

Welcome, everybody, to this seventh day Sabbath.

The purpose of this sermon is to look at why we individually must learn to deny our selfishness.

If you'd like to turn to **Matthew 16:24**—Then Joshua said to his disciples, **If anyone desires to come after me**, which is “to follow me.” So if we are to follow the Messiah what do we have to do? ...**let him/her**, let any of us that have been called, **deny himself**. We are to deny ourselves. What does that mean? Well, we understand that we have a self, and we're going to look at that today. But we have been called to deny self, because we all have a self. We're born with a self. ...**and take up his stake**, which is the burden. We're to take this burden up **and follow me**.

Now, what does that mean, “take up the burden,” “take up the stake?” Well, we understand that Joshua the Messiah was nailed to the pole; he was placed on a stake. Well, we have a stake to bear. We have to carry one. What is it? Well, once called we have to bear something. Well, we have to bear the rejection of this world, what the world is rebelling against us, or pushing us away, because they are different. We are different. We're called to be different. We're called to deny our selfishness, to deny the self. They're not called to deny self, they just have a self and they live it, they please it. And we will look at that.

So we've been called to take up this way of life, which is God's way of life, which is contrary to the world, therefore, we have a burden to carry. And that burden can overpower some people because this way of life is not easy, because there's aspects of this way of life that people have rejected in time.

Aspects of it are firstly, we're called, we're Sabbath keepers. Well, being a Sabbath keeper in this world at this present time, there's a burden. And what is it? Well, it's a consequence. We pay a penalty for obedience to God because we live in Satan's system. That penalty is the fact that we can't have the employment that we may desire, which is nothing wrong with that desire. To have a certain type of job because of our personality that we have or inclination towards something, mathematician or whether it's to do with nature, whatever it may be that God has blessed us with. Well, we can't always fulfill our own nature, in the sense of what is build in us, what we desire to do, what we're good at. Which is the best way to have employment, of course, is to do something that is normal to us or natural.

I've always been involved in certain industries because it wasn't really work to me, it was reasonably easy. People would say, “You're going to work.” Well, I enjoyed my work. I loved my job because it, to me, wasn't work, it was just something I enjoy doing. And if you enjoy it, well, you want to go early; you want to do a good job because you enjoy it. Well, it's difficult for some people because they take on certain jobs and it's difficult for them and they hate going to work because it's not what's considered natural to them. In other words, they don't really fit.

Well, we have taken up a stake or a burden. We carry a burden. And that burden is that we obey God. Well, what here, Christ is saying is, well, if anyone desires to follow him, to follow his way of life, to be like him, we are to deny our selfishness. Well, that in itself is a burden because we see; because of the power of God's holy spirit we see our selfishness. Now, when we see it it's a burden. Well, the world doesn't carry that burden because they don't see their selfishness. Well, we see it; therefore, we carry this burden. Well, this is what it has to have to take place within anyone who is called. We have to focus on our overcoming of self, our selfishness, and follow Joshua the Messiah.

Now, this can only happen if we are called. That's why the world does not have to take up its burden, because they don't know what their burden is. They don't have to take up the stake and follow Christ because they haven't been called to it.

**Verse 25—For whoever desires to save his life**, which is about focusing on the physical. So if we just focus on the physical and we do not take up the burden, the overcoming of self, the denying of one's selfishness, if we don't take that up, **we will lose our life**. Well, we've been called to deny ourselves, to take up the stake, take up the burden, and to work on self, fight and overcome our selfishness. Well, if we don't do that we will lose our life. That's what Christ is saying here.

**...but whoever loses his life**, which is denies self... We deny our self. We have to take up this burden, this way of life which is obedience to God and denying of self. Well, **whoever loses his life for my sake**, for the sake of Joshua the Messiah, **will find it**, because we'll be given life, true life, the meaning of life, the purpose of life,

The purpose of life is to overcome self, to have God's holy spirit, to be given the beauty and the gift of a calling—something that is so unique and so precious that we will guard it, guard our calling, we'll look after our calling. We'll remember our calling. And what will we do? Deny himself. We will deny our selfishness. And the purpose of the sermon is to look at that.

**Verse 26—For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own life?** So here we see somebody that focuses in on the physical. Yes, they gain good income. Yes, they build a nice house. Yes, they have a family. Yes, they do all these things. Yes, they have extra property. Yes, they have businesses. Yes, they have all this wealth and that is their focus. Because this is what this sermon is really about, it's about a focus. And that's what Joshua is saying here; it's about a focus. What are we focusing on? Well, this person focuses on the physical.

Now, mankind of and by himself will focus on the physical. That's all he can do. He has no choice. Well, we've been called to follow Joshua the Messiah by focusing in on something different, spiritual matters...spiritual matters.

Well, here it's being said, "For what profit is it to a man or a woman if they gain the whole world," physical things, "and lose their life spiritually?" **Or, what will a man give in exchange for his life?** Well, that's a question. Well, now this can only be heard by somebody that has been called, someone that has God's holy spirit, that has the gift of God's holy spirit, because without it we can't understand this. Well, we can. We can understand it.

So the question here is what are we focusing in on? What is our priority? Because that's what Christ is saying, what is our priority? If we are focused—talking about somebody that's been called, which we have... For someone that has been called, what is our focus? If it happens to be physical things, if we're bogged down with the life, physical life, about earning incomes and all the other things that life has, about what we like in entertainment, all those things that we put before God (in other words, God's not first), if we put all that as a priority, if that's our focus, what does Christ say? He says we will lose our life.

And the question is: What will a man give in exchange for his life? Well, it's because we don't see clearly. That's the problem, we don't see clearly. Because if we saw clearly on a spiritual level we would have our focus and our priority on the spiritual aspects of life. They would be number one. They would be number one because we wouldn't have any real involvement with the physical beyond the spiritual, because...

Let me clarify that. The reality is every physical focus has a spiritual component. Because if we are focusing in on the physical there is a spiritual aspect to it. What is it? Well, if we're focusing in on the physical we're neglecting the spiritual. So what's that? We're becoming lukewarm or we're becoming lazy and we're not putting God in the picture. That's the problem.

So if we have a physical focus we need to make sure there is a spiritual component connected to it, which means we've involved God in it. The reason we're doing the physical... The reason we're doing the physical is to overcome self. So we put ourselves out there in the physical environment, we're involved in physical things like work (I'm not talking about entertainment), but like work because that's what God says is good for man. But in that we bring God into it because in our work environments what will we discover? We will discover more about how to deny our self... how to deny our self. Because that's what Christ just told us to do.

**Verse 27.** So we look at this and think it's about a focus and priority...**For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each one according to his works,** which is how we have chosen to deny ourselves. Because it is a choice. We've been called for the purpose of denying our self, which is denying our selfishness.

So the title of this sermon today is *Deny Self*.

Now, denying self really is about a choice to repent. Because what happens once we are called we see our selfishness, we see our self, who we really are, and we're made up of components of this self. So what makes up self? The first aspect is everybody, every human other than Joshua the Messiah, has a self, and self is always protected and guarded during our life. The purpose of a physical life is to maintain self, maintain our selfishness.

Well, we can go back over our lives and see all the aspects of our selfishness because we've been given God's spirit to see it. Now, people in the world don't see their selfishness. They may grasp elements of certain aspects of selfishness, some people see aspects of pride, but we see our selfishness. We see ourselves. Well, what Christ has told us to do, that if we are to follow him into life, which he has entered by the power of God's holy spirit, because God gave it to him, which God has promised to give us the same reward as His Son, well, if we are to take up that

stake, take up that burden and follow him we have to understand what our self is, that we are composed of self our whole life. And as God's spirit unites with our spirit and we become begotten sons of God we still have self, selfishness.

So what makes up self in every human? We know everybody has it, well, we're human, we have it. Even though we're called we understand there is a component of our self that needs to be overcome. We have to deny it as Christ said. If we want to follow deny self.

Well, I found this Feast very encouraging in one way and in other ways found it a bit of a challenge because the reality is we all have self and if we had ears to hear what God was saying to us, that we have to now put in the effort to truly stand, to take up the burden now and to stand, to dedicate ourselves now to God, involve God in everything, put God first now because there's a measuring - time's up, there's no more time... I look at it from the point of view of the book that said *Time is Running Out*. Time is running out for us, brethren. As members of the Body of Christ time is running out.

And there is going to come a point which was indicated, that we don't know when it was, whether it was during the Feast or at the end of the Feast or after the Feast, how much longer we don't know, time is up. Time is running out; time is up for us. And what's it about? Time is up in the sense of we have to make a stand, we have to make a choice about this aspect. "Let him/her deny themselves." We have to really fight because that's what it's really all about.

What the problem is with us as humans is we don't deny self by nature. We just don't. We pamper it. We protect self. Our purpose of life, everything we do is about self, selfishness, promotions, pride, titles, everything, it's about self, elevating self. Because that's what Satan's system is built on, the elevation of self. Whereas God's way is about the lowering of self. God's way is about humility. God's way is about humility. True humility, which is a gift of God, can only come from God and it's about a way of thinking.

Humility is a way of thinking. It's the way we think about others and it's the way we think about ourselves. Because we put it into the context of God, the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, what are we? Well, we only see it if God gives it to us, that we can only be humble because God gives us the thought process to realize what we really are... what we really are. And it's all to do with this self. God gives us the ability to see self and what is self worth? Self is ugly. It is a shocking thing because it protects itself. It's all inward, all total to me, me, me, me. That's self.

Well, we have to learn to deny it. So with this title *Deny Self*, that's what it's about, learning to deny self. So what makes up our selfishness? Every human has it.

**1 John 2:15-17**—Do not love (do not desire) the world, because that's the problem. The world and Satan's system is there, we're born into it, we have it, then we're called out of it, we're drawn out of it, and what do we have to do? Learn to deny self. We have to then fight against the world and the world's system and what is on offer. And this is a very present evil age. It is a shocking age. And for younger people growing up in this world's environment and this shocking environment it's very difficult to watch. And we cry out for the return of Joshua the Messiah. We

really do. Because there is no hope for this world. If man keeps going the way he is, with the lying, the destruction, the evil that exists... If you just take things like the Roman Catholic Church and the pedophilia, the absolute evil, and it's tolerated and covered up by people in the same organization. That's what you call evil; denying things that have happened, trying to cover up, paying people off. It's disgusting. It's shocking.

The whole world is riddled with it. It's not just the Catholic Church. There are government bodies, there are other religions, there are organizations, there's politics. It is an evil age.

Well, we can see that it's evil because of selfishness. We've been called to see selfishness within us. Well, in seeing it within ourselves, what do we do? We see it in others. We see it in the world. And that's why we take up the burden. And the burden is the fact that we reject that, and yet we take up what is God's way of life. Because God's way of life is a burden in this world. It's not a burden, really, but we have to take up whatever comes our way, whatever the rejection is, whatever is said, whatever is done. Doesn't matter, we will carry it and we will deny our selfishness and we'll put God first. Priority. It's a focus.

**Do not love/desire the world or the things in the world, the ways of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love (the agape) of the Father is not in him.** So there's this great contrast here. There is two ways - we're either fighting or we're not. Straight forward. We're either fighting our selfishness, denying self, or we're not. And if we're not we'll be in the world, we'll love the world, we're putting it as a focus, it is a priority and guess what? If that's the case we're sinning because God's not first. Therefore, that's a sin. God's first or we're sinning. Therefore, if we're sinning we love the world, and the love of the Father, God's holy spirit is no longer dwelling in us because we've been cut off from the flow of God's holy spirit. So we can see there's two contrasts here. We're either putting God first or we're not. We're either denying self or we're not, we're fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

The love of the Father is God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. Because if we have God's holy spirit God can live in us out to the benefit of others. It's not us. We don't do good works. It's God in us that does good. And we've had sermons that cover this.

If anyone desires a relationship with what opposes God, anything that opposes God, if we want a relationship with that, anything that's contrary to God, which means we're not seeing clearly, obviously, it is proof that God's thinking is not in us. So if we are desiring a relationship with the world, if we are desiring and our focus is worldly things, the pleasures of this world (the temporary pleasures of sin), if we're desiring those things before a relationship with God and before fighting against our selfishness, this is evidence, this is the proof that God's holy spirit is no longer living and dwelling in us, because God's spirit in us lives love to others. Well, it's either one or the other. We're either doing good or we're not, we're doing selfishness.

**Verse 16—For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh...** Now, these are the things that... the three main headings that make up us humans, we as humans, every human including me, including you, all of us. This is what makes up our thinking. Now, there are three main categories. Because under them there are subcategories, it goes farther, but you can see these three main points, in other words. ...**the lust (desires) of the flesh**, which is a self satisfaction, **the lust**

(desires) **of the eyes**, what we see and that's what we really want. So we then focus in on that. We have this focus that that's what we want.

Now, there is nothing wrong with desiring certain things, because we have to be careful that... Certain desires are fine. I desire a new car and I desire a particular colour. That's not a problem with that but it's about how far we go with it. Is that our focus in life? Are we putting that before God? So it's about a priority, putting God first or putting God out of the picture. But there is nothing wrong with desiring a bigger TV for example. That's not a lust of the eyes. We may see something but it's about what we do with that thinking. We say, "Oh, that would be fantastic to have. But I trust in God and I'll wait on God and I'll do best I can to save and to do the right things, put God first," tithing, first and second, doing those things, giving offerings as commanded by God, doing those things in obedience, "and if God then blesses us financially that we could have a new TV, fantastic." The credit and glory goes to God. It's not what I did, it's what God provided. So you can see it's a way of thinking.

**...and the pride of life.** Now, this is the biggest issue for all of us. We all have pride. Every human being other than Joshua the Messiah has pride or has had it or has it and will have it in the future. It's going to go right up to the end of 7,100 years, the pride of life. Now, what is the pride of life? Well, the pride of life really is about the fact that we think we are right, we think we make judgments that are right, that we're right and not wrong, because if we're wrong we would change and we would be then right, and therefore, we'd select pride. And it's the opposite to humility is pride because we don't see ourselves.

So anybody that doesn't see themselves in their true light as God sees us has pride. And we slip in and out of this. At certain times in our life, once called, I mean once called, we start to see selfishness; we start to see pride within ourselves. And we all have it. Every single person has it. And you slip in and out of these things in life, pride, the pride of life.

And it's easy to see in the world. It's very easy to see in the world, sometimes very difficult to see within ourselves. And one form of the pride of life that we need to be on guard about is justification of self. Because it really comes down to pride is what causes this. Now, we will often...things will happen and someone will say something. We tend to slip straight into justification, to want to say, "Well, it wasn't me," or, "You don't understand why I did it." Well, that's justification. Why are we justifying? Go back into the mind. So what is the point of justifying, why are we really doing it? Why am I doing this? The answer is pride. Because we don't want to be seen by others as wrong. We don't want to have a picture painted that we possibly made a mistake. Possibly made a mistake? Imagine that! Well, that's pride.

Well, the reality of life is that we all make mistakes and we will make mistakes and we should not defend or justify ourselves because of an image. There are times to say certain things, to defend when we believe that something has been misunderstood, but not when it comes to defending self. There's a big difference there - defending self. If we're wrong we should admit we are wrong, that we did wrong. No use defending it. But nature will defend it, will twist it, will lie a little bit and twist to cover it up.

Well, these three main headings, the desires of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes (the desires of the eyes), and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. Selfishness. There is no selfishness in Yahweh Elohim. There is no selfishness in Joshua the Messiah, but there is selfishness in us. Selfishness will exist even once Satan is removed because of our nature.

So Satan is removed after 6,000 years of man's self-rule, then we have 1,100 years and guess what? These three things will be taught, these three things have to be seen within each individual. Everybody called must come to see this. And it goes back to the beginning of this sermon, "Let him/her deny himself." What is "himself?" Selfishness. Let's deny these lusts and these desires. We're to fight them.

So to be in the Body of Christ, a member of the Body, we have come to this point in our life for the purpose of continuing the fight against self and not to become battle weary. There are times when we fight and we continue the fight and continue the fight and we fail. We have been given the gift of repentance by God, by God's great power, gift of God's holy spirit, that we can see where we failed. It's a beautiful gift. Then we can go towards God, to God's throne, and say, "I failed. I have allowed my selfishness, my lusts or the pride of life to rule me. I don't want it. I deny my self. I want to deny my self. I want to fight my pride. I want to fight. When something is said and I know I feel like I want to justify and say something or lie or exaggerate, I want to deny myself by stopping it, stopping it there!" Even though the thought can be there we can stop it. That is denying self. We're going to deny our selfishness.

Now, there are many aspects of life where we have the opportunity to deny our selfishness and it can come down to simple things. About, simple choice of a meal. We may desire one thing, someone else may desire something else. We can turn around and go, "No, I want to do this." But there is a time, of course, to lead and say, "No, what about this as an option?" Nothing wrong with putting forth the option. But there is a time to turn around and go, "No, I'll go with you. I deny what I want for the benefit of somebody else."

We understand these things. I'm going over old ground here. But it's about a point. This is the only way to live this life. To be called, to be given God's holy spirit, we have to take up the burden, and that burden in this world is the fact that we're different. But in the future it won't be the burden; it won't be the same burden. There'll be different things that they have to deal with, and the burden they carry, everyone is going to have to do, is to deny themselves. Everybody's got to deny themselves. During the 7,100 years of mankind everybody has to learn to deny themselves.

**Verse 17—And the world, which is talking about this age, this present age, is passing away, and the lust (the desires) of it are going to pass away; but he who does the will of God abides forever.** Which what this is saying is that over the 7,100 years it's all physical and it's all going to pass away, and there's going to come a point where selfishness, all the desires of self are going to be done away. There's not going to be any more self left because everyone is either changed or destroyed. Therefore, what does it say, "but he who does the will of God abides forever." It's those that do God's will. What is God's will? To learn to deny self, to make the choice to deny self. And what will happen? They will abide with God forever. They will be in Elohim.

We can be the problem in relationships because of our selfishness. That's a given. If we fail to love as God loves, which we do often, we are not denying self but pleasing self because it's what we want. Where God sacrifices. God has sacrificed. And we understand many things that God has sacrificed. We don't know all the things that God has sacrificed but God has sacrificed His Son. He sacrificed His Son. He gave us something, Joshua the Messiah, who was nailed to a pole for us. He gave us this opportunity so that we could have life. It's an incredible thing. So God has never failed to love, but we fail to love more often than we probably would admit.

The problem is not what the other person says or does to us. It's never. Someone could say anything to us. But the problem is in the way we respond to what is done and said. So it's our reaction.

Now, we use in the Church an example about cars because all of us have been involved to a degree, and most of us, anyway, have been involved to a degree where something has gone wrong in traffic. If a person cuts us off they're not the problem... talking about something about on a... There is a problem there, the fact that they're selfish, and it's spiritual in nature, really, but the way we respond is what is most important thing because we're the problem. Now, we can respond two ways. We can respond with the pride of life, "You're cutting me off?!" Well, who are we? Who is me? Who is me really? In the eyes of it all, who is me? Well, I know who I am so if someone does cut us off what should we do? Relax. No big deal. Doesn't really matter. It's the way we respond.

Now, these things happen to us. That's just an example. There's thousands of things in life that happen to us and how we respond is the answer. Someone can say certain things to us and it may be true, it may not be true. But how we respond is the key. So we then take up the burden and we live God's way of life and we live in humility and it doesn't matter what anybody says.

Now, people have called me crazy, have called me all types of things, just like they have you. They call us crazy. They call us a cult. Does it matter? It's how we respond. Well, we respond in love. We have great desire for them. We have great concern for them. We desire that they repent (when God gives them the gift to) and that they be a follower of Joshua the Messiah. It's an incredible thing. And people can't understand. Unless you've got God's spirit you can't understand these things we're talking about.

No one can make us sin. It is a personal choice. So nobody makes us sin. There is a saying that says, "The devil made me do it." No, Satan can tempt, he can test, but in the end it is a personal choice. He is wrong in the sense of what he's trying to do, which is destroy God's creation, destroy us in particular because we've been given the opportunity now to enter Elohim at a point in time where others haven't. Well, he is out to destroy us in a spiritual way. Well, he still cannot make us fail. He can test us and tempt us and those types of things, but the reality is in the end it's a personal choice that we make whether or not we are going to follow God or not.

We are the problem when it comes to right relationships with God. It's not God's problem, that He cut Himself off. It was us. We did something to destroy this relationship. God is love, we're not. We are selfishness. God knows what a right relationship is because He thinks love all the time.



1 Corinthians 13:1. Now the point here is it's addressed to the Church, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13, and the point here is we cannot have a relationship with God unless we're called to it. So nobody can have a right relationship with God unless they are called to it. Now, one of the answers to emails that come in (emails come into the Church and the Church website), and certain people will do certain things and say certain things. A lot of them say they want to join the Church and all those types of things. Well, we have an email that goes back out and it says, "To have a right relationship with God you have to follow certain steps and they include Sabbath keeping and tithing." And if a person is not willing to yield their selfishness, themselves to these two points in the main, there is no relationship that can be had with God. Because these are the principles that God has established to have a right relationship with Him, and it's all based on obedience. Obedience is the key to having a right relationship with God.

Well, here we see in 1 Corinthians 13 it's about how to have a right relationship with others, which is the ability to live love to others, to God and to others.

**1 Corinthians 13:1—Though I speak with tongues of men, or different languages, and of angels, who speak a particular language, but have not love, do not have God's holy spirit, I have become a sounding brass and a clanging cymbal.** So without God's holy spirit we are of no value. Now, that should make us stand back and realize that when we sin and cut ourselves off from God what are we? Selfish. We've committed an act of selfishness. We can repent. The beauty of a gift from God, a calling, that we can repent. But without God's holy spirit what value am I? What value are you without God's spirit?

Now, many that leave the Church cut themselves off quite early and you can't see it, you don't know it, but their value while they're connected to the Church, there's still potential for repentance. But there comes a point where they're disfellowshipped. Well, they then have to wait a particular time because they're value to God is still there, in the sense of they may be given an opportunity to repent in the future, God may use them a different way in the hundred years. We don't know those types of things. But they become like an empty vessel because without God's holy spirit that's exactly what we are. We're just living our selfishness. And really, without God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us we become an empty vessel, an empty container just walking around fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, those three main headings, and all the things that are connected to it, which is all about disobedience to God. We're fulfilling total selfishness. We are no longer denying self. Not possible. We can only deny self if we have the gift of God's holy spirit.

So without God's holy spirit we just become an empty vessel. And we should be able to see that, just walking around empty, empty container. What's the good of an empty container with nothing in it? Could be filled with gold, silver, things of value, or it could be filled with stubble or straw. What value is that? It's worthless. Empty - worthless. Well, without God's holy spirit we become worthless, in that sense of no real value because God can't use us because we're rejecting Him.

**Verse 2—And though I have inspired speaking,** and that only comes about if a person knows the truth. Now, a lot of people in times past and in the world in particular, they get into speaking in tongues and they say it's inspired speaking. That's a lie. That is not true. The only way a person

can have it, inspired speaking, is if they know the truth and believe the truth. Because it's from God; it's God's thinking. ...and if understand and see all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. So if we fail to sacrifice self, deny our selfishness, we are nothing of value.

So when you really look at it having this calling is the ability to deny our selfishness. That's the ability we have. Whereas without it we can't deny our selfishness. And if we can't deny our selfishness we're of no value on a spiritual level.

**And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.** So we have to have God's holy spirit to be of any value to anybody else, really, because with God's spirit we are of value to others because we are living love to others. We have that power, that capacity to live love to others. By the power of God's holy spirit in us God does the works. But without God living and dwelling in us what are we? Empty vessels, vessels of selfishness, never denying self, not fighting self, which is what we have been told this last period of time that we are in, that we had best be denying our self, we had best be fighting our selfishness. We had best be focusing in and putting God first in our life because now time is running out, time has run out and it's time to now act, to live a particular way of life.

The point here is that we must live love to others and it all starts with the way we think towards others.

**Love suffers long.** So now we're going to hear the description of God. Because God is love, so now this is what we should be living in our life by the power of God's holy spirit. A person without God's spirit can't do these things. God (love) suffers long. He's very patient. ...**is kind; love does not envy**, there is no jealousy, pride. There's none of that involved. **Love does not parade itself**, lift its self up saying, "Look at me. Look how good I am." It doesn't do that.

...**is not puffed up, does not behave rudely.** It's got humility. ...**does not seek its own, is not provoked;** doesn't respond with sin. Someone sins we don't respond with sin.

...**thinks no evil.** So imagine the person cutting us off. What should we think? Really, what should we think? Well, human nature we think a lot of things, but what would God think? Person is just being very foolish and they don't know any better. Forgive them; they don't know what they do. That's the answer. Forgive them; they don't know what they do.

...**does not rejoice in iniquity**, doesn't rejoice in sin and selfishness, **but rejoices in the truth.** So when truth enters the Church we should rejoice. Because when you look at this whole matter of truth, if we just stand back—the world doesn't have it; we have it—but let's stand back and look at it. When a truth enters the Church, like the truth of the name of Joshua the Messiah there's great rejoicing. The world thinks we're all crazy and doesn't really care that much. But we can stand back and say what great blessings have been poured out on us, that now when we pray to God the Father through the name of Joshua the Messiah, now it has great meaning...great meaning about salvation, about God's plan. We understand why Joshua was given to us, as a gift to us, as our Passover.

These are amazing things that we understand, we can understand because we have God's spirit and we don't rely on our selfishness. If we're selfish we will reject God's ways, we just won't want anything to do with it. Why would we? We're self satisfied, we're all about self. What a beautiful thing our calling is.

...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. God's purpose for mankind is an incredible truth that mankind does not know about or understand. Mankind doesn't know anything about denying themselves. They just can't know it.

Now, there will be somebody that will say "I deny myself this particular desert," ice cream, in particular, which I like. But they'll deny themselves. But what is the motive behind denying themselves? Selfish. It's about pride because it's about the figure, the body, and you'll find there's a motive behind it. It's based on pride. "I'm not going to do that because I'll put on extra calories and I'll put on extra weight and I don't want to look too bad and this is the image I have of myself." That's the motivation. Well, man can do that. They can deny themselves, but there's always something behind it called pride, generally behind it, is sin behind it. It's motive which they can't see.

Well, we've been called to see it. We've been called to deny ourselves for spiritual reasons...for spiritual reasons. To be like God, become like God, be holy as He is holy, be separate. Well, we're separate from the world by the power of God's holy spirit. Without God's spirit we're not separate from the world, we're back in the world, we're part of the world.

Truth 9 says: **9 (6) The human spirit in man.** The difference between the [human spirit or the] human mind and animal brain is that there is a human spirit within the human brain that gives the ability of free thought, [which we have], creativity [which we have to different degrees], and memory [which we have to different degrees]. This human spirit must be united with the spirit of God for man to be able to come to know the true ways of God.

For someone to know the truth, not just words, to know it within their being requires the gift of God's holy spirit connected with the human mind, the human spirit. This is a truth that was given through Mr. Armstrong to the Church. God gave it to Mr. Armstrong to give to the Church. Now, people misunderstood this, I understand, but really it's very straight forward. It makes life simple. When we understand animals who do things by habit, so to speak, or by design; it's a repetition of the same thing. Every lamb does the same thing. Every bird does the same thing. Every snake does the same thing.

We as humans have choice. They don't. They have minimal choice on certain things but we have choice on everything. Whether we want to obey God or we don't is a personal choice. Whether we want to fight the fight against our thinking, against sin, deny self, is a personal choice and there is an outcome either way. If we choose not to fight there's an outcome. If we choose to fight there's an outcome. Now, one would think that human reasoning, which is not a good thing, but using this just thinking it through, put your hand on the fire and get burned and possibly get an infection and die or don't put your hand on the fire. Choice. Which one do you want to do? Now, we as humans will go, "Ah, I'm not putting my hand on the fire because I might get an infection and die." It's pretty straight forward.

Well, this is the same. God's way is reasonably straight forward. Deny self or deny God, one or the other. If we don't deny self we're denying God living and dwelling in us. If we deny self we're fighting the fight, God can use us and live out to the benefit of others. It's a wonderful thing to know the truth. It's a beautiful thing to know it.

We are the problem in all relationships because our lusts and desires that dwell in us. That's what makes up self, the overview, three main principles.

We are called to learn to deny our selfishness. That's the purpose of our calling, to fight. Now, if we're not going to fight we become an empty vessel. If we fight we become a vessel that God can use.

We think we have all the answers of every issue or problem that affects mankind. When we look at things we say, oh, we know the answer, just do this or just do that, just do that. I know watching movies that sometimes you see and you know the answer and I say, just... The person is just better off...just shoot him, just get him out of the way because you know he's going to come back. And that's generally what happens, they get shot and guess what, they crawl back out at the last minute and grab the person. All those things, well, we just think we know the answer to all things. We make judgments thinking we know the answer to things when reality is we don't know. We weren't there, we don't know. All we do know is every man is a liar. Every man has pride. Every man has lusts. Every man looks after self.

So no matter what is happening in politics, what is happening in local governments, what is happening in the world, what's happening in the media, everybody has a motive and everybody has selfishness, and everyone will justify their position. All the more reason why we don't take sides. We take God's side! And there are many things in this world we do not know the answers even though we think we do. We know nothing about. All we know is every man is a liar because God said, "Every man is a liar." Man is riddled with pride, everybody. There is nobody that doesn't have pride in this world.

We, by nature, think that we know best and what is best for others. We think we know what God should do and should be doing with His creation. Now, that just shows you the arrogance of mankind and what we're really like. We think we know what God should do and how He should do it when it's all mapped out, and it's perfectly mapped out for the benefit of all mankind and the benefit of the creation, what God is creating, having a family, having Elohim. That's why God did all this. God created all this for the purpose of Elohim.

Well, we often, if we're not careful, can think of "better" ways to do it. And you might think, "Well, I don't think that." Well, it can be revealed simply, if you want a clear answer to it. We can think about an ordination and think we know better. It's a common thing. Because when I make this statement, "We think we know what God should do or should be doing with His creation," well, God placed Joshua the Messiah as the head of the Church and if an apostle makes a decision or appoints somebody to a role of service and we disagree with it what are we doing? We think we know what God should do and what He should be doing with His creation. It's the same thing. We elevate ourselves up because we are selfish by nature. We think we know best. Well, they're things to guard on.

And when those thoughts enter our minds, because that's what happens, these thoughts do enter our minds (there is no use denying these things), we have these thoughts, we have all these different tests and trials and temptations, all different, all varying. Everybody is different based on their background and how they were born, their genetic disposition, their environment they grew up in; everybody has tests, trials.

Well, whenever this comes into the mind we need to deal with it - deny self, deny himself, denies selfishness. It's not what we want; it's what God has planned. That's the secret, deny himself, deny what we are, what we think is right and wrong, what we want. That's what's got to be denied. Put it aside and follow God. Believe the truth.

God knows what is best for mankind. So we see the first 6,000 years of man's self rule is good. It's good because God is giving an opportunity for mankind to learn something - man cannot rule himself, every man is a liar, selfishness is evil. That's what we're going to learn out of this. We've learned it. We're seeing it. But mankind has to come to see it and they'll be given that opportunity, the majority, not all.

Then we see a transition, really, of 1,000 years where Satan has been removed and we see this transition where mankind begins to see his selfishness and begins to learn to deny self. Then we see the last 100 years where God gives mankind the opportunity to choose, to deny self or not, fight or don't fight, believe Me or don't. The choice is yours. That's what God says.

**Isaiah 29:15—Woe to those who seek deep**, which is putting great effort to cover up selfishness. **So those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Eternal.** Now, this is somebody that thinks they're not being seen. So within the Body of Christ if we think that God doesn't know or see we are delusional, we really are delusional. Nothing can be hidden from God. The attitude can't be hidden. God knows when we sin. So why would we want to go to great efforts to cover something up? Why not simply repent, get rid of what we are doing, or get rid of the things that we're involved in that we shouldn't, and turn to God? Why not do that? Why not deny our selfishness as Joshua the Messiah said?

**And their works** (their actions) **are in the dark**; believing it's all covered up. Remember we had the sermon *God Knows* where we looked at the fact that Adam and Eve hid. And thinking you can hide from God, it's just... Human mind. It's just the foundation of human reasoning without God, that's an empty vessel, that just stands there and thinks, "Well, I'm going to hide behind the bushes." It's just insane stuff, when God created it all, God knows. It's His power, His spirit power that made all of this. And the beauty that we have is God's holy spirit so that we can share in a part or an aspect of God. It's a wonderful plan that we see and know.

**Their works are in the dark; they say, Who sees us?** The mind is incredible. **Who knows us?** They lack the knowledge and understanding that God sees everything. Now, that's mankind. Mankind doesn't have God in the picture. Mankind doesn't worry about what God thinks. Mankind doesn't believe God. They don't want anything to do with God.

I know in certain court cases and people get up and they have to swear on the Bible, and the judge doesn't use the Bible as his guide. But that's the foundation of the court system, the Bible,

swear that you're going to tell the truth to God, you know, and put your hand up. What a stupid system when the judge himself doesn't follow the laws of God. What does he follow? The laws of man. It's called the court system and all the bylaws and laws that they have about all the penalties all written out. "This is what will happen if you do 'this' and 'that' and 'that'. It's all going on and on and on." Nothing to do with obedience to God. God says a certain thing about this is what happens, this is the outcome. The judge doesn't even consider God's word because man is left to himself for 6,000 years.

Well, the day is coming soon where that's going to all change and a person's yes will be their yes and their no will be their no, and that's it. It's yes or no. Did you do this? Yes or no. "Now, let me tell you about it." No, did you do it? Yes or no? It's easy! It's going to be a wonderful system.

**Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter, referring now to God, be esteemed as the clay?** Now, this is saying, are you bringing God down to your level? Are you treating the potter, the molder the same as the clay? God and man, are we making them equal? Well, it's just stupid thinking.

**For shall the thing made (man) say to Him (God) who made it...** I'm referring here, this is about a potter with the clay and we're looking about God and mankind. ...**and He did not make me?** The clay, the man says, well, God didn't make me. Doesn't believe in God. If a person believes in evolution they deny God as their creator. That's simply what man has done.

**Or shall the thing formed say to him, shall man who was formed say to God who formed it, or fashioned it, He has no understanding?** In other words, God doesn't know what's going on. I can hide. I can do all these things but God doesn't know it. I can do it in the dark. I can sin and get away with it. I can say I'm in the Church, turn up for Sabbath services and keep living my life the other six days of the week in sin." Fool! Not going to happen. God knows all things.

God is merciful and gives time for repentance. Well, the time is now. The time is now. The time is to repent now. Time is running out. Time has run out. It's time to repent for all of us. I'm speaking to myself here, too, because it's time to change, to really dedicate ourselves to God.

So this is saying God doesn't know what is going on, God doesn't even know what's going on in our thinking. You know the buzzer - nope, wrong! God does know. God knows everything. God knows about our intent. God knows things about us that we do not know about ourselves.

It is pride and arrogance to think that our attitudes are hidden from God. It's just stupidity. It's absolute pride to think that God doesn't know things that come out of our mouth and that the attitude behind them, which is the key, the attitude behind them is wrong, and that we think we can get away with it.

**Jeremiah 18:1—The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, talking about the potter, making something at the wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred, which is corrupt, ruined, or marked, in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good**

**to the potter to make.** Now, we can just envisage that. Potter there making something and it's not quite right, and it's not quite right and it starts to go off. Well, he just stops the wheel, grabs it, and pushes it all back into one, bangs it down, gets it ready and puts it back on the wheel ready to make something different. Because the potter can change the clay to whatever he desires. Now, we know this is referring to God and mankind.

**Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: O house of Israel,** like spiritual Israel today, the Church. Referring to the Church, God speaking to the Church. ...**can I not do with you as the potter?** Now, it's interesting because where we are in time, cannot God do with the Church what He desires? Can He not mold and fashion it the way He wants it in His timeline, not ours? Cannot God do that based on whatever He wants to? He can start something, stop it, redo it, refashion it, and start again to shape something different.

**...says the Eternal. Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!** Church of God, we are in God's hands. We are being molded and fashioned as God sees fit. And no matter how long it takes or what it takes we will be molded and fashioned according to God's will and purpose in God's timeline.

This is a spiritual principle that we've just covered. We can be folded, molded, and fashioned to fit into the Kingdom of God. We will be fashioned to fit exactly.

Now, there's another principle here if you've ever used clay or tried to do any pottery work. The clay of itself, if you're not careful, can dry out and just set into a blob. You have to add water. Well, we understand in the Bible that God uses water as a symbol of God's holy spirit. Therefore, the clay (mankind) can be molded and fashioned using the water. Because as the wheel spins and the pot starts to change shape you'll find that the potter adds water to the clay to keep it pliable, otherwise it dries out and becomes set.

Now, we understand, because God has given it to the Church, that some people are like that clay, that they have dried out and become set. Some of them never had the water in the beginning, never were given the holy spirit. They just were a piece of clay, dried out, and became set, hardened, can't be changed. And what you do with something that is set, if you get, like, a plate that is half shaped and it dries out, you crack and it just bursts open because it's dried too much, hasn't been baked off. Well, mankind, some of mankind have done that. Those in God's Church have done certain things too with God's holy spirit, with some water, have been molded, and then they've dried out. They haven't been finished off in the kiln, which is by the fire to bake it, to make it set permanently in God's way. No, they've just dried out without being baked because they've set their mind against God (just as an analogy there).

So we have to be careful that we don't dry out, that we don't have the fact that we've made a decision by unrepented sin, that we dry out. No, we need the flow of God's holy spirit. We need the water. But if we choose to obey we will be given the water. But if we choose to disobey we won't be given the water. It's reasonably straight forward. So if we choose to obey we can be molded; we can be shaped and molded into what it is.

Now, over time when I look back at callings and mine in particular, I realize certain things have happened where I've been shaped and molded that I think differently now about certain situations when I was in the Church ten, twenty years, but I still thought a particular way. But I was wrong. I was living and thinking sin because of what I was doing, the way I treated people or the way that I thought about people. Now with a bit of molding and fashioning, a bit more water added and a bit more plying and a bit more pressure put here and there my thinking is changing, transforming. And that's what will go on, God willing, to the end of my days, this continual molding and fashioning, the continual changing that has to take place in our life.

**Verse 7—The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil.** Which is, we look at this, God is talking about nations, well, let's look at us, about us. If God says, "Well, no you're not changing; you're refusing to change. You're not really going to repent, therefore, this is going to be the answer," but a person chooses to change, chooses to repent, and chooses to obey God... "If that nation whom I have spoken," that person, "from its evil," changes, repents, thinks differently, "I will relent." Yes, God can change His mind about certain things.

So we are in a period now where we've seen aspects of this, where God says, "If you will listen, I will listen," mercy given. Well, here is an act of mercy. God says, "Well, if they go down this path this is what is going to happen. And it looks like that but this person then changes because of free choice that we've given." God's spirit connected to our spirit, we now have this power of choice to see self, to deny self. If the person is willing to deny themselves, change, repent, think different, **I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.** God is in control of world events and their outcome, and the timing. It's up to God.

Now, we're no different on a spiritual level. It's up to God. We're being molded and fashioned for a particular purpose, which is to fit into a location within God's temple. Now, that location is there for us. Now, there comes a time where a person may be molded to that and then they become set in the sense of not good but set against God. They rebel against God, and therefore, they have to be discarded. Just like the potter can do what he likes with the clay, molding it, but it needs to be reworked. Well, that reworking may have to happen in another time, but not for this part in the temple, part of the 144,000 in other words.

**Verse 9—And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it...** Which has happened within the Church. Many have been called and given an opportunity. **If it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice...** Many have done that, just disobeyed God; given the opportunity, disobey God. **...then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.** So it had a purpose, it was being molded and fashioned, but at some point the molding and fashioning stops because they've cut off the flow of God's holy spirit in their life and they no longer can repent and change. Well, God says, "Well, they've turned away from Me. They're doing evil in My sight." They've set their mind on doing that evil, **so that they will not obey Me, then I will relent concerning the good.** The power of God's holy spirit, only God is good. God's holy spirit is good - coming into to us, out to the benefit



of others. ...and that which I said I would benefit it. The person being benefitted by the power of God's holy spirit.

We are living a benefit. We have God's holy spirit. We are benefitted because of it. What a great blessing to know the truth, to be part of the Body of Christ. What a great blessing to be mocked and called a cult. At this end-time, and when you take the scheme of everything this is a blessing, to be part of the Body, to be a member of the Body, what a great blessing, to be called.

This principle applies to us as individual's which is about God has a purpose for us but it's up to us what we want to do. If we choose to disobey we can't be used. If we choose to obey God will continue to mold and fashion us.

**Now, therefore, speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the LORD (the Eternal): Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and deriving a plan against you.** So God's got something He's going to say, "This is what I'm going to do because of your rebellion." **Return now everyone from his evil way,** now, this applies to us in the Body. It always applies to anybody in the Church. There is a disaster that's going to come our way if we refuse to repent. It's a spiritual disaster for us.

...and make your ways and your doings good. That's what we have to do. Now is the time. Time is up. Now is the time to turn to God. No matter what happens, how long it takes, how short it takes, now is the time to change, now is the time to rededicate ourselves.

God doesn't owe us anything. We've been called and given this opportunity. What a great blessing; what a great act of mercy. Well, God doesn't owe it to us to call us. We've been given this opportunity because He desires a family and He desires out of all the people that exist in the world, seven billion or so, it's us that have been called. We've been called to deny ourselves now. Others will have the opportunity in the future to deny themselves. Satan will be removed but they're still going to have to deny self. They're going to put self secondary. God has to be first. Focus must be spiritual. Physical comes after. Spiritual focus, the physical will look after itself. If we have a physical focus the spiritual will be neglected and guess what will happen? We'll become set in our thinking, which is a disaster.

**Romans 9:14—What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?** Is God unfair? No. **Certainly not!** Everything that happens to us is for a spiritual benefit; everything, no matter what it is, we know that all things work to our good on a spiritual level. God has a plan and we are part of it at this present time. Now, this is a key to this, "at this present time." Decisions are being made by God. Judgment is on the house of God now. Well, it's up to us. It's not up to God; it's up to us what we choose.

Now, we don't know why we are in the Body, in some aspects. We know we're in the Body to deny ourselves. How long do we have to deny ourselves and what time periods are we going to live into? Don't know. We may live into the Millennium. We may be changed. Talking to all different people here. May die and be resurrected in the hundred years. And when you go through this thought process, personally, I realize there are blessing either way for me. If changed, fantastic. If not, live into the Millennium, what a great blessing for the opportunity to help others by

example, living God's way. And if died and resurrected in that hundred years, what a great blessing to be with those people, to be able to help them (although physical, not spiritual), physically be able to help them, to be an example that this is what can do. Because we don't know what God has planned for us. We think we know all these things but we don't. The reality is we don't.

Well, many of us have been called to live into the Millennium. What a great blessing! What a tragedy to deny God now by denying our selfishness. Because if we do not deny our selfishness now we are not going to follow Joshua the Messiah into the Millennium. It's not possible, because we have to deny ourselves now.

So everything that happens to us now is for a spiritual benefit. We have been warned at this last Feast and that was a spiritual benefit. The warning was a spiritual benefit. God wants the best for us. God has a plan for us and we just don't know the exact timing of everything.

**Verse 15—For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.** We have had mercy and compassion shown to us by God because we've been called at this end-time...at this end-time. What an incredible act of mercy and compassion. The evidence of God's mercy and compassion is in our calling and can be seen in the sacrifice of Joshua the Christ, Joshua the Messiah, if we grasp and understand that great act of mercy and compassion for us. Because without Joshua the Messiah there is no salvation. We would be remaining in our selfishness because sin could not be covered. We'd be just still going through all these rituals of animal sacrifices that couldn't cover sin. Because sin is spiritual, animal sacrifices are physical. Well, animal sacrifices are done away because we now have a spiritual sacrifice, the Son of God, Joshua the Messiah, our Passover, our High Priest, our soon coming King. Isn't that incredible? We understand it. The world doesn't understand it or know it.

**Verse 16—So then *it is not of him* (mankind) **who wills...** In other words, you can't save yourself by willing it and by wanting it. No, you have to be called. ...**nor him who runs.** Nothing about how fast you are; don't run and gain salvation. ...**but God who shows mercy.** So it's God that called us, that has shown mercy to us. Without that there is no hope.**

It's not our own efforts or our self will that can save us. It's only God who saves us through Christ. We must have an attitude "By myself," this is interesting, "By myself I can do nothing." By my "self," the self we know by the gift of God's holy spirit, well, this self, we can do nothing spiritually good, absolutely impossible. Because self is selfish, therefore, we can't do anything spiritual.

Now, what Christ was saying was it wasn't him but it was God in him, the thinking of God, the mind of God that he had. He could do nothing other than what God had given him to do. We can do nothing spiritual without God's holy spirit. That's why we can't become an empty vessel. It's a tragedy. We're of no value. Almost brings you to tears to think what value are you if we don't have God's holy spirit? So what value am I, what value are we as empty vessels? Useless, absolutely useless. It's terrifying to think of these things. It is for me.

Of our own efforts we can do nothing and by myself, my selfishness, my will, my desires, my self it can't do any good. It's only by the gift of God's holy spirit that we can do good.

Now, an example of this is when truth enters the Church. How does it enter the Church? Well, the answer is when God through Christ delivers it to His apostle to give to the Church. Now, we either believe that or we don't. We either understand that or we don't. Now, the issue for us is that we will be tested on these things to make sure that we understand whether or not we know this very fact. Do we believe this, "When God through Christ delivers it to His apostle to give to the Church?" That is the only way truth enters the Church. No other way. Not from our own thinking, not any other way. This is how it is. And then it's up to us, the choice that we make, whether we're going to accept it or not.

If we have other thinking we need to learn to deny self, because the self starts to think, "Oh, hang on a minute, what about this... What about..." And it's not about the "what about's." Believe God; this is God's Church, believe that. It doesn't matter what happens, it doesn't matter when it happens. It makes no difference, we believe God. We understand this spiritual principle. We continue to fight the fight, denying our selfishness, well, it's going to be alright ever how long it may take in a person's life.

**Verse 17—For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I (God) have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.** Now, Pharaoh's pride, which is natural and which we all have, it was elevated because he was pharaoh and he believed almost that he was a god. And people treated him like it so his head gets quite big. He knew he had power because he did. Well, God used it for a spiritual purpose which no one at that time understood. Nobody understood what God was doing because this is about something in the future. But Pharaoh wouldn't have known that he was being used by God for a spiritual purpose.

Israel was taken out of Egypt by God for a spiritual purpose. Wasn't spiritual to them then but it's spiritual to us. They wouldn't have known. They just know that they're saving themselves physically. They still had the selfishness, "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." They had all those things, all of them, and they were using it extremely so at different times.

Well, God took them out for a spiritual purpose which no one at that time understood. They wouldn't have understood what was really going on, that it's all pointing to something spiritual. But we do understand. We understand why Pharaoh was like he was. We understand why the children of Israel were taken out of Egypt. We understand. How incredible is that? Do you know the world doesn't understand it? But we understand it because God's given it to us. How? God gave it to Christ to give to an apostle so that we understood, by the gift of God's holy spirit.

But we do understand because God has revealed it to His Church. Isn't that an incredible thing. When God states "that My name may be declared in all the earth," this is yet to be fully fulfilled, to be completed. Millions have lived and died not knowing anything about God's great plan for mankind. So God was glorified in a way but now there is a glory but it takes God's spirit to see that event, otherwise it's just a story in the Bible.

**Verse 18—Therefore, He has mercy on whom He wills**, which is about our calling. We've had great mercy because we were called by God the Father, the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe. ...**and whom He wills He hardens**. So He used Pharaoh for a purpose, for a spiritual purpose, for our purpose. Isn't that incredible? For our benefit. We understand those things that happened.

Now, this has happened not only with Pharaoh, but with others. If you look at Judas; without Judas there is no betrayal. Therefore, God allowed that for a purpose. For whose purpose? Mine, yours, because we had to have a Passover to cover our sin, therefore, Judas was part of that. God did it. God allowed it. What a beautiful thing!

And when you look at the man of sin, the son of perdition, God allows these things because He has a purpose. Why? Because there was going to be an Apostasy. There was going to be a great falling away from the truth. Then there was going to be a remnant raised up. And who was going to be part of that remnant? God decided who was going to be part of that remnant. God decided. We didn't decide.

I know from my background and what happened to me that I didn't decide all of a sudden to, "Oh, hang on a minute. I'm in the wrong location." No, God did it. God did it through Jesus Christ - Joshua the Messiah should have said. Big slip. But he did it through Joshua so that I could have the opportunity to become part of the Body of Christ. Incredible.

**He, therefore, has mercy on whom He wills**, which is about our calling, **and whom He wills He hardens**. Those not called at this point in time, those left to themselves in their pride, in their selfishness, those that do not have the ability to deny themselves. They don't have that ability.

**Verse 19—You will say to me then, Why does He still find fault?** In other words, "It's God's fault that I'm like this!" **For who has resisted His will?** Saying, "Well, it's not my fault. I'm made this way. I'm selfish and it's not my fault, it's God's fault." But the reality is I am the problem because of my choices. And people would say, "Well, it's not my fault because I was made this way." Well, the answer is we would still choose our selfishness. That's what we do. We're given a choice but by nature we choose selfishness. But it's all part of God's plan because this is about learning to deny self. So we come to see self, now we have to learn, "Oh, I've got to overcome it. I have to fight myself." To enter Elohim, it's the only way. No other way. And this is God's plan! So it's a beautiful, wonderful thing that God made us this way. God made us this way for a spiritual purpose and it's a great and a wonderful plan and it's a great blessing. All we have to do... All we have to do is learn to deny ourselves, take up the burden, which is the burden is having to fight all the time (God's way of life, take up this burden of overcoming self by the power of God's holy spirit), and follow Joshua the Messiah.

How simple is this? Well, you know it's much harder. Fighting self takes a long time; never stops while we have physical life.

**Verse 20—But indeed, O man, who are you to rely or reply or argue with or be against God?** Who are you to blame God? What sort of...? Have we lost our mind to think that we would blame God? God is God of love. He does everything to our benefit, and yet here we are blaming God.

**Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me like this?** So the attitude is, “Well, why have you made me this way?” Well, because God loves you and He wants you to be in His family. God wants me in His family. God wants us in His family. That’s why God made us this way. All of us are made this way for a spiritual purpose because God loves His creation and He wants to give us something. A life in Elohim? Can’t comprehend it.

**Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me like this?** The attitude is “It’s not my fault. I’m like this because God made me this way.” Well, God made you this way to make a choice, to one day that He would call you and me, call us so that we can choose God, learn to deny ourselves, fight our selfishness.

We fail to see God’s purpose for mankind. So if we have the wrong attitude here this is the problem, we fail to see God’s purpose for mankind, what He’s really doing, creating Elohim. We fail to see why we have been created this way. It’s a wonderful thing, the fact that we’ve been created this way, and then called, and then have the opportunity to choose righteousness, choose God’s way, not to choose selfishness? We fail to see God’s plan of salvation for us.

So if we give up the fight what we’re really doing is we’re just failing to see our purpose...our purpose that God has for us. He loves us and wants us to be part of His family. There is no other way but to give mankind the choice of good and evil. Once called we see spiritually the difference between good and evil. And we have to choose the good and deny the evil, deny the selfishness.

Once called a person will begin to see self. We are called to deny self. That’s why we’re called. Man must be tested and tried to see what he will choose. And that’s our life. We’re tried and tested all the time for the purpose of coming to learn to see self, what we choose. What will we choose? God will test us to see what is in our thinking.

**Verse 21—Does not the potter (God) have power over the clay (mankind), for the same lump to make one vessel of honor or for honor and another for dishonor?** Because we belong to God. Now, God will appoint what He wants. God established the Church through Joshua the Messiah for a purpose. It’s God’s Church, the Church of God. Joshua the Messiah is the head of the Church, therefore, we’re going to go through tests and trials to fit into a particular location. So everything works to our good. Everything works to our good because we understand God’s plan. Some are for honor, some are for dishonor. Some are needed for a time within the Body and then they’re let go because of their decisions and because of their nature. They’re just let go. Well, God still will use them because it’s God’s decision who remains in the Body and who leaves; based on our choice, of course, it’s a combination here.

God is good, therefore, what happens to us and for us is the best thing to happen for us, because all things work to the spiritual good. And that’s the issue. All things work to the spiritual good. So if we understand our calling, if we understand the purpose of life, we understand that no matter what happens to us, whatever we go through in experiences it’s all for our good.

We have tests and trials in life for the purpose of God knowing us by the choices we make. Now, the choice that we are facing right now is whether or not we are going to learn to deny our selfishness or not. But in the end that choice is ours whether we want to take up that fight.

**Romans 8:28** in closing. **And we know**, we see spiritually. World can't, we can, so we know why trials happen verses the way we think. It's the way we respond to things. Good things may happen to us in... Not real good from God... But good things happen and then bad things happen on a physical level, if you understand what I mean. We don't know whether some things are good or some things are bad in the sense of the outcome of them. Well, we know that all things, whether they're considered good or bad on human level, **all things work to the good**, everything, together **for good**, for God, for a spiritual outcome, **for those who love God**. So they have a priority of putting God first. They love God. They're fighting themselves, denying their selfishness. They love God. That's why they're doing it, they love God. They don't want to be like this anymore, therefore, they love God. **...to those who are the called**, which is us, called, love God, **according to His purpose**. God has a purpose for us which is Elohim. Timelines - not relevant. Really, it's about this effort that we must put in to overcome self.

**Verse 29**—**For whom He foreknew**, in the sense of God has a plan and it will be fulfilled, **He also predetermined** (predestined) **to be conformed to the image of His Son**. That's the purpose of life. Now, it's not that He knew us exactly, but there was going to be a group of people. This is what He was going to do with His Church at the end-time. This is what is planned. And what is it all about? To be conformed to the image of His Son, the same as Joshua the Messiah. The mind of God, how do we do it? By choosing to deny our selfishness, deny self.

**...that he might be the firstborn among many brethren**. Yes, Joshua the Messiah is first, others are to follow. We know 144,000 will follow. Well, all of them have had to do this, deny self. Every single one of them. Now, we know there are a few yet to be sealed, if at the time of giving this sermon that is the case. Well, we know that all of them have done one thing - denied self.

With that, we will conclude.