

This is the continuation of the series entitled *The Establishment of Peace*, and this will be *Part 3*.

I'm still amazed by how at the end of an age mankind has tried to come together because the population of the earth has grown so much, technology has become so great that early on in this past century there was the attempt to begin a unification of nations to prevent world war because of the atrocities of what happened in World War 1. And talked about the League of Nations and how that that failed, didn't even get past, as far as the people of the United States was concerned. They didn't want to support it, although their president did. Then following up, because that failed after World War 2, they tried again and this time with the United Nations. Now, just a little over seventy years it's been going on.

It's an absolute farce. Man can't accomplish peace. He can't bring peace. And we talked about that statue in front of the United Nations building, of something that only God can accomplish. Only God can bring peace to this earth. And that's the time we live in, a time we very much look forward to being fulfilled and accomplished realizing now we live in a time when... I think of the news right now and things that are going on in the news and how nations, there's a lot of sabre rattling going on out there, things that different ones are saying in different countries. And we know it's coming, it's just a matter of time.

Toward the latter portion of *Part 2* last week there was a section of scripture in the book of Philippians that we focused upon that speaks of the kind of thinking, the kind of thinking that one needs in order to cultivate their life...or to cultivate life (I should say), in order to think better. We need to think better. That's why I love the word "repentance" in the New Testament. It means "to think differently," in essence. It's about a different kind of thinking. And that's what we seek to do when we repent. It's a desire to think differently. To become converted is to change our way, then to respond to that process, of a desire to change, to become something different. And this has a great deal to do with what we're talking about in this particular sermon.

So again, we talked about this need to think different in the sense of the kind of thinking that's needed in order to produce real peace, true peace in one's life. And again, it goes back to how we think, whether peace is a product of our life has everything to do with what goes on in this mind, each one of us. And God has called us to change this mind, to go through a process of transformation. And it's not easy. You have to work at it. Peace has to be worked at. It doesn't just happen, especially with human beings. The reality is with human beings it can't happen. You can do things and human beings can do things, mankind can do things to have a measure of peace in their life, but to experience it continually in family, in community, in a nation is something you really, truly have to work at.

It doesn't just happen even for those in this world, but with God's spirit it's to become a way of thinking, a way of being.

So let's go back there today and begin there where we left off, or that section we did look at last week. Good place to start to be reminded of a different kind of thinking.

Philippians 4:4. It says, **Always rejoice in the Lord. And again I say, rejoice!** So I can't help but think of the Feast of Tabernacles when we're told at that particular period of time that God desires that we come together at the Feast of Tabernacles to rejoice, and I can't help but think of the period of time that the Feast of Tabernacles pictures, a millennial period, a time where mankind is going to be able to work at producing peace in a way we never have in the last 6,000 years. So we live in some incredible times.

And we're told here, then, the Church... This is about the Church. This isn't the world. The world can't receive this. **Always rejoice in the Lord. And again I say, rejoice! Let your moderation...** It's better translated as "gentleness or forbearance," in that respect. **...gentleness or forbearance be known unto everyone. The Lord is at hand.** In other words, he's near. And for us we understand nearer than ever.

Because they didn't understand back then, 2,000 years ago nearly, that it was going to be a long, long time. But for them that time was near because this is their time. Whenever you're called, it doesn't matter when it was in the past 6,000 years when people have been called, for them their salvation is near, the Lord is near, the Kingdom of God is near. And so that's why those terms were used throughout scripture by Christ himself and talking about the Kingdom of God is at hand. And the reason being is because if your mind has been opened up this is your time, it's now. For others it'll be in the Great White Throne. For the majority of others it'll be in the Great White Throne.

So, **The Lord is at hand/near.** But we understand now for us this is far more meaningful because we live at a time when Christ is going to return to this earth.

Don't be anxious, in other words, **worry over anything.** Worry doesn't change anything, and yet we can tend to worry as human beings. We can get into a state of mind of worry depending on what it is that hits us, that comes our way, certain kinds of trials. And it is a battle to deal with some of the things of this world and to put things in proper perspective and to get past that.

And that goes back to some of the sermon we had talked about at one point about placing our trust in God, because a lot of it has to do with that. It has to do with understanding our calling, understanding the uniqueness of our lives, and how there are things that you just can't change in life. You've got to deal with them but you can't change them. People, you can't change them. You can only work at changing yourself. But sometimes people worry about that, about seeing others change and why don't they do this or why don't they do that, or I think they should and blah, blah, blah, and that's where a lot of the problems that are opposite of peace come from. People aren't content then, if we think that way, if we think in those terms.

So now it's still going on here talking about some of this. **Don't be anxious or worry over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving.** So it starts out here saying look to God. That's what prayer is about. Put things in their proper perspective. When you do that in the plan of God, in the purpose of God and what He's working out on this earth the very fact that you've been called and others haven't helps you deal with a vast majority of things that are in the world around you. They can't help it, they're imprisoned. They're in captivity. They don't have the opportunity and the ability to see through things as you do as far as the plan of God is concerned. So that in itself, if you can deal with that, just as Christ says, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." Stephen basically said the same thing, "Don't lay this sin to their charge," because they don't know what they're doing, in essence. They're caught up in something they can't deal with. We're not.

We're to be able to deal with the things that come our way in the context of going to God - that's why prayer here, it says, **but in everything by prayer and supplication.** In other words, your petitions go before God. You look to God. You may not understand something so you look to God for answers, for help to deal with, to know what to do, to do it the right way, **with thanksgiving.** That's so important, to go before God, yes, in prayers and petitions and desire to know and understand and learn and repent, and all the other things that we do, but also here with thanksgiving. It's a matter of constantly in our prayers in life giving thanks to God for what we do have, for the calling that we have first and foremost, for what we do see and understand. And that helps put a lot of things in perspective, it really does, just right there alone.

If we have thanksgiving involved in our prayer, throughout our prayer, it's going to have a lot to do with the answers we come down to, the conclusions we come down to and the peace of mind we have as a result.

So it says here, **prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, something that comes from God, which passes all understanding...** So there is that which comes from God that is unique that the world doesn't grasp nor comprehend. But we should be able to.

...which passes all understanding shall keep or guard your hearts and minds through Christ Joshua. Finally, verse 8 it says, Finally, brethren, whatever things are true... This is about how to think. Why spend so much time worrying about things that are false? I think about the very fact that the beginning of... How do I put this? After the Apostasy, in the beginning of people striving to come back together again, or striving to hold on to the things we'd been given, how that God gave, basically, a direction to go that rather than getting caught up in people's arguments, about all the arguments... There were so many ideas about Passover, as an example, 14th/15th Passover or 15th Passover and all the reasons that go along with that, and then ideas about Pentecost that varied from what God had given to us through Mr. Armstrong.

And so all those different ideas that were coming along it was a peace of mind when God just blessed me as far as a minister is concerned, to say "Here is the truth, deal with it. Don't get

caught up with all the arguments. If you go through and try to show people where they're wrong, why they've gone off on a wrong direction you waste your time! Who cares about what's false. If you know the truth," which is what God showed, "just show the truth, and if people see the truth then they have a choice to make. You don't have to get caught up in their arguments about 14/15 Passover and all that stupidity and garbage because you'll never convince them. But if they're able to begin to see a glimpse of what is true and they receive it and they'll hear you," basically, God says, "they're hearing Me. And that's all you have to do. And you don't have to get caught up in and worry about what they don't see or that you've got to try to convince them of something else or you've got to try to help them to understand their error of their way. You can't do that. Only God can do that.

So, same sort of principle using here: **whatsoever things are true, focus on that.** Don't get caught up in people's...

I think of society when they try to understand why someone would go in and shoot up a place like continually happens out here in the news on a regular basis, to go in and kill people, take people's lives. Why try to understand that kind of a mind, that kind of insanity? And yet a lot of psychologists, different ones they, people try to go in, try to understand why did they do what they do? What's in their background? What...? They're nuts! They're messed up! To do something like that they're so unsound, so... So why try to understand or excuse, in some cases, because that's what some people try to do, to excuse or to give excuse for why they might have done some of the things they do. There is no excuse for anything like that, there really isn't.

So sometimes we get caught up in things if we're not careful worrying about what's not true, worrying about what's false out here, worrying about the lies. You can't do anything about the lies.

If I go on the internet... I think of when I used to go on the internet there just to see some things about Mr. Armstrong, and some of his writings go on there. This is way back, some time just after the Apostasy, and page after page after page of things that were written out there against him. Garbage and filth, just page after page. There was more of that than what was true because that's what people like to get into, drama, all the garbage and the cesspool that exists out there and what people say. And little did I know that the garbage would come along later, myself included then, when yours truly, would be a whole lot worse as far as page after page. Because he had been dead for twenty-six years, and here I am alive, so go after him.

So you can't worry about those things, you really can't. It doesn't matter what people say or what they think. I don't care who it is. Whether it's your family, whether it's a mate, whether it's your children, whether it's your parents, whether it's people on the job and the community, you just strive to live a good life, a right life before God. And if they see that and like that, then that's good. And if they don't and want to tear things apart, then that's their problem not yours. But how often have you gotten caught up in some of those things? Maybe on the job? Maybe in your own family? Because of something someone said about what you believe and why you do

some of the things you do? They don't know what they're doing. That's the answer. You don't have to worry about that. They don't know what they're doing, what they're saying.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure—these are things to pray about, to ask if they're a part of your life and how much are they a part of your life—whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of a good report. Think about some of those different words at times when you pray. What do these things mean for your life? ...*If there is any virtue...* virtue - qualities and characteristics that are a matter of something that emanate from God, that come from God, of things that we should strive to live by. ...*and if there is any praise—think on these things.* Not the opposite of these because that's where the worry comes in. The opposite of these things are the things you get caught up in in life and then you start worrying about them and they start consuming your life, and then something else but peace begins to be produced because you're not following the way of peace then. If you don't think this way and you're thinking some other way peace is going to be interrupted and there is going to be something else. That's called drama.

I hope we're starting to understand that. You're either having peace produced in your life, coming out of you in your life, or around you, and you're at peace or there is drama. It really is. There is just two of those things, period. That's the fruit. That's the product. The product of going the wrong way, of thinking the wrong way, is going to be drama in your life and those around you. But if you live the way God says and strive to think on the things that God says and not have that wrong kind of worry, if you will, anxiety in life, then you're going to have peace. It's a beautiful thing, especially that which comes from God.

So how do you think? What do you think on each week, each day of each week?

Let's turn over to **Romans 8:5**. It says, **For those who were after the flesh...** It's a word that's translated often having to do with carnal or carnality or the carnal mind. Carnally; that's what it's about, that which is carnal. It's the same word as what's used a little bit later when it says "carnal."

Anyway, **For those who are after the flesh are those who mind the things of the flesh**, or the things that are carnal. So there's a way of thinking. That's what your attention is on. You mind the things that are of the flesh or that are carnal. That's what you think about. That's what it's saying here "and those who mind." It's about thinking. Well, that's what you think about. If you're mindful of it this is what you're thinking about, that's what you sent your mind upon, the things that are carnal, not the things that are spiritual, not the things that come from God. So we're one or the other.

Either we're striving... That doesn't mean our first action or first response oftentimes, because so often it's just going to be carnal anyway because that's what we are. But if we catch it, and the sooner we catch it, and in time... And I'm talking about before it comes out of our mouth.

But if we don't then we need to catch it as quickly as we can - or come out in our action and how we respond to something - and then ask God for repentance and strive to change those things that are ugly and then have more of the peace that should be there. But the desire and the goal is in time to get it when it's up here in the thought before it ever hits the lips. And that can be done with God's help. With God's help you begin to be able to see some of those things if you're able to, whatever you're working on in that area of your life to change.

For those who are after the flesh, or that which is carnal, are those who are mindful of, or that set their minds upon the things that are carnal; but those who are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. And so those are choices we're making on a regular basis. And as we grow we're able to see them through different kinds of sermons. We grow, we're able to come to see something that we couldn't see before, and that's a process we continue to go through. Every how long you're in God's Church that's going to be a process of your life. I don't care how long you live, how spiritually strong you might be, there is that which God is going to reveal to you that still needs to be changed. Because as long as we're in this flesh there are things that are carnal that come out of this carnal mind. And God wants us to see those things as we're able to so that with His spirit we can respond and have this mind transformed.

Because we're a part of the mind being transformed. It isn't just something He does and somehow cleans it up and changes us. We're a part of the process. And it's by choices we make then of repentance, of a desire to see certain things and a desire to change them and to learn to hate the things that are wrong. I mean, you have to really hate them, loathe the things that cause problems, that cause drama.

For to be carnally minded is death. It's a simple thing. To be spiritually minded is different. To be carnally minded means you're just wrapped up in the carnal things of this life and where is the growth, where is God's spirit, where is God in it? And there is the battle.

To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. There is a life that God gives to us not just in the future but now through the power of His holy spirit and the life that we're able to share in fellowship, in things within the Church. I think of times when the Church was much, much longer, how did we do? How did we fare? Well?

I think of different periods of time. Some were better than others. Some areas were better than others depending on sometimes the minister that was in an area and his faithfulness; because that had a big bearing then on how people would respond and what they would learn by the example that was there and by the things that were being preached. And I think of others.

I think of one area we went into just before the Apostasy and I think there were close to 60 teens, maybe even more, somewhere between 60 and 70 at that time in Y.O.U., and there was a problem that existed at that time. There were these cliques. And different ones and some of the teens wouldn't mix with others and some looked down upon others, on some of these groups and who would kind of gravitate. And someone asked the question, well, why is this? Why do we...?

We're dealing with a problem here and here's what it is. And it didn't take very long to see it was because the parents had them. They were doing what the parents were doing. They were responding to things they heard the parents say, see? And they would gravitate then to certain ones that because of things they learned from the parents because the parents had the same kind of thing, groups that were together.

So when the Apostasy came it was absolute, total chaos and destruction. So, so much has to do with how we think and how we feel. So there is a right way of thinking, whether we have life, the life of God in us and peace in our life, peace in a congregation.

And I think of how the Church has grown since God has helped us to get to a point of, well, starting in 1998, candidly, the process began, but we weren't at peace yet. We didn't have a lot of peace in the Church. Even then there were some who did have, as a whole, but there was a lot, there were a lot of people who weren't at peace. They were at war inside. And in time God brought that warring out in them because they had choices to make, whether they wanted to be a part of a remnant, whether they could grasp and understand how God was working with them in their life and helping them to come to see things that they couldn't see otherwise, to understand there had been an apostasy. Something that's simple for you to look back at, especially if you were called since that time. It's very obvious an apostasy took place to you. But to those who went through it, not so easy to see because it's a spiritual matter, especially for those who are asleep.

And so to understand what it's talking about here, "to be spiritually minded is life", it's a way of thinking and it's a way of thinking toward one another within a Body, within a fellowship. And a lot of that has gone by the wayside in how people treat each other and seeking to have greater peace within the Church.

I've constantly dealt with warring in the Church. Ever since I've been a minister I have constantly, year by year, dealt with a lot of warring because that's what goes on in our lives. We're at war. We individually battle. And sometimes people don't bother to battle. And it's those that enter into a different kind of warring. They begin warring with those who are trying to war, in the sense of changing in their life. And so if everybody isn't doing the same thing, striving to be at one, striving to be of the same mind, striving to draw close together in the manner that God says then there are going to be problems. And you know what? There should never be problems like that in God's Church. Never! Never!

And so they should be easy to spot, that when someone is not at peace or thinking right toward someone else... And it's still going on, where some don't think right toward others. If you're not thinking right toward others in the Body you've got to get a hold of that. You've got to get a hold of that and ask God for help, because you're sinning. Someone else may be totally wrong toward you - even if they are wrong toward you, you can't change that and you can't worry about that, but you've got to act a certain way toward them. You've got to love them until God manifest something and brings it to the surface, that they either change or are gone. And hopefully change

so that they can continue on the same course. We are a body and we should want to see everyone in the body come through all of this.

So I think about that. How much peace have I seen in God's Church? Well, I've seen a lot of peace in the courtyard. There's a lot of peace. Because it can seem like there is a lot of peace that exists but sometimes deep down inside of certain people's lives it starts coming out that they're not at peace, and then the warring comes out and the drama comes out.

We should want to be of the same mind, to be spiritually minded. So that's why it talks about in these terms as Paul is saying here, **For to be carnally minded is death.** Why? Because there is sin involved. Someone is not thinking right toward someone else, judging someone else, jealous toward someone else, envious of someone else. Those are all sin. And the reality is if one doesn't repent there's a penalty to pay. Christ paid for it but if we don't respond as we should then we're going to end up paying.

...because the carnal mind is enmity, it's an enemy. And that's what we have to recognize. And we learn that but we're reminded of it on a regular basis in our lives because we have to be. Otherwise we begin to become self-deceived in thinking things are okay. Yeah, as long as you're in God's Church things aren't okay. You've got change to make. I've got change to make. I have things I need to see. When I get to a certain plateau then there are other things I need to see to refine this mind more deeply all the time, more and more and more. That's a part of being transformed. And it's to the degree God can use us and mold and fashion us and place us in certain places within the temple.

...because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it fights against God. And so we have to be honest with ourselves and say, "Yes, whenever I sin, whenever I think wrong toward someone else, whenever I think whatever it might be in life, if it's wrong, if it's not the right kind of thinking," as we just went through in Philippians, "if it's not the right kind of thinking I've got to repent of that so I can have God's peace, a right kind of peace, a right kind of thinking in my mind and not be against God."

Because every time I sin as a human being I raise something up above God. That one there bothers me all the time, whenever that happens in life. And it should bother you. Whenever you do something that's wrong against God, whenever you sin you have raised something up above God. That's why it's called spiritual idolatry. You're worshipping something more than you are God. You're responding to a carnal mind more than you are to a spiritual mind. And that's a biggie. We shouldn't want to have spiritual idolatry in our life.

Because the carnal mind is enmity, an enemy, I should say, **against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh,** or carnal, acting carnal, responding carnally to things in life, not striving to bring them in check because of a spiritual mind, because of how one is striving to think and thinking right, **cannot please God.** That should be a fearful thing in every person's life, not to please God. That's a horrible thing if

we're not pleasing to God. We should want that and desire that. That means we're going to be in battle, we're going to be fighting this first and foremost.

But you are not in the flesh, or living carnally, if you will, thinking carnally, **but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God is dwelling in you**. So how often in different ways do we come across this, whether God's dwelling in us or not and what prevents that, how we live, how we respond to God, sin that cuts us off from the flow of God's spirit. Until we repent then we can't have that flow continuing to come into our life. So these things come alive for us.

"But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God is dwelling in you," if Christ is dwelling in you, if God the Father is dwelling in you and you in them.

Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. That's why I've been preaching about and talking about for so long here now, about being out in the courtyard. Because that's not of God. They're cut off. And unless something changes they're going to become so asleep that the same thing will happen to them as what happened in the Apostasy. God will spew them out of His mouth. That's what He does. He'll separate them completely to where they can't even have an appearance or an opportunity to come into the temple. As long as a person has that opportunity that's an awesome thing. And that should be sobering; and understanding the fear in that of being separated to a point where God says, "No more." Because once it gets to that point and God does a separating there are so many who can't make it back because they become so weak and they don't grasp the battle that's in front of them. That's a horrible thing. Some make it back but it's a... Depends upon their relationship with God and how much they really want it and how much they're really crying out for God's mercy and for God's intervention, for God's help in their life so they can once again come into a fellowship with God.

But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God is dwelling in you. **Now, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he is none of his**. **But if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness**. Awesome thing, an awesome thing. And this goes back to things about just believing, being able to believe what God gives. We believe it not because we're able to prove it all, not because we understand all the verses, all the scriptures and everything, but we know it. It's something that God just gives in your mind to be able to see. You know it's true. Awesome.

Verse 11—But if the spirit of Him who raised up Joshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies. So it's not just something about the future. That's going to happen in time if we're able to continue and we continue to go through a process of being transformed and remaining faithful to God and God dwelling in us. Then in time at the end of life, if it be, or at a change of life if it be a time when of Christ's actual return and one is alive, which happens to very few, but if that's the case then indeed there will be a change in life as well from physical to spiritual or a resurrection from the dead. But there's more to this.

“But if the spirit of Him who raised up Joshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also make alive your mortal bodies.” So we understand the eventual fulfillment of that, of a mortal body, but right now we’re in a mortal body, in one respect. We’re in a physical dying body but the reality is we have a life within us, as we’ve just read earlier. There is life and peace that can dwell in us that’s of God. What an awesome thing, a beautiful thing, the life of God that can actually dwell in this mind. And who would want to be separated from that? On the contrary, we should want that more! That’s why our prayers should be filled with incredible thanksgiving to God every day, every time we pray, for what we’ve been given.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to that which is carnal, to live carnally, if you will, to live after the carnal; for if you live after that which is carnal you shall die. So we have choices to make in our life day after day, week after week, month after month as to what we’re going to respond to. **But if you through the spirit,** by striving to be close to God because it takes God’s ability, God’s power, God’s might to change certain things, to change things in our thinking, to change things, to transform our minds. But we have to be a part of it. We have to make the choices along the way as to what we want and if we want that change and if we cry out for help to change. That’s what it’s all about. God wants to know what’s in you. What do you want? Do you really want this? And if we do then we have to fight for it, we have to work for it, we really do. Awesome to understand that.

For if you live after that which is carnal you shall die, but through the spirit will put to death the deeds of the body you shall live. So there is work involved.

For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And those who are out in the courtyard are not led by the spirit of God, but still have an opportunity to repent and change and come on into the temple. God gives a lot of grace, a lot of mercy. And a lot of my sermons, the sermons that I have been giving, I guess should say, the past couple of years have been about this, to understand the mercy of God, to understand that if you’re out in the courtyard wake up! Quit playing games with God! Quit playing games with sin in your life. Because those, the sins you tolerate and allow and continue to exist are the very things that cut you off from God.

And just because one attends Sabbath services or a Feast doesn’t mean you’re in the Body or that you’re in the temple. I feel for those but I can’t change them, for those that I see out in the courtyard. And blows my mind sometimes what some will do when they’ve been given so many opportunities, so many chances, even in things said to them personally. And it’s like, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, I’m going to do ‘this,’ I’m going to do ‘that,’” and then all of a sudden a little time goes by and you see exactly the same thing - going right back to what they were doing before. How many times do you think God’s going to say, “Oh, that’s okay. That’s okay.”

How much do we appreciate when we’re able to... How thankful are we when we see that we’ve been able to address sin in our life? You know, we should really be thankful when God shows us a weakness in our being, a weakness in our thinking and we’re able to see that, how it affects life, how it affects others, and we see the ugliness of what human nature and selfishness does, and

then we want that change and we cry out to God for help to make that change. That's a beautiful thing to understand that we can have such a thing from God. Incredible!

In Romans 3, backing up a little bit, Paul asked a question regarding an advantage or righteousness the Jews have over the gentiles, or foreigners. I'm going to pick this up in verse 9.

Romans 3:9 it says, **What then? Are we better than they are?** So back in that particular time there was a thinking of mind about Jew and gentile, and here Paul is now working with gentiles, he's sent to the gentiles or foreigners. In other words, that's kind of the term that's used here, someone different than a Jew, other than a Jew. And the Jew had opportunity of knowing of things about God in the past and Moses and the law of Moses and the things that have been passed down through the Levitical system and so they had this knowledge of those things and held on to them up to this point in time, in part - more on a physical plane, obviously; totally on a physical plane.

But again here then the question comes out because of what's happening with the Church, it started with the Jew first and began to go out then to other areas. And Paul has to deal with this then because this is where Paul has been sent. So he strives to reason with different ones along the way and here, then, is that case. He says, **What then? Are we better than they are? No, in no way! For we have previously charged that both Jews and gentiles are all under sin.** And so he's making a point here, speaking to the Church, it isn't a matter of Jew or gentile, and it isn't a matter even of Jew, that the Jew was better than the gentile because he says both are under sin. We've already shown this, that both are convicted under the law, that they're not God's, that they're not living right.

As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one. And so Paul is revealing things about the Church to them that this is the process whereby righteousness can be attributed to you, because he talks about it even in Romans here about Abraham and how that Abraham believed God and that's why he did the things that he did. And that's the way that is with our lives. We're not righteous but God attributes that to us as we believe and then choose to live by what He reveals to us. We believe things that He's given to us and the truths that we have, and therefore, we respond. And we don't do those things perfectly, we don't live perfectly toward others, we don't constantly think right. We sin but He continues to work with us as long as we make choices that have to do with what He's given us to believe. Hopefully that fully makes sense, but you have to work through those things yourself between you and God as to what it means and how righteousness is attributed to you. You should strive to live righteously but we're not righteous. We constantly have to repent of wrong thoughts, of wrong thinking, of wrong actions, of wrong words that come out of our mouth, wrong ways which someone is treated.

There is none righteous, no, not one. So it doesn't matter whether it be Jew or gentiles, even with us we're not righteous. Thankfully God attributes, because of our calling, because of being able to be forgiven of our sins through our Passover, we're able to be cleansed of sin and we have to do that constantly. But because of what we believe and we live by it we strive to be of one

mind and God attributes that to us for righteousness and continues to dwell in us because of the choices we make.

There is none who understands; there is no one who seeks after God. If you look at the world and the way the world is by nature we don't do that. It takes a calling. That's an amazing thing to understand, that one can only have a relationship with God if He draws them. He has to draw them to Him. Incredible! Because by nature there would be no other way for an individual to want God, to desire God's way of life.

They have all turned away; they have altogether become useless. The word is "unprofitable or useless"; **there is no one who does good, no, not one.** If you look at the world that's just the way the world is. Sad.

Verse 13—Their throat is an open sepulcher; and their tongue speaks deceit. If we can understand that about our carnal mind, that this is our tendency as human beings, this is great, to be able to start from that point and to realize we have a constant battle on our hand. These are the things you have to fight against. This thing about the throat, "Their throat is an open sepulcher," why does it say that? Because it's what comes out through the air, through the vocal chords, and comes out in words, of things that are said that condemn us, things that are said to others that are hurtful, that are wrong, that are wrong judgments, that are just flat wrong so often, that come out in anger or jealousy of words spoken, see? Sin. Death. An open sepulchre. That's the way the world is. They're captive to that. And that's our battle. That has to change with us, and we understand that and so we fight to change that.

And their tongue speaks deceit. So it's easy to look at others and say, "Yeah, the world is deceived and that's all they can speak. What about us? Do we realize that our tongue wants to speak deceit, that the mind wants to think deceitfully, it wants to deceive itself? If you don't recognize that battle within yourself you've got another battle there you don't know about to add to your list. Because the mind strives to deceive itself, make itself feel better, look better, be better, whatever it is. It's not. It's only by the mercy of God and the blessing of God that we have what we do.

The poison of asps is under their lips. Oh, it doesn't take much to say something to somebody about somebody and all of a sudden we've been caught. As far as God's concerned look at your sin, look at what's coming out of you, look at what's coming out of your mind because you're not thinking right, because you're thinking on something you shouldn't be thinking upon, and so because of that and that's occupying your mind (drama, drama, drama), because that's occupying your mind peace isn't going to come out of that, something else is going to come out. And because of that there is sin. And that's what our lives are like. And that's why I hope and pray we're starting to come to a point where we're making a greater distinction between the two - peace and drama - because there is no in between. It's one or the other that we're striving to live, truly, and fighting to live, wanting to live, wanting to experience in our lives.

...and their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. We think, “Well, I don’t curse and I’m not bitter.” Oh, be careful. Be careful how you think. Do you know deeply what’s deep down inside of you? Do you know your own mind? Well, that’s where the deceit comes in because we don’t know our own minds. You realize God has to show you your mind? He has to show you how you think and where your thinking is wrong.

That’s why as long as I’ve been in the Church continue to come to various points and levels of life where you look deeper and deeper into this mind, where you’re able to see deeper and deeper into things you couldn’t see before. There are things in this past year I’ve come to see in deeper ways that I couldn’t see before, couldn’t see. That’s what growth is about. That’s what it’s all about, about God revealing things inside of us that we don’t see constantly or easily. It’s a process of growth.

... and their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. What does that mean? Well, we don’t think about taking someone’s life. We don’t think about that on a physical plane but there are things in scripture over and over again that are spiritual that have to do with murder, have to do with killing, having to do with taking life and spilling of blood on a spiritual plane. So if someone hates someone else and does something wrong to someone else, gets in an argument with someone else, is jealous toward someone else, is envious of someone else, has something come out of their mouth whether it’s directly to the person or to someone else about the person to God that’s the same spirit. Just because someone out here in the world goes and does it physically, if we don’t understand where it begins in the mind and we don’t understand the thought processes and how evil it is to hate someone...

Say, “I don’t hate anybody.” Oh, then you haven’t murdered anyone either, have you? “That’s the last thing in my thinking, in my mind!” Well, what does God call it? Because there are some strong things said back by John in the book of John, 1st John, that are very direct about life and death, about how we think, about spilling of blood. There are things said in Ezekiel about what the Church ministry did in the Church themselves, killing others, spilling blood right and left, okay, because of what they taught, because of what they did, because of how they hurt people, turned them away from God.

What’s worse? Physical death or a spiritual one? And there are some who have caused people, because of their choices, to lose out spiritually. What’s worse? Some have already been judged because they’ve gone too far and they’re not able to, not going to even have the opportunity because their minds have become so corrupted they went so far. And who had influence in some of that? How are they judged? Did they repent?

So sometimes we just don’t see the ugliness of sin for what it is and how it is so evil for people to fight and to argue without repentance, without going to them and striving to make peace afterward, to do your part to strive to make some peace and to not let those things continue on or happen over and over again in your life. Because some people get caught up in that to where

they're are just some outright battles sometimes in marriages, in homes, let alone between people in the Church that have existed. And those things aren't right before God.

So that's why these things should come alive in our thinking, to understand what is being said on a spiritual plane. "The poison of asps is under their lips." And we tend to say, well, that's not us. "That's not about me." "And their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "That's not me." We tend to think this isn't about us. People read things like this and because they see the outward physical thing, like murder, "That's the last thing on earth I would ever do!" and we do it spiritually. It's the same thing as far as God's concerned, truly is.

"Their feet are swift to shed blood." Why is that? Because we're right. Because our opinions are right. That's why it's so easy to shed blood so quickly, in other words, to say something so quick about someone else, to judge someone so quickly, to say something harsh, to condemn someone else so quickly, see, to find the fault in someone else and to worry about that rather than worrying about what we do when we think in a wrong way.

So sometimes we don't realize that our feet are swift to shed blood. We have to be careful of what comes out of the mouth. We have to be on guard about what comes out of the mouth.

...**destruction**... In the Hebrew it's "that which is broken or crushed"...or Greek, here, I guess it is. I'm sorry. I don't know why I put down Hebrew. That which is broken or crushed.

...**and misery are in their ways**. In other words, that's what destruction is. It's about breaking and crushing things in front of us. And misery, which is a word that just means "distress or misery" or simply "the way of drama." That's what it is! That's what it is in modern terms! That's what this word is here. Misery. Drama. People who are deeply involved in drama are not happy! They're not at peace! And the more you allow drama to come at you or into your life the less peace that exists up here. I strive to not let it in. That's what you have to do, strive to not let it into your minds, not to dwell upon it. Because you can't change it! You can't change the drama around you in life, can you? But if you let it in you begin to let it control you and that's wrong.

And so that's why we have to see the difference between drama and peace. That's what these sermons are all about. "Destruction and misery (or drama) are in their ways," not peace. I hope we're really starting to see a distinction here between that which produces peace and whether you're able to be at peace in your own mind and thinking or whether there is drama. Because I'm telling you right now God's wanting us to see that drama is sin and it needs to be repented of and gotten out of our lives. Truly does, mightily so. Get rid of the drama! Because what have we been called to? Life and peace. Life and peace, as we read earlier.

...**and the way of peace they have not known**. That's why. Because you'll know and live one or the other. And if the other is too much in your life it's going to affect you adversely so on a spiritual plane and you can't afford that.

That's why I marvel where we are as far as God's Church is right now and I truly hope we're starting to see this more clearly. We're at a particular stage where God is helping us to see some things that the world is going to begin to be shown very powerfully so not too long from now that the Church is to see first. We must see it and live it first because that's what's to continue on into the Millennium. It truly is. Though we be small, that doesn't matter how small, it's what God is doing in our lives and what God is going to continue to do then in the Millennium. This is where it starts.

That's why so many things have been starting in the Church here at the end of an age. Things about the curse of women, as an example. If we can grasp that one, that this is what the world is going to begin to be shown and taught quickly, the reason for that is because it's being taught here first. This is where it's starting before that Kingdom comes to govern this world.

...the way of peace they have not known. The reason why? The next verse... **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** If you fear God, if you fear going against God, if you fear doing things different than the way God says they're to be done, or you're thinking differently than the way God thinks we should think, there is a problem, and that is that we don't have enough fear in our thinking. And how does that affect you then? If we have a fear of God it doesn't mean to be afraid of God. It's to be fearful of doing things different from what God says. To fear that because then we're going to be separated from Him.

We can separate ourselves. I don't care who we are and where we are spiritually in the Body those kinds of things have to be looked at very powerfully so in our thinking. And so we have to ask ourselves, "Is there a right fear that I could be separated...?" God doesn't need me, meaning that God can do without me and continue in His plan to serve elsewhere, to raise up anyone He wants to to fulfil whatever He desires to fulfill.

And if you don't understand that about yourself then be careful, okay? Be careful! I don't care where we are, we've already experienced this. Do we not grasp and understand that there was a period of time when many were rejected from being a part of the 144,000? Do we believe that? Do we believe what God has shown to His Church, that there were those who had the opportunity and had been growing for a long period of time to be measured and to be brought into and be a part of the 144,000 who were rejected late here in the scheme of things? That's a scary thing, to think that one could cut themselves off from God who was called to that? Or one who was called to continue to live on into the Millennium is not going to be allowed that if they don't respond as they should? What do we have from God? Do we grasp how rich we are? Do we grasp the abundance of everything that God has given to us?

That's why I understand whether it be me or you or anyone in the Body, it doesn't matter, we have to fight this fight to the end, okay? And you think that God can't raise up anyone at any time to do what He wants done? If you don't know that and understand that and believe that you're missing the mark mightily. If I didn't do my part and don't respond to my part I don't care whether it means another 21 years or longer, God would raise someone up to replace that, okay?

Is that a reality for every one of us to understand, that we aren't expendable in the sense of our choices?

If we make wrong choices I don't care who we are God doesn't owe a one of us anything! We owe everything to God. We truly do. And if we grasp that then we're going to fight this fight to the end. Truly, we're going to fight and fight and fight because we treasure what has been offered us, what has been placed before us. Okay?

A lot has changed since 2008 to 2012. A lot, okay? So don't take anything for granted. Understand that you have... There is a fear that we all need to have of being cut off from God, of not... If we don't live as we should, incredible. So we have to take seriously the incredible calling God has given to us, to love what He's offered us and to fight for this. So I hope that means a lot to everyone.

And right now the message is to God's Church that we're striving to live more and more the way of peace and to get rid of the stench of drama because it permeates this world in a way that it hasn't for several thousand years, when God had to destroy most of all of it because it was so bad. And we're at that point again. "As in the days of Noah," that's where we are with all the technology and everything we have. And we don't grasp sometimes within the Church how much that's affecting us and we need to ask God to help us to see where it's affecting us. The technology out here is a very powerful tool being used by a very powerful being who is far more powerful than we are. That's why I love the scripture "Greater is He that is in us than he that's in the world," because that's how we come through these things, through the power of God's spirit and by God dwelling within us.

So don't ever get to a point where you think that you have it made, that no matter what, in that respect, that somehow you have it made no matter who you are. Because we don't until we're there. Until your change comes it's a battle. It's a battle all the way. So it comes down to conviction. How convicted are we to continue in that battle? And sadly, the more we could see that at the day of baptism the better off we are. The day we told God "I belong to you. Whatever you choose to do with this, so be it." If only we could see it that clearly. Because that's what it is, we belong to God. And what a blessing that we do.

Continuing on, verse 18, again, **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** So that's a good thing to have, a fear of being separated. Those who are out in the courtyard, they don't have that fear. Where is that fear of being separated permanently from God? Because they've already cut themselves off from God's spirit. They're already fooling out there in the courtyard doing things they shouldn't be doing. They've already cut themselves.... And so is it going to become permanent now? Is that what's in store? Horrible!

James 4. There is a place in James that was referred to in *Part 1* that now would be a good time for us to return to and focus upon it a little bit more.

James 4:1—Where do wars, it's a word for "wars and battles" in the Greek. Where do wars and fighting among you come from? Where do they come from?

So if we're not careful we can look at verses like this and think about the world. It's talking to the Church! It's talking to the Church - wars and battles, where do they come from? Where do skirmishes, some of the feelings that sometimes people exhibit toward each other and say toward each other or to say to someone else about another? I think of the period of time we lived through and some of the garbage that's gone on, of how people have talked about others in the Church in a negative, in a wrong way, and not understood that they're deep in sin for doing that, that they've cut themselves off from God for doing such things. Incredible how much the mind can deceive itself.

Where do wars and fights come from as far as among us, as it talks about here? I think of how too often people hear that word peace and they think of all that's the opposite of war, you know? Peace is the opposite of war. Well, to a degree it is if we understand war on a spiritual plane, what it is, what it's talking about here. But too often people think in those terms: Peace -war. Well, there's a lot to the word "war" and what it consists of. So, indeed peace is the opposite but a whole lot more.

War is simply the ultimate manifestation of man's inability to live the way of peace. War is simply the ultimate manifestation of mankind's life of drama. So when people think about war and they think about peace they think about big wars, World War 1, World War 2, certain things in the world where people are battling each other and they don't have peace. Well, there's a lot more to that that ends up finally that way. And that's what people can't see and can't grasp, that God is showing us more deeply within His Church, that He wants us to see more deeply within His Church, that it starts right here in our minds and how we think.

So, where do wars and fighting from among you come from? Where do they start? Where do they originate? That's what God wants us to see even more deeply than ever before. So "Where do wars or fighting..." This word has to do with quarrelling, disputing, arguing, contentions. Now, I tell you what, these things pop up once in a while in God's Church and I don't have as much patience with it as I used to have. I come back a lot stronger than what I used to because time is not on our side. It's not a friend anymore. I don't know if it's ever been a friend, in that respect, but in the sense of change and how human beings tend to think and put things off and how we procrastinate.

But I've seen a lot of quarrelling, a lot of disputing, a lot of arguing, a lot of contentions in God's Church since I've been a minister - and before that, obviously. I think I've shared with you before and I'll share it again. I think of the first time... After about six months in the Church I lived in an area kind of remote from everyone else in Kansas and I had to travel quite a ways to another area to go to services. And I truly felt, believed that everyone who was in the Church, that they lived right; they didn't have any sin in their life. I mean, I don't know where my mind was but I just didn't know it. I was so far gone, so bad as far as my life was concerned that I was in awe of that

in God's Church and how that I came to church and I saw how people treated each other, how they talked, how they lived, and I just thought people lived without sin.

And then one time in a particular area (about 600 people in a congregation in Wichita), invited to a particular home one evening to eat with some others in the Church and a husband and wife got into it, started fighting. I thought, "Man, what is this?" Well, I had to be awakened. No, everyone in the Church isn't living a perfect life and there is sin in our lives and we still have sin. Anyway, I don't want to go into any more of that but the point being is that God takes us through a long process to understand these things within ourselves and within the Church and this is where it begins and where we have to address it.

And sadly there has been too much of this kind of thing that has gone on; quarrelling, disputing, arguing, contentions. Where do they come from? And to say they don't exist or they haven't existed is just not reality whatsoever. But they shouldn't come from me. They shouldn't come out of you. Or anyone listening out there, they shouldn't come out of you. And if they do you have done a horrible thing, especially in God's Church if it's towards someone else in God's Church. It's bad enough if you respond to people in the world that way and it's maybe a little more understandable as far as our human nature, as far as how someone might talk or think or treat you, or whatever, but that's not an excuse.

But sometimes within the Church when it happens within the Church to understand how horrible it is to be against someone else whom God has called, whom God has justified, whom God has forgiven, whom God has a purpose for? That's a very heinous sin. It's really sick! And yet people aren't fearful of such a thing. There is no fear of God. If there was a fear of God then we would be afraid to do such things toward one another, to say such things about or toward one another within the Body.

And that's where the drama comes from, the absence of peace. And so when peace goes by the wayside you can bet there is going to be some drama. And then too often I get to get involved. Not my favorite time because I know what the Body should be like.

So where do they come from? **Don't *they* come from out of your lusts that war in your members?** Do we see ourselves for what we are? Do we recognize this battle that's going on? Because that's where change can come from if we can really understand that there is a battle going on at any time in our life in the Church. I don't care who you are. No matter who you are you have a battle to contend with that comes out of here. And there is always that process where you can get to a certain plateau and then grow on to another one because God will show something else that's hidden even more deeply inside here. Because the desire is for all of us to be fully at one, to nip in the bud, if you will, everything that we can. It's just you don't have time to do it all, not in this physical body. But to become more refined, yes, you will, and it's a beautiful thing. And the more you do that the more at one you'll be with God.

“Don’t they come from your lusts that war in your members?” Do we see what goes on inside of us sometimes? Why do we think the way we do? That’s what this all goes back to, why do we think the way we do? Where do these things come from? Where does the worry come from? Where does the anxiety come from? Where does this manifestation of this drama, what started it all? Where did it come from? What is the thinking? What’s inside? Because that’s where it is.

The last part of the verse here actually states this a little differently in Hebrew. I said Hebrew again. In Greek. And rather than spend time in going into the meaning of the use of these different words I think it’s just simpler to quote this out of some other translations because some of them, one of them especially that I don’t ever as a whole, hardly ever refer to has a real good grasp of what it’s actually saying in this particular case. Sometimes they get it right.

So “Don’t they come out of your lusts,” in other words, your wants, your desires, or desires for pleasure, to please self. You know, sometimes we try to please self because we know we’re right; because if someone else doesn’t agree with us or think the way we do then it interferes with this concept or idea we have of what’s right. And we pretty much in our own lives tend to think that we’re right about everything and we’re not.

Anyway, one version says, “Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” If you understand what this word “pleasures” is about.

Another one: “Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?” There are certain desires of thinking where we want things to be a certain way. That’s why worry comes out when that isn’t being satisfied the way we want it to be satisfied.

And then another one that hits it on the head for what the words really mean: “Isn’t it the whole army of evil...” It’s the word... That’s what the word means here, “the whole army.” It’s like an army indeed. That’s how the word is used in the Greek language. “Isn’t it the whole army of evil desires at war within you?” It’s like there is this army inside of us battling and fighting. And sometimes we don’t see it, how great this war is. That’s why it’s referred to so often what we’re living is a war, is a battle. That’s why it talks about putting on certain armor and so forth, because that’s what we need in order to come through all of this, in order to defeat what’s inside of us. Not in the world but what’s up here. That’s where the battle is. It’s in our own mind.

Verse 2—You lust (desire, want). In other words... Sometimes we look at this word “lusts” and it doesn’t give the meaning of how it really was given and how it was used at that particular time or even how it’s translated here, but there is this desire or want we have to be satisfied, that something is done in a certain way. And they use the word “lusts” but it’s really just a selfishness that comes out of us, that we want things done in a specific way. “This is what I want! And if I don’t get what I want...” then there is a battle. There is this whole army inside of you fighting to get your way, the way you think; and that’s a battle.

You desire or want and do not have. You kill and desire to... Amazing! James is saying this. Who is he saying this to? The Church! To us because it's something we have to see about our nature, about our thinking, about how we think towards others. Because our thinking towards others isn't pure, it isn't perfect by any measure. We tend to judge, we tend to categorize, put people in certain places. As human beings we just tend to do that. That's just the way we are and you have to fight against that, not to have unjust judgment in your life, to control or rule the way you think, to understand that our judgment isn't right; that we want to make sure or strive to think about what is God's judgment in this. What does God say about this? And if we keep that in the forefront of our minds then so often we're going to respond in a different manner, in a right way. That's what it's about, coming into oneness with God.

You kill and desire to have. In other words, another translation gets this on the head and says, "You kill to get it." In other words we want something so much so to be a certain way in our lives. It's not about wanting some thing in the sense of a physical thing, it's something about what we want our way and we want it so bad we can strike out at someone else in order to get it. We will judge or condemn someone else when we shouldn't. We will say something about them or toward them that we shouldn't or say it to someone else that we shouldn't because we want it so much and we don't understand what we're doing.

...and cannot obtain. You fight; also a word meaning you argue or quarrel, **and war,** wage or make battle. We have to see what we're doing on a spiritual plane. **Yet you don't have because you ask not.** What do you mean you don't ask? Well, is God in the picture? Yes or no? Do we look to God for the choices and judgments that we make, as I said earlier, in how we think toward others? Because if God's in the picture we'll strive to think a certain way towards others, especially in the Body of Christ.

So why is James addressing what he is in this first couple of verses in chapter 4? We need to look at what was being said previous to this. So when it talks about here, again, this thing about war and battle, why do these things exist among you, why does fighting and quarrelling exist, well, let's back up and get some of the context.

James 3:8—But no one can tame the tongue. It isn't about the tongue. It's about the mind, again. See, it's just taking it back a little farther, our conduct, what comes out of our lives, how we treat others, and in this particular case here talking about a tongue, but it's the mind that controls the tongue. It's spiritual. **But no one can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.** That's the way our tongues are. That's what we're told here.

I think of the word translated as "conversation" so often here we're going to come to here in a little bit, but it's about conduct and how we act toward others. All this goes back to our actions and the way of thinking that we have. That's why the tongue does what it does and says what it says. Because we're selfish to get our way a lot of things come out of the tongue, from the tongue and it reveals what's in the mind. I hope we understand that. The tongue reveals what's in your mind, and one way or another it's going to reveal what's inside your mind, how you think.

Verse 9—Therewith we bless God, and the word being, in essence here, means to thank or praise God. So within the Church then we can praise God, we can have a prayer toward God and thank God about certain things, speak well of God or to God, if you will. As it says here, **even the Father, and therewith we curse or speak against men, who are made after the likeness of God**, in other words, people in the Church, see? Not just talking about the world but those who have the opportunity to be drawn into, who have been called to come into a likeness of God, because that's when the change begins to take place, when we're called and we're impregnated with God's spirit and then that spirit that is impregnated in the mind begins to change. That's when God begins to transform, mold and fashion the mind to become godlike. Because before that we're not and we're not being worked with. Human beings aren't being worked with until they have that calling and the essence of God's spirit dwelling within them, and then this process begins.

So how can we...James is asking the question (God is addressing it), but saying to us, "Therewith we thank God," out of this mouth, out of this tongue. You know, we can speak nice things about God or whatever, or things that come out of this book, whatever it might be, or in our prayers, but in the same manner we turn around and it says we curse or speak against (that's what the word means), speak against men who are made after the likeness of God, or being made after he likeness of God, to be called to become a part of His Family, Elohim. So it goes back to thinking.

Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing, in other words, speaking well of or toward is what the word means here, praise, **and cursing**, speaking against another. You know, we really need to be on top of this more where we're careful, far more careful in the Body of Christ, everywhere in the Body of Christ when something comes out of our mouth about anyone else. What are we saying? Why are we saying it? There are times to address various things, especially within the ministry, and there are times not to, and there are times within the Body for things to be addressed amongst one another, whatever it might be, but it has to be done God's way. And that's what we should want to know.

So the warning is being given here a person can speak in a certain way toward God in prayer and be so deceived because on the other matter out of the same mouth comes that which is speaking just the opposite of what they said in prayer. Why go before God and pray to God? Why have a relationship with God if we're going to tear down what God has called, what God has justified, if we're in an argument or dispute with someone else in the Body. How can that exist in the Church? The reality is it can't. And if it does then we're playing around out in the courtyard; we think we're in the temple.

My brethren, these things should not be so! That's why I've been able to or moved to or desirous of, because of what God is doing with the Church in the last 2-3 years, of crying out more and more about certain things that should not exist within the Church, certain things that should not exist in marriages, certain things that should not exist in congregations between people, that there should be a desire toward others whom God has called and to understand if

God has called someone and molding and fashioning them we better look to the good as much as we're able to, to see the good, to see the right, and to desire that everyone be able to grow and change and overcome despite our weaknesses, despite our faults. Because we all have them! You can't judge by that. You've got to look at what God is doing. And you don't always know what God is doing. Matter of fact not very often at all, in one respect.

Does a spring flow forth at the same time or at the same opening both fresh *water* and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives (olive berries), or a vine figs? So can no spring yield both, this means "to make or send forth" **salt water and fresh.** So it's talking about like a spring, a geyser, whatever, either one, water coming out of the earth and out of the opening, can you have that at the same time? We know that's impossible. You either have fresh or you have salt, see. They don't mix. If there is some salt in there it's going to be salt. That's just the way it is. It's going to be messed up. It's not going to be fresh at all.

So how can things like that come out of us? And the reality is we deceive ourselves if we think they can. And sadly, we get into a rut if we're not careful in human life, and especially within the Church, that we can tend to begin to think a certain way and think that we can be a certain way when in reality God says, "No, you can't. If it doesn't agree with Me it needs to change," and we're just playing games.

Who among you *is* wise and understanding? It says, **Then show out of or from your good conduct,** that's what this word means. It can be, so often it is conversation, but the word has to do with conduct, but used first in thinking and speech here about what comes out of the mouth, but it has to do with our actions. And so often they come out first in what we say.

So it says **that show out of or from your good conduct your works in the meekness of wisdom,** in the teachableness of wisdom. In other words, looking to God because wisdom comes from God, it's about the Word of God. Just like in the book of Proverbs, when we talk about the word "wisdom" that's use there. Are we looking to God? Because that's where it comes from, if we're striving to measure things like that, in the teachableness, are we of a teachable spirit, willing to learn? Willing to learn about whatever God is showing us within the Body and especially toward one another. How much do we really love one another and want to see each other succeed?

I hate to see people out in the courtyard. Candidly, every person that's out there that I see who is out there (and there are probably others I don't know and don't see, probably a few), but as a whole those who are out in the courtyard I desire with all my being to see them repent and come on in and be a part and share with us and to embrace what God is offering them. But time isn't on your side and some are still playing games. Horrible! Horrible!

This is a bit of a wake-up call for us as well within the Church, because this is a plateau we're addressing right now that is a big one. Peace - drama. Where are you on the scales? Where are you on the scales of peace and drama? How much peace exists in your mind, in your life? Because it has to do with your mind toward God. And if God's in the picture then it's going to be a whole

lot easier to put everything in that category as to what God is doing. Where is God working? How am I a part of that? Am I fearful of not being a part of that? Or it's on this side here where we just kind of live what we want, like it says here, lusts, the desire of what we want, we want to see something work out a certain way. Well, if God isn't working it out that way then you're fighting against God. You've got to be careful. Some things, if you're not careful, you can fight against God because you want things to be a certain way that aren't necessarily in unity and oneness with God. That's a dangerous thing.

So who among you is wise in understanding? Then show out of your good conduct your work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, don't glory and don't lie against the truth. So, in other words, we can lie against the truth by doing and living something separate from what God is showing us. And right now what He's showing us is this vast chasm of difference between what's being produced in our life, whether peace is being produced or whether drama is being produced. What are we living?

And I'll tell you there are some people out here just living a lot of drama within the Church. Still are. And you've got to get it out of your life. You've got to run from it. You've got to fight against it. You've got to cry out to God to have peace and to not let the drama in because it's an evil and something God wants us to address right now within the Church.

I think of these words here, bitter, and then the word envying, and strife, and how it's used. Bitter: It simply means "bitter or sharp." Sometimes a person can be too sharp in something they think or say about another person. We have to be careful in what's being said. Is there a sharpness behind it? Why? In other words, cutting or... Why? Where does that come from? Why do we do that?

Envying. This word is a little unique in how it's used as many translate this as "jealous" or "zealous," depending on the context. So it can mean, depending on the context, it can mean zealous or jealous. But it really is a lot more than that. In the Greek language a definition is given of this that means "to have warmth," as in a kind of passion. So it says "warmth," but it's like a passion that's inside of us, this want, passion. Passion has to do with what we want. "...a warmth or feeling for or against." So that's why this word is kind of difficult sometimes to deal with, to use, because something about God, zealous, something about human nature that is envious of someone else, there's a jealousy that can be. So it depends on what it's describing and how it's being used. "...of a feeling for or against." And very often then that is about someone and how we think about someone.

So this kind of dual use, it's often translated as, again, jealous or zealous. So we're looking at this expression in James as having a kind of sharp passion or want on our part, a kind of intense passion against someone. That's what it's talking about here. Why should we have some kind of intense passion against anyone whom God has called? Against anyone in God's Church? Something is wrong there if we have an intense passion against... Think about that, an intense passion, a

want that's against someone else. Shouldn't be there. And that does not mean that jealousy is involved. It's not about that. It's about something we want.

That's why we can see things in other people's lives and judge and so often misjudge. And we have to be careful of that, that we don't get in the process of misjudging others or setting ourselves up as a judge, in some cases, of other people's lives. This is what we need to look at - self. It's the only thing you can change. And if you want something, if you have expectations of others and want things out of others that's not what life is about. You want your way? No, I want God's way. What is that?

So we have to be careful of the wrong kind of thinking involved in some of these things. That's why James is addressing some of this. Where do these things come from? Inside of us; in the mind.

Strife: Indeed it's about strife and oftentimes contention then, and it's about "strong disagreement over fundamental issues but exhibiting conflict in how it's approached or addressed." We're to think about that, strife.

So let's read these last two verses again. **Verse 13—Who among you is wise and understanding? Then show out of or from your good conduct your works in the meekness of wisdom.** Are we teachable? That's what meekness is here, a teachable spirit, wanting to learn how to better do things God's way because true wisdom comes from God.

But if you have bitter, envying, and strife in your hearts, it says, **don't glory.** In other words, don't be lifted up by that and **don't lie against the truth.** **This wisdom,** going on, **This wisdom does not descend from above, but is from self** (that's what it is), **but it's earthly, sensual,** in other words, **natural, devilish.** That's scary. Because it's saying here there is a wisdom of our thinking, of how we think things should be in life sometimes but there is that which comes from God that is right. And that which comes from God that is right is what we want to be in harmony and unity with and should strive with all of our being to have as a part of our thinking, as a part of our minds.

And I'd be scared spitless of this, to think that we hold on to our way, to a wisdom that comes out of self because we think we're right. That's what happens when human beings think that, you know, they're so right in their own mind and can't be taught something differently or won't think differently or won't change certain things. Because we know we're right in whatever it might be about, most often, someone else. And you have to be careful of that because you could be fighting against God then. Because that wisdom is from self. That kind of wisdom, you want to make sure the wisdom is indeed from God. I hope that makes sense to you. Where does it come from? Does it come from self or is it indeed coming from God?

And then it goes on to say this kind of wisdom that comes out of self, if you will, is sensual, carnal, and devilish. He's the master of it all, the adversary of God, and we do not want to fight against God, to be an adversary to God.

For where envying and strife is there is confusion, a Greek word that means "instability, restlessness". Even inside. Do you feel peace? Do you feel that peace with God because you love what God is doing, because you agree with what God is doing though you may not understand it you're excited by what God is doing within the Church and what He's getting ready to do within the world? You know, with what we see happening in the world we should be so elated to know this is about to come to an end, so thankful to realize that very soon now this world is going to be taken out of being held captive like it is, you know, in bondage, and to be freed from this. It's misery out there. How people think toward each other? You think people's lives... I think of people on TV. You see people on news and they're not happy people. I don't care who they are, they're so eaten up inside about different things going on and things that they feel right about. Is it of God? Is it about God? Is it about what God is doing? No, we know what that is. And they're not happy people, though they sometimes they put on a big show of being happy. They're happy if they get their way, when they think they're starting to get their way, when they find someone else that agrees with their way. And they generally talk to people who kind of agree with their way. And those commiserate with each other in their way against someone else's way and we just have a world that's filled with warring, fighting, bickering and drama to a degree that the world hasn't known for a long, long time.

For where envying and strife is there is confusion (instability, restlessness) and every evil work. I'll tell you, it doesn't take a lot of reading of news around the world right now and there is so much evil that's out there right now in how people think toward each other, how people are thinking toward nations. Incredible what's going on! Insanity!

There are times I'm watching things on TV and watch people talk and think, "This isn't coming out of you. You have help. Leaders, you have help right now in the insanity of some of the things you're thinking and where this is all leading." There is a spirit world out there right now that is so stirred up and they have so much more control and power than most of you know, can know. Next time you watch some of these things think about some of those things when you see things that are so far out there, so, so strange, so unsound. Sometimes those things just aren't coming out of the individual themselves; they have some help and encouragement.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure... That's what we should want. That's what we should desire. That's what it's talking about here. It's making this contrast about that which comes from what we want, and we've got to be careful of what we want is measured by agreement because it's what God wants. Or is it really what we want, what "I" want?

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle (yielding), and easy to be entreated. It's a little more difficult to understand in this usage, but basically has to do with a willingness to plead or intervene for others. It's a beautiful word if you understand it, how it's

being used here, the last part of this, this one on yielding and easy to be entreated. That last phrase there “easy to be entreated,” it’s about a willingness to plead or intervene for others.

...full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, somewhat like negative judgment here, and without hypocrisy.

Verse 18—And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace in those who make peace. You have to work to make peace. Too often if we’re not careful we’re working to create and make drama. They are opposite of each other. Everything about peace that is good and beautiful, the exact opposite of that it is that matter of drama and what God is showing to us as His people. Drama that stirs up peoples lives like it does in the world, and too often stirs up our lives in very negative ways, in very unsound, unharmonious, if you will, not in harmony with God, not in unity with God. And we need to work to change that.

So the reality is that we either work to produce drama or we are working to produce peace. It doesn’t just happen. Pray to God to help you to see the peace, to embrace peace, and to know what you need to do to help bring it to pass in your life and within the Church more and more and more, whether it be in our lives or in the lives of others.

So which is it? Which is it? Do you have peace that is reflective of your life in a greater way or is there more drama? If you have one or the other that describes what you’re living in your life day by day, week by week right now, where is the scale? Which outweighs the other? There is going to be some drama, but how heavy is it? That’s up to you. How much peace is there? Because that’s the one you want. You want the peace to be the greatest by far. So let’s fight against that which produces drama and work hard to produce that which produces peace.