person can be forgiven of sin and go before God, but sometimes we have to pay a penalty. Sometimes people think that just because of repenting everything will be taken away and there is nothing to pay for it. That’s not always true. God lets us experience sometimes the harshness, the hardship of disobedience, and we have to struggle, we have to work harder to obey. Sometimes because of stealing from God a person isn’t going to all of a sudden begin to be blessed mightily at their work or whatever it might be. They may have to suffer for a time. They may be well forgiven indeed for stealing from God, but that penalty, meaning you’re still not going to be blessed by God for things of the future here and you’re going to have to work harder, you’re going to have to apply yourself more, you’re going to have to struggle harder because you disobeyed in something so basic. So you’re going to have to work harder at this if you really want it. Hope that makes sense.

Therefore, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, because they are filled/satisfied by their own counsel. We deceive ourselves, our minds. **For the turning away, or the turning back as it is, the faithlessness of the simple shall slay them.** So it ends in their own destruction. **...and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoever pays heed to Me shall dwell safely.** God promises that. He says if we listen, if we do what we need to do, we respond and turn to Him like we should, **shall dwell safely and shall be at peace from fear of evil.** Peace. Awesome! Something you can have in your life that you can’t have any other way. There is that which comes from God that is a matter of obedience, a matter of His intervention, His help in our life, His forgiveness of sin in our life.

Well, we've reviewed these verses because God is making it clear to all that if people who have been letting down, letting go, and neglecting His way of life, if you will turn more fully toward God and if some others will return to God then He is ready to show quick mercy.

That's an awesome thing. It's an awesome thing to receive mercy, and especially at a time when we've continually neglected for months and maybe even years, because some have for years been neglecting what they should be doing, not applying themselves as they should be. You know, basically just sinning for a long time, not putting God first in things in their life, not being motivated in that direction. Other things have been first in their life. God is saying now if we'll receive what He has given to us before the Feast, and during the Feast especially, He wants to show quick mercy.

Because, you see, God's a merciful God and we're at a timeframe where He's letting us know this is it. If we'll respond to that message He's quick to show mercy then, let us move forward because there are just too many people out here not doing what they should be doing!

There are too many people neglecting fellowship with God's people when they could be having fellowship with God's people; too many people doing that in the Church. Okay? It's easier to stay at home and watch it or whatever on TV or listen to it. Now, if you're not able to that's one thing, but if you have the ability to, shame on you. Because this is where, here and other areas where people are today, wherever your congregation or group of people is that meet together, there is a fellowship there, as was mentioned during the Feast, that you're able to have with God, because these are God's people and God's spirit is in them and we're lifted up by that and we're strengthened by that. We're not strengthened by that by being on our own unless you can't help it.

We have people out here who can't be with others. They're hundreds of miles away from other people and their health isn't what they would like to have because they've gotten older. We've got a lot of older people out here and they're confined. They would love to be in together in some areas but they can't be because of those constraints, finances, health, older age, and so forth, distance to services. That's just one example; it's one small example. I could go through a whole list of a whole bunch more. I think I did, probably, add enough at the Feast.

So some who had been suspended before the Feast and told that they'd not be allowed to return in another month or so have been given mercy and brought back already. Some at the Feast and afterward who have come up, come forward and acknowledged their wrong ways have also been given great mercy and not suspended as they normally would have been. Okay? To me, that's a fearful thing, to be cut off. Because that's what that is. It's being cut off from God's people. Being cut off from God is already there, sometimes we just don't understand what we've done to ourselves. That's a formality of something to help a person be sobered into reality. You're cut off from His people too and this is where fellowship is in a very powerful way. If you're cut off from His people sometimes that helps to drive the point home you're really cut off from God, very powerfully so, see?

So some have been given a lot of mercy in different areas, whether it be stealing from God, misusing things that we shouldn't be doing, sexual things that some have acknowledged that they shouldn't be doing. It's time to be sobered and not let our base human nature that we have just run rampant and control us. Do we let our nature control us or are we striving to control it? Because if we're letting it control us we're just choosing to be in Egypt, we're just choosing to be in slavery and cut off from God. What a horrible choice!

Hebrews 12:1—Therefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses... So this is referring to what was just covered in chapter 11, this cloud of witnesses, this history of those who have gone before and of what they have done and the example they have set and the encouragement that that can give to God's people, and to understand so often when you go back and look at some of them and we think our trials are maybe big or great, and to realize we are exceedingly blessed above and beyond the times they lived in and some of the things they had to go through. You can't make comparisons to it. In so many ways you really can't.

I want to go back and read about some of those (we know a lot of those), but I want to go through that rapidly. **Hebrews 11:32**, just backing up a ways. We went through talking about different ones, what Paul did, and things that they did in their lives, and then he said, **What more can I say? He says, For there wouldn't be enough time for me to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae; and also about David and Samuel and of the prophets. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness...**

How do you work righteousness? You live by the truth that God gives to you. You believe what God gives to you and you choose to live a certain way of life because you believe, you've been given the ability to believe Him, and so you choose to live by that and God attributes that to you for righteousness because there is not a one of us who's righteous. None of them were righteous! Not a one of them! There's only been one that lived life on this earth in human life who lived righteously and that was Joshua our Christ. No other human being has ever been righteous, okay? We should understand that, but there is that which we can work, perform, do because of what we're able to believe, because God has opened our mind to see and to be able to believe the truth. Then we make choices as to whether we're going to live by that, live by faith, that confidence, that thankfulness, that gratefulness that we have to live by what He's given us to believe is awesome.

If we neglect such a thing what a horrible thing! Yet the vast numbers of those called since the time of Christ have rejected him. Those who have been in God's Church, the vast majority of them rejected him, rejected God. They wanted something that's here and now more. They put a level of importance upon that greater than what God is offering, the vast majority of them. That's a sobering thing to understand, what we're capable of as human beings. It really is. Mindboggling!

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong... “Out of weakness were made strong.” That’s an awesome thing to understand, how God’s spirit can work with us, how God can intervene in our life as He did in all these people’s lives because of what they believed, because of what they held on to, and because of what they chose to live by even if it meant their death.

I think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The answer was, “Even if God doesn’t choose to intervene we’re not going to bow down to that. We’re not going to bow down to you. We’re not going to do it so do what you must do.” God chose to intervene for them. What an awesome thing! What an awesome attitude. What an awesome way to think because it’s the right way to think.

...out of weakness were made strong. Sometimes we have to be brought to a point of humility in our lives and a time of weakness where we can be made stronger in that sense of really starting to focus more on God, being able to see things that perhaps we couldn’t otherwise see. When you go through various trials, whatever hardship and trial you’ve ever gone through, those are the times so often where God can work with you the most. Truly. Because there is a spirit that can oftentimes be there of humility, of a knowing that we’re weak and we need intervention, we need help, and a desire to look more fully to God.

...waxed valiant in fight, turned the flight of armies, the armies of foreigners. All these things that were done over and over again, examples in the Bible of God’s intervention when people believed God and went forward. I think of the 300 that ran down the hill, Gideon, and masses of armies out in front of them. The campfire at night time; it’d scare the “you know what” out of you to look out over that. To know that there are only 300 of you up on a hill and you’re going to go running down the hill and break the vessel, holding the torch or the light you have, and then all of a sudden when you do that you’re going to blow the horn and scream and holler and whatever else, and you’re going to do that? You think, you know, looking at a human you can recognize, “This is probably my Waterloo.” Of course, they didn’t have a Waterloo by that time, but anyway. That’s an awesome thing to have done, but they did it and God gave them incredible victory because they believed God and they just did it. That’s all we have to do if we’ll make the right choices.

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance. Can you imagine being tortured and you’re going to go ahead and continue to do what is right no matter what? **...that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of mocking and scourging, yes, and more, being bound and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two...** Can you imagine? That stupid little act they do, you know, magicians, you know, “cutting someone in half.” Mind boggling! So where do you think that idea came from? Perverted minds of when things like that were really done.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, tested and slain with the sword. So what kind of drama do you have in your life? What real hardship? What real trial do you have in your life? What is really real in a real trial in your life and not what we make up sometimes? What's real to be confronted, to be dealt with? See? How can we compare some of those things to things like this? It puts things in a proper perspective.

Candidly, I have often and have done so often, thought about Paul. I truly do. I think of the things he went through because of all that he suffered. He never once said, "God? Why? Here you told me to go to the gentiles. I'm doing it. What am I doing wrong?" He didn't do that. He didn't think that way. As far as we know, it didn't cross his mind. Maybe it did at some time, we don't know, but he went through it. I can't imagine being stoned, drug out of a city because they thought you were dead and put you in a pile. That had to hurt in ways that we can't begin to imagine. It'd take a while to heal from that, being hit with a lot of stones on your head and throughout your body. You think you've had it really bad with a trial you're going through?

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, tested, and slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins... How tough do you have it? What kind of clothing do you have? Are you able to drive a car? You live under a roof that's patched, you don't have to worry. Do you have heat in the winter time? Maybe even cool in the summer time? We've got it tough don't we? We've really got it hard compared to people like this and what they went through. You think, well, now, if they're God's people and they're living right then why didn't they have more than this? There are answers for that. What are they? What did they live through? What were they experiencing? Why did they have to do this? In other things there were people that were being pursued for their very lives. They hid in caves, they tried to hide away in different places because people were out to kill them, you know, take their lives. They couldn't just go out and be able to have gainful employment anywhere. Incredible.

...being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. So sometimes when I hear little boo-hoo stories I don't boo-hoo. I really don't. I wish I had that little llama out here to show you all, I really do. You squeeze a little thing and something comes out the back end, a lot of brown. That's what it is. That's what it is with drama. That's what it is, a bunch of that. It doesn't mean a thing.

We let things get worked up in our lives. Sometimes we like the attention. That's distorted. Sometimes human beings want that attention and so the drama is built up so we can receive attention. I think life is hard enough without creating drama, without wanting it. But that's the world we live in because of TV, as a whole, and because of the kind of media we have out here and all the things that bombard us in this world. People live in drama. You think, why? Aren't the trials of life hard enough without creating more, without allowing ourselves to be stressed?

It's your focus. It's your vision. What is our vision? What is our focus? Is it on building up things and magnifying them sometimes, little things that happen around us and making them big? Why? Why do that. Why weight ourselves down with that? I don't like to hear it. I don't have a lot of compassion for anyone with drama. I really don't. Not anymore. We do it to ourselves. You think, **God's Mercy**

why do we do that? It's perverted. It's distorted. Sick, sick, sick world we live in. We build things up and make them bigger than what they are. You don't have to. You have a lot more peace, a lot more enjoyment of life, a lot more happiness in life, joy in life.

And so all these, having obtained a good report through faith, had not received the promises. It went on to say that, too, I even mentioned it: "They wandered in deserts and in mountains and dens and caves of the earth," yes.

Verse 40—God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. God has a plan. There are certain ones that He's been working with for the past 6,000 years and now others that He's starting to work with to go into a new age, that they'll be the first to live into that new age. This is a very unique time, incredible time we live in.

Hebrews 12:1 again—Therefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... What do we allow to weigh us down? What is it? Like Johnny uses that expression every once in a while talking about the bag full of rocks we pull behind us. That's our choice. We don't have to carry, we don't have to pull a bunch of rocks, but we do because that's kind of our nature. We don't get rid of everything immediately. It takes time. Then sometimes we are actually stupid enough to stop along the road and pick up some more rocks. That's called drama. "I don't have enough rocks. I need some more rocks in my life." You think, "There's a pretty rock!" and you go pick it up and you put it in a bag. A little more drama, you know. It's a perverted excitement in life.

We're entertained by it in the world sometimes on TV. People enjoy watching it sometimes. I think, "How insane!" I'm going to be glad when so much of this is gone because it really robs us of tranquility, of peace, of happiness, of joy. It really does. We rob ourselves. We hurt ourselves.

Let us lay aside every weight. That's not a suggestion. Whatever is weighting us down, whatever is taking away from our life, fullness and joy and peace that God desires us to have, that's in our court. That's our own fault, our own stupidity.

...and the sin which does so easily entangle us. So we need to understand those one, twos and threes, whatever they are, the sin that we recognize is at the top of the list, because those are the ones that are our greatest battles and we need to have them in the forefront of our mind so that we can be on guard, and pray about them on a regular basis throughout the week, for help to stay on guard because you know where your greatest weaknesses are.

...and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. We have to choose to run. It's not backsliding. It's not going back and doing something and relaxing and taking it easy for a while. You can't do that! You've got to run. It's up to us to run, to put one foot in front of the other. We see a marker up ahead of us.

I think that's such an excellent example, of someone who's running, especially a longer race because if it's only a quarter of a mile you can see the end of it. If it's a half a mile you can see

the end on a track. If it's a mile you know you've got to do it a few times in order to fulfill it but you know it's there. A longer race, especially if it's like a cross-country type of thing or in an area you're not familiar with as much, you automatically in your own mind as you're running you'll start setting markers, and you realize the importance of that; you've got to make it to that part there. You don't think about the finish fully. You want to do it, you want to accomplish it, but you have to set markers along the way and you have to get to that point and then see another one at the bend of the road down there, or whatever it might be, and focus on running to that. That's the way a race is.

God gives us those things in life. He gives us markers along the way. We've gone through some of those things. If it weren't for that we might have a YouTube and just a few people scattered throughout the states, around the world watching it and no large congregations at all, if you want to call this large. For us this is large, okay, because of what we're going through, because of what God is doing in our lives.

So I'm thankful that God sets markers out there, gives us moments of time to keep focused upon. Just like we have now. "I just hope that's the one; hope that's the final marker, God."

Then I become concerned because I think of the scripture that talks about dunging and working around a plant, a vine, whatever it might be, a fruit tree, whatever it might be, and working up the ground around it and watering it and fertilizing it (that's what it means), and seeing what will happen in that following year. I hope that time isn't before us where we have one more because of that and this is the time of the digging up around the plant and the trimming of it, the pruning of it and the fertilizing of it, and the watering of it to see if it'll produce fruit, of so much which is really not producing fruit right now.

Sadly, it sounds a lot like that. I just hope it's not. I just hope it's for those who have an ability and opportunity to go on into a new age that God is offering us. But I also understand very powerfully so that God can change a thing about the Day of the Lord as well and it can be another year. I really don't want that. Okay? I sure don't want anything beyond that, but whatever God sets before us so be it.

You look at this world and you think, wow, things are really happening fast out there, but they can't happen too fast because of us.

Verse 2—Let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Joshua the author, the word meaning "the beginner," and finisher of our faith. It begins with him being our Passover. The process begins there. We're called, we have the ability to be forgiven of sin, and we go through this process of transformation until the time, finally, we can become a part of God's Kingdom. He sees us through it as our High Priest; and all the things we go through, our Passover and our High Priest.

...who for the joy that was set before him endured being nailed to a pole. The word “despising,” it’s not the word “despising” at all. It’s a word that means “thinking little of” **the shame**. In other words, he didn’t care about how people thought about him. Because it was a shameful thing to be nailed to a pole, and here he’s beside two criminals and he’s equated as being just like them; he deserved what he got. That’s what they wanted to be able to say. He deserved what he got. It didn’t bother him one iota because he knew of what he had to fulfill, that he’d have to shed his blood. It’d have to be spilled to the earth and then die to be our Passover.

Sometimes because people are associated, sometimes in the Church because of things that happen with neighbors, mates, relatives, children, parents, and on and on it goes, sometimes people are ashamed of what they’re living. They’re ashamed of having to talk to them about the Feast of Tabernacles and why they’re leaving, ashamed about having to discuss things of tithing when in reality it should be, “This is my money and it’s going to have a 10% tithe on it. And another 10% is going to be saved for me because I’m going to the Feast. I hope you can live with that because that’s the way it’s going to be. If you don’t like it, I’ve got to do what God tells me and I’m doing it.” Because sometimes people have made choices in that in families and in marriages and they’ve given in because of shame, being ashamed of what God gave them to do. Giving into it is being ashamed, and considering then something else more important, what someone else thinks. On and on it goes. We shouldn’t be ashamed of this way of life, ashamed that when it comes to the point of something being brought out that we’re not willing to stand up and say, “No, this is what I believe and I’m doing it.”

...thinking little of the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. We don’t really grasp what he went through. We really don’t grasp what it was like to live what he lived through. Not fully. It depends on what you’ve been through.

Verse 4—You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin. So, how much are we fighting? How much of a battle are we putting up? So, I love verses like this: **You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, do not despise,** the word means “to regard lightly” or “to be casual about” **the chastening of the Lord.** We can’t be casual about it. So the things leading up to the Feast and throughout the Feast, some are taking it casually. It doesn’t apply to them; they see how it might apply to some others. They’re not regarding it with the intensity and the importance that’s there.

Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint, grow weary, in other words, or **give up when you are reproved (scolded, corrected) of Him.** God does it because He loves us. That’s what this goes on to talk about, about God’s love and the kind of mercy He offers to us and wants to give to us. It’s God’s great desire to give us mercy. It’s God’s great desire to pour out His spirit

upon us. That's what He wants to do. But we have to make choices along the way to be the recipients of that, to be the recipients of His mercy as well.

Verse 6—For whom the Lord loves He chastens. We can't grow without that, if we are not chastened, if we don't grasp what our nature is like and from time to time and maybe even at certain times far more so, like what we've been going through, are reminded about what our minds are like, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." There is a gravitation to fight against what is right and good, to go a different direction. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life" that pulls at us constantly because that's what we are. We're selfish individuals and so time to time God helps us to see that even more clearly, reveals something in our life so we can see it and say, "You know, that's just downright ugly and I don't want to be like that. I don't want that to be a part of my life." You cry out to God for help and He'll give you help.

For whom the Lord loves He chastens (disciplines, corrects), and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father does not chasten? What is a child like if they grow up in life and a parent doesn't correct them? Look out! It's going to be horrible, it really is. We have to have that as human beings. Children have to have it to learn, to learn to fear to do wrong, to whatever it might be that they need to learn. If that isn't there you know what happens? People become spoiled, exceedingly spoiled, more selfish. The selfishness becomes so far more rampant.

I remember one time my wife and I being at a hotel in Jerusalem around Passover season and the kids and the people were coming in for Seder, for Passover, and the hotel was going all out for it, so much so that gentiles had nothing to eat. Basically, we were gentiles. The Harrell's and us, we were there together. We had matzos. We could get matzos but everything else was this thing that they went through for the Seder and being prepared for that. There were several days like that. It went almost the whole time we were there. I was about matzoed to death, but thankful for them because without them we'd really been in bad shape. But we saw children; they were so misbehaved they were horrible! Young children running all over the place unsupervised, wild, and really kind of nasty at times as well, and quite nasty, and the selfishness just reeked. Come to find out, one person acknowledged that was there, that because of what happened during the Holocaust they don't tell their children "no" anymore. It's everything is "Yes, that's okay." Just let loose on your own, basically, and you'll learn as you grow up, I guess, I don't know. Sick.

It was bad. So if we can understand that on a physical plane that is what is being shown here from a merciful God, a loving God who is so far above and beyond a human parent. That's what it's talking about here.

God deals with us as with sons, sons and daughters. It's using the word here. **For what son is he whom the father does not chasten? For if you are without chastisement, whereof we are all partakers, then you are illegitimate, and not sons, not children.** We're children of God and there is that which we've been given to partake of. But we have to change. We have to have God's Mercy

discipline in our lives. We have to learn control in our lives. We have to learn a lot of things in our life, to change things in our life that are not right. God reveals those things to us mercifully so, patiently so.

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us and we gave them respect.

There's even almost a yearning and a desire that children have. Sometimes it's difficult in relationships because there is that which we desire as we grow up, as we are children, and even into adulthood, and this desire of something that they were never able to give in life, and yet there is that respect that is shown to those no matter who they were, as a whole

...shouldn't you much more be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? So if we can understand something on a physical plane that's done so imperfectly—because that's what it is—because especially if a person doesn't understand the truth, and even some who did have knowledge of certain truth did a very poor job. The Church is littered with that, has that history of things that have happened that have been wrong because people didn't love their children, didn't guide and direct their children as they should have, didn't work with them as they should have. It's like they're going to learn it by osmosis - tithing, holy day offerings, obedience to God: "No you don't go out and play sports on Friday night." A lot of people gave in to that and let their children be involved in things. What does that teach? Well, it teaches you're going to be gone as soon as you can be and you can do whatever you want to do and on and on it goes. So sometimes parents had to make tough decisions at time, work with their children, teach them about God.

I still find it, at this point in time, that's why I've talked about children need to know some basic things about God, about God's law, 10 Commandments. That's a simple thing to teach a child to read them stories when they're young, Bible stories to help these things get implanted in the mind. Yet we've had a history of that which people haven't done so they've been negligent in teaching about God. You think, well, as they grow up they can listen to sermons. No, they can't. They have a hard time just sitting there listening, period. They learn through that process, but you've got to work with them along the way to understand that there is value.

Verse 10—For they indeed for a brief time chastened us as seemed best to them. Whatever knowledge they had or didn't have is immaterial. As a whole that's what parents do just naturally so, physically so, of what seems best to them because we all think we know what's best anyway, don't we? So a parent does. They may not know diddly squat. You know, there's no handbook, there are no classes given, there is no guidance given even as a child is growing up because the parents before it's kind of experimental. That's kind of how we learn, what works and what doesn't work and children are different, and what works for one family may not work for a different. It's something you learn along the way. It's sad it's that way, but that's the way it is.

People can learn through that process in life, in human life, doing what seems best to them. Sometimes just to give them relief, you know, and doing it for the wrong reasons perhaps because they get built up with anger and then they strike out at their own children because they've had enough and don't nurture them along the way in some of that that's taken place.

The point is that human beings do it so imperfectly...so imperfectly. Even within the Church it's not perfect. We can always learn to do better.

For they indeed for a brief time chastened us as seemed best to them; but He for our profit. God's always desirous of whatever He does with us in our life that it's for our benefit, for our profit, for our ability to grow, **that we might be partakers of His holiness.** Everything by God's design is to help us to be transformed, to be changed, to grow spiritually.

Now no chastening for the moment is considered to be enjoyable, but painful. It is. I think of some of the chastening I got when I was little and things that I deserved; a lot of things I got by with too, though. But anyway, when I finally did get it at times I got it fairly well and it can be painful.

That's what the point is here. So it is with us as well in our spiritual lives. It isn't always a pleasurable thing to come to see ourselves, to see what we're doing wrong, to see how stupid we've been or foolish we've been or negligent we've been and God shows us something in ourselves that needs to be changed. When we finally really are able to see and realize what we've been doing and what we've done wrong, the ugliness of it, it should be painful in the mind to help promote change, because if it's not, something is wrong.

Nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness... You know, if we respond to the kind of correction God gives He does it for our good so we can grow spiritually and become a part of His family. He knows how to mold and fashion and transform us and work with us so we can be blessed, so He can pour more mercy out upon us, so He can give us more of His holy spirit. That's His desire and that's how He works with us, to move us in that direction. Whatever it takes, whatever we have to go through so be it. That's what we should want.

It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. So living right produces peace, it really does. There is something of the mind and something of life which is the opposite of drama. You know, if there is drama there is no peace. It's the exact opposite.

It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised, or "trained" as the word is, by it. Therefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. So if a person can come to that point at different times in their life, of receiving correction from God, and a person is able to see how ugly sin is, how bad sin is, how much it hurts self and others, then there should be that spirit of humility that is associated with that. Basically God is saying, "Don't beat yourself up with it. Move on!"

Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. We have to go through that at a time of correction, if we really receive it. If we don't receive it then we don't have that response to God, but if we receive it and we are humbled and we are able to want and desire and cry out to God for help to change and thankful for the correction we've received, He says, **and make straight paths for your feet.** So don't mope around about the past. Don't worry about the sin

that's there, that was committed. God forgives if we truly, genuinely repent. But repentance means to change as well, to think differently.

If we're asking God to help us to think differently, what do you pray for? I want to pray to God to help me to become more deeply convicted of the right so that I'll hate the wrong. You've really got to want to hate what is wrong and to become more deeply convicted in it, which means to be of the same mind of God, in agreement with God of what is right. That's what you want in your life. You pray for those things. You ask for those things. That's a part of making straight paths for your feet.

...lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. That's what this phrase really is and saying.

"Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." God doesn't accept that which is lame in a sacrifice. It has to be healthy. Animals, you couldn't take something that was lame, in that respect, to offer up before God. "Because that's the worst one in the flock, so I'll give that to God. I'll give the sickest looking one out here that looks so lame, whatever, and bad compared to the other nine. So, there are nine here and this is what I'm going to give to God, this tenth one," even in tithe. But even if it's a special offering given to God you don't go and pick out the worst whatever it might be animal that you have. Somehow God's going to be pleased with that when you conscientiously work to give the worst to God? Sometimes we do that spiritually if we're not careful.

"...lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." So if we do that then we can be turned out of the way because God's not going to accept it. God's not going to accept us doing certain things and sins in our life and tolerating them and thinking, "Well, it's not that big and God understands I'm weak. He'll help me, He'll bless me to get things back on track," and whatever it might be.

"...but let it rather be healed." So whatever we're doing wrong God's desire, our desire should be to be healed, to be healed in the mind, a healing of the mind that needs to take place.

Let's turn over to Hebrews 4.

As was stated earlier, God is making it clear to all that if people who have been letting down, letting go, and neglecting His way in life, way of life, if you will turn more fully toward God, and if some others will return to God, he'll have mercy. There is that need. Those who are in the temple, just because you're in the temple doesn't mean you don't need to turn more fully to God, that you don't have things in your life that need to be addressed and corrected and gotten on a better path. We all do. We all do, every one of us. There are things in every person's life listening today, or whenever they hear this, of things that need to be changed, of things that need to be fought and conquered, and so you ask God for help to see those things. We don't look at others and think, "I'm doing pretty good and I just hope that they," or whoever, "will respond

and get their life right.” No, you need to get your life right, to turn more fully to God, to receive what God is giving.

If you will turn more fully to God, even those of you, in that respect, who are in the temple. But also as I’ve said here, if some others will return to God, those who are out in the courtyard, they haven’t really turned to God yet. They’re still messing around out there. What happened this week is not over with by a long shot. I know that. Okay? There are some who are so asleep only God can wake them up, and candidly, if they can’t hear what’s been given to them at this point in time it’s the Great White Throne. That’s as simple as it gets. That’s just the reality.

So, if you will return more fully to God, and if some others will return to God then He is ready to show quick mercy. I’d be praying like mad if I thought that I had any thought of being out in the courtyard. If you can look at certain markers in your life, at certain things that are taking place in your life, of certain things that you know full well are not right, of things that have been stated here, whether they be of a sexual nature, whether they be of a tithing nature, whatever it might be out here that seem to cause people to mess up, or if it be of attitude toward others and not being at peace with others, jealous of others, envious of others, whatever it is, to be crying out to God, “Help me see more clearly the things that need to be changed!” For some to just flat out say, “Am I in the courtyard? I kind of feel like I might be. If I am, please help me to see why. What is it? And if I’ve been drifting off to sleep please shake ‘the you know what’ out of me so that I’m awake.” Because only God can do that. If a person falls asleep only God can wake them up and let them know. Let Him know you want mercy, you want to receive what He’s offering; you don’t want to be negligent about it, you do want to pursue His way of life in gratitude and thankfulness.

A lot of things to pray about, but it has got to be genuine because we really want it; we really want to see the things that we’re blind to, that we can’t see. Sometimes people do things for so long they just can’t see it anymore. If you let down you’ve let up, you’re coasting. That should be enough. If a person feels like they’re maybe coasting, why? That’s not God’s way. You’ve got to run. You’ve got to fight for this way of life.

Again, God is ready to show quick mercy. What an awesome thing. Time is short because we don’t have a lot of time. Time is up. He wants to give mercy. If we’ll place our self before the throne of God, the mercy seat of God, and truly cry out to Him with a genuine spirit He’ll forgive us, He’ll help us, He’ll work with us, He’ll show us more, He’ll show us mercy and help us to get on a right track.

Hebrews 4:10—For he who has entered into His rest, we went through some of this at the Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, has also ceased from his own works, as God did from His. So again, that analogy there and we have to rest from doing our own way, our own thing, and do what God has placed before us. It’s work.

Obedience to God takes action; it takes work, it takes forethought, it takes planning. Being together with God's people on the Sabbath takes forethought, planning, dedication (where we can). Tithing takes forethought. Setting aside offerings takes forethought, planning.

I thought I'd maybe interject here and back up a little bit, but some things about second tithe. Different questions have come out about second tithe and the use of it. We really haven't focused upon that as much sometimes, and maybe this would be a good place to bring up some of the questions that have been asked recently.

Some have been asking about saving second tithe. You save second tithe for next year's Feast. Whether there is no dollar or no euro, nor whatever at that time, you still faithfully save aside what you're supposed to save aside no matter when things happen. At some point it's going to be basically gone, but you're doing the right thing because God says to do it. So you do it until you can't do it. That's the answer. You continue to save it aside, faithfully so, and if there is another Feast, which we're planning for right now, we're thinking about different places. I don't like it, but if I don't do it and we go on we'd be in a real pickle. So you plan ahead.

You've got to plan ahead in your life. Not like some did for 2012 where people were ready to quit jobs and everything else. Well, we learned a lesson from that. If there are some reasons, whatever they might be, and we don't know what they are, and something can go beyond that, so be it. God knows what He's doing and He'll let us know at some point what we need to see.

So, anyway, you keep doing it. Some questions have come up, can it be used for different things like coming into Phoenix or to Cincinnati. No, it's not a holy day. Now, there has been a time, one time in the past where some were being allowed to do that because of the focus we had, because of what was believed as strongly as it was at that point. But not now. You keep it for the holy days, holy days only.

Some have asked about excess they've had after the Feast. You can save it for the next year. If you know you're going to do something different, maybe go somewhere else if we go on, and you want to go to another place that's going to take more money or maybe your finances have been cut back for whatever reason and you're on the edge as it was for going to the Feast this past year, and yet you still had a little bit left, you can save that aside for next year. Now, if you're doing exceedingly well and you know you have far more than what you need then yes, sometimes, you know, a person turns that in, excess second tithe, which is used in the following year, can be used to help others attend a Feast or for whatever purpose deemed necessary by God's Church.

So, again here, trying to answer different things about tithing that have come up, that I wanted to interject in the midst of this sermon because some haven't known or understood.

I do want to make a comment that it's not a time of passing gifts around, of thinking you've got to give gifts to different ones or everybody in an area. This isn't Christmas. People shouldn't feel obligated to have to give a gift to one another. You know, if you want to give a gift to some, to a

few or whatever, that's fine, you know, something that is special that you know would help them or be encouraging to them, that's fine. But sometimes we get in certain places, certain areas where people have this feeling that they've got to do it year after year. No, you don't. Again, it's not making up for Christmas. It's not feeling like you've got to pass out gifts to everybody, or whatever, or people get expecting of gifts or whatever. So please don't do that.

Some have asked about clothing. Can you use second tithe for clothing? Well, it's fine to, if you want to upgrade something, like for the Feast of Tabernacles, but not your whole wardrobe, not for something for the entire year, you know. Buying this or that, a pair of shoes, whatever, in the past I'd have said a suit, but I'm not worried about that any more, a special tie... well, we're not doing that necessarily. If you want to upgrade something, fine, if you have ability to do that. But again, you don't go on a great big shopping spree just because it's that time of year and it's not even going to hardly be used at the Feast. It's about the Feast of Tabernacles. So that's what you've got to keep in mind.

Sometimes it comes down to a vehicle. Can I use certain monies for this? Well, we try and let people know that if you go to some site, you've had to fly there, you rent a vehicle, you have to pay money for that. It's fine to prepare your own automobile if you're going to drive a long distance, if you need some tires because you're not wanting to go that far. There's nothing wrong with that if you have the ability to do that, to get a tune up or whatever it might be if it's needful. Does that make sense? Certain things you can do just as much as you would do if you flew to an area and rented a vehicle. So doing some things like that are fine.

There is balance in that. It doesn't mean you go out and have your car freshly painted at the body shop, you know, and a brand new engine put in it and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Now, a certain percentage of that would be fine for going to the Feast and whatever, but we should have balance. Soundness of mind.

If you have questions, ask. The basic thing is it's primarily whatever is to be used at the Feast, for whatever is your use at the Feast. Primarily foods, primarily transportation, some clothing perhaps, whatever it might be that makes the Feast a little more special, some gifts, perhaps, to certain ones, whatever reason, but not a large group of people, you know, and feeling like you have to. Anyway, having said that about second tithe, let's move on.

For he who has entered into His rest (Hebrews 4:10)...

The reason I mention this, went through some of this, is because I think at the Feast of Tabernacles, because what we experience in the Feast of Tabernacles is a type of God's rest. It's a taste of God's rest and what we look forward to of being in God's Kingdom, in God's family. Again here, it's this journey we're on and there are those things we should receive in our life as far as peace, as far as a rest of life, that we're able to rest in God's way of life and be content and be fulfilled in it along the way. Sometimes people aren't.

It goes on to say, **Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest**, It takes work, as we've been talking about, to live this way of life. It takes forethought, effort, and work to obey God. It doesn't just happen. To fight against your nature takes forethought, prayer, and fighting. It doesn't just happen.

So it goes on to say, **lest any of you fall after the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division/the dividing of basically of one's physical existence of life.** It cuts through. You know, God's word is powerful. If we look to that it's like being able to see things that you can't see, of being able to see the deception of our own heart that we can't see without God's spirit. God's word sometimes brings those things to life so that we can see through and begin to grasp, "I need help," or be suspicious of the fact, "The heart is deceitful above all things." "Where is mine deceitful? Where am I being deceitful in my life?" Because you are.

Every person has some form of deceit in their thinking that they don't yet recognize, some prejudice, whatever it might be. Whatever it might be of certain desires we have or certain things that we tolerate or put up with or allow, that we're allowing ourselves to deceive ourselves in thinking it's okay, whatever it is the human mind goes through sometimes. It's good to cry out to God for help to see.

...dividing, again, of life and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner... God is! God's spirit is. God's word is. That's how we're able to learn, to discern, to judge things in a right way, **the thoughts and the intents of the heart.** To be able to see through deception, because you can't without God's help. You really can't get to the heart and core of things that motivate this life in the mind, of things where we deceive ourselves without God's help. He has to reveal them to us.

Verse 13—Neither is there anything in creation that is not manifest in His sight, in God's sight, and through the power of His holy spirit working in the mind to be able to reveal. It goes on to say, **but all things are naked,** in other words, they're not covered, they're clearly seen by God through His power, **and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.** There is nothing hidden from God. That's an awesome thing. He can help us to see things about ourselves that we can't see. That's a blessing! It really is a blessing to be able to see things God's way, not our way, to be able to see through deception and prejudice, and on and on it goes.

Verse 14—Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Joshua the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. It's about our calling. Hold on to it.

I give this and I think it's not over with. We're down to a time where more are going to be separated from the Body. It's going to happen. I think, "Why does that have to be that way?" Of all time in human history, at a time to shake the tar out of us to realize the seriousness of a time that's fast approaching us.

Verse 15—For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities... I'm going to go back to this thing of being together with God's people. You know, I just thought of some different areas and different people who just aren't even struggling or working to be together with God's people anymore. It's become the norm for them to be someplace else so often more times in a month than not. You're in the dark. You're walking around in the courtyard. Just make it real clear; just tell it exactly as it is. You may not believe that or accept that, but that's what you're doing.

So I think of some different people out here in some different areas that fit in that category right now. If you don't change that you're gone. You're gone! But God will give you mercy if you'll change that, if you'll repent of that. You can't stay behind because of a mate. You can't stay behind because of a job. You can't stay behind because of animals. Whatever it might be in life sometimes that keeps people from doing what they should, things that are excuses for not doing what they should do. Amazing! Amazing to me. Who else could we be with? Who else could we be around that would be more important to God on His Sabbath than His own people. Blows my mind!

For we do not have a High Priest (verse 15), who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tested like we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly... That's a beautiful thing. It's about a liberty and a boldness with that liberty, if you will, of freedom that God has given to us to come before His throne. No one else on earth has that. We do. We're guaranteed of it. It's absolute He will hear us because of the impregnation of His spirit in our mind. We're His begotten sons and daughters, His children. Any time we want to pray we're able to go before His throne.

It says, **Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace...** We have to see it as that. It's a throne of mercy, the mercy seat, if there is sin we need to be forgiven of and we need to repent of. **...that we may obtain mercy,** it's a throne of grace, meaning it's a throne. Grace has to do with favor that God gives. That favor may sometimes be in the form of forgiveness. The forgiveness that God gives to us, the favor that He gives to us, the help that He gives to us, all the things that God offers us, the blessings of life, are a matter of grace, meaning we don't deserve it, but He's there to give it to us. He wants to give it to us if we just respond correctly to Him, that we want what He has to offer us, that we're thankful for everything that He offers to us, and on it goes, and that we desire His mercy when we've done wrong, when we're doing wrong. **...and find grace to help in time of need.**

So this is a time where we have need. We have need to draw closer to God. We have need to become stronger in spirit because of what's in front of us far more than what you can know right now, far more than what you can recognize in your own human mind right now, that you have no comprehension of what's in front of you, that you need to be closer to God than you've ever been. Okay? Just say that bluntly. For those who are weak you're not going to come through it anyway if you don't repent and change and desire to receive of God's mercy through your

repentance of your sins. So still playing games with God. I don't get it after all this time. I do get it, but I don't like it.

Jude :1. So God continues to cry out. To be able to hopefully see what was given to us throughout the Feast and even before the Feast, and even now, that He's a very merciful God and it is a throne of grace that we come before when we pray to God with boldness, with thankfulness, and a freedom and a liberty that God has offered to us—what an incredible thing—and that He's there to help us. He wants to help us and He wants to show mercy right now. But if we don't cry out for mercy in all cases, whew.

Jude, the servant of Joshua the Christ, and brother of James, to those who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved. Those who have been called, those who have been set apart for special purpose by God to receive His help, His work in their life, to receive of His holy spirit in their life, set apart for holy use and purpose, **sanctified by God the Father and preserved or kept in Joshua the Christ.** We're kept in him, which has so much to do with this matter of him being our Passover and being able to be forgiven of sin, and thereby then we're able to have access to God the Father and to Joshua the Christ, that they can dwell in us and we're able to continue to dwell in them, not be cut off, not squeeze off the flow of God's spirit in our life.

Those who are preserved or kept in Joshua the Christ and called. Mercy unto you. That's God's desire. It's brought up over and over again through scripture, and sometimes in the beginning of some of these books where it talks about this mercy that comes from God that He wants to give to us. He's an exceedingly merciful God. **Mercy unto you...** Because we'll grasp that more deeply if we understand the kind of love, the love that He has for us. **Mercy unto you and peace, and love, agape.** Incredible. All these things that we can receive from God, all these things we should be receiving from God - peace, mercy, His love, **that it be multiplied,** that we grow in it.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for... It's a word from the Greek that means "to struggle, to fight for." To struggle! To fight for! ...**to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**

For there are certain ones who have crept in unawares... Greek word here, it's interesting. It means "settled alongside." It's been that way in the Church since its beginning. There are certain ones who have "settled alongside." It doesn't mean "crept in." It means when God calls and gives the impregnation of His holy spirit everyone has that opportunity, everyone has that blessing of being in the Body of Christ. They didn't creep in. That's a wrong translation. It doesn't mean they snuck in. It means they were all given of the same opportunity to be a part of something so great as far as God's way of life was concerned, as far as what we just covered. Those who are called, those who are sanctified; that's who it's addressing up here in these verses, those who have been sanctified and preserved. So this word here that they put in scripture is not a proper translation at all. No one crept in unaware.

Now, there have been tares, but even sometimes that, if we understand it, has a source and it falls in line with a lot of this. **For there are certain ones who have “crept in unawares,”** not right - **who have settled alongside,** something changes in their life. **...who were before of old ordained of this condemnation.** Why? God knew what people would do by choice. That there would be people who wouldn't choose, who wouldn't hold on to this way of life. It wasn't a mystery to God that many had to be called and that few would be chosen. That's not a mystery to God at all there would be those who would receive the impregnation of His holy spirit and then refuse as time went on, refuse what He had to offer, refuse repentance, whatever it might be, refuse His mercy, refuse His love, refuse His truth.

...who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly... What happened? To become ungodly, to live something that's ungodly? Well, you steal from God? That's kind of ungodly. You do things for the sake of sex or some sexual gratification that's wrong before God? That's ungodly. You think wrong thoughts, you think wrong thinking toward others, you become jealous and envious of others, that's ungodly. Jealous of others? Not being respectful of one another? Not esteeming God's government like we should? Sometimes talking and thinking wrong and speaking wrong about God's government. I mean anyone within the ministry. Because it happens; it happens quite often. It happens a lot, just to be real candid about it. People aren't afraid of doing that. That should cause people to shake in fear, of ever speaking against God's government, of acting against God's government. Incredible. “Well, that's just their opinion. That's just the way they see it.” Or, “They're only there because of...” Whatever it might be, not seeing that God has a purpose in what He does and how He does it.

For there are certain ones crept in, who have settled alongside, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly, turning the grace of our God, turning the grace... So here is something that they had been receiving, something of God. To be called of God is incredible grace, favor. Of all people on the earth to be drawn to the Church, to be drawn to be able to see a need for baptism and wanting to be baptized in water, to be forgiven of sin. Incredible grace and favor that God has given, unwarranted, undeserved, you know, but God did it, willing to forgive everything in order to give a part of His life, His mind, His being to us to become a part of His family.

...who have turned the grace of God into, it says “lasciviousness” here but it's basically a word that means “that which is **obscene.**” To rob from God is obscene. It's obscene. To have wrong sexual lust and desires, to not strive to be in control of one's own mind and their own actions is obscene. To mistreat others in the Body of Christ, to be jealous of others, envious of others, to be in argument with and battle with, or to fight against or to get into an argument with anybody in the Body is obscene. It's unholy. It's not of God. It's very ungodly. It's not the mind of God. To have drama, drama, drama in our lives and to build things up in such a magnitude that we have no peace in our life, no soundness, that's obscene. That's not going to be in God's Kingdom. Drama is not going to be there. There will be no drama in the Kingdom of God. It's opposite of everything about God. That's why I hate it so much. You have to come to where you hate drama,

to see what it does to the mind, to see what it does to one's life, what it does to one's relationships. Then you'll fight against it and you'll see it for what it is anyway.

It goes on to say here, **These are individuals who settled alongside**, you know, have the appearance of being in the temple but something changed in time and they went through the doors out into the courtyard and they started wandering around out there getting weaker and weaker because of sin, you know, and not living what they should be doing, getting cut off from the flow of God's spirit, **and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Joshua the Christ.**

See, this is not about people who didn't have access to God. This is about people in God's Church impregnated with God's spirit who began to turn against, became antichrist, began to turn against the very purpose of why he died. That's obscene! Turning the grace of God into obscenity, that we should do such a thing as to take so lightly our Passover and the very purpose of why he died.

He died so that we could have access to the Father, so that the Father and His Son could dwell in us and we could dwell in them on a spiritual plane in a spiritual relationship, and to have a spiritual relationship with others in the Body who are His people. And if we really understood that we would never get into argument and a battle with others in the Church, yet it happens. It happens on a regular basis. Somebody gets in an argument, a fight with each other, you know, disagreement, angry at one another. It's obscene.

"...and denying..." So by choice of doing what is wrong, by a choice to raise something up above God, spiritual idolatry, spiritual adultery - they're the same in the sense of what one does - to raise something up above that which God says is right, that we want to do and allow into our life that's sin, that's wrong, that's obscene before God is to deny. We cut ourselves off from the flow of God's spirit so this is what happens.

...and denying them to dwell in us, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Joshua the Christ. I am, therefore, reminding you, although you once knew this... See, we all know in the beginning a calling God has given to us, the things that God says we should live and so forth, and in time people begin to water those things down if they're not careful and not live by them.

...although you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. So what is the spiritual part of that? See, that's the point. It's for us as well to understand.

Dropping on down, **verse 17—But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Joshua the Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time.** Now, see, we hear the word mockers and you know what we think of? We think of people on the outside. We automatically tend to think of, well, that's people out there who mock the truth and the Church and what you do. No, we can become mockers as well of God's way of life. That's what our actions reveal if we indulge in sin and dwell out in the

courtyard. We're mocking; we're making a mockery of God's calling! That's a horrifying, obscene thing.

That's why God has been having me cry out to the degree I have been, that there are things that are just obscene and we need to see them for the obscenity that they are. They're just not as obscene as they need to be in our own thinking! If we could see how ugly sin is and how hurtful and painful it is then we could more easily be on guard against it and fight against it if that's our desire, if we really want God.

Verse 18—How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who would walk after their own ungodly lusts. So what do you want to use your tithe for besides giving it to God? Well, you have ungodly lust for something else. What did you use it for? What did you have to have it for? What was it that you so had to have that you couldn't obey God? Now, see, I'm saying this because this is happening a lot, and because of the sermons we were given at the Feast more came out, that it was happening, which I already knew because God let me know that it's happening way too much in the Church just in that area alone...and other things as well then, what people doing, that they shouldn't be doing.

I do want to clarify one other thing in the Church as I'm thinking about it. Someone wrote in and made comment about something and I've been told by several. I made a comment at the Feast about those who have been a part of any Pentecostal movement in the past, that I've never known anyone who's continued on. But I found a lot of people who have let me know, "Yeah, I have had that in my past." Please understand, I'm excited by that! Because God will heal us of any and all things that have ever happened in our past, and forgive us of all things. He called us for the purpose of forgiving us of anything we've done wrong or been a part of.

My experience in times past in Worldwide had been that individuals who were so deeply involved in that, that they couldn't be communicated with, that no, that wasn't a real experience. That was more the context of those that I've counselled with in times past because they knew they had an experience. I feel that today we've been very blessed to have matured to a level far beyond that, to where we realize, yes, those things have existed, and yes, once they're repented of an ability to recognize where it really does come from and to see it, people have repented of those things long ago before they ever came into the Church or were baptized, or as they learned it.

So please understand, yes, we have people from all backgrounds who are doing exceedingly well in following God's way of life. We just have to work on ourselves. We all do. We have to pay heed to what's being given here. But I'm encouraged by that, to see a change in growth that's taken place within the Church and how God's working with us.

Anyway, going on. ...**mockers in the last time, who would walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves...** "They separate themselves." What a horrible thing. **These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit.** We can cut ourselves

off from God's spirit. **But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith...** We're to build more upon what God has given to us, what He's given us to believe. ...**praying in the holy spirit.** To pray to God, there's really no other way we should pray. That means that you need to know that you're repenting, you want God's way of life, that God is dwelling in you and you're dwelling in God. You're praying in the holy spirit. You either know that or you don't. If there is sin there you know you have to repent of it and God forgives and you go forward. But if there are sins and secret sins in your life that you don't want to tell anybody, you don't want anybody to know about, what's really going on in your life and you're kind of hiding it (which is what people do), and wouldn't want a minister to know, wouldn't want others to know, then what are those things? You praying in the holy spirit or not?

Keep yourselves in the love of God. So how do we do that? How do you keep yourselves in the love of God? It's through repentance, crying out to God for help to change and to grow and that you want His mind in you, you want to live right toward others. Where we're not living right toward others that needs to be repented of because we can't dwell in His love if we're sinning.

Keep yourselves in the love of God looking for the mercy... This thing of mercy is over and over and over again, mercy from God because God is merciful. We look for it. We want it. We know we need it because we see what we are. We're so thankful God forgives us of sin and that He gives us mercy. ...**looking for the mercy of our Lord Joshua the Christ unto eternal life.**

Ephesians 2:1, I'll launch right into it: And you who were dead in trespasses and sins, all of us, our need to be able to be forgiven of sin, wherein times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of the mind. The bad thing is some of that still straggles along with us in life that you have to keep fighting because there is where your battle is. But it is talking about how we were totally immersed in that in the past before God called us out of it and began to work with us and we began to grow on a spiritual plane. But this part is still there as a battle. We need to recognize that. ...**and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,** not having God in our life and so forth.

But God, who is rich in mercy... When He calls us He wants to give us mercy. As we continue in the Church He wants to give us mercy. When? When we need it. And when do you need it? When you sin, when you've turned against Him, when you put something else up as more important than Him. **But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us or loves us,** because that's what it's about. It's hard for us to grasp that sometimes, how much God truly loves us and what He's offering us and the sacrifice that's gone to give us what we have. ...**even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us (made us alive), together with Christ,** is what it's saying, **(by whose grace you are saved)...**

Verse 6—and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly in Christ Joshua, in other words, he is there by God's throne as our High Priest and our lives and what we're doing
God's Mercy

and what is ahead for us if we continue to yield to this way of life, in their hands, that which God offers us that we'll be able to be a part of, whether it be a part in the 144,000 or whether it be able to live on into an age, new age, and continue on then with that growth. It's reserved by God to give us awesome blessings, to be in His family.

...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness toward us through Christ Joshua. So again, it's just saying there we don't know what it's like to be in Elohim, but we believe it. We know what God is doing. We've been shown His plan, and in time we'll receive of that if we continue to fight and move forward and look to Him in His mercy for forgiveness of sin, for help to fight, for strength of His spirit to be in us.

For by grace are you saved through faith. There is nothing you can do to earn it because none of us are righteous. It's only by living this way of life, living in faith that we're able to be saved through the grace that God offers us. It's undeserved, not owed in any fashion or form. **...and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.** We can't earn it.

...not of works. That's what that's saying, you can't earn it. You have to work. You have to work hard at this way of life. You have to cry out mightily to God. You have to fight the battles that are before you. But that's a part of the process of continuing in God and God in us to change us. But we don't receive it because of that, because we still have sin in our life. Every day of our life we have sin. You can't live through life without sin because you're selfish, I'm selfish. Selfishness: we make a certain decision, a certain choice based on selfishness and we've sinned. It's as simple as that. It really is. It's the get way rather than the give way. We just have a lot of that in our life. We just don't realize that sometimes. We continually repent of what we are, of what we see, of what is wrong, and desire what is right and to exercise that, to work at that, to live right toward others.

...not of works lest anyone should boast, because that's what would happen. "Look what I did!" "Look who I am!" I've known a lot of people in the Church who thought they were very righteous. They're not around.

For we are His workmanship... Even there we are in God's hands. He is the one who molds and fashions us; we just have to yield ourselves to the process. A lot of that is through humility of spirit because then He can mold us. Without humility, He can't fashion us. **For we are His workmanship created in Christ Joshua unto good works, which God has ordained,** in other words, **prepared before that we should walk in them.**

So, brethren, I hope we grasp in a mighty way that God is offering us so much mercy, especially at this time for individuals who so need it to turn their lives around, and for all of us, candidly, to understand that we need to work harder. We need to put more into this way of life right now, each and every one of us, to look at the changes that we need to make in our life so that we can draw closer to God. Because we're going to go through a very hard time in front of us and we need to be ever so close to God to come through it successfully.