

Today will be *Part 2* of the series entitled *The Establishment of Peace*.

Mankind has done exceedingly poor in its pursuit of peace. Mankind has not understood the way of peace, that it begins with each person and how you live your life. It begins at home, and people don't seem to grasp that. It's how each person chooses to live their life, and then that determines, obviously, whether it's in the workplace and in community, and then between nations. It's just a reality that man doesn't know, mankind doesn't know how to live God's way of peace at all. It isn't there.

I think of things like as the population of the earth has so increased in the past couple of centuries, along with technology, the way of peace has even become more aloof or obscure, if you will, seemly unattainable. I couldn't help but think about World War I and what ended at a point in time there when they wanted to start the United Nations. Actually it was Woodrow Wilson who came up with a concept of a League of Nations. The plan for a League of Nations was part of a peace treaty that ended that particular war. A lot of nations weren't eager to enter into that league and neither were the people of the United States. I thought it would be good to read a little bit of the history of some of this.

So again, President Woodrow Wilson sought national support for his idea of a League of Nations and took that appeal directly to the American people in the summer of 1919. After a vote, the public, the American public, refused to join, and this led to the major reason why the league itself failed and a lot of other nations didn't take it as seriously as what they really had desired, or what he desired, what he foresaw, a desire for peace, a desire for nations to come together and talk things out and try to avoid another world war. Didn't go very well.

So again, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended the first world war the League of Nations was formed in January of 1920 but it had no power to enforce any of the rules that it made up, and candidly, the United Nations doesn't either, but people go on, they continue to try to have some concept, some idea of how they can bring peace to the earth. Anyway, the league lasted for 26 years and really didn't have any effect during that entire period.

Then, again, a replacement for the League of Nations came after World War II, the United Nations, and that became established on the 24th of October of 1945. Its primary aim was to prevent another such worldwide conflict and war. Obviously, seeing the populations of the earth, seeing nations get larger, seeing the technology that was coming along, recognizing the kind of power that now exists in war a greater desire was there to prevent another one. So people did join together in this more so, nations did.

It reminds me, though, of the statue out front of the United Nations. It's a statue that is formed after the words found in the book of Isaiah, and I want to read that. It's a prophecy of weapons of war being beaten into tools of agriculture. It says there, **Isaiah 2:4—And He**, speaking of God. It's something that man can't do but man makes a kind of a statue and puts it out front as though he's going to attain something that he can't accomplish. It's really kind of sick when you think about it, of the smugness, of the audacity, of the thinking of mankind and what people do.

But anyway, it says, **And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning tools. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and neither shall they learn war anymore.**

So when you think of that statue that's out in front of the United Nations that depicts this scripture it is sick. There have been all kinds of wars. There have been millions of people killed since this began, the United Nations, and man can't stop that. Mankind can't stop war and here it tells about something that God's going to do, that nation is not going to lift up sword against nation again when He intervenes and does what He is going to do. We live at that time. That's an awesome thing to understand. We live at the juncture of time, at a time when mankind would annihilate himself, destroy himself if God did not intervene.

So it should be obvious that mankind cannot accomplish that which only God can do. Incredible!

Isaiah 59:8, speaking of mankind again here it says, **They have not known the way of peace; and there is no judgment**, or the word really means "there is no right," or "a right way" **in their goings**, in what they do, in other words. It's a Hebrew word that means "in their paths," "in what they do" basically is how we would express it. There is no right way or no right life or living in what they do and how they do it.

They have made for themselves crooked paths. And whosoever goes that way, or their way, (because that's what it's about), **but whoever goes that way shall not know peace**. That started in the Garden of Eden. It's been going on ever since. People can't live peace toward each other. It's impossible. Human beings can't live that way toward one another in a family scale, in a family level of life, just two people in life, and all the way through as you have community, jobs, whatever, in the community and the nations. It's the same thing; people can't have peace with one another. They can't help but have conflict.

It's incredible to understand that about human nature because it's so selfish people want their own way. As long as that exists where people are inwardly motivated, where they're selfish, where they're striving to live more the get way because that's all they want, that's all they see, peace won't be there.

I think it's an awesome thing to understand that in the Church God begins to reveal to us there is a way to peace and it's not man's way; it's not the way of selfishness, it's a different way. God expresses that to us in a lot of different ways. As I've mentioned, Mr. Armstrong expressed that in

two different ways of life that world leaders understood when he talked to them. There is a give and a get way. He expressed to them that the problem with the world is that man wants to live the get way. They understood that because that was in basic terms of something they deal with themselves day in and day out in their governments. They understand that people are selfish and people want their own way. To what degree they could see it in themselves is another issue.

Let's turn over to **Matthew 10:32—Whoever, therefore, shall confess me before men...** Now, it's not in words. It's not how the Protestant world looks at this, that you have to confess the name of Jesus Christ, "Have you accepted Jesus?" That's how they talk. It's not that at all. It's not about this expression here of how people read something like this in the world without God's spirit.

Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me, Joshua was saying, before men, him will I confess also before my Father. The word here "confess" is not about words in the sense of saying, "Yes, I do," and making a statement like that of confession, as people look upon it. It's by how you live your life. It's by how you think. It's not in words but it's in actions. That's what the word means. It's how you live your life.

How do we do that in God's Church? Because the world can't do this. The world can't live this but we can because it requires God's spirit. That's the only way, as far as how this word is used in scripture, that one can acknowledge Christ or reflect Christ in their life. It's by how you live. And how do you do that? Well, he has to be in you, he has to dwell in you. God the Father and Joshua the Christ have to live within us and we have to be dwelling within them. That's the only way this can be accomplished. That's what he's telling them, but they didn't understand that when he told the disciples this. That understanding for them didn't come until later on.

And candidly, there are a lot of people in God's Church who have never really understood this, what it means. Because the tendency a lot of times in human life is to take on a mentality, if you will, that's on a physical plane, as the Protestant world has done, to confess by what you say, by how you say it.

Sometimes people think they have to say things in a certain way that sound religious, even in God's Church. Thankfully, we've gotten farther and farther away from that. Or to use certain words or certain names, and somehow by doing that that we're more religious and that is an expression then by what we say, by what we speak, and that's not what it's about.

Yes, what comes out of our mouth does reflect whether God dwells in us and we dwell in God, but it's not this syrupy, false, fake thing that sometimes we think we have to do in our minds in how we talk to others or even to one another within the Body. We don't have to sound religious, but you have to live this way. It's how you live. And that, then, will determine what comes out of our mouth, and it's not syrupy, meaningless expressions that truly have no meaning whatsoever because in the Protestant world that expression has absolutely no real meaning whatsoever,

“Have you accepted Christ?” or “Have you accepted Jesus?” “Have you accepted Jeesus?” That’s how they say it. “Have you accepted Jeesus?”

I think of a story of someone that was driving along and two people were in a car, and they came up to someone who had a sign out, if I remember the expression properly here, or the example of what took place. But anyway, someone was desiring money on the side of a road and the one person told the individual that was going to hand it out, “Don’t give it to them until you ask them have they accepted Jesus. And if they say yes, then go ahead and give it to them, otherwise,” in essence, “we’re driving on.” You think what kind of a life is that? People who think they have to ask others, “Have you accepted Jesus?” You want to run, and most people do even in the world unless they’re caught up in the same kind of fake, syrupy, false way. I don’t know about you but it makes me sick.

So it’s by how you live your life. That’s what’s important.

So it says here then, **him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven.** It has to do with what you choose to live, how you will talk and how you describe various things in your life.

Anyway, going on here, **verse 33—But whoever shall deny,** basically just means “to say no,” or to **refuse me before men...** How do you do that? Somebody comes up and says, “Do you accept Jesus?” But if you say “No,” if that guy on the side of the road said “No,” that’s not what it’s talking about here.

Who shall deny (refuse or just say no), **me before men,** in other words, if you refuse. What are you refusing? What are you saying no to? For us in the Church we need to understand this. It’s by our actions because we choose to live something else toward people and something we blurt out of our mouth because we’re not obeying God. There’s something else we may do because we’re not obeying God, we’re refusing Christ to dwell in us. That’s what it’s talking about here, “Whosoever shall deny (refuse) me before men.” Well, how do you do that? By how you live toward them. How do we live toward people on a job? How do we live toward people in society? How do we live toward one another within the Body? Do we live it the way God says we should strive to live it? Well, that’s what Christ is talking about here.

So we can refuse the flow of God’s spirit in our life. So much of the sermons leading up to the Feast, during the Feast, and after the Feast now are still about this approach that we have. How are we living our lives? Does it reflect Christ in us? Does it reflect God the Father in us? Or does it reflect something else? We’re playing Church, we’re fooling around out in the courtyard? Because it’s one or the other. There are so many different ways of saying this.

But whosoever, or whoever, shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Refuse. “If you don’t do it I refuse you.” Basically, that’s what happens. We get cut off! God doesn’t give us His holy spirit and continue to give us the flow of the spirit if we refuse to obey, if we refuse to live the way of life He says we’re to live. That can be in what we

say toward others and how we say it. That can be in how we act toward others, what we do toward others, etcetera, etcetera.

Then he goes on to say, **Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth.** That's amazing! What does that do to the Protestant world? How often do they preach about this one? "I didn't come to send peace on the earth." It's like, whoa! **For I did not come to send peace, but a sword.** What's the answer for that in the Protestant world? They don't have one, they really don't.

For I have come to set a man at variance, in other words, to separate, **against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household.** Now, we understand that in the Church because this is what we live as soon as we begin this journey. We begin to understand what it's like when you begin to accept a certain way of life, not to deny God's spirit, but you want it, you desire it in your life, you want it to change everything about your life. You cry out for help to be transformed, to be changed, to think differently, to talk differently. It begins in some very basic things.

It begins by no longer keeping Easter and Christmas. It begins by beginning to observe Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread and other holy days. That's how it begins. So often that isn't received well by the world around us, let alone our own households. That's exactly what Christ was talking about! It's exactly what he's talking about here. "I didn't come to bring peace," not at this time. We're talking about Christ speaking to the disciples here and talking about things that were going to happen, basically, we understand it, as over the next couple of thousand years and what life is going to be like in the environment of the Church and what you're going to live, what you're going to experience because now you're able to be forgiven of sin through Joshua the Christ. You're going to begin to obey God. It's going to affect your finances. Tithing, it's going to affect that. It's going to affect how they look upon you because you're going to tell them, "No, we don't accept Christmas presents anymore." "No, the children, our children aren't going to receive your Christmas presents anymore."

You talk about warfare! You talk about attitudes and feelings of hostility and how people will talk about you then. It's like, "How can you deny your children giving of presents?" They don't understand that, but we do and so we live it and we take what goes with it, the sword that comes our way as people turn and hate God's people because that's what happens.

So those that we used to walk side by side with in the sense of the world, it's no longer there. I marvel sometimes people come into the Church, and it's happened to all of us, in one respect, and it doesn't take very long, the friends you used to have and some talk in this vein, they begin to realize, they begin to see something in their friends, that their friends have changed. You think, no, you changed. They're still the same. It takes a while for us to begin to realize, "Something is happening in my mind, into my life and my response to people, to my friends I used to have, because I don't do the same things they do anymore." Because you make choices not

being with them in certain environments you drift apart, you're not the same anymore. They're not the same towards you anymore. They really, in many cases, just don't want to be around you anymore. It makes them uncomfortable.

Sometimes that happens in family where you can have peace you strive to have peace. We want to have peace in families, but not all family members respond to that. So it's a tough thing sometimes in our lives.

It goes on to say, **And a man's foes shall be those of his own household.** What a horrible thing when it happens right within a family. One is called and one isn't. It happens a lot. It's happened in the past in the Church a lot. I experienced that a lot in Worldwide and it's gut wrenching sometimes what people have to go through. But it's a process, and God uses that process to mold and fashion people, to try people, to see what they're going to do and how they're going to do it. There is so much involved in this process where peace didn't come through Christ but a sword within the environment of the Church.

He wasn't talking about the Millennium. He wasn't talking about the Great White Throne. He was talking about the period leading up to it. It's not meant to be easy. It's hard! It is warfare, battles we have to fight, things we have to enter into.

Verse 37—He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. People in the Church have always been tried in this part. What are you going to do when this comes knocking at your door? Peace. What are we going to do to have God's peace? Or do we have our own kind of peace and peace that involves compromise like the world does when nations come up against each other. "What are you going to back down on and what am I going to back down so that we don't have all out war? How are we going to have this?"

Well, in the Church you can't compromise. You can't pull back on not going to the Feast of Tabernacles, not obeying God. You can't pull back on not tithing. You can't pull back on those basic areas of your life let alone many other areas of your life. You can't pull back on those things. You do them because it's right before God and your relationship is with God first and foremost. So if by our actions we give into something that we shouldn't give into we raise them up above God, we raise that environment up above God, we put something else first before God. That's spiritual adultery; it's spiritual idolatry, plain and simple.

That happens a lot in God's Church! That's why so many people go by the wayside in God's Church, because it's an environment whereby we're tested, it's an environment whereby God allows us to go through various things to see what's inside and to see how much we really want His way of life, see? How much we really want His way of life, how much we really love what He's showing us and giving to us, as to how much we really esteem and value the calling we have and a desire for His government, for His Kingdom. It's very basic, but boy, oh, boy have there been a lot of carnage along the way because of battle, because of the sword, because there isn't peace in this world.

Now, we're to live peace and we're to live peace within the environment of the Church. That doesn't always happen! There are times when there is great conflict. Thankfully, I feel and believe by what I'm experiencing, that's becoming less and less over the last couple of years. That's a beautiful thing. It still exists, but it's less, you know, because we're human beings and we have to go through change and there are things we have to see in our lives and everybody grows at different levels and at different times by different experiences as God molds and fashions us.

So this thing of a calling and being molded and fashioned by God within the environment of the Church is an incredibly unique experience because it's about battle in the world, but it's about peace in our lives. We can have battle in this world but have peace in our lives. You can have battle and things going on around you within family, within your job and other things, but you can have peace. You can have peace of mind. You can have God's peace in your mind and in your life, which is very unique in this kind of a world. But it always goes back to this same thing: Do we yield ourselves? Do we want, do we desire Joshua the Christ and God the Father to dwell in us? How much do we want to dwell in them?

That's why this thing of being in the temple or out in the courtyard are so opposite of each other, in one respect, for the Church because our desire should be to want God's spirit, to desire God's spirit, to want to be in the Body, to want to be in God the Father and in Joshua the Christ. That's what that means to be in the temple, "I want to be dwelling in them and I want them to dwell in me. I want, I need, I desire that life, that spirit, that power that helps me to see and to understand the right things I should be doing and saying and talking, and so forth, in life, that everything that comes out of me." So we have battles. We have our own battles. How much do we want these things?

So I get frustrated when I see people just wandering around in the courtyard and not fighting to come into the temple. It boggles my mind in one degree after everything we've gone through and talked about over a period of time, that God has expressed to us in many different forms now in the Church over the past two or three years, you know, very powerfully so. So it comes down to what do you want? What do I want? Is this my way of life? Is this what I have chosen when I said I did at baptism? Sometimes we're tried. That boggles my mind.

There have been far more people who made that covenant at baptism God is first; "My life is not mine, it is God's, and His Son's. It's not mine anymore because I've chosen that way and I'm going to live that way, I want to live that way, I'm crying out for help to live that way." Yet the majority since the time the Church began have left, have come to a point where they refused, as it says here, Christ, and so Christ and God the Father have refused them. Those in the period of Ephesus, Thyatira, Pergamos, Smyrna, all the way through, if you want to go on through Thyatira on up to Sardis, Philadelphia, and then Laodicea, a lot of people have gone by the wayside...a lot of people. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and maybe even hundreds of thousands, which, I

believe, would be the case. That's incredible to comprehend. So what God offers us is so incredible.

People clear back then in what Christ was talking about, they're going to be those who are going to be refused. That doesn't mean it's over for them. But they're not going to be in the first resurrection, because that's what all those eras of the Church were all about. It was about preparing people for that first resurrection. Now we live in a unique time where some are still being worked with to be a part of that, but very few in comparison to those who are going to have the opportunity to live on into a new age. Then that desire is still going to be there in a different kind of world, obviously.

But anyway, going on here. **He who loves, again, verse 37, father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.** That means if we make a choice based on what a parent chooses or wants that's contrary to God, or anyone within a family. **Any who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.** Well, how does that come out? It comes out by choices that people make in life and always have. That's something that blew my mind, in one respect, when we came to the Apostasy and all these different splinter groups that were coming about, because Worldwide as we knew it didn't exist anymore. It was gone. It had turned back to the Protestant world. It had turned back to exactly what God had drawn it out of, called it out of. Yet all these different groups were popping up and the vast majority of people made decisions about where they were going to go by one, sometimes, say "domineering" type of personality, but one who had greater influence within families or within friendships that people had amongst themselves.

So because of a choice that one person might make others gravitated to it depending on who they were, sometimes maybe a certain minister. A certain minister went there, "Well, I admire him. I look up to him and always have. He was my minister a long time ago so I'm going over there." It wasn't based on what do they teach? What are they saying? Are they teaching 14th/15th Passover? That wasn't important to people because we'd gotten so sleepy, so tired. We were in such a deep sleep by that point in time people couldn't think straight. But most made their choices and decisions, the overwhelming majority, by what others did—father, mother, sister, brother, friend, whatever it might be—and then they went with them. Not because they were convicted of who they went with, out of conviction that they really believed this is where God is working, "I really believe this is where God is and so I'm going there." The rest of you, the rest of the family here, you may choose to go over there with this group but I'm not because I know some of the things they're teaching. I know and I can't conscientiously do that. It didn't happen as a whole. Didn't take place that way.

Some it did. But again, we were so weak we didn't know what we could see anyway. But there's a difference in conviction. Do you do something out of conviction because this is what you believe and you're striving to do it and asking for God's help in it, or do you do it because another family member or a friend or some other acquaintance made a certain choice and so you're going to go along with that? You've got to make it because of what you believe.

What good is life if you don't live by your own convictions? Really! Seriously! What kind of a life do we have? I'll say, even if you're wrong? But in one respect if you don't know you don't know, and so you're going to make decisions and choice in life sometimes even when you're wrong, obviously, but do you do it because you're convicted? I'm talking about a conviction toward God because you believe this is what God would want you to do, because you believe that this is what God says and because of what you see to that moment in time. God can correct you. God can reveal to us what we need to see.

I think of the Apostasy and what took place there and choices and decisions we made, and it's like, I don't know what decision to make. Like for the Feast of Tabernacles, where should we go because we can't go with this organization any longer. So we split up and go in different areas. Where do you go? We're trying to find it; where is God working? You've got to make choice and decisions by your conviction, of what you believe of where God is.

Anyway, it's amazing what we've been through, but you've got to make choices and decisions because of what your conviction is concerning your relationship to your God. If you don't do that that way things aren't going to go well with you in life. They truly aren't. It must be because of your personal convictions.

So it goes on to say, **And he who does not take up his pole** (stake)... It gives the example here of what he did for a time, Joshua, when he had to have that pole on his back, basically, and carried it for a certain distance and after a while couldn't do it any longer so they got someone else to take it the rest of the way for him. He physically didn't have the strength and the ability so they grabbed someone else along the way to go ahead and take it. But he did as long as he could until he physically just couldn't do it any longer. So that example is used here for us. What are we willing to carry? What are we willing to bear? How far are we willing to go? It better be all the way because our life belongs to God and what a beautiful thing if we've given it to Him and He has it in His care, in His protection. Powerful.

He who does not take his pole and follow after me, is not worthy of me, so if we get to a point in time where we think, "Well, this is just too hard." So many people have gone by the wayside because "This is just too hard. This is just more than I can bear." A lot of people have quit over that very reason right there, "It's too hard." Yeah, it's hard. It's not easy because you're fighting self and if you give up to that and you accept the way of the world, what a horrible thing.

He who finds his life shall lose it. What does that mean? It's talking about on a physical level. You find what you want. You grab a hold of that and you're going to do that apart from God and you're satisfied with that, you're at peace with that, and you're comfortable with that, that's what you want and now you've attained it, whatever it might be, and you're happy with that, well, so be it. Fine. It just won't be God's.

...and he who loses his life for my sake shall find it. All in the context of what he said here, "I came to bring a sword, not peace." So it's going to be a battle. It's going to be hard. It's going to

be a lot of hardship in all this. So if we lose our life, give up the way of self for his sake, to know it's going to be suffering, to know that you're going to have to stand up to family, to know you're going to stand up on the job, whatever it might be in your life that you have to stand up for God's way of life, it should be because that's what you want because you've weighed, you've weighed it out, and no matter what comes along God comes first.

He who receives you receives me. Now, this has been a great encouragement to me, to understand this verse here. It helped a lot when we began to be invited out to go, after the Apostasy, to various Church areas. I think of going to Minneapolis, St. Paul, a group up there invited us. I think of a group in Arizona had invited us. I think of some other areas, even St. Louis.

It says here, **He who receives you receives me.** Well, I believed I was doing what was right. I believed I was following God, and time proved that indeed that was the case, in the sense of what God had given because He was restoring a remnant of the Church. Those things I began to understand. It's not hard. You stand up for God's way of life and you say something that they don't like, like I think of 14th/15th up in Minneapolis. I told them, "You've got different groups coming in together here," because what they tried to do was they were trying to build bridges and bring people in. You can tolerate someone who has a different idea about Pentecost, and some other group over here has a different idea about 14th/15th Passover or whether it's just 14th Passover, and so you have some of these battles going on with different groups and so forth. Incredible, what we've gone through to get where we are.

You have to stand up for what is right no matter what anyone else does and no matter who it is in God's Church. If you are living what is right, whoever receives you, as it says here, **He who receives you receives me.** Because if you're living the truth, if God is dwelling in you then this should be your greatest concern. If somebody doesn't want to be around you, even in the world, if someone is such an enemy to this way of life why would you want to be around that? I mean if they're really an outward enemy. Now, if they want to have a certain amount of peace and so forth, that's another matter in life, in family, in relationships and whatever it might be in the world, on the job. But if they get to a point where they so loathe and so hate and are attacking you on a constant basis people have to make choices and decisions in life, and people in the Church always have.

He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. So this is speaking more fully in the context of the Church here, obviously, in what Christ is saying, but some of these things have principles that carry on out.

We're talking about peace. We're talking about the way of peace, that only God can establish peace. He begins to call, He calls us, He begins to work in our lives, and He begins to establish it in our lives. As we yield to Him we begin to experience peace. The more of that that we experience the better life is. But we're not always going to have it because we still live in this world and a world that doesn't have peace. It has nothing but chaos, confusion, and as I've used

that word over and over again, drama. It's at different levels in life but it's there. You've got to come to where you really hate that and you love what God is offering you.

Isaiah 45:5. So God's purpose, as we've talked about, is to heal the mind. He's giving us that opportunity and it starts with us. His desire is to bring peace to this earth but it's a long process. 6,000 years of battling, of chaos, of confusion, of wars, a lot of drama, a lot of drama in people's lives.

Verse 5—I am the Eternal, and there is no one else, there is no God besides Me: I gird (surround, secure) **you, although you have not known Me.** As God spoke to Israel they didn't understand what they'd been given. God speaks to us and sometimes people haven't grasped this on a spiritual plane.

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides Me. I am the Eternal, and there is no one else. I form, means "to fashion or form" **the light, and create** (or shape and create) **darkness.** We understand what that means physically. We understand what that means spiritually. **I make,** means "to carry out," indeed "to make, to perform" **peace** (shalom). God makes it. Mankind can't. People can't. The world can't. ...**and create** (shape or create as the word is) **evil.** So we understand what that means. Like the darkness, we grasp what it is that God gave up peace; He forfeited peace for a long, long time. In the angelic realm first, and then with the world He created us so there wouldn't be peace because He knew what we would choose as carnal human beings. All for a purpose, by design. **I the Eternal do all these things.**

I'll tell you what, the more you grow in God's Church the more you come to see and understand things of God's Church, the more you become in awe of God, truly. We see so little, but the more we're able to see in things like what these verses talk about, and grasp it on a spiritual plane, it's beautiful. It's a marvel. It's a marvel how God calls us and the kind of world we live in and why He designed it this way, and then begins to work with us in a Body, in a Church, how He's worked with us in the last couple of thousand years. To mold and fashion us as He does, what else would one want except what we promised at baptism? "I am Yours. Mold me. Fashion me. Transform me. I want to become what You want me to become. I want to be and serve where You want me to be and to serve, to be a part of the Family, to be a part of the structure, to be a part of the building wherever You desire me to be," because that's where you'll be the most fulfilled in life. Incredible!

Luke 1. God revealed how He was going to begin to make peace. So He's the one that performs it. He's the one that makes it. He's the one that creates it, a long, long plan over perhaps billions upon billions of years. We don't know how long.

Luke 1:76. As God begins to show how He's going to do this, and it says, **And you, child...** So this is the account, again, of Zechariah beginning to speak. If you remember the account here it's talking about John in this particular case, and he begins to speak out again. You know, he'd lost

his voice for a period of time because he didn't believe what was told to him and then John was born and he was inspired by God's holy spirit to speak these following words that we're reading here again.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest, for you shall go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way. "To prepare his way." So it's talking about Christ's first coming and those things that God was going to use John to perform, to accomplish, because he was talking about a Messiah that was coming, to a Messiah who was there and would be in their midst. Though they didn't understand those things people began to repent. It was a physical type of thing, not a spiritual calling like we have in the Church, but nevertheless there was a people that God was going to prepare, just like all the thousands that lined the street when he came into Jerusalem at the end of his life. Incredible stories! Here it talks about the one who would be there to prepare his ways, those who would be, he'd be pointing or turning people toward the Messiah.

Verse 77—to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins. So again, talking about this, that you're going to be able to be forgiven of your sins. So people repented. They hadn't come to this thing of understanding the Passover yet, but this was the beginning of the process. Just like it is for us, we come to a point in time where we begin to grasp things about repentance, the need to go under the water, a desire to bury sin, and then to come back up and live in newness of life, but more has to take place. That isn't the end of it. If we stop there nothing would take place.

Basically, that's what happened with the baptism of John. It was a physical type of thing because they couldn't receive the spiritual part of it. There is a desire, a beginning to see here a need to repent, a desire to be able to get rid of sin, to have it indeed washed away, but how that was going to be accomplished hadn't yet occurred. He hadn't yet died, in the sense of those that were being drawn at that particular time, for that to be manifest. Later on some grasped that and those who continued on became a part of the Church understood that you have to have hands layed upon you, you have to receive the holy spirit of God. That's the rest of the story. In order for God to dwell in you, to know indeed that sins have been forgiven, then He will dwell in you. So you need the whole story here of what's going to be accomplished in the Messiah's life.

...to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dawning of a new day from on high has visited us... So something was changing, something was going to happen, something that hadn't happened in the past 4,000 years was about to be fulfilled. **...to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.** It's through the Messiah. It's through the ability to receive and have the mind of God, to begin to have change in the way we think about life.

Ephesians 2. Let's continue on here. **Ephesians 2:11—Therefore, remember that in times past you were gentiles in the flesh...** So again here, John was the one who was to prepare the way

for Christ's first coming as our Passover began to be revealed to mankind far more clearly, about the way of peace, which is going to be shown through verses like this as God began to mold and fashion the Church, reveal to the Church things through the apostles. In this case here, Paul. **...that in times past you were gentiles in the flesh, who are also called, or were also called, if you will here, who are uncircumcised by those who are called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands.** So there is this thing going on between gentiles and Jews and so he talks in physical terms to them about their approach toward the gentiles, or the Jewish approach toward the gentiles. There were those that were considered "circumcised in the flesh," as it says here, "made by hands." It was a very physical thing. Then they looked down upon the gentiles who were uncircumcised, and so he's describing some of this.

...that at that time you were without Christ, being foreigners in the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise. He's saying here, "You didn't have anything," when you speak to the gentiles, "the Jews had that which was physical done by hands," and then he's showing something greater here as he goes on to talk to them. It says, **you were not a part with Israel and you were strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,** whereas on a physical plane and to a point Israel at least had certain things that had been given to them as far as knowledge, though they didn't grasp it.

Verse 13—but now in Christ Joshua you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. So it goes back to those scriptures in Isaiah, speaking of peace and those who are afar off and to those who are near and how God's going to bring everything into one, indeed, and is going to give peace, as it talks about there in Isaiah.

...sometimes were afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace. So whether it be Jew or gentile Joshua the Christ here is described as our peace. That's what he's saying here. He is our peace. He is the one through whom we can have peace or begin to grasp peace and begin to live peace.

...who has made both one, both Jew and gentile, both without Christ, if you will, because Israelites didn't have Christ. The Jews didn't have Christ, but neither did the gentiles. That's a part of what he's saying here, "Both of you have been able to be made one now." **...and has broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; having abolished in the flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; for to make of himself from both one new man, *and so making peace.*** So he's going on here talking about this process of how change begins to take place in us and how it's going to be accomplished.

It goes on to say here in **verse 16—and that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body.** So he's talking about the Body of Christ and he's saying here that both can be reconciled, both Jew and gentile, because both, in essence, were without Christ. **...and that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the stake (pole), the way he died, having slain the enmity through this and came and preached peace...** Again here, this enmity, that which makes us an enemy to God and to God's way of life because of human nature because that's what selfishness is.

Everything that we choose as far as selfishness is against God because it doesn't agree with God, and so God shows how He's going to bring us into oneness with Him.

Verse 17—and came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near. So sometimes people read this and they think, well, the Jew here had more. No, that's not what he's saying here at all. They had the advantage in one respect, of having knowledge about God. They had an advantage in the sense of knowing certain, like the Jews did, about the Sabbath, and so that knowledge and the more they were able to live by certain things on a physical plane the better their lives were, but they were not God's in the sense of that which is spiritual.

It says, **and came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to those who were near.** The point being is those who were near at that time being spoken of are the Jews, but they needed to be saved. They needed to be able to receive of God's spirit. So did the gentiles.

...for through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father. It's a beautiful thing. I marvel how God has given us so many ways basically to say the same thing over and over and over again so that certain things jar us more at certain times, help us to come to a greater conversion, will help us to come to an ability to see things on a spiritual plane in a greater way so that we can make growth and advance in our growth, and yet it's the same thing, just a lot of different ways of saying it. There are different things that sometimes jar us that have been said many times before, but we're not ready for it. Then at a certain time, God has prepared and worked with us, and all of a sudden we're able to see something. How many times in your life do you hear the same scripture, a particular scripture, and all of a sudden you see something in it you couldn't see before? Yet it's always been there, we're just not ready for it. It's a process of growth.

...for through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father (verse 19), therefore, you are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints. So again here, it's talking about the Church because the saints have to do with those who are called, those who are called into a relationship with God, and now there is a citizenship that you're able to have with them, a fellowship, if you will. **...and of the household of God.** It's God's house. It's God's Temple.

...and are being built up (being built upon) the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Joshua the Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in/through whom all the building is fitly framed together and grows unto an holy temple in the Lord. You have to be in the temple.

I still marvel every Sabbath I preach knowing that there are people out here who aren't in the temple yet. Why? Why? It's a choice. If you want to be in the temple come into the temple. If you want to be in God, if you want to be in Christ, if you want them to be in you it's a choice. It's a choice by what you're doing in your life, by how you're living your life, whether you're being truthful with God, genuine and truthful to God in what you do and the choices you make in your life.

It means we have to address certain things in our life. That's why we mention things about finances, things about sex. The two greatest pulls that people have. And choices and decisions that are made in families so often have to do with those two things, because it's about finances, about what you can have in the world or what you might not be able to have for a time or what you think you want and have to pull back on. What kind of a choice is that? What do we esteem more? He knows what's in our heart. What do we value more then? What do we value more? Where do we want to put it? Do we want to put it in a car, a better car, a nicer car? A nicer car is a nice thing to have. A nicer place to live is a nice thing to have, but not to the point where it robs from God. Because then what value is it?

I'd rather live in a little cubicle, smaller than what I lived in for three years than to rob from God. And candidly, I can do that! I can do that! I can live in a little cubicle if I have to, to be out of the rain, to be out of the elements, or whatever it might be. If I have to so be it! But how many people won't do that sometimes? They make choices and decisions because they want something more, and therefore, make choices that are against God. What a horrible thing. It's happened a lot in God's Church.

So do we want to be in the temple? It's a choice by what we do. Sex? Things on the Internet that we want to fill our minds with? Garbage that's out there that we want to fill our minds with? And then to maybe even take it farther than that by having a certain kind of friendship with others that we shouldn't be having, getting a little too close, doing things that shouldn't be done. This is happening in God's Church on a regular basis. Pops up every once in a while; just pops up its ugly head. It does. Do you know it's always been that way in God's Church? Just because it's God's Church doesn't mean that there aren't people who come into it who are out in the courtyard screwing around. I guess sometimes physically and spiritually, okay? Sad to make such choices in life, to let a choice of someone else, another person, making a choice to pull you out of God's Church, to refuse Christ because you're making a conscientious decision to refuse Christ, to refuse God.

Any time you do those things, mess around with those kinds of things, you're making a choice to refuse God. What a horrible thing. That's why Christ said, "If you refuse me I'll refuse you before my Father." Basically, what happens is we just get cut off from the flow of the spirit then, don't we? That's what that means. You're refused before God. Sometimes then that obviously goes right down to the Church and the ministry then is given that sometimes to put someone out, to separate, to do physically what's already been done spiritually. I hate that part of the job. I loathe it. I wish it wasn't that way but people make choices.

You think Christ enjoys that? You think God enjoys that after He's done everything, after Christ has done all that he's done, poured out His blood for every one of us, and he has a desire for each person that's drawn, that God draws, you think Christ doesn't have an incredible love, and incredible desire for every person who's ever called, that they make it, that they continue on, that they will make the right choices? We've been called to succeed. We've been called to win.

We've been called to receive peace. We've been called to receive God's love into our life and to live a fellowship that is only unique to the Church, and then to have that which is so far above and beyond that later on up the road, if we'll remain faithful, and yet we make physical choices for physical things in the world.

Physical things are fine IF...if God is first. That's the key. All physical things are fine to have because if God's not put first then it's lust, it's striving to covet, to have that which is forbidden, because somewhere along the line we had to cut God out of the picture in order to have it. It's not worth it. It'd be better to be in a little cubicle in the corner like some have to live in certain countries south of here, sometimes not very good shelter, just pitching something up, just pitching something together. It'd be better to live that way in that kind of life, which some have chosen to do in times past, as we read I believe it was last Sabbath, talking about various ones who made various choices of how they chose to live, of where they had to live in order to continue in God's way of life.

Different ones who had to live in a cave or whatever it might be, or to live in the desert, to remove themselves from people so that their life could continue on. Some who didn't have to worry about weight problems like we do in this western world because the food wasn't very plentiful at all and because of what they had to eat they didn't have any weight problems. So in this western world that we live in today so often it's a matter of we eat well. I eat too well, I really do. It shows up in places. Incredible how blessed we are.

Talk about "the household of God, building is fitly framed together, joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord," **in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God through the spirit.** What a beautiful thing that God can dwell in us. That's why Christ died, so he could dwell in us. Forgiveness of sins, yes, but it doesn't stop there, going under the water like John did to those who wanted repentance. They went into the water, but that's not enough. It took more. It took his blood being spilled to the earth, the things that took place there so that we can go under the water, come back up, and then have hands layed on us and receive the impregnation of God's spirit and have a continual flow of God's spirit into our life. That's why he died. He didn't die just so we'd be forgiven of sin, because that doesn't mean anything of and by itself unless you receive His holy spirit. Then when we receive it what do we do with it?

Philippians 4:4—Always rejoice in the Lord. That has so much to do with being thankful, seeing what He's given to us, seeing what has been sacrificed to give what we have, seeing what Christ sacrificed, seeing what God the Father sacrificed through time. **Always rejoice in the Lord. And I say it again, rejoice!** How do we think toward God? How do we think about what we have in life, what we've been given physically and spiritually?

Let your moderation be known unto everyone. So, so much of how we judge things in life have to do with moderation. There is a balance. We have to seek that balance. What is a balance in life? We're ever striving to learn how to do that. Even in how to keep the Sabbath, what is the moderation in that? What is the balance in that in our lives? On and on it goes. What is it about

the clothes we put on? How is it how I do my hair? Every kind of thing. What is it about the amount of drink I have, speaking of alcohol? Where is the moderation? Not to be like the world, not to go as far as the world; what is the moderation?

Let your moderation be known unto everyone. The Lord is at hand. He is near. So it's being reminded here that we better be concerned about what moderation is because we have a calling and this is our time...this is our time. He's at hand. That's what it means, "He is near."

Don't be anxious, it's a word that means worry, **over anything**. You're going to be tried in that in many different things in life, of what you're going to allow worry in your life, in your mind. You come to a point in life no matter what it is that to have peace you've got to put it in God's hands. There are things that are beyond our control, and to be at peace with that. Whatever the answer is, whatever is given to us at any moment in time therein to be content. That's an awesome thing to understand, to live, actually.

...but in everything by prayer and supplication... So it requires a relationship with God. It requires a prayer life with God in conversing with God about the things we live and the things we go through. God knows what we go through at all times in our life, but it's how we handle it. It's how we handle it that God's concerned. How do we deal with it? Are we learning to put Him first in our life? Are we learning, as we went through one series, to truly trust in Him? There are things we have to do, but is our trust there and are we at peace with that? Do we have peace?

...but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Beautiful! To think about things, to think about what we do have, to think about the truths that God has given to us that others don't have, to think about the calling that we have. **...let your requests be made known unto God**, with thanksgiving, in other words, **and the peace of God, which passes all understanding...** Isn't that an incredible thing? It says there's a peace that of and by yourself you can't understand. You can't grasp what God is offering when it comes to this matter of peace because in the world it's not real, the kind of peace that God offers us.

Our definition of peace is a whole lot different than God's. That's the point. It really is. The kind of peace we're able to have in our lives is a whole lot different than what our concept is of peace in the world and what it really means.

...and the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep, or guard, as the word means here, **your hearts and minds**. So it's actually something that helps to guard you, to the way you think, to keep you, to guard you, to guard your heart, to guard your thinking, to guard your mind **through Christ Joshua**. So he has to be a part of it.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true... Not the things that are false, there is a focus. Norman Vincent Peale wrote *The Power of Positive Thinking*. I think of that book, I read earlier on, when I came into the Church, and there is something just on a physical plane because it has to do with choices, how you choose to think about various things. There is that which is very

powerful in that as to how you respond to things, as to how you think about things, whether it's being negative or positive. What do you see and why do you see it? Now, I'm talking about when God's in the picture, because with the world, even on a physical plane there are things they can grasp and comprehend on a physical plane, but they don't grasp the rest of it that's far more powerful for us, what it means when God's in the picture and we make those decisions and choices and are positive about the things because God's in the picture and because of our calling.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things *are* true, whatsoever things are honest... What do you want to focus on? What do you want to be a part of your thinking on a regular basis? That's what it's talking about here. ...**whatsoever things *are* just.** If you worry about the things that are unjust, if you focus on the things that are unjust you're going to eat up your life because there's all kinds of injustice in the world around us and we have to be focused on that which is just that's going to come to help resolve the issues, because if our focus is so much upon our calling that we grasp that we're a part of something that's going to help to change all that, then it puts things in a totally different focus and a way you deal with it then.

There are things you can't change in this world, you can't change in people's lives. That's why I marvel, and I'm learning so much. I'll be candid with you, growing in it more and more all the time, of understanding the thing that was given to me to tell the ministry and have told them many of times: There are times you just need to back off! The Church of God in times past wasn't like that. Too often people inserted themselves into people's lives, into situations where they shouldn't have.

There is a time when harm that might be caused to others, there's a need to get involved in certain matters in people's lives. But we all make mistakes. We all do dumb things. So that's a fine line. That's why you have to have, in your relationships with others, the same thing. You have to look to God for help to know how to deal with various matters in people's lives, especially within the Church even more so because we're held to a higher standard. We truly are in how we think toward each other and treat each other.

Sometimes it's wise to back off. You know, God doesn't come down and just get involved in every little thing we do, and if He did we wouldn't survive. He lets us make choices and decisions and He lets us make choices where we hurt ourselves. He lets us do that. He warns us. He pleads with us, but He lets us do it and then through that process hopefully and prayerfully at some point we're going to be able to break free, we're going to be able to see what we've done, we're going to be able to acknowledge repentance, to want repentance, to want change.

I hope you understand what I'm saying in part because there is so much in that, there really is. This thing sometimes of not getting worked up about other people and what they're doing within the Body. Does that ever happen within the Body that we worry about, we get concerned, overly concerned with what certain ones have done or are doing? You've got to be careful of that. You've got to be ever so careful of that, see, because it's how you think towards others that count. It truly does, in a very powerful way.

Brethren, whatsoever things are true, these are the thing that we're to think upon. If you focus on the negative things in people's lives, if that's your primary focus you're hurting yourself immensely so. You truly are. What about the positive things that are going on? Look at the good things. Look at what God's doing within the Church, within the Body. The same thing in the world oftentimes. Why weigh ourselves down with the negative? Negative things are all around us everywhere, but we're a part that's been called to change all that. What an awesome thing! But we've got to work on this. This is what has to change.

...**whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest...** He's telling us what we need to think about and what we need to think upon. ...**whatsoever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely...** There is a lot of ugliness in the world around us so you're going to see all these bad things. But what do you choose to think upon as far as your mindset is concerned?

...**whatsoever things are of a good report...** Look at the news. There is nothing good. There is nothing. Who wants to hear about good things that are happening? Who wants to hear about certain accomplishments of what people have been able to do? Now, there are people who do, but as a whole that's not what the news is about. It's not about good news. It's about everything that's bad in the world. And we get such a diet of that. So much is bad. So much is bad in how people are treating each other and things that they're doing. It doesn't matter where you look it's just bad. You see one station over here, and it tells you bad on one side. You look at another station, it tells you bad on the other. They're both finding bad with each other. It's just all so bad, you know, it's so evil. And it is. It's bad and it's evil.

Where is the good? People don't think that way. That's not what they choose to think about. You know what they choose to watch and tune into? Drama. We live in a world that likes to suck up drama! We don't want to find out about certain construction of certain buildings and the ingenuity of man.

I think of one of these buildings in Dubai that they had to engineer as they were building it and they were going in a circular pattern. It had never been done and so they had to learn as they were building it. Some of the most awesome things, interesting things and how they made those islands. I'll just use that one area of the world. How they made those huge islands out there where they finally built all kinds of things, homes and businesses, and one that looks like a palm tree. They're gigantic! Gigantic! And of the marvel of the ships that went out and how they made the ships so they could take up things off the ocean floor and bring it and pile it and shoot it out then to build these islands that go out into the sea. A marvel! Incredible what man can do when he puts his mind to it, various accomplishments like that that are being done. But that's too boring. It's too boring. That's not my human nature. That's your human nature. We don't tend, generally, to want to search out those things by nature.

What's the latest garbage that's going on right now? What's FOX say? What's CNN say? Oh! I do it every day. I go to see what they're saying, trying to keep abreast of various things that are happening in the world. You have to wade through a lot of garbage. It's always there, the evil.

Now, I don't choose to think that way in the sense of what I'm going to allow into my life. I can see what they're doing. I'm thankful that we have a part of being able to one day change that and to show what is wrong in all of it, not a part of it. That's why you don't take sides because none of it's right. There is no government that's right. There is no government leader that's all right by any measure. I hope you understand what I'm saying because it's about what we choose spiritually to allow into our thinking, what we allow to affect us. It's whether we allow it to begin to hurt us so much that we're worrying about it and over anxious about it. None of that matters. God has a plan that's being worked out and we're either a part of working in that or we're not and we're letting other things bother us in life. On the job; things out of your control. You can't change the way they are. You can't change the way your company is.

So how do we think toward those kinds of things in our life?

Going on: **whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there be* any virtue, any virtue, if there be any praise—think on these things.** So it's a matter of where do you want this to be? It's how you shuffle and deal with things in the world around you, but where is your real focus? Do we go on to see what God is doing? Do we want to be a part of how God is addressing various things? Do we look at those kinds of things and say, "Yes, but this is what we're doing, this is what we're going to accomplish, this is how we're a part of something that's going to change, and this is what we're going to be a part of changing."

Again, I can't give this to you. It's got to be something you want with all of your might, to think in a right way toward God and what God is doing in the world, what He's called us to change and to be a part of it in our changing, and to realize that there are certain things in life and the world around you you can't change but within the plan of God.

The same thing is true within the Church. I can't change anything except to yield myself to the process that God has given, to do it His way, to strive to do it His way through all of that, to preach His way, and then everyone else has to make choices in life. But for me I know what I've chosen to do, how I've chosen to live and to think toward one another within the Body and to think toward those who are outside the body so that I can have peace and not drama in my life. I see the drama all around me, but I don't have to have it in my life, see, and that's a choice. That's a choice that every person here has to make. Not next week! Not next month! Not next year! You've got to make those choices now in your life, that you don't let it into your life and control you and control your mind.

I hope that makes sense because it's a choice. What we have just read is a choice as to what you think upon. These aren't just words that are just out here blowing in the wind, okay? They have deep meaning.

Whatever things are true... Why would we want to spend time focusing on things that are not true? Why would you want to spend time focusing on things that are speculative, doubtful, not knowing? **Whatsoever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report...** Please, please, that's what I want! That's what you should want in your focus, in your thinking. You're going to rub shoulders with all the rest of this garbage and swill and drama of life, but you don't have to take it into your life.

And see, that's the danger. We in the western world, or of the whole world, frankly, now, because of technology and because of the media and because of everything out there, we tend to want to suck up the drama. We choose to live the drama ourselves because that's what we have learned to do even in God's Church. That's what we need to learn to get rid of, truly. Okay? Because drama is the opposite of peace, it really is. I'm not talking about drama in terms of things that maybe you thought in times past, I'm talking about that which is real and manifest in our lives every day of our life that we deal with. It's how we think; that determines whether there's drama and to the degree that drama's there. It's how you think! It's how you think toward everything, every one around you in life. It truly is.

So it says here, that this peace...**the peace of God, passes all understanding.** God will help us to understand true peace, the kind of peace He wants us to experience in life. It comes from Him. So this peace spoken of in Philippians 4 that passes all understanding is spoken of in this manner because it is beyond our grasp as human beings on a physical plane. It's beyond our abilities. That why I mentioned about the League of Nations and Woodrow Wilson, because that's something done on a national level, if you will, between nations, or the United Nations. The ability for peace isn't in man. So whether it be on a national level, state level, a community level, the workplace, the family, it's beyond our ability. It's beyond mankind's ability to see and to achieve, truly.

Let's turn over to **Colossians 3:1**—**If you, then, were raised with Christ, then seek those things which are above.** What does that mean? That means exactly what we're talking about now, the things that come from God, the things that God wants us to see and to have and to focus upon in life. That's what we need to seek. So that's where we need to think. That's the kind of thinking we need to have toward God and what He's offering and the sacrifice and the work it takes to get there. The things that are true, the things that are just, the things that are lovely, the things that are beautiful in life, the things that are of good report, and on and on it goes, that's what we're working toward because that's Elohim.

All the other crap and garbage we're trying to get rid of and it begins with you in your own life and how you think and how you live now, see? That's what we've got to grasp. This is about change right now in the Church of God. That's why I said what I did during the Feast.

If you, then, were raised with Christ, then seek those things which are above, the ways of God, the peace of God, the mind of God...the mind of God. The only way we can show forth those virtues, that kind of mind, that's what it's talking about, the virtues of God. The mind of God is to be in God and God in us and to be focused on those things very much so. Not this world. Not the temporary things of this world. Not the sex. Not the money. Not the have, the get, the wants that we want, that we desire that oppose what God is offering.

...seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection... See, that's the problem. Where do we set our affection? Is God first? Is that where our affection is first, His way? **...on the things above, not on things on the earth.** See, these are nice words to think about, but boy, what does it mean in your life spiritually in reality, in how you're living it?

"...not on things on the earth." Brethren, it's a hard thing for us to grasp what it's like to live three score and ten or three score and twenty, which is four score, and on and on it might go, and what we have in this physical life; it's hard to think beyond that. It's hard to grasp what God is offering us to live in into endless time. I can't grasp that but I want that. I want that His way, the kind of peace, the kind of life that we can have, the way we can think toward one another that's pure, that's good, that's lovely, that's refreshing, that's filled with peace. That's what we want. Not some Xanadu type of thing, you know, that man comes up with, this thing that's not real. We used to have that toward the Millennium, what it was going to be like. We didn't understand because it's hard to grasp what God is offering us.

Anyway, **Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth. For you are dead...** Now, we feel very much alive and we want to take care of this physical life, of everything we have, because this is our focus, this is the here and now. That's why people take, misuse things that God says don't misuse that, don't do that, don't screw up your mind, don't pollute your mind, don't tarnish your mind. It's a precious thing. Don't yield to the pulls that you have as a human being of what you want in this life that mean nothing in the future, that aren't going to exist in the future. You don't have to worry. The wealth, the abundance, the richness, the fullness of life you can't even begin to compare with what we're living now. You really can't. But we're physical and we think of the here and now in what we have. All that that's physical is fine, and as much as we can have in life is fine, as long as God is first.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead... In other words, when we died in the water we made a decision and a choice right then and there, "I belong to God and I'm thankful of that. I don't want to belong to myself, to whatever I choose and whatever I want in life because I know where it'll go and it won't be good."

You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ *who is our life* shall appear, then you shall also appear with him in glory. Now, this is speaking first and foremost at this period of time to those that Paul was speaking to, and that was strictly to the Church, of those who were being called to become a part of 144,000. That's the only reason they were being

called at that time. That's the only reason people through Ephesus, through that period of time were being called and on into Smyrna, Pergamos, all the rest, Thyatira. They were all being called to be a part of the first resurrection and so that's the primary focus over 2,000 years. We just live in a unique time now that's a little bit different. But we still look to those things that will come in their time at the end of a thousand years.

Your life is hidden with Christ and God: when Christ who is our life shall appear then you shall also appear with him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, in other words, lust, things that conflict with God's way of life. That's what he's talking about in all these things, choices and decisions that people have been put out of the Church over the last year over. Every one of these. And the year before that. And the year before that, going back 2,000 years. That's why people separate themselves from God, for these things.

...**uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires,** just means lusts which are forbidden, and **covetousness, which is idolatry.** Raising something up above God. That's what we do whenever we sin; we've raised something up, someone or something above God.

Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience...

That's why we've finally come to the end of 6,000 years. That's why I marvel sometimes what people read about judgment in the Bible and they haven't understood that timing of that. They don't grasp and comprehend. The world doesn't grasp and comprehend. They think you die and go somewhere and that's your judgment, you're being punished. No. The punishment that God's talking about here, the judgment that's coming upon the earth is the time we live in. There was one other great judgment that came during the days of Noah, but now in that which was spoken of by the prophets is another time of judgment at the end of 6,000 years.

...**in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them,** speaking about, "because of the wrath of God coming upon the children of disobedience." That's a way of life we lived, and that's why the world has to suffer, that's why the world has to come to this point in time after 6,000 years of God finally saying, "You'll destroy yourself if I don't intervene. That's what it's all led to, your way of selfishness." **But now you are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.** What do these mean? What do these mean to you on a spiritual plane?

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. Do people lie? Yeah! And people lie. Human beings, we want to put on a facade. I mean, we want to be seen in a certain way by others. That very much controls our life in large part. That's a big battle for us when we come into God's Church. It doesn't just all go away. Sometimes people don't tell certain parts of the story because they don't want others to know because they want you to think about it in a certain way, which is sometimes a matter of wisdom too. So there is a balance in things.

But be who you are. Again, that's something that's understood with time, what it really means on a spiritual plane.

Verse 10—put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new *man* which is renewed in knowledge, in how you think, in what you think upon, like what we read earlier, in **knowledge according to the image of Him who created him (verse 11), where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free**, man or woman. I don't care what it is, it's how we think toward one another. I marvel how God created us. I marvel how He created us to have different races - for a purpose, to learn what our nature is like. That's why it's there! To learn how we judge and can begin to understand how we misjudge so often in life.

So many things that God has created a potential for so that we can come to see the ugliness of human nature and what we're like, and how we do judge and misjudge. So evil, human nature. It truly is.

So it says here, **bond nor free...** It goes back to how we judge, how we think about each other. **...but Christ *is* all and in all.**

Galatians 3:28 it says **...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Colossians 3:12—Put on, therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies. So again, this is something we have to work at, whether we're going to be merciful to someone or others. To me that's an awesome thing, too, to understand, that if you understand the degree to which God's been merciful to you it's a whole lot easier to be merciful to others. If you don't grasp how merciful God's been to you, you won't tend to be merciful to others. I've known a lot of people in God's Church who aren't so merciful to other people because they really don't grasp the depth of mercy that God has poured out upon them and is still pouring out upon them, things we need to really grasp.

...put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies... That should be deep down inside of us, of why we think toward others and treat others in the manner we do. **... kindness**, to be kind, **humbleness of mind**, not getting lifted up by who we think we are. We're all called. We're all a part of God's family. No one is better than anyone else.

...meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another... I love this one because we tend to think of it like we're better than someone: "I'm going to forbear because I'm better than someone else so I'll put up with this or that or whatever it might be." That's not what this is about. It means to allow for differences...to allow for the differences in people.

We're all different. We all have different growth that takes place in our life. None of us are the same. We have different things that God is molding and fashioning in each one of us. There are times that I can learn and think about certain things about people's lives and realizing that they're going through something specific for them because God's molding them for something

different. You can learn a lot from that because God's molding something unique for them, in them as they yield to the process, if they'll continue to hold on and continue to fight for this way of life. Everyone has been called for a purpose, and God is molding and fashioning something unique within each and every one of us if we yield to that process and continue to fight for what He's offering us. And that's a beautiful thing, it really is. Were not all on the same peg in the temple. We don't want to all fit in the same spot. We can't. Wherever God's placing us it's awesome, especially in the calling we have above all people through time.

...and forgiving one another, to be forgiving, not hold on to things. Too often there are relationships and friendships that are hurt by this because we don't let go. Give people time. Give others time. Don't hold anything against anyone. That's God's doing, whether He holds something. He only does that out of love, to get them to a certain point, to help them come to a certain point. He'll work with individuals knowing how to work with them. God knows how to do that with each one of us.

...forgiving one another. So, if any person has a quarrel... That's why I marvel. There isn't one person of my past, not one, some who have said and done some of the ugliest of things, I mean really ugly, painful, hurtful, and so forth. There is not a one of them that once God, if God is able to, if He brings them to a point of repentance, where they come to a point of repentance (and I desire to see that in them), that when that day comes and they see what they have done that the embrace will be nothing in the past matters, it's the here and now, and thank God you've come through it. You're a brother. You're a sister. Whatever it is. Nothing else matters. It truly doesn't. Everything is forgiven, everything is gone; it should never have been there in the first place. Incredible.

So, if any person have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so do the same. We should be forgiving in our thinking toward others, not to hold anything against anyone. **And above all things put on love**, put on agape, God's love, which is the bond of perfection. That's what makes us pure. That's what makes us strong, is God's love, is God's mind, virtues that come from God. We're far from that, but He lets us taste of those things and He lets us think that way. He lets us taste of what that's like to think that way.

This is the result: **And let the peace of God rule.** See, we make choices every day of our life. What rules our life? Drama or peace. I'm putting it exactly that way because that is God's message to you. It is God's message to me. Which do we let rule in our life? What do we esteem? What do we give control to in our life? Drama or peace?

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Yes, there is drama you have to deal with in life, but don't let it rule you. **...to the which also you are called in one body; and be thankful.**

So again, this thing of peace is a beautiful thing. Some have made comment about all those words we went through last week. I received different emails and so forth about all those words because they reflect the result of what comes out of it, and peace does not come out of those

words but human drama does, drama of the mind, the anxiety, the worry, the turmoil, the confusion, everything else that comes out of this mind that is the opposite of God's way of real peace, peace with God. When you have peace with God, the more you have that the more you'll have it, period, toward everything else, toward everyone else around you.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts. See, that's a choice. That's what he's showing here. It's a choice because one or the other is going to rule in our life. We're going to either let life rule us in the sense of the things that go on around us and we get accustomed to that, and if we're not careful we bring that into our life then of how we think.

I think of news sometimes, that if people aren't careful they take sides. That's not what it's about. You're letting drama come into your life if you start taking sides. That's not what it's about. It's about being able to judge and analyze and see the wrong, the things that aren't right. But don't let that become a part of your life in how you're thinking towards others, because then you'll end up being dead wrong. It's about how we deal with everything around us, and don't let it become a part of what rules our mind.

Because, I'm going to be real candid with you. I see a lot of drama ruling a lot of people's minds in God's Church. Too much so. I don't know how much peace then that you're allowing to rule in your life. But you need to think about it and pray about it and ask God for help that peace will rule more in your mind and in your thinking and in your speech and everything that comes out of you because you can't let drama rule in your mind.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be thankful. Thank God He's showing us His way. Thank God He's showing us a way that we're able to live life and think in life that produces peace. Because I'll be honest, I've said this many times, I loathe with all my being any facet of drama. I really, really do. I know where that comes from because we're at a point in time where finally we get to do something about it very soon now. We get to help be a part of bringing it to a screeching halt on the earth. All the drama that rules this earth, that rules in people's lives, that's going to lead into a war that you can't grasp yet until you've gone through it.

And some who hold on and want to see the end? You don't know sometimes what you're asking for because it's going to get really, really, really, really bad. You're going to experience some of the worst things of all human history. It's not going to be a pleasant thing to live through. But with your relationship toward your God He will bless you and bring you through those things and protect you. But that doesn't mean you're not going to experience a lot of what's really bad out here. Because we are.

God doesn't take us out of the world. He's not going to take us to a place in Jordan so we don't have to suffer, so we don't have to experience along with the world what it experiences. On the contrary, He's going to show His great power and His great might to take care of His people in the worst of times, though we suffer, see?

Think of all those who've gone through time spoken of in Hebrews 11 and 12 and in through there. We're no different now. Still in the world. We're going to experience what it's experiencing. Those who lived in the time of Christ under Herod's rule? They experienced some pretty tough things. Those who lived under the various Roman governments from that time forward and other governments in God's Church have experienced a lot of horrible things, truly.

Romans 8:5... You know what? We're going to stop there for today. There is a lot here to meditate on. There is a lot here to think about. There is a lot to pray about here, of something God desires us to have within the Church more and more - peace, that we think peace. It's a way of thinking, of what we allow to rule in our life.

If nothing else in this following week, pray about that, that you be able to understand what God is saying here, when we're able to think about what really rules in this mind.