

Today we're beginning a new sermons series entitled *Real Freedom* and this is *Part 1*.

Again, I am always amazed, inspired by the fact of how God works with us, molds and fashions us, and builds one thing on top of another. To me this sermon is very exciting because there are things going to come out in it in the sense we'll be able to look a little more deeply at matters that I think a lot of time we take for granted or don't fully believe or understand yet. Basically, simple things, but they're not so simple.

The world speaks of freedom but with many different definitions and beliefs of what real freedom actually is. There is a well known expression, which, when I began this particular sermon it was before I realized what was coming up on Monday, because I started working on this last Sabbath, started thinking about it on last Sabbath, thinking about some different scriptures, and so forth, when it came to mind. The expression goes like this: "Free! Free at last!" Not realizing at that moment in time when I started thinking about it that it was Martin Luther King's memorial, actually, holiday that we have in the United States.

Anyway, I thought what an incredible thing here. "Free! Free at last!" You think about the expression and what people have gone through through time talking about freedom and what it is and all the ideas that people have of freedom. It's so varied. I think of that particular expression there, of what was happening back in his time and the statement he made. The question is, did real freedom follow? There are some big things that took place. There are some changes that took place, things that should have taken place a long, long time ago, and it brought out and brought to light so many prejudices, so much wrong thinking in so many people through a long period of time. Yet real freedom didn't follow and there are still prejudices. There are still those kinds of feelings that people have of all races, of all kinds that exist out there, because of human nature and what we're like.

People can talk about freedom, and even freedom in this country here, but it isn't real in the sense of what real freedom is all about. We don't have it. Mankind doesn't have it yet. So again, so many ideas about what it really is. The problem is, is that real freedom, people don't understand it comes from God. It doesn't come from what man can achieve. It can never be that way.

So if people could just look at that a little more objectively and be a little more honest they could come to admit certain things, but they'd have to admit certain things about their own nature and human nature, and the reality is that people can't do that because it takes God to show us what we're like. It takes God to show us what is deep down inside of us. In the world people can only go so far with human reasoning and human ability to perceive some of these kinds of things. With us in God's Church, when God begins to show us things about our self and

what is wrong with human nature, of all people we can begin to understand certain things and see certain things in ourselves. It gives us an ability to see it in the world in the way the world can't see it.

I've even told this to the ministry at times, be careful, because you're given extra ability at times to carry out the function, the jobs you have, to perceive certain things that are given by God's spirit. It's not us. It's by God's spirit. He gives the ability to see those kinds of things for the purpose of serving. That's the way it is within the Church, even how we should see ourselves, of what God's desire is. It's about giving. Love is about giving. Love is about sacrifice. Love is about the ability to sacrifice. That means that love has to have sacrifice involved in it because you're sacrificing self to love in the way that God does. Otherwise, so often, if you look deep down inside, there is some selfishness going on in what we do, meaning that the highest level sometimes that people achieve in life is that of brotherly love. God's love is something else. It's totally different and it comes from God.

So much of that requires an ability then to then see ourselves. God is the one who reveals what's in the heart, in the mind of man. We don't have that ability. The world doesn't have that ability to see what you see. It really doesn't. We see some things now in this age, in this time, that God is making manifest that help us to comprehend how much we need God's Kingdom, how much this world needs God's Kingdom. We see that in far greater ways than we did twenty years ago in the Church, or ten years ago in the Church or five years ago in the Church because God's given us an ability to understand those things in a deeper way.

So again, real freedom comes from God and it's only achieved through real change, change that begins with each one of us because we are the ones that have to change. So often people want to change others; their idea in order to have freedom the way they want to have freedom is if others will change and agree with them, because they're right. That's why no one can agree in government, as a whole, because everybody is right in their own eyes as to how they think things should be done. And that's worse today than ever before.

So again, true change can only come to people through the power of God's spirit working in their life and then God helps the mind to literally change, to be transformed. We look for a period of time in a new world that God offers mankind as a result of the change that can be accomplished in the minds of human beings that begins, first of all, in the Church, in God's Church. That's where real freedom comes from and that's the only way it can be achieved.

So we're going to begin this series by looking at the process whereby people must come to a place in life where they can start to see the kind of bondage that actually enslaves their lives and that of the whole world.

There is a book that Paul wrote, the book of Galatians, that starts to address a lot of this, and we're going to turn there first in this series. There are so many places and we're going to continue to add to that as we go along. But there is so much here, brethren, there truly is, of

what God has given to us. Sometimes it's difficult for us to grasp that, what we've truly been given. It's also difficult sometimes as we address these things, as we look at our lives and ask how deeply do I really believe that? Things that may seem to be simple that aren't so simple because they're spiritual, and that comes from God.

Galatians 4, we're going to begin there. **[Galatians 4:19]**, Paul says, **My little children, of whom I travail in birth...** Now, awkward translation in that part there as far as the King James is concerned. It's about labor. It's what it's saying here, "My little children, of whom I labor"; in other words he is laboring and using that particular word that's used for childbirth. So it's not that he is in a spiritual kind of labor, he's just revealing something here of something he is going through for the sake of the Galatians, for the sake of the Church to help bring them to a time of birth. So it's a process we go through and there are times because of that that the scriptures speak of labor, difficult times, hard times spiritually in our lives, and this is what he's referring to. So he's using a specific term here to help them to grasp something in the whole context of the book of Galatians.

He says, **in whom I labor again until Christ becomes formed in you.** So he's dealt with them before about various matters as he had with different of the Churches, this time in writing specifically to them because he couldn't be there with them. So as with so many of the things that Paul wrote, especially from Rome and being imprisoned there he wrote to the different Churches and he's writing to them about things he's heard about that he has to address. That's what this book is about.

He says here, again, that he is doing this, again, **until Christ becomes formed in you.** So that's a long process. It's a lifelong process, but there are times when certain things have to be addressed that need to be changed if individuals are to continue in that process, to be a part of it. Just like we've seen in the Church, so many go by the wayside, so many quit, so many give up, so many are pulled away, so many give in, don't stand fast in the truth that God gives to them. Choices. Choices. Choices. So many more go than stay. Paul is addressing some of this, that they have choices to make.

I would like to be present with you now and change my voice... Again, a little awkward here in how it's being stated, in how it's being actually translated. He's just basically saying, "I'd rather speak directly with you"—to see their reaction, in essence. That's a modern way of saying it. To see their reaction, to be able to better perceive then by their response to the things he says. It's because he can't do any of that. He can't go and talk to any of them face to face so he has to write a letter to them and he doesn't prefer that at all. He'd far rather be directly there with them and discuss these things so that he can address things as he's speaking to them. That's basically what he's saying.

He says, **because I have doubts about you.** This word "doubts" is basically a word that has to do with "being perplexed," or "somewhat at a loss of words," as we might state it. So it's a difficult thing for him to address. He's perplexed by what he's hearing. He is trying to help them to come

to understand some things as he goes through this book and because of a kind of a frustration he says, “I’m somewhat at a loss of words of how to address all this.” So he’s going to address it.

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you know what the law says? So now it’s getting into something here and I’ll tell you, so many of the translations you read through is because of the perverted, distorted view that people have in traditional Christianity of what it means to be under the law. See, to them it’s like this is a bad thing because you want to keep the Sabbath and the holy days, etcetera, etcetera, see. But they don’t understand that’s not what Paul is talking about at all.

Paul is addressing something here of individuals, who like so many of the Jews did, which had a strong impact on some of the other Churches because of the Jews who lived in different areas. So it wasn’t always just gentiles because it’s talking about Galatia. On the day of Pentecost they came in from all kinds of regions around the area there. So they were in different areas, locations, and in some of the Churches as well. Sometimes they had a very negative impact, candidly, on some of the Galatians because they had the baggage of Judaism with them. They had the baggage of their past ideas and it was hard for them to change. It was hard for them to—and much of this is addressed in the scripture—to deal with the fact that there were gentiles that God was working with. In other words, foreigners, people other than Jews.

So in Judaism there was this thing; the battle with them, in so many cases, was they had this concept that carried into Christianity of doing things by their own ability. They saw things on a physical plane, not a spiritual one. It was like the same thing they had in Judaism, their own ability to follow through various things. The sacrificial system, everything they did was on a physical plane. So for them to grasp what it was spiritually took time just as it did gentiles, just as it does anyone whom God calls into the Church. It takes time to understand the spirit of matters of what God is saying.

Like the matters of circumcision, as an example. It was a difficult thing for the Jews because their minds were very physical and it was hard for them to break away from some of that, just as it has been for God’s Church during worldwide, to break away from certain things that people had these perceptions of that they thought were wrong. Make-up, birthdays, things that have no importance at all on a spiritual plane! Because there is nothing that prohibits the observance of a birthday, and yet that was carried along. There are some in scattered bodies, groups out there who still have difficulty with some of that. That’s why I’ve addressed the fact. What mother is not going to remember the birth and the day of birth of their child? To say you can’t acknowledge that and remember that? That’s not from God. Nowhere in scripture does it say anything like that.

So various things that have come along through time because even as we were coming out of Sardis (the Church), and going through the period of Philadelphia, it takes time to grow spiritually. A lot of that was physical along the way. The name says it all: “Phila-delphia.” Some esteem that as being the greatest thing. It’s not. Agape is. God’s love is far, far, far above philia. So that expression reflected an era of the Church where there was a fraternal (which is what the

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word means, in essence), a fraternal kind of love amongst the people. But it wasn't necessarily spiritual. It doesn't mean that was spiritual. With many it was as people grew, obviously, but the name doesn't mean that because basically so much of it was still physical.

I hope you understand what I'm saying. Those of you who lived through Philadelphia or were in the Church at that time you know what I'm saying, as a whole. Those of you who came along later, to try to understand some of that without experience, it can be difficult. The Church was coming out of something and relating to physical things still. It takes time for that.

Even for God to work with a Church over decades. It took a long, long time to get us to the point where we were by the time of Mr. Armstrong's death. And before that one of the big things he said? "The temple is not a physical thing; it's a spiritual thing." So many of the ministry quickly forgot that during Laodicea. If they'd held on to that it would have been easier to understand what happened to the Church in the Apostasy. The stones of the temple - not one stone was left upon another. Of what it means when it says the Church, meaning everyone, was spewed out of God's mouth, vomited out of God's mouth. To be able to understand those kinds of things and the relationship it had with the temple would have helped them so much.

So in the last few years of Mr. Armstrong's life he spoke of, gave sermons about, wrote about (which we've gone through in times past), of the fact that the temple spoken of in the Old Testament, of that which is future, is a spiritual thing. It wasn't about a physical temple. Because there are still people who think that some of the temple has to be rebuilt, or as one evangelist at one time said, that those in that particular group, some of the leading ministry were basically saying that at least an altar has to be erected. Why? Why did they feel in the site of Jerusalem, on the holy mount, as it's referred to, would not the temple have to be rebuilt or anything of that nature, but why at least would there have to be an altar? Because of what it says in Daniel.

The belief amongst so many of the scattered Church is that something akin to what Antiochus Epiphanies did by offering swine upon the altar has to be repeated because that was the abomination of desolation on a physical plane in the Old Testament. The ability to see the spiritual part of that is totally not there. It's absolutely not there, but we understand what it was. The abomination of desolation that began with the man of sin, the son of perdition, and that whole process of an apostasy, it's clear; it's easy to see for us as God has given it to us, but others lost that because they didn't grasp something so simple that Mr. Armstrong focused upon about a temple.

So that's what I'm saying when I'm talking about Philadelphia and so many things being very physical. That's what Paul was dealing with with the Galatians. Their salvation, their ability to make change or do things in their life was something they were doing on their own ability, not something that came from God's spirit. That's what he's basically addressing.

So this thing of being under the law was a matter of individuals who were seeking salvation more and feeling justified more on a physical plane. If they could remain circumcised they felt better

about that, as an example, or they wanted to adopt that, or they wanted to adopt some other things of Judaism. Then they felt better about themselves. They felt more spiritual. It's amazing how people can feel better about themselves, spiritual about certain things like not eating pork. There is nothing spiritual in not eating pork! It's all physical. You just believe God that He says it's not good for your body, so you don't do it. What's spiritual about that? But people look upon that. I hope you understand what I'm saying because this has been a hard one for God's Church to understand, yes, God says don't do it, and the attitude toward God is what's important far more than the physical thing itself. Birthdays, make-up, on and on you go.

So it's a way of thinking. One is physical about human ability, our own ability to say "yes" or "no" to certain things in life, or to look to God for the strength and the help that you have to have to change. There's a big difference. There's a big difference. Now, we have to make choices and we have to work at it, but like Mr. Armstrong said over and over again concerning the work and things within the work, you have to do it as though you're doing it yourself with all of your being. You should throw yourself into it, but to understand God's the one who does it. But you have to make the choice to work. You have to make the choice to fight. You have to make the choices to do these things.

That's why you ask God for help, because you made the choice to do certain things, to quit certain things in life and so you cry out to God for help to do it because you can't do it on your own ability. If you try to rely on your own ability and to feel better about yourself because of what you're able to do physically you're missing the mark. It's because of knowledge of certain things that we cry out to God for the help to change, to be something different because we have to have His spirit, His help to change. It's the mind that has to change.

Paul is addressing some of these things. He's saying, do you really understand what the law is saying? Do you really perceive what God is saying? See, because the law is spiritual. He didn't say it specifically right here, but this is the context of what he's working through and trying to reason with them on a physical plane and a spiritual one.

So, **do you know what the law says?** What it means? In other words, this expression, again, "to be under the law." Again, I hope we understand how this can be so misconstrued by others because they don't understand because their idea is anything to do with the truth that comes from the Old Testament. Well, not murder and not stealing because those are good, but it always seems to boil down to the Sabbath and the holy days and things of that nature. If you do those you are trying to save yourself by the works of the law. Duh! Dumb. They don't understand that though.

Galatians 4:22—For it is written that Abraham had two sons. This is beautiful. What he covers here is awesome, it really is. ...**the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.** One was a slave and one was free. One was a slave, indebted, or not on her own, not free because for whatever purpose she was indebted. Not slavery like we think of slavery in the United States that has existed in that same way. So much of things that happened in times past had to do with

indebtedness, in so many cases, and families and the like, and sometimes it was a type of slavery, but not as we think of it. That's why I hate the word that's used sometimes of what we see in the Old Testament and compared to so many of the things that we see that happen in this nation, the atrocities, and so forth, because that's generally what comes into people's minds.

So, anyway, going on here: **...the one by a bond...** The reality was even there when it had to do with people being subject to having to fulfill certain things, whether it be through conquering of other nations and they did serve them, they were servants, slaves, if you want to say, indebtedness that was there for the rest of their life in many cases, or if it was a matter of a real debt and they had to pay it off and they became servants for a period of time, whatever that period of time might be until it was paid off. But the reality is, you know what it all boils down to always in those cases? The person they served. How they were treated. Because people can be ugly, ugly, ugly, just as happened in the south. There were people who treated others better, but so many treated people really bad. That's what we think of so often.

That's the way it is in life. It's like having a boss at work. Some are good, some are really, really bad. Some people take authority to the head. You know, it's like carrying the whip, whatever. Some people can really be nasty, but not as nasty as when people are fully indebted, or in that respect, in servitude. Most of the time slavery was really bad. Why? Because human nature is really bad in how people thought, in how people would think about certain things and think about other people. It's hard to grasp how others can think about others as being less than human. That's almost hard, difficult to even grasp, the mind of individuals who can claim to be "Christian" (because they did). They even claimed to use scripture for things they did. Sick, sick, sick, the mind of mankind, human beings and the way people are and how bad that can become.

So again here, it says concerning Abraham, that he had two sons, **the one by a bondmaid and the other by a free woman**. So one was under bondage and one wasn't. **But he *who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through promise***. It's awesome what it's saying here.

Now, it's interesting how this is quoted in the New Living Testament. I'm going to read that because it just shows something here that's kind of unique. Most places here you can't get anything close, but I want to read this in the New Living Testament because every once in a while—this is what boggles the mind—sometimes something is translated so perfectly but they don't get it because they don't understand it on a spiritual plane whatsoever. So sometimes something will be quoted properly.

Verse 23—The son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's promise. See, because it's going back here and it's relating to the story of what happened with Sarah and Hagar, and because this is what the story is about and this is what Paul is using as his example. Now, they didn't understand what they said here, but this is right on because this explains something if you can grasp it. This would be more like an interpretation of the intent of what's being said, not word for word by any measure.

The son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about the fulfilling of God's promises, but the son of the free born wife was born as God's own fulfillment of His promise. The point being made here is that with Hagar it was an attempt to fulfill a promise because they didn't rely on God. It's this human attempt again, this thing that Paul is addressing here, "You who want to be under the law, do you know what the law even says?" "Do you grasp that it's spiritual?" Basically, it's what he's asking. Again here, it's drawing this out in very physical terms about something that happened in the Old Testament because what happened there was very physical. Abraham, Sarah, they were told and yet a child didn't come along and so this thing that has gone on for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years since that started back then with Hagar, and Sarah agreeing for Abraham to go to her to fulfill something here.

It was their own thinking. It wasn't a matter of relying on God. It was a matter of them trying to bring about a fulfillment of a promise on their own ability. That's the problem with human beings. So often on a physical plane without God's spirit we try to bring about things that we think are right. I hope you understand what I'm saying because so often that's just the way we are. We see physical things first and then God helps us to grasp the spirit of it as time goes on.

...but the son of the free born wife was born as God's own fulfillment of His promise. That's relying on God. The promise is fulfilled by God. There is that which leads to real freedom that comes from God, and there is that which people try to bring about on their own ability. That's basically what he's trying to help them to grasp and comprehend here. There is that which you're really made free from and there is that which you're still in bondage if you're trying to work it out on your own.

Verse 24—Which things are symbolic of these being the two covenants... So he's really getting down to the nitty-gritty of it all here now. There is the old covenant which was a matter of your own ability. That's why the Jews were so messed up because they had practiced certain things on their own for so long and Israel, Judah was never spiritual. It was never called to have a spiritual relationship with God. Everything they did with the temple, the Levitical system, it was all a matter of physical things they did and they felt better about themselves for doing it that way. They felt closer to God the more they did certain things by their own ability.

That doesn't mean you're close to God, but they felt better about themselves just like people do in the world when they go to church on Sunday and they listen and they go away feeling better about themselves. It's not a real freedom there. There is not a real ability to grasp things on a spiritual plane, but there is this thing in human beings that somehow we want to satisfy this feeling we have that we feel better about ourselves or that we feel spiritual.

For me, some of those kinds of people are really hard to be around in the world. I grew up around certain ones like that that, you know, the certain attitudes that go along with that so often; this pious type of thing or self-righteous kind of thing that sometimes people have and judgmental attitudes, not perceiving what's true at all, but just of how people think they are - better than others spiritually. So they look down upon someone who doesn't think exactly the way they do.

Look at the churches today and how they think about each other. When it really gets right down to it, how Catholics think about, well, how about Southern Baptists, or how about Southern Baptists, how they think about Catholics. It's not a love fest. They might play it at times. They might get together and sit around maybe even on TV and certain one of a certain religion here and another of a different religion and they'll talk nicely too without getting too deep on a certain plane here. "Everything's good." But when it comes right down to it and they're nailed to the wall and something comes up, they're better than the other. They truly are. They're better than the other. If they believed otherwise why wouldn't they become the other? So there are those prejudices that are always there.

So again, **Which things are symbolic of these being the two covenants**, the two wives, the sons, different sons. One born of a woman in bondage, one born of a free woman.

The one represents Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage. Do you get that? Mount Sinai, the law, the 10 Commandments. If you try to do it on your own you're in bondage, you're not free. You're not free! So the Jews, ever since that period of time, any relationship that they've had toward God has been by their own ability and they've always been under bondage as much as traditional Christianity, as much as anyone else in the world. If you want to talk about something on a spiritual plane they're in bondage because they don't have God yet, they don't have the spirit of God yet, they don't have the ability to change and work toward what real freedom is all about. That which you have the ability to do, they don't. So how blessed are you? Incredible!

So again, **the one represents Mount Sinai, which gives birth to bondage; who is Hagar.**

Awesome! Awesome! It really is awesome, what it's saying here. **For this Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia...** I love that one, too, because it tells where it is. It's in Arabia. It's not up farther north where some of them think Mount Sinai is.

...and corresponds to how Jerusalem is now. It's incredible what he just said here. He said, "Look, there is one, Hagar, that represents Mount Sinai, that gives birth to bondage. It doesn't give freedom." Then it goes on to say, **this also corresponds.** This word "answers" is not the word "answers." It gives wrong thoughts here. It's the word "corresponds." That's what it means.

...represents Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to how Jerusalem is now. Do you know what it just said? How is Jerusalem? It is Jewish, Judaism, that which Christ condemned. All Judaism he condemned for how they, in their relationship toward God. Whether it be Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, all the rest, not one of them were living according to God's way, doing what God says. They were living it how they felt right, of how they felt good about their form of worship and what they believed. Incredible! Things haven't changed much.

So he's saying here, just like Jerusalem today, he said, they're in bondage. Judaism is in bondage. That's just exactly what he got through saying to them. So if you try to do it on your own ability, which some of them were trying to do because they were absorbing some of this or received some of this from different influences, which Paul had to address at different times. He had different

ones that would come out from Jerusalem, you know, that would go out to some of these areas as well and they would confound people, mess people up by their influence. So people got this wrong concept, especially gentiles because they had no relationship having to do with God, Yahweh Elohim, so when they heard Jews talking about Him they would get things messed up, muddled up in their minds, in their thinking.

...but the Jerusalem that is above is free. So he's saying Jerusalem you see today, right now, it's in bondage, corresponds to Hagar, under the law. That's how they try to be saved. Their salvation comes through what they're physically able to do on their own abilities and what they perceive. It's not about a relationship with God. "But the Jerusalem from above," that is a matter of God's Church and how God's Church works, that's what makes you free. That's where freedom is.

...but the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all. That's why the Church is referred to as the mother of us all in scripture. That's what this is talking about. That's where freedom comes from. It's about a relationship with God through the ability, the blessing of being in God's Church, being in the Body of Christ.

For it is written: Rejoice, you barren, who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband. Beautiful what he's saying. Now, did they get it? They could only get it through God's spirit. It's the way it always has been. Those with God's spirit who were striving to draw closer to God, who are crying out to God for help to grasp and receive what Paul was giving would see it, would understand it. Others would still do the same old thing and that happened. People did go by the wayside because many more have been called than chosen. That's the way it's always been in God's Church.

So you could know that in every Church where He worked there were those who came along who didn't stay. It's always been that way in God's Church, see. You have to fight. You have to fight and you have to cry out to God for salvation, to be saved, to receive the kind of freedom that God wants. Then sometimes what's difficult is for us to believe what He said about the process whereby we are saved. That's what much of this sermon series is about, to know that you're free, because sometimes we don't free ourselves, we aren't able to be freed. We beat ourselves up. Sometimes we can't let go because we think physically. It's a matter of learning to believe what God says, to truly trust in God, to place our faith and trust fully in what God says as a part of the process of salvation, an ability to have real freedom in our life, to truly set you free. Because we all have baggage from the past, but you don't have to carry any of that with you. But so often we do.

So again, some of this, it's very awkward translation in what's actually being said here in verse 27. I love what's being said here because it's something on a spiritual plane, that when we understand it it's actually fulfilled in our lives, of what takes place, the ability to rejoice in a way that is unique to each one of us in our own personal relationship with God and Joshua the Christ. It's awesome.

So what's being said? **For it is written, Rejoice, you who are barren, and cannot bear! Break forth in crying aloud...** So much of this happens in your prayer, in your prayer life. It's about a relationship with God. It's about something inside that's sometimes is just difficult to even express in words, but it's something that you know, that you sense that you have from God. God lets us experience that to varying levels in our lives, at different times in our lives as well.

Break forth in crying aloud, you who are not in labor! For the desolate, symbolized by Sarah, **has many more children than she who has a man.** That's what the word is saying here. "Husband" is not the word. It can be by context of what's being said, but literally by a man here, and basically referring to a literal relationship here. "She who has a man," is referring to a woman who can conceive from a man and have children - and in this case Hagar, okay - than she who has a man. So it's talking about, again, that which is trying to fulfill a promise here on a physical plane that had nothing to do with a promise of God that's a matter of faith and a spiritual relationship with God. That's the difference here that Paul is making as he goes on with the story.

Verse 28—Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. So he's saying just as Abraham was told and Sarah was told that there would be a child born, and all the promises that would follow with that and what was contained in that that are so incredible when you go back and read them in what was actually said, then in time it happened. Finally, Isaac was born. God blessed them. Something that could only be done by God because God fulfilled His promise and only God could do it because they couldn't, yet they tried. They tried on their own ability. It wasn't the way God was going to fulfill it.

But as then... Those physical examples are the symbols for exactly what Paul is describing here to the Galatians of something that is on a spiritual plane with mankind and what we have to come to see. **But as then he who was born,** it's not "after the flesh," but **according to the flesh,** speaking of Ishmael. In other words, "according to the flesh," this expression here. They did it physically. They tried to fulfill a promise of God on a physical relationship of their own doings that they thought they could bring about the fulfillment. That's not how it was going to come. God was going to fulfill it in their lives by His power, not something they could do physically at all. So it says here, that's why it's saying here, "who was born according to the flesh," speaking of Ishmael, **persecuted him,** so the actual thought being **who was born,** here.

So again here, **He who was born according to the flesh persecuted him,** in essence saying **who was born according to the spirit,** because it was a matter of God's spirit that Isaac was given life. So it was by the power of God's spirit and by what He performed and what He gave to them, the ability to perform, to have on a physical plane. Yes, it was physical, but God is the one who gave the ability for it, to fulfill His promise. That's why it's giving this analogy through the story, the difference between Ishmael (Hagar), Sarah, and Isaac.

...persecuted him who was born, in essence, what it's saying here in context **according to the spirit; even so *it is now.*** What does that mean? It's the same thing in God's Church. It's gone on
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as it did physically then. The persecution that Isaac received from his own brother, half brother, is a type of or symbolic of God's Church, because the world doesn't receive, the world can't receive that which we receive by promise that's a matter of God's spirit. When we receive that what do we have? We have trials. We have persecution. People don't love what you're doing. People don't love what you believe. If you get in very deeply with them about certain things you believe they really don't love you. So it's better sometimes that they really don't know everything, see?

Some things you're just not going to be able to help, they're going to learn as time goes along depending on the circumstances. But like on the job you don't want to make the mistake that some people make sometimes when they start talking about, willing to talk, wanting to talk to different ones about the Sabbath and the holy days. They can't hear a word you're saying. "What?" They can't hear a thing because it's spiritual. God has to call. So sometimes people have made mistakes in that, you know, and because of that sometimes they receive persecution as a result.

They'll learn certain things. They'll learn that you don't work on the Sabbath. They'll learn in time. But to give them too much, they can't deal with it. It's better for them sometimes to see you on a physical plane as some other groups out here, "Oh, it's like... Are you a Jew? Are you a Seventh-Day Adventist? Are you...?" So they can't put it together. That's good. I'm just kidding.

So anyway, Paul is going through the story here with them, that which is done by one's own physical ability and relying on self, and you know, it's the same thing as walking around in the courtyard, people playing games sometimes because they've relied on themselves, they're analyzing and thinking about things in their own way, not by what God has said, not because of a relationship with God, but because they've developed this kind of whatever it is in the mind that appeases the mind to think you can walk around in the courtyard and not obey God! The mind can do that physically. The mind can do that!

Many, many people have done that through time. Many people have been associated with PKG. Far more people who have been associated with PKG in its short life than what we have today - many, many, many times over of people who have sat in congregations, who have been around for certain period of time—short or long period of time is immaterial—who deceive the mind in feeling better about themselves because they go to the Feast of Tabernacles, because they tithe, because they do this or do that and go through the motions and somehow feel better about themselves but aren't developing a relationship with God, are allowing certain sins to enter into their life and somehow excusing those as being justified. But then there are certain things that come along where there's so obvious sin that you can't justify them at all and that's what God has been cleaning up here in a very powerful way in the last few years in the Church.

So, it's this thinking that can mess us up. One looks to God, relies upon God and Joshua the Christ, to dwell in God and for God to dwell in them because they know they need it for salvation, they cry out for help, they ask for help because they know they can't do it on their own. That's why they were baptized! That's why they had the laying on of hands. That process

continues on on a spiritual plane the rest of your life, repenting before God, looking to God for help to be able to change and to grow.

You can't do it on your own. You can't do it by going through the motions. There were people who if they had this routine and this ritual of praying so much each day and so many times a day and studying the Bible so long and etcetera, etcetera, that somehow made them feel better about themselves, but they had problems with others in the Church, relationships, and wouldn't address those. But they still felt better about themselves because they're doing this praying every day and they're drawing closer, and you think, you're not saved that way. Should we pray? Yes. I'm not going to get into that.

I think of this thing of studying. There was the idea that you had to study scripture so much in a week's time, or whatever, a day's time or whatever, and I think of people who never even had a Bible. Most people have never had scriptures available to them throughout time in the Church of God. You know what they did? They heard. They heard from a minister Sabbath by Sabbath or they heard through written letter that was sent to them. If they were so fortunate and so blessed to have a minister that was local there, an elder there that was able to teach them and work with them on the Sabbath then they were exceedingly blessed.

So again here, talking about this difference here, talking about this persecution of what took place back then, a matter of Ishmael and Isaac. So it is now, the same sort of thing taking place as far as the Church is concerned.

Verse 30 it goes on to say, **Nevertheless what does the scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.** It's beautiful. Because of what God has given to us, the mother of us all, Jerusalem above, that which is spiritual that we're blessed to have a relationship with God, and it's night and day difference between knowing certain things and striving to do certain things on our own on a physical plane. That's what Paul is striving to teach them, to tell them.

Let's turn over to 1 Peter next because Peter begins to address certain things now. We've begun here by going through part of what Paul has addressed to the Galatians, an age old problem that's existed in God's Church as well of the different thinking in the mind as to how we're being saved, candidly, as to whether we grasp the process, as to whether we're yielding to the process, as to whether we believe the process or whether sometimes we have the difficulty and that which we begin to try to do on our own ability and our own power, going through the motions of certain things and somehow feeling better about that. It's not about that.

1 Peter 1:1—Peter, an apostle of Joshua the Christ, to the strangers, or better said, perhaps, to those who are estranged, scattered, or “dispersed” as the word is, throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. So here it's a reference to some of those that Peter was addressing here, even of Israelites who were scattered in different areas and Jews who were

scattered throughout different regions. But again here, that's why it's using the word "dispersion" here, this word for scatter. So again here, it's what happened through time because of various wars that took place and how people were scattered throughout various regions here. The mass were taken up into parts of Europe, but there were those who were scattered along the way as well.

Verse 2—elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Now, these are very specific here. This might be where they were from but these were the ones called into God's Church. So the difference being made here by Peter compared to what Paul wrote, Paul wrote directly to a gentile Church as a whole; there were Jews in the area. Here Peter is addressing those who were called out of the past, in the sense of those who were dispersed and scattered throughout various regions of the world and Israelite.

...elect according to the foreknowledge of God... So he's referring to individuals who have been specifically called by God, **elect according to the foreknowledge of God, of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit...** So now it begins to go into some of the process here of where our freedom comes from, where real freedom exists. It shows this process and it's explained very clearly here, something that God had determined long, long ago - long before there was ever an Israel, long before any human beings were on the earth.

...according to the foreknowledge of God through the sanctification of the spirit, because God's plan was determined long, long, long before anything was put on this earth. Before this earth even existed God had a plan. Do you know where it began? I hope you do. I hope by now you do. It began with the plan that revolves around, is built upon that which comes through the Messiah. Real freedom. True freedom. Because, you see, God forfeited much of that at the very beginning. He allowed bondage to come into existence. He allowed certain things to begin to come into existence that happened in time. And again here, some of these things that we've gone through in times past.

So again here, **according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through the sanctification of the spirit...** So again here, the sanctification of the spirit, how God works with us when He begins to work with the spirit that's in us, the mind. **...unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ.** So again here, obedience isn't by itself. It's not done on your own ability by your own power. You want to obey but it's combined here with "and sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ," because there is no obedience without that! You cannot obey the laws of God on your own ability! You can only do it through a process of being forgiven of your sins and a desire to live according to what God says, a desire to agree with what God says on a spiritual plane. There is a world of difference in this in what we're talking about.

Again here, "the sanctification of the spirit," the cleansing of our lives, the purification of our lives, this process of being made at one or made right with God is this "unto obedience," and that through what it says next, "sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ," because that's where it starts. It comes with an ability to begin to see where we are wrong, where we're not in

agreement with God, where we are selfish, where we do make wrong choices in life and we want that to change, where we've given into our human carnal nature in relationships so often because we are selfish, and when we are shown those things then what do we do? "Sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ."

We do that regularly, we do, as we repent and we ask God to forgive us because it's through his blood. It's by faith in that process that God has given us that we can actually kneel down in prayer, or pray wherever we are, and pray and cry out to God and say, "Father, forgive me. Forgive me, I have sinned. This is what I've done." And it's gone. It's gone! You're free. Sometimes we don't let ourselves be free.

There is a lot of faith in that. That's what faith is; so much of faith, that's what it's about. It's believing God, believing what our Messiah did the first time he came and died as our Passover. That's why he did it, so we could have a relationship with God, so that we could learn to obey God. Obeying God is not a matter of just obedience for the sake of obedience. It's a matter of agreement. It's a matter of agreement with God; that you agree that "God is right and I am wrong," because you want to think like God, you want to be of the mind of God, you want that mind to be in you which was in Joshua the Christ. That's what it says. You want to have that kind of a mind and that mind was in agreement with everything that came from God.

On a physical plane obedience is for the sake of obedience. If you're trying to do it on your own and you go through the motions to obey the Sabbath, to go to Sabbath services, to tithe even, or to do other kinds of things, go to the Feast of Tabernacles, does not mean we're in agreement with God! We're going through the motions and feeling better about it because we're doing it.

Now, we have to do those things. I hope we understand fully. Because you agree with God you don't want anything different than that. That's why you would never dream of not keeping the Sabbath or the holy days. That's why you would never dream of not being faithful in 1st tithe and 2nd tithe. That's why you wouldn't even dream of those things because it's about a relationship with God and you agree with God. You understand the need for why He said what He did in setting those things apart, that we too want to sanctify. The law, His way of life, the truth, we want to agree with it.

That's why we talk about 57 Truths plus 1. It's a matter of agreement. That's not a matter of just agreeing with what the Church has said, it's a matter of realizing this comes from God. This is the mind, the Word of God and we want to be at one with God, we want to be in agreement. Because I've seen many, and many in the ministry, who have been a part with us who have gone by the wayside because they did not agree. They left because they did not agree. That's the way it works. They try to get others to disagree, to agree with them. That's the way it works.

Again, obedience is not just something that's done by our own ability because churches in the world can do that. It's not like Judaism. That's not the reason to keep the Sabbath. It's not to keep the holy days because it's just obeying and saying I'm going to obey. Do we agree? Do we

rejoice in those things? That's what comes from that. When it's a matter of agreement with God you rejoice in what's true. Do you rejoice in those truths? I do. I've learned to rejoice in them more and more as I see them more clearly as time goes along, to rejoice in the truths that God has given to us. And the last one! Awesome!

You talk about being made free because we've gotten rid of some baggage that associated us with something that started in a big church that became really big. We still weren't free of that yet. We were still in bondage to that. Whenever that name popped up it pictured everything the world uses. Being on a pole, but it has cross bars on it, or whatever, a cross. That's not who we are. Incredible! On and on it goes. We're not a part of any of that. I have a greater sense of freedom because of that than I ever have. I am so thankful. I know that you are, as a whole, as well.

But that's what we're talking about. I use that example to show you what it means to be free because you agree with God, you understand that *lésous* is not the name that God said His Son would be called by. It was Joshua. That's awesome to come to see those things and to rejoice in those things and to have that sense of freedom that we don't have any of that with us anymore. We've been freed from the trinity. Look how long it took for that. Look how long it took to be freed from that. We only got part way there, two-thirds of the way there for a long, long time until God gave us PKG. Then He showed to us only God the Father, Yahweh Elohim, has eternally existed and has eternal life inherent in Himself and He has never given it, He never gave it to the angelic realm, but He gives it by promise to those whom He calls, to those who will go through the process, to those who will receive it, to those who want it, to those who will fight for it. Awesome! Only one has received it so far. Joshua, the first of the firstfruits. So we were freed from that, from misunderstanding those things, and then finally the name itself.

So, anyway, so much of this is going through this concept that so often is hard for us to see, or people to see because if we're living something on a physical plane and we're not developing the kind of relationship with God that we need to we just rely on ourselves and our own abilities. That's not the way it works. The way to really be free and the way to feel that freedom, you have it in your being. When you have that what happens is there is a rejoicing. There is a rejoicing in God, a rejoicing in agreement with God and thankful to God for what He has revealed to us that only comes through the power of His spirit that you can't receive in any other way. Hard for words to even express and explain.

...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the spirit unto... Because the sanctification of the spirit is to come to a true kind of obedience because of a relationship with God that He gives us the ability to come into agreement with Him. **...and sprinkling of the blood of Joshua the Christ.** Because the reality is that as we continue to grow we see things in ourselves that we want to get rid of. We want to get rid of this selfish nature we have. We don't want it. We want to fight against it. Yet we fall on our face from time to time, day by day, think something, say something, do something that we think, "You fool!" you know, speaking to self. It's like, "You've done it again!" Because we're human, meaning we're selfish,

so we cry out to God for help of His holy spirit. Those are the things that help us become more deeply convicted.

Grace unto you... Grace. Even understanding what that just said, what we've received from God because of this process He's given to us, this sanctification of the spirit in order to have true obedience, because of the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin. Because that's what God attributes to us for righteousness. It's living by faith. It's not by our abilities, yet we have to fight and we have to want it, we have to desire it, but understanding that the abilities come from God. That's why you cry out to God, because you know you need that help. You believe it! You're convicted of that: "I need God." That's why you pray. If you pray by routine you're missing the mark. If you pray because you know you need it, because you need God's spirit, because you want to change, that's what it's all about. That's why you pray. That's the purpose of prayer, because you see the need, because you want it, because you want a relationship with God.

Grace unto you... So, yes, we receive favor, we receive mercy, we receive forgiveness, we receive so much from God. Grace? Absolutely! So much that we receive from God because of this process that can work in our life. ...**and peace.** Not the drama, drama, drama, the little llama, llama, llama. No drama. Drama is the opposite of peace and God blesses us with peace. Peace of mind. True freedom gives you peace of mind. That's why I mentioned what I did earlier because they go hand in hand, this matter of what God gave up so long ago before the foundations of the earth because after the angelic realm was created God sacrificed peace. Isn't that incredible? Then bondage came along.

Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. That's how it's multiplied. So the more grace, the more mercy, the more favor, isn't that what we want from God? God's favor, God's mercy, to be pleasing to God, to be as David was, a man after God's own heart because we love God, because we're so humbled by the fact that we're called, that we can have a relationship with Him and the world doesn't have that yet. To be of so few who have ever throughout 6,000 years, who have been able to experience this, and to be amongst those that are able to have a relationship with God? And to know that others, the vast majority, have to wait for another thousand years before they can experience that? How blessed are we? To not obey God? To not want God's way?

So, yeah, we want grace because grace is about receiving favor, mercy, forgiveness, those things from God. It's right to want them. It's right to ask for them. It's right to want peace. It's right to ask for it, to have peace that comes through a right way of thinking. When you do that you know what happens? God will show you where your wrong way of thinking is. You know, you start seeing certain things in your life and you realize that slap in the face, but then when you repent let it go. Let it go! Sometimes that's just hard for people to do.

You were suspended? You were disfellowshipped? You came back? It's all gone! Sometimes it's hard for people to let go. You deserve suspension and never have been yet? Yeah, that's happened to people too. You privately know that in your own mind. Cut off from God's spirit? Have you ever experienced it? Because you have. Or you don't see it. Every time you sin you're cut off from the

flow of God's spirit. Every time. God will not dwell in sin and so He gives us abundant grace because all we have to do is respond and go before God and ask for forgiveness and He'll dwell again, He'll continue to dwell in you. He'll live in you. Awesome! You'll be able to live and dwell in Him and His Son.

But that's the only way to continue in that relationship, to continue in, to abide in, to dwell in. We have to look to the sprinkling of the blood quite often in our lives. We really do. There is a faith in that. And if you really believed that, that's where freedom comes from. That's where real freedom and peace come from - peace with God, peace of mind. I mean real peace of mind, real thinking that is peaceful because you see God, you see God in the picture in what you do and what you live.

Worthy... This word "blessed." Nobody can bless God. This concept of blessing others or blessing someone. "Bless you!" You know, "Bless you!" I'm sorry, they don't even know where that comes from. It used to be, it was "gesundheit," or something like that, the German expressions. It was this pagan, stupid idea that somehow if you don't hold your hand over your mouth and somehow the spirit is going to come out of you, your soul is going to come out of you and you're going to lose it. "Bless you," so you don't lose your spirit, or whatever it is they think, the soul. I don't know what it is. But plumb stupidity. People don't know where some of those things come from. "Bless You." For three years I heard so much "Bless you," in the camp because people would sneeze or they'd cough or whatever, you know, and "Bless you." "Bless you." "Bless you." "Bless you." Let me out of here! I had to wait. But they don't understand what that means. But every time I hear I think, if you only knew what you're saying and why you're saying it and where that comes from. But it's by tradition, you know, people learn it. They grow up with it and so they do it.

Just like the rest of religion, that's why they do what they do. Count the beads because they learned it through tradition. They don't know the meaning. Well, anyway.

So it says here, again, it's not "Blessed be," but saying **Worthy to be praised**. In other words, it's an agreement with that we understand God is to be praised. That's what it's all about. It's like saying, **Worthy is God to be praised, indeed, because of all this**. So it should move us and inspire us indeed to understand only God, and indeed God, is so worthy to be praised. That means to be thanked in prayer. The more we grasp that in every facet of life of what God has given to us the more we can glorify, honor, praise God, thank Him. It's a matter of thanking God. Thanking God for what we see, for what we know. The more that's in your mind the more you can come into greater agreement with God, because you see it.

So that's what it's saying here, **Worthy to be praised is God, and the Father of our Lord Joshua the Christ, who according to His abundant mercy...** That's what He's exercising right now. He has at different times throughout history. To Israel He'd given more time, given more time. There was a king who was given more time. Fifteen years. It says, at the end, in essence, that he didn't deliver or respond according to the benefit that God gave to him, that extra time that was given

to him when he was told, in essence, to get your house together, you're dying. Then he asked for help, for more time, for life. God gave him fifteen more years and then he didn't live like he should have lived. He didn't respond according to the mercy that God granted him. So much of life can be like that. We have to be so careful. Of course if we want this, we're going to fight for it and grasp what God has given to us.

But to understand this: **...who according to His abundant mercy.** Just like He is right now, as I said, with this nation, with the world. How do people respond? How did that king respond? Well, they don't even know that God's given them time. But one day they'll learn. "God gave us more time and what did we do?" Well, so much of history—and when people are resurrected they're going to learn from their history—of what God did and how they responded to it. Carnally. Didn't recognize a bit of it, didn't accept any of it but became worse. That's just the way carnality is, the human mind is. That's what people have to come to admit when they're called in the Great White Throne.

...who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again into a living hope. How do you explain that except to experience it, except to live it, to grow in it, to understand what it means you have a living hope that lives in you and it becomes greater and greater as time goes on? No matter what happens in life around us it's alive, it's spiritual, it's in a relationship with God, an ability to see and know and believe because of God's spirit because you can lose it just like that. Just by sin and not repenting of sin you can lose it. By getting lifted up with pride, "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life," you can lose it if a person doesn't repent. It could happen quickly. It's happened to thousands before you who have been a part and no longer a part.

...who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again. How blessed are you to have a measure of God dwelling in you? God's spirit, the impregnation of God's spirit, so few have ever been given that opportunity. **...begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Joshua the Christ from the dead, to an inheritance...** See? It started with Abraham. It was told to Abraham what was going to be given through time, so much about a Messiah that would come, things that would take place through time that weren't understood, that were spoken of that God has revealed through time, through the prophets and through the apostles as time has gone on, what so many of those things have meant.

...to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, but is reserved in heaven for you. So as we yield to this process, as we draw closer to God, as we become stronger on a spiritual plane we have it made. God called us to have it made. God called us to succeed. God called us because He wants us to be a part of His family now. Whenever we were baptized, whenever we had that opportunity of having hands layed upon us, from that point forward God had called us into a relationship to succeed, to be blessed, to receive incredible blessings, to inherit the greatest of blessings that our minds really can't even begin to grasp, what's before us, what's ahead of us.

...to an inheritance that's incorruptible and undefiled. No sin. No selfishness. No evil in it. Only good. Only that which is right. Only that which is filled with peace. **...and that does not fade away but is reserved in heaven for you; who are kept by the power of God...** That's the way it is. You can't do it on your own. You're kept. You're kept in this way of life. You are kept in the truth. You can only continue in the truth by the power of God in you, by a relationship with God, by God's spirit.

...who are kept by the power of God through faith... And you know what so much of that faith is all about? About the Passover. It's not just about the Messiah and the Christ that's coming in His Kingdom and that which is coming in the future on a spiritual plane, but it's getting there, it's the process that begins it all. It begins for us first and foremost, and on a daily basis, with our Passover. It's faith in that. It's faith in the blessing of knowing what it means to be free.

How many feel totally free? Because we have some brethren who struggle with that, of letting the past be the past. That's why I mention sometimes that whenever anyone of our past, anyone who was scattered, anyone who was a part of PKG, whenever they are blessed to be awakened out of a spiritual sleep, for those who can receive it, for those who will receive it, that when they're back it's like they never left except there's even a greater bond and a thankfulness that they're there than what existed before. There is a greater love. There is a greater care.

For those who have that kind of a mind there is no concept, no reminder, no holding against, no judgment of the past. It's gone! It's just a gratitude and a thankfulness we're family and we're together again. It's stronger than it was before. Of course, for those in God's Family that'll be even far more true, obviously, but if we're physical and have God's spirit dwelling in us and we're in the Church that's the way people are to be received.

That's why Paul addressed the Corinthians like he did at one point and he said, speaking of the man who took his father's wife (it wasn't his mother), and they had a sexual relationship and the Church knew about it and they were condoning it, in a sense, or closing their eyes to it, not addressing it as a church. Paul addressed it to the Church and he brought in things about Passover and other things about sin and so forth and a little leaven leavens the whole lump. This process of what went through and talking about they should have addressed this and they should have been put out, you know, not a part of the fellowship. But see, there was a self-righteousness there of something that, again, this physical process of people relying physically on themselves and their own ability to condone certain things and reasons why we justify, why we don't address what we really should address, which I think in times past if people had practiced that like they should have on a spiritual plane, to go to a brother alone out of love, not out of harsh judgment or being self-righteous, but of doing it because God says there's a certain way to do something because you love someone.

So through faith, kept through the power of God through faith unto salvation. So there is this matter of believing. There is this matter of understanding what it is to be blessed with the forgiveness of sin, to have peace, to have peace of mind, to have freedom, to feel freedom.

That's to repent of sin. The more we repent of sin and rely upon God and have faith in God and you truly believe what He said you don't have to carry around a bag of bricks, bag of rocks behind you. You don't have to have that weight. You really don't. You're free. It's gone.

...who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. So it's this matter of faith and believing God in the process. So much of that, again, it always goes back to our Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, because that's what we're doing every time we repent. **...and ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Wherein you greatly rejoice... It's not a matter of going out here and putting on a show, you know, "Yeah! I'm happy, happy, happy!" It's not that. It's what's inside of you, that you feel this way. You feel this way when you pray to God. You're thankful to Him. You rejoice before Him. The prayer of gratitude and thankfulness to God, how can you explain that except you live it? But there is a joy and a fullness in that that you experience with God.

So again here, **Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through many trials.** I think of times past in the Church where people have put these together and talk about this, and even in Spokesman's Club discuss how can you rejoice and you're going through trials and I'm really rejoicing and I'm going through this trial. I feel so good. You know, you don't. It's hard. Trials are hard. Call a spade a spade, you know. "I feel horrible. This is a horrible thing to go through. I don't like what I'm experiencing," whatever it might be. You don't jump up and down when you're in a fire. Oh, you might jump and down. Let's take that back! How do you get out of this? What is the quickest way out of this? That's the only jumping up and down. But it's not going to be because of joy and rejoicing.

So, wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through many trials. So there is a rejoicing you can go through even when you're going through trials, whatever the trial might be. I don't care what it is. **So that the trial of your faith...** Because that's how we grow, that's the only way we come to see ourselves, by going through various hardships, and God can use those hardships of life just by chance. It's not by Him making certain things come upon you in life, it's just by going through the various experiences in life that you'll go through. So many of those, then, it's the same kind of process spiritually that God works with and will work with us as we respond to Him, "that the trial of your faith." So we're tried in various things we go through in life. What are you supposed to do when you go through trial? What does it teach us? What do we learn from it first and foremost? Go to God quickly! Go to God quickly. Rush toward God. Cry out to God. Look to God.

That's the way our entire life needs to be then. It's a continual process of looking to God, of crying out to God and knowing you can't live this way of life, you cannot obey the way of God without His holy spirit. He has to give you help to change. So it's crying out for help. When you're in a trial, and when you're in a hardship that's what that should teach, it should teach you need God. Don't try to work this out on your own because that's what we so often do. We don't think about God.

Think about the matter of healing. What do we do? Well, we know. We know what we do as human beings. If it's not mentioned periodically we tend to forget. We don't think about God and so we carry the thing our self, whatever it might be. Now, you may carry some things yourself anyway, but you better include God. God better be in the picture. See? So if we're not able to go to work, what do we do? If we're not able to function, we're in bed, whatever it might be, can't get out of the house? Better obey God. Look to God. See, that's what that helps to teach.

So this is just one example of many things about trial of our faith. It teaches us that prayerfully we're learning to rely upon, trust in God, and our eyes are on God. We go through various things in life to teach us this. **...the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes.** It's not about money. It's not about wealth. It's not about what you have and what you don't have. Yet those things tend to affect and infect sometimes the minds of people. To really, truly see how blessed you are above and beyond anything physical because of what you have in the mind, that which comes from God, that which is spiritual, to be able to rejoice in that.

...much more precious than of gold that perishes though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Joshua the Christ. So that's our goal. Of all times we realize we're really close to that, closer than anyone else who's ever lived by far, obviously.

...whom having not seen you love. Isn't that an incredible thing? We learn to love God through time. We grow in that ability to love God. Sometimes that is so hampered because of our past. Thinking about a father, thinking about a mother can have a great affect upon us because of our lives and what we've experienced, whatever that might be in life. It can distort the thinking then about relationships - brothers, sisters in a Body, people - because of betrayals perhaps we've experienced in times past in life, whatever that might be. Sometimes we can drag that along with us, whatever's happened to us in our lives, whatever atrocities, whatever hardships have happened to us in life. If we're not careful we carry those into our adult lives. In the Church it's a matter of learning to be free. It's gone. It's behind.

Sometimes it's a matter of learning how to forgive one's self, let alone others, and going on. "Father, forgive them. They can't help what they're doing." The same thing was true with us at a certain point in time. Just let it go because you can't help what you didn't know at a particular time in your life. You couldn't deal with certain things. Now you are stronger. Now you have the power of God's spirit. Now let it go. Don't let it hamper you. Don't let it keep you bound, hurting your thinking in your relationships towards others.

...might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Joshua the Christ, whom having not seen you love. That is a matter of faith. That is a matter of something you can't see that's spiritual, and yet you believe it. The more you see it and the more you experience it the happier, the more fulfilling your life becomes.

In whom, even though now you do not see *him*, yet believing... So much boils down to this ability to believe. So we can believe the 57 Truths + 1, and I think that's the way it's going to stay. ...**yet believing you rejoice.** The ability to believe, what an incredible thing. A lot of this sermon has to do with the ability to believe what God says about being free, about where real freedom comes from, about what it means to really let go. So much of that has to do with our physical thinking and our physical minds and the selfishness that exists in us and an ability to truly let those things go.

Anything that might be held against others? Why? Can we not live, can we not follow the example and cry out for God's help as what Christ had to say? ...or what Stephen had to say? What an incredible thing! As you're being stoned and put to death and to basically say the same thing as his elder brother, Joshua, said, "Don't hold this sin against them." "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." And they don't. That gives us an ability to deal with things in a world. They're in bondage and you can't have expectations of them that are unreal. But you can have expectations of self and you can cry out to God to be free in the mind.

...whom having not seen you love, even though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with joy—I love this—inexpressible. That's what the word means; inexpressible. In other words, unable to fully convey it in words. I find myself doing that sometimes in sermons. What can I say? How can I explain this? Words can only go so far.

Sometimes that's the way it is in our relationship with God and our prayers to God. There are some things it's just a matter of knowing, and then the fullness and the joy or the peace that comes from that, that comes from a personal relationship or experience with God. It's not something you feel in your body, it's something of the knowing in the mind. Because that's where real peace will come. That's where real peace can only exist because then if it's really there and real freedom is there then it'll come out in the way we speak, the way we think, the way we express ourselves in life. It'll reflect what's inside of us.

...you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. Because it's a matter of seeing what God has given to us, what God has blessed us to have.

Well, with that we'll stop there for today, continue on next week from that point with *Part 2*.