

Welcome, everybody, to this Sabbath day. The title of this sermon is *The Mercy Seat*.

The purpose of this sermon is to look at one of God's attributes, God's mercy. We understand some of God's attributes to a level. We don't understand all of them. But one of them is mercy, that God is merciful.

It's important in this sermon to make a distinction between the two types of mercy. Firstly, there is a human mercy that we have as humans. It's based on selfishness. It's based on the natural carnal mind. But it is totally different, complete opposite to God's mercy. Man's mercy can be demonstrated by the fact that maybe, for example, recently a man rapes a three year old girl, and in mercy we don't have the death penalty. But God's mercy is based on something that He has planned, which is salvation, therefore, God views things differently than we do. We look short term, we use human reasoning. Well, God's mercy is totally, totally different. They can't be compared because God is mercy. God will always be merciful. It's very difficult for us to grasp that thinking.

Now, the meaning of the word "attribute." So this is one of God's attributes called mercy, so this is an attribute, which is, the dictionary virtually says, "a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of somebody." Well, God, one of God's attributes is the fact that He lives mercy. It's the way He thinks about things and it's based on His plan of salvation. That's the way God thinks. He lives mercy. We're going to look at that today from the aspect of what God has done for us, He's shown us mercy, and how we have access to the mercy seat, and we take it for granted. But people don't have access to it because they've not been called to have access to it. But we have access to it, yet with our human nature we neglect this opportunity.

All being well we'll get far enough into the sermon where we'll cover this aspect and we'll look at the different components of the mercy seat.

If we look at the physical mercy seat that God established in the tabernacle, that last third of the tabernacle, the mercy seat was there for a reason, and it was nothing physical; it pointed to something. It's pointing to something that we have access to.

Now, we know Aaron went in once a year, as the Day of Atonement covered, but we have access all the time anytime. But we neglect that. We neglect it because we really don't grasp what God has really done for us, this mercy that He has and that He is. That's what He lives. That's the way He thinks.

Mercy is the way God thinks. Our calling is an act of mercy by God. So God in His wisdom decided to call you and me, to call us. That's an act of mercy. Because in calling us and us accepting that calling we now have access to something that nobody else does. We have an audience with God.

We're going to look at this component where Aaron would have access to the tabernacle, that last third on the Day of Atonement. It was the high priest. It wasn't Moses. Well, God did talk to Moses as well and you'll look at components of that and we'll see that that's what God wants from us. We have an aspect of being able to go before God, to approach the mercy seat, and talk directly with God. Isn't that incredible that we have that?

The physical events recorded in the Old Testament have a spiritual meaning for us today. To understand the purpose of the mercy seat we must first understand God's nature. Now, we understand to a degree that God is love. Love is a way of thinking. It's the way God thinks.

Now, we have human love, which is selfish. Anyway, it's difficult for people that may not be called by God to understand that, but human love is selfish. We love what is ours. It's just like a mother's love. Mr. Armstrong used to explain what a mother's love was. But it's selfish. "It's my child." "I'll defend my child." "I'll defend my house, my car...my, my, my." That's selfish love.

But God's love is different. Mercy is a way of thinking. God lives mercy. We'll turn to Nehemiah **9:17**—**They**, referring to Israel, **refused to obey**. That's exactly as the nations of the world today, other than spiritual Israel, people refuse to obey. Because unless a person's called and given that opportunity they just don't know what sin is. They don't know how to obey. **...and they were not mindful of Your wonders.**

So what is it that Israel had seen? Well, they'd seen a pillar of fire by night. They'd seen a cloud by day. They'd crossed the Red Sea. They'd seen bread from heaven, manna. They'd seen water come out of a rock. All of those things! Well, they weren't mindful of the fact that there was an Eternal God that did that. They just didn't realize and didn't think about it because they didn't have the capacity to really put God first in their life.

...that You did among them. So God did all these things but they still weren't mindful of those things. **...but they hardened their necks**, which is about pride, they wouldn't listen, **and in their rebellion**, rebellion is this going against God, **they appointed a leader to return to their bondage**. They wanted to go back. They wanted to go back to where they had come from because things weren't going the way they wanted it to go.

Then, it says, **but You, God**, this is God, **ready to pardon**. So God is ready to forgive. Now, if you look at what God was dealing with, a physical nation that was rebellious by nature, yet God was willing to forgive in the sense of what they were doing. It wasn't a spiritual forgiveness but it's a physical one, that God would still work with them. Even though they kept on rebelling and rebelling and going against God, God still was forgiving and if they any way turned to Him, well, He would move forward and do greater works for them to bless them and look after them.

...gracious and merciful. So this is God's character. He's gracious and merciful.

Now, the word "gracious" means "to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior." Now, I found that quite moving. Because we are inferior to God. God is eternal, has existed forever, has an

incredible nature, has an incredible character, which is based on love and mercy, outgoing, yet He is willing to work with us. Because of the way we are God made us for a purpose to give us what He has. Incredible plan that God has for us. So this “willing to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior,” well, God is kind to us. We are inferior to God but He is willing to be patient with us and be merciful.

Now, the word “merciful” is “to love, love deeply, have mercy, be compassionate, have tender affection, have compassion.” Well, they’re all the things that God has done for us. That’s what God has done for us in calling us.

...**slow to anger, abundant in kindness**, which is loving kindness, **and did not forsake or leave them**. So God worked with them for a purpose. We understand physical Israel, really, God worked with them for a purpose so that in the end we could be called and learn the lessons that worked, that God worked with Israel, physical Israel. Well, we look at those things and say, “How did they do that?” Well, we should by now, with God’s spirit, know, “Oh, I know why they did that.” Because we would do exactly the same if we were there, because without God’s spirit you can’t obey God in the spirit of the law, the spiritual intent of the law. It’s just not possible. Can’t be done. It requires God’s spirit in us to be able to keep the spirit of the law.

Now, there is a Psalm, Psalms 13:5, which is a Psalm of David. After reading a lot of the Psalms we can see that David understood a lot about God’s mercy and in many of the Psalms he mentions about mercy.

Psalms 13:5—But I (David) trusted in Your mercy. Which is what we do, we trust in God’s mercy. We have access to the mercy seat. We trust, we believe, that if we go before God in humility that God will forgive us. We trust in that. We believe it, and therefore, we trust in it, that God will forgive and that we can then move on from that point forward in our spiritual journey. So we trust in that.

Well, David is saying here **I have trusted in Your mercy; my (David’s) heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.** Which is exactly what we can do. We can rejoice before God in the fact that we are on the path of salvation. That’s what we’ve been called for, for the purpose of salvation.

I will sing to the Eternal, because He has dealt bountifully with me. Well, we can agree. We’ve been called or awakened - what an incredible thing, what an act of mercy. How bountiful is that mercy towards us? When you look at everyone around us... Often, travelling, I look around and say, “One day that person will be called.” It’s going to be an incredible thing, their mind is opened, they’ll be able to understand that things we talk about. The only ones that can understand what we’re talking about today are those that have God’s holy spirit. They can actually understand the topic we’re covering.

We have the truth. We understand Passover and the days, the Feast days. We understand those days. Incredible things! Incredible gifts that we have been given all because of God’s mercy. Now,

when truth enters the Church, really it's God expressing more mercy to us. Because when you look at what is going on with regards to truth, it's God revealing more of Himself to us, which is an act of mercy. The world can't understand it.

Proverbs 16:6. Got a few scriptures today. **Proverbs 16:6—In mercy and truth**, which is God's mercy, **atonement** (covering) **is provided for iniquity**, for sin. So this mercy that God has shown to us is about this covering of sin. So when we approach the mercy seat to seek forgiveness, which is based about our repentance, God says He's provided an atonement. We understand that from the Day of Atonement, what that is all about, about Christ's sacrifice for us. So this atonement, this covering of sin has been provided for us. The real question boils down to, do we use it? Do we do it often? Do we do it daily or do we do it hourly? Because it's there any time because this is God's character, that He wants to pour out mercy, He wants to forgive us.

So if we sin and walk around carrying that sin and not repenting it's really an act of foolishness when you think about it, because God's nature is one of wanting to give mercy, wanting to be merciful. It's been provided for us; this atonement, this covering for sin's been provided but we, because of our nature, often we just won't go before God and admit it. We'll hang on to it and carry it. Well, when you think of it that's a really foolish thing to do, really foolish.

To understand the mercy seat is to know and understand that God is merciful. God thinks mercy and lives mercy. The mercy seat reflects God's character. So although we see—and we're going to go through some scriptures—we see God established the mercy seat to be part of the tabernacle the mercy seat sat on top of the ark of the covenant and the way that it was built, but it's all pointing to something. It's something spiritual. There it is something physical but it's meant for us to learn from it, that this is about access to God's throne at any time. We have access to God at any time. It's whether or not we want to have access to it.

Well, God outlays a lot of physical things so that we as God's people can understand it on a spiritual level.

There is a statement in many scriptures in the Bible that says, "O, give thanks to the Eternal because His mercy endures forever." Now, that's a common theme. David said often, "O, give thanks to the Eternal because His mercy endures forever." God will always be merciful. Now, we can't fully comprehend what that really is until we're spirit beings. We can understand aspects of it now because we're physical and we know what we are really like and that we need mercy and that God is merciful, willing to forgive, willing to cover sin. As long as we're willing to repent God will cover it. Well, He's always going to be merciful.

So if we go forward billions of years in time God says, "I change not." What that's about is God's character does not change. God will always be merciful; God will always be love, billions of years in the future when God willing, in His mercy, we are part of His family. We just can't grasp where that attribute, how it can be used in the future, but God will always be merciful to whatever is happening. That's who He is.

Exodus 34:5. This is where God descends and talks to Moses. **Now the Lord descended, the Eternal descended in a cloud and stood with him (Moses) there, and proclaimed the name of the Eternal.**

Verse 6—And the Eternal passed before him and proclaimed, The Eternal, the Eternal God, merciful... So here is an attribute being expressed which is “full of compassion.” God is full of compassion. When it talks about that God knows our condition because Christ was a human, God in him, the Word of God made flesh. So Christ went through all the physical things but didn’t sin. But he suffered physically like we suffer. So God does know because Christ knows—same mind—they know what it’s like to be physical, and therefore, God is full of compassion because He understands what we’re going through. God understands that we are going to sin, but what God wants to see is whether or not we are going to admit our fault, which is a difficult thing for humans. It’s very difficult to admit we’re wrong and to say we’re wrong. Well, that’s what God wants to know. Will we admit when God shows us in our minds?

Because if you look at what we were like before we were called, what were we like? Well, I can only go on what I’m like and what I was like, what is still there, which is to admit we’re wrong is a difficult thing. For a human to admit we’re wrong, there’s just no way because “I’m right!” It just really goes against human nature to admit that you’re wrong and when anyone with a natural mind admits they’re wrong it’s a big shock. Wow, that person admitted they were wrong? That’s pretty hard to do - struggle. He is merciful. He is full of compassion towards us because He knows our state. He knows we’re going to sin. For the rest of our life at different times we fall into different traps, and particular sins never leave us it’s just that God reveals more of that sin to us so that in the end you go, “This is who I am, my upbringing, the way I am, I’m natural, carnal. This is going to go on for the rest of my life.” What God wants to know is will I learn to hate it and will I respect Him and fight against it even though I’m going to have it all the time, I’m going to make many mistakes, but am I going to fight it all the way to the end ever how long that takes?

...and gracious, longsuffering... Now, aren’t we blessed to know that God is longsuffering? The same sin for 35 years to different levels? Starts often within the Church its outward change on physical things, but the mind, it takes ages to change the mind because there are records there of grooves where something happens and instantly, you know, I’ll make a judgment on it, which whether it’s right or wrong that’s it. Pride is in the way. But that’s the way we are. We’re all the same.

He’s longsuffering, **abounding in goodness and truth**, because God can’t lie. God’s word is true. Now, to what degree we understand God’s word is based on what He pours out to give us the insight into His word. But as a physical human we will never know God’s full attributes. It’s just not possible. Our minds can’t comprehend it.

Verse 7—keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity (sin), the transgression and sin. So God is forgiving if we’re willing to repent.

Micah 7:18. We're just establishing here that God is great. God's character, God's nature, God's characteristics are totally different to ours, and any attribute that we may have as a physical human being, there is no comparison to a spiritual attribute that God has, for example, looking at mercy.

Micah 7:18—Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? We have transgressions. We are a remnant—spiritual Israel, a remnant—and there are many that are called into this Body now that God is willing to pass over our sins if we're willing to repent.

He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. So we look at God delights in giving us mercy. Isn't that an incredible thing that that's the way God is? He's looking for us to repent. His desire is that we repent because He delights in the fact that He can cover the sin, which is "the wages of sin is death." God is willing to wipe that penalty away. The death penalty is gone and God wants to give that. What an incredible attribute. We're not like that. What we think is justice is getting even. "Let's sort him out." "Let's sort this person out." "Let's sort this situation out." It's called getting even. God's not like that. If a person is willing to repent God will forgive. Do we do that? It's tough.

Matthew 9:9—As Joshua passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, Follow me. So he (Matthew) arose and followed him. Now it happened, as Joshua sat at the table in the house, and behold, many of the tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him (Joshua) and his disciples. So we can visualize that. There they are and then tax collectors turn up and other people that are considered sinners. They're all there with them and here is Christ eating with them.

And then the Pharisees... Now, when we see the word "Pharisee" we should see the word "self-righteous," because that's what they were. They were right in their own eyes. The Pharisees were right. What can you say when somebody is right? They're just not wrong, they're right. They're self-righteous. So here they are, they're right in their eyes the way they're viewing the people sitting there at this meal.

When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? So, "Why does he do that?" So they've made a judgment that these people are tax collectors—tax collectors were not looked on well—and sinners, because they'd made a judgment that's what they were because they weren't Pharisees, they weren't following their religion, obviously, the way they saw it.

When Joshua heard that, he said to them, so it was when he heard it, Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. When they hear things like that you're thinking of a natural carnal mind to translate that. It's spiritual. What he's really talking about is something spiritual but they're trying to put it into a physical context. **But go and learn what**

this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. So what Christ is saying here is that God, Christ desired mercy to be lived towards others. That's what he wanted. Which is something spiritual. They wouldn't be able to understand this because in their minds they were merciful, obviously, because they were right in the way they dished out any type of mercy, was obviously right because they were right in their own eyes.

But what Christ was saying was that he was looking for a spiritual attribute that we have to have. It's something that God is but God requires us to live it on a spiritual way, not a physical way, because the physical way is wrong, it's not really mercy at all. This is an attitude of mind. It's God's mind. It's the way God thinks about things.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice. It wasn't about physical sacrifices which the Pharisees and that would have been doing according to the law at that time. God's desire is that we live mercy as He does. Now, we can only do that if we have God's holy spirit. There is just no way to think mercy unless we have God's holy spirit. It's not possible.

For I did not come to call the righteous, which was us, didn't come to call the self-righteous because they're already right in their own eye. But we, often, before we were really called, we thought we were right otherwise we would have joined some other group or some other religions or some other group, if we thought we were wrong. ...**but sinners, to repentance.** That's us. We were sinners - we're called to repentance. An act of mercy. We have been called to change the way we think, to think differently.

Now, let's look at the mercy seat in the sense of a physical aspect and look at where it's going as far as a spiritual component of that, or aspect of that. Exodus 25:10. This is actually the making of the ark and then the mercy seat. There are things to be learned from this because it's something physical that God is getting the Israelites to do, the priesthood to do, for a purpose. We can learn from that.

Exodus 25:10—And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. So here we see this type of a box that is overlaid inside and out with pure gold.

Verse 12—So this is now referring to how it's to be moved. You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and on them in its corners, it's four corners, so then they're placed. So there's a ring on each corner - of course, for a reason, the way it's going to be carried - **the two rings on the other side.** So there are two rings on one and two on the other.

Verse 13—And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. You shall put the poles into the rings on the side of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. So they weren't to actually touch the ark. The priesthood was to carry the ark with poles. **The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.** So they were permanent. They were

to be put through and then left there. So any time the ark was to be moved it was to be carried, as we know, by the Levites.

We might remember the time when Uzzah (I can't remember who it was now), touched the ark. Remember, the cart stumbled and he put his hand up and touched it and he died and everyone goes, "Oh, no, don't want to go near this," and if you've ever seen the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, how ridiculous a lot of that was, because that touching of the ark, which God said you're not to touch it. The priests were the only ones allowed to carry it and it was being moved. That that was an act of presumptuousness. It's to like us saying, "Well, couldn't God stop it from falling?" Which he thought he was going to intervene and do it. He was a laborer. He wasn't meant to touch it. It was a priesthood thing and they were to carry it with poles. So there was disobedience involved there, rebellion involved, even though at the time he didn't think about that he was being rebellious, but he was, presumptuous and rebellious.

And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you. Now something else: You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half shall be its width. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Now, we know of three cherubs, or cherubim, whichever you like to say, Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. One was in rebellion. Well, here we see two that are set over as one piece, it's made molded as one piece, as the mercy seat.

Now, they were looking at this for whatever reason on a physical level. True? That's the only thing they could do. But we can see this as a spiritual thing, that we have access to God's mercy. This very thing that this pointed to, we, out of all the people in the world, have access to go before this mercy seat, to receive what? God's mercy. The reason for the mercy seat is God wanting and desiring to give mercy. That's how we approach Him and He will give mercy if we're there in humility looking for mercy. We need mercy every hour of the day, really, when you look at it, every hour of the day we need mercy.

Verse 19—Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. So it's molded as one piece total. Mercy seat, certain dimensions, and then the angels that are there, the two cherubim. **The cherubim shall stretch out their wings over, and covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; and the faces of the cherubim shall be towards the mercy seat.** So we can see that it's picturing God's throne where mercy comes from. This is God's character. This is where God wants to give mercy from. In other words, it comes from God's throne. It comes from God. That's where mercy comes from. But this is physical. **And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony which I give you.**

Verse 22—And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat... We can visualize that physically. We can see something in our minds, what that was like. Well, on a spiritual level this is what we can do. We can approach the mercy seat as Aaron did once a year. We can actually do it at any time. Incredible thing. Why are we approaching the mercy seat? For mercy. Because we need it. We need it. That's why we're approaching the mercy seat.

So we don't go before God, "I want..." "I want..." "Me..." "My..." "I..." "I want..." "I want..." No, we go before God for mercy. We want the covering from Christ... the penalty of sin's been paid for, once for all, well, we want it applied to us because we are wrong. We're just wrong in so many things in our attitudes.

God is going to speak with Moses **from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the covenant, or the ark of Testimony, about everything which I will give you in command to the children of Israel.** So here we see something physical that is taking place. Now, we understand the Day of Atonement is all about mercy, and God is mercy. He provided Christ as a sacrifice for us. Christ enabled us to have access to the mercy seat.

Let's look at Mark 15:33. Joshua Christ dies on the stake on the fourteenth day of the first month in God's calendar, Passover day, which was a Wednesday on the Roman calendar. Now, we understand that, we believe that. God has revealed that to His people at the end-time.

Mark 15:33—Now when the sixth hour came, which is the Hebrew time, 12:00pm on the Roman calendar, Roman time, there was darkness over the whole land... Now, this wasn't just a matter of clouds covering the sun. This is darkness over the whole land. It's gone dark. It can't be explained. It requires God's intervention to make something go dark at a particular time. ...**until the ninth hour, which is 3:00pm.** So there's darkness from 12 till 3 which nobody can explain and people are concerned about it, why there is darkness over the whole land

Verse 34—And at the ninth hour, 3:00pm, Joshua cried out saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is translated, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Which we understand is about sin. Some of those who stood by, when they heard it, said, **Look, He is calling for Yahweh! ...which is "My God."**

Verse 36—Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to him to drink, saying, Let him alone, talking about leaving Christ alone, let us see if his God, Yahweh, will come and take him down. So they're still looking at things very physical. They do not understand what is really going on with Joshua the Messiah. They really have no idea. They just see there's a man and he's been sentenced to death, and therefore, they're carrying out their orders. That's all they could see because they weren't called to see anything different.

Verse 37—And Joshua cried out with a loud voice, and breathed his last.

Verse 38, which is a key here, because what we see now is something that's taking place that impacts you and me today. **Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.** It's like the curtain behind me being ripped from the top. Because if you went to tear that what would happen normally is you'd grab the bottom and tear it up. This is totally different. It's being torn from the top down, that way. Well, what's this really picturing? Well, we know. Now that the veil of the temple has been torn we have direct access to God, whereas before, remember, Aaron could only enter that area once a year on the Day of Atonement. Now it's been torn we have access. An incredible thing. Once called we have access to the mercy seat. We can approach the mercy seat at any time in prayer.

I want to go through a particular Psalm. I've got to try and find it. I did have it here somewhere in my notes, put it somewhere over here. This is from the old hymnal, and it's Psalm 51, which I'm not going to go through. But I'm going to go through what Dwight Armstrong wrote. We sing this on Passover night, *In Thy Loving Kindness*. For me this means a lot. I'm sure different things mean different things to different people in God's Church. This means so much to me. When you read what it says, it's called *In Thy Loving Kindness*. It's from Psalm 51. It's not word for word; there are segments that are but other parts have been put into what we would call different language because it explains it clearly. On part of the original song sheet you'll see it say, "With humility." Because if we really understand what we're doing when we go before God, God's mercy seat, we can't go there with pride. God's not going to hear it. Pride is sin. Why would God hear a sin of pride? This has to be done in humility. We have to fully understand what we're doing. We're going before the Eternal Great God of the universe in humility because we know we need mercy applied to us because the wages of sin is death.

Now, to what degree we really believe that will depend on our prayer life, what it's really doing, if you understand what I mean. Because if we don't really believe that we earn the death penalty when we sin we're going to delay our time of going looking for forgiveness because we don't really, really, really believe that the death penalty will be applied to us. Well, it will. It's a law. God has set it. It's a law. The wages, what we're going to get paid for sin, is death. For us it could be death, not just one death, a physical one, a spiritual one never to have life ever. Well, if we really believe it we will go before the mercy seat a lot more often in humility seeking forgiveness, admitting what's wrong with us. What's wrong with us? We're all selfish. To different degrees we all fall, we all fail.

I'm going to read this. I don't know how far we're going to get into the sermon but I wanted to read this because this meant so much to me if you really understand what is being said.

In Thy loving kindness Lord, be merciful to me; It's very personal. "In Your loving kindness, be merciful to me." Why? We don't deserve mercy, but God made us a particular way so that we would seek mercy. Because once we're called, we see what sin is. Now, when we look at the world we shouldn't hold anything against the world because they have no idea what sin is. None! Like, if you went to someone and said, "You've sinned. What is sin?" The world has no idea what

sin is. Sin is the transgression of the law. We understand it's God's law. But they don't understand God's law so they don't know what sin is. But we do, therefore, in humility we can go and say, "In Thy loving kindness, Lord, be merciful to me because I'm the problem. I'm the sinner. I've failed before You because of my nature and that's what's in me. I want it gone. I want to get rid of it!"

In compassion great, which is great compassion, *blot out all iniquity*. Every sin that we carry, cover it. *Wash me thoroughly from sin, from all guilt cleanse Thou me*; or all guilt, cleanse though me, *For transgressions I confess; sins I ever see*. Well, we can see this. We see sin because we've been called to see it. People can't see sin.

Against Thee (You) only have I sinned... Sin is the transgression of God's law so we sin against God. So whenever we raise ourselves up in any sin, as Ron has clearly explained, we break the first commandment. It's idolatry because we're raising something up. We're raising up something we want before God. So we're lifted up. It becomes an idol. It can be many things in our life. *Against Thee only have I sinned, done evil in Your sight, that Your speaking may be just, and in judgment right*. Because it is God's, talking about God's speaking - it's just and His judgment is right, it's an accurate judgment.

My iniquities blot out, my sin hide from Your view, and in me a clean heart make, spirit right renew. Because we want a different spirit. We don't want this human selfish spirit, we want to renew the spirit of God in us because when sin is forgiven God then can pour out the flow of His holy spirit, more of His spirit, hence we should be before that mercy seat often.

From Your gracious presence, Lord, cast me not away, and Thy holy spirit take not from me I pray. That resonates with me personally, that it'd be a terrifying thing. It's almost you can't speak about it. But imagine God not allowing His spirit to flow in us anymore so that we couldn't believe the truth, we couldn't see ourselves? Because if we look back before our calling we never saw ourselves. Not really. It would have been based on pride. But we didn't see what the mind really is, how evil it really is. But as we go longer and longer in this relationship with God, in His mercy He reveals more to us, hence we realize, hey, we need mercy all the time. We have to be careful it doesn't become a bit of a, "Whew, got a long way to go and it's never going to stop." But we have access to the mercy seat so it doesn't really matter - how long it takes is how long it takes and whatever sin we may have that is secret in this (not secret with God but secret to others in here), we all have it, God knows it, that's what we should be going before God about, "Be merciful to me. I'm sick of thinking this way, making these judgments, this thinking that I have." We don't have to say one single word, but it's all going on in the mind as we know.

So we don't want God to take His spirit from us. Imagine that. It's a horrifying thought. You know and I know hundreds of people where God has now taken His spirit from them. Why? What's that all about? Unrepented sin, failing to go to the mercy seat in humility and acknowledging sin before God. That's what's gone wrong. They've failed to repent. Now, they failed to repent

because over time of neglect they failed to see what their sin is, and therefore, they won't acknowledge it.

Now, any time we go before God there's a sin we don't see. We're just not aware of it yet. God hasn't revealed it to its extent to us yet. So we don't want God to withdraw His holy spirit.

Joy which Thy salvation brings again to me restore. So we have a joy, so that once we go before God in humility and repent and we have God's mercy applied to us, which He has promised, it's a guarantee if we're willing to go before God and repent, admit it, God will restore again the joy of salvation, the purpose of life. If you really look at it, what is the purpose of life? The purpose of life is salvation! This physical thing is only a temporary thing. If by strength, you know, we get seventy years and if by strength more. Well, what's the end of all that? Salvation for those that are called to a plan that God has for us. Incredible thing! Well, there's a joy in that salvation.

So, "Joy which Thy salvation brings again to me restore." So get "my" thinking right, you know "my" mind right. This is not about the physical things that are going on around us. There are spiritual components that are a lot more serious that "I" should be worried about. What "I" should be worried about is "my" response to every physical situation. That's what's the issue is - how "I" respond, how "I" think.

Now, you would know I don't get that right all the time either. None of us do because we have a certain thought process because of the way we're brought up or whatever, our environment, whatever's happened. It's just the way we are.

With Your spirit free do Thou keep me ever more. So we need God's spirit and God has promised us that when we're changed to spirit we will never think this way ever again. Now, that's something to rejoice in - never, ever think this way ever again. We will think like God - merciful, loving, kindness, gentle. Isn't that amazing that that's what could happen? Well, at the moment, you know, we struggle with these things.

Sacrifice dost Thou not want... So God doesn't want physical sacrifices, animals and lambs being killed. *...else would I give it Thee.* If that's what God required that's what we would do. But God does not require that. We know that that was abolished at the time of Christ's death. It's been done away. There's a different sacrifice required, the sacrifice of self, selfishness, self. The self has to be put to death within us.

And with offering Thou shall not delighted be. So all these sacrificial animal systems and the sacrifices, God wasn't delighted in that. But God is delighted the day or the time or the minute or the second that we decide to go before His mercy seat, which is God Himself, and kneel down or stand or whatever it is, driving, and admit to God in humility that I am wrong. I am a sinner and I am just so thankful that God in His mercy has applied the Passover sacrifice (Christ), to me, that I

have access to His throne now. And therefore, that's what God looks for. God wants us to do that, to go and do it.

If you do get a chance to get this Psalm out and maybe kneel before God and go through this in humility. It's a marvelous thing because you realize very quickly this is what God wants from us. He doesn't want sacrifices and all these other things on the animals. He wants us to acknowledge that we're wrong and that yes, He is merciful, and when He says that He will forgive us of our sins He can't lie, so it will be forgiven and we can get up or move on from that point (whether we're standing, whatever), we can move on from that point knowing that forgiveness has been applied to us because of the sacrifice of Christ. Incredible thing!

Now, just finishing this off: *For a broken spirit is to God a sacrifice.* God wants us to go before Him and admit that we're wrong. It's a broken spirit. In humility. *And a broken, contrite heart, You will not despise.* So God won't look down on us if we're willing to humble ourselves before God. So we see now that this veil has been torn and we have access to the mercy seat.

Hebrews 10:11—And every priest, this is from the Old Testament, standing ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. This is talking about sacrifices which pointed to Christ. **But this Man, referring to Christ, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,** which was on Passover day, which was when the sacrifice was completed, Christ being sacrificed for us, **from that time waiting till his enemies are made his footstool.** And that, of course, happens at the end of 7,100 years. The reality is it's God the Father that does it all. Christ is the head of the Church, but God's doing it all through Christ. So this is all enemies will be made as a footstool to Christ. In other words, enemies won't exist is another way to put it. At the end of 7,100 years anything that is against God and Christ will not exist. There'll be no enemies left.

For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified, set aside as holy. But the holy spirit also witnesses to us; for after he had said before (verse 16), This is the covenant that I, talking about Yahweh Elohim, will make with them after those days, says the Eternal: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them. Now, this is about the spirit of the law.

Now, mankind can memorize the law and put it into their own minds. This is totally different. This is something spiritual. This is about the law, the spirit of the law, which is a totally different thing. We've covered this before. The spirit of the law really is talking about intent, "What is my intent behind my action?" Examining that one soon realizes that often our intent is not good. It might look like a good thing, as we talked about, someone who can give a hundred dollars to somebody and their intent, you'll never know. Can happen at any time. It's not our problem what their intent is. Someone gives you a hundred dollars be thankful to God that you got a hundred dollars extra. But really, it's about us. Whenever we do anything, "What is my intent? Is it about self? Am I trying to get some vain glory from it, that someone will like me more, whatever it is?"

That's the important part. Therefore, we should examine ourselves about the intent of—looking at the 10 Commandments—the intent of the law. Now, God has given us that power. Other's don't have it; we have it.

Verse 17—then He adds, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. This is about going before the mercy seat in humility, the way to access God through prayer, repentance, and Christ's sacrifice for sins, which can be covered. That's what that's really about. So it's about going before God in prayer, in humility seeking that mercy. **Now where there is remission (forgiveness) of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.** This is about God's forgiveness.

Verse 19—Therefore, brethren, having boldness, which is this freedom and a liberty. We've been given a freedom. Other's haven't. They don't know about the mercy seat. Their minds can't comprehend the mercy seat. We can. The mercy seat really is symbolic, pointing to God's character, His character of mercy. So we've got this liberty and freedom **to enter the Holiest by the blood of Joshua.** We have access, direct access to God. We can talk to God at any time. Isn't that incredible, really, when you look at it? **...by a new and living way which he consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, his flesh.** So it's been torn, his flesh was torn. Now the veil has been torn, we have access.

...and having a High Priest over the house of God, which is the Church, which we are part of, and that, of course, is the called-out ones. We are the House of God. We are the called-out ones for a purpose. **...let us draw near with a true heart,** which is in sincerity. Let's be sincere **in full assurance of faith.** So we have a full assurance. In other words, we believe God. We believe God that if we go before Him in humility before the mercy seat He will forgive us our sins. **...having our minds/hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,** which is by repentance, this evil thinking, **and our bodies washed with pure water.** So God forgives sin. We can be spiritually cleansed based on our repentance.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, the hope of salvation, **without wavering,** we can have a confidence, **for He who promises is faithful.** **And let us consider one another,** in prayer, **in order to stir up love and good works,** because praying about others, asking for God's intervention into their life to live His character towards them, we have to have that desire. Because what we have, we really would like to see everybody called and have that opportunity.

I can't remember who I was talking to now about a calling and if we had known at the time of our calling that it was going to take 30, 40, 50, 60 years, most people would go, "And what do I have to do?" And once you become aware of having to fight self continually all day every day? The human mind would just give up. Because when we're called it's all so exciting and normally new information is exciting, until you get to this point, "Well, hang on a minute. I've got to... What's it? I've got to fight myself? This is the hardest Church I've ever been in! This is tough!" Well, if you know it was going to take a lifetime most of us would probably go, "Oh, I don't know if I

could last that long.” Well, that’s how long it lasts. People have been going for 30, 40, 50 years doing this. Incredible!

So we can have this boldness. **Verse 19—Therefore, having boldness, this freedom, to enter the Holiest by the blood of Joshua.** We can talk to God.

Verse 21—having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart (sincere) in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. God is willing to forgive.

Verse 23—Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, the hope of salvation, without wavering, so we ought to have this confidence.

Verse 24—Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, which is prayer before God. Now more than ever this is the time to draw closer to God. We are in the end-time. We are very close to the end where Joshua the Messiah is going to return. How much more should we go towards the mercy seat? How much more knowing what’s coming? Because we’re going to need God’s protection in this. There is no way the food that we’ve saved is going to last.

I can’t remember who I was talking to about the other day, about whatever you’ve got stored, the moment one neighbor turns up and you give them something how long do you reckon it is before the other neighbors turn up? Not very long, because that’s how it works. It’s human nature.

...as is the manner of some, but exhorting (encouraging) each other, and so much more as you see the day approaching. Let’s turn to the mercy seat.

Hebrews 9:1. This, of course back on and is involved in atonement, and we’re looking at this from another point of view, of after Atonement, and if we look at it, pre-Feast, what we should do. Because we have an opportunity at the Feast to have access to the mercy seat at any time. Whether we’re walking on the beach, whether we’re driving a car, we actually have access to the mercy seat at any time knowing, in humility, that we need mercy applied to us, the sacrifice of Joshua the Messiah on us. He has done it once for all. Well, we at this point have this opportunity. Others will soon have that same opportunity.

Hebrews 9:1—Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances, which is physical rituals, of divine service and the earthly sanctuary, which we’ve looked at. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lamp stand and the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary (Holy Place), which was the first two-thirds of the total area. ...then behind the second veil, which is what we’re saying symbolically was torn, that access, behind that second veil where we’ve looked at, where the ark was and where the mercy seat was. The first veil was at the entrance, there’s one at the entrance, and there’s the Holies of

Holies behind that. ...and the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which is the second part, which is where the mercy seat was located.

Now, which (verse 4), which had the golden censer of incense... So now this is looking symbolically. They were looking here at the golden censer of incense. What's that? Well, we understand that's about prayer, the prayer of the saints. ...and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which the golden pot of manna. It was in there. It pointed to God's word, spiritual food, Aaron's rod that budded, a sign that God was working. So Aaron's rod was about a sign, this is about God's working. This is how God works. ...and the tablets of the covenant. So those things were in there, those three things were in the ark component.

Verse 9—and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. So we've been through that and we understand what it really was pointing to.

Now, when these things had thus been prepared or been prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the sacrifices or the services, the daily service that was to take place. Now, you can imagine that area, well, the priests used to be able to go in there and they would do all different types of things, which involved cleaning and there were sacrifices and all those types of things that had to be done. There were teams of Levites on rosters that used to do those things.

But into the second part, that last third, the high priest went in once a year alone, so this is talking about Aaron, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance, which is about sin. ...the holy spirit indicating that the way to the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. So we understand that they didn't have access to it. It was only Aaron that had access to it.

Verse 9—It was symbolic (a "type") of the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect with regards to conscience. So the people's sins were not forgiven. People's sins were not forgiven because they were not called to spiritual repentance. So they had sin. Well, God didn't forgive sin because the blood of bulls and goats could not cover sin, and the sacrifice of Christ had not taken place yet.

We're going to just drop down to verse 24—For Christ had not entered the holy places made with hands, so this is now moving to something spiritual, which are copies of the true, which is a physical pattern, but into the heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Verse 25—not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of others—he then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world. Because if that would in effect have to take place Christ would have to have kept on dying, so to speak. ...but now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now because of that we have now access to God's mercy seat

remembering that God's mercy seat points to God, His attribute, mercy, what He wants to give to us.

So Christ (verse 28)... Well, **verse 27—And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,** which is the hundred years. We know there is a second death, which means people have to live twice to have a second death. **Christ offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for him he will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.** So it's all about salvation. You can't separate the two. You can't separate the mercy seat (God's mercy), and salvation, because salvation is a gift, an act of mercy. Because we don't deserve it; we deserve the death penalty.

Hebrews 10:26—For if we sin willfully, which is deliberately without any desire to repent or change, **after we have received the knowledge of the truth,** which we have, **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.** Now, this is really going into an area called the unpardonable sin. I won't read all of that; it's on the Church website, about the unpardonable sin, but when we look at it in straightforward terms we have the potential to commit the unpardonable sin. What is the unpardonable sin? It's an unwillingness to repent of a known sin. Now, we have unknown sins, all of us, and if we knew of them we would repent. But we have unknown ones so we don't repent of those because we don't know them. But when we see them, we would repent, we'd go before God's mercy seat and we'd repent.

Well, it has happened to some where they see a sin and because it's part of what they think is their character, their personality, they refuse to repent, they refuse to go to God for mercy. Now, if a person refuses to go to God for mercy, in humility to go to God, God cannot forgive them. That's called the unpardonable sin. God wants to pardon sin, but it's unpardonable because God can't give mercy because they don't want mercy. Straightforward, really, isn't it? If a person does not want mercy shown to them and they refuse to go before God's mercy seat to ask for forgiveness of sin, the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice for us, and they want to hold on in their pride to the sin that they have because they feel that's who they are and that's what they want more than they want God's way, more than they want mercy, it's an unpardonable sin. It cannot be forgiven because they're not going before God's mercy seat.

Now, deep down they refuse to repent. They just simply refuse to repent of that sin. Even though they're aware of it they refuse to repent. Now, it's difficult (I find it difficult), to think that that's where a human could go. This is like, we sit here and think, "How could a person not approach God and seek God's mercy? How could you do that?" There are people that have done that, that have been part of the Body of Christ since 31 A.D., Pentecost 31 A. D., that have refused to repent, connected to pride and idolatry. But that's what they've refused to repent, therefore, they have committed the unpardonable sin, therefore, they cannot be given salvation, because they refuse to approach the mercy seat in humility.

So this sin cannot be forgiven because they refuse to repent. Reasonably straightforward. But if you wanted more information on that you can go on to the Church website and look that up under the “Topics” section.

Hebrews 6:4-6 refers to a converted person, someone who has been called, repented, been baptized and received the gift of God’s holy spirit by the laying of hands who knowingly and intentionally rejects the truth once delivered and denies God and Joshua the Christ to live and dwell in them. So they refuse to repent.

Now, we understand that God and Christ cannot dwell with sin; therefore, if a person refuses to repent they’re refusing God living and dwelling in them, therefore, it’s unpardonable because God cannot transform the mind, the mind cannot be changed, and therefore, the gift of repentance, the mercy that God has, cannot be applied to them because they refuse, they don’t want it.

Hebrews 10:27—but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. So we can see that if a person refuses there’s an outcome. The wages of sin is death. Well, the death penalty will be applied on a spiritual level. **Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses,** which is something physical. **And how much worse a punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the spirit of grace?...**which is mercy. Because it’s an insult to God. Because here is God in His character offering mercy and the person virtually rejects God and says, “I don’t want Your mercy.” Well, if a person chooses, does not want God’s mercy, well, what do you think is going to happen, is what the scripture is saying. What do you really think is going to happen?

Verse 30—For we know Him who said, it’s talking about God, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Eternal. And again, The Eternal will judge His people. We are under judgment. We are under judgment. The Church of God, God’s Church, is under judgment. Why are we under judgment? Because we’ve been called, we’ve been given the gift of God’s holy spirit, and now we are being judged, because judgment really is about measuring. We are under measurement. We’re being measured. The measurement is once God gives His spirit and reveals sin to our thinking—we see ourselves— is another way to put it—“Oh, Wayne, what’s going on here?” We see it. God wants to know, will we approach the mercy seat so that He can give mercy to us? That’s what’s the measurement, and if we are willing to go before God in humility and seek forgiveness of sin, His mercy, God will give it as long as we ask. It’s this refusing to ask.

Well, God says, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.” What that’s saying is, God is saying, “Well, if you want to reject Me there is a consequence. If you refuse to repent and hold on to your pride there is a penalty to be paid and vengeance is Mine.” God will do it. We don’t have to worry about it, God will do it. He’s true to His word. Person who commits the unpardonable sin by

refusing to repent will pay a penalty. They will. God will deliver it because that's what they chose. God will give them what they want. They refuse to repent; the wages of sin is death.

Verse 31—It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It's a fearful thing to not seek God's mercy. It's a fearful thing to have God working with us and then for us to turn around and say, "Nah, it's okay. I'm going to do it my way." It's a fearful thing. We don't want to fall into God's hands in that. Some have.

Verse 32—But recall the former days in which, after you were enlightened—which is after you were called, because before this we couldn't see, our mind was open to know God—**you endured,** which means we remained under God's law, we remained under God's government, **a great struggle with suffering.** Now, we should all be able to relate to that. This is a great struggle with suffering because of things we don't want to do we do. Deep down we don't want to do it, but we do it. Remember, Paul goes through that and says there's a certain element, only one part does this, "I don't want to do this," but guess what? Put in the right environment, what do we do? Exactly the thing we didn't want to do. "I said the things that I didn't want to say. I repented of saying these things so many times and here I am put in the right environment and bang, I do it all again exactly the same. I do the things that I don't want to do. But another part of me," which is God's spirit part, "I don't want to do this. I reject it; I don't want any part of it. But being human, right environment, right place, right time, bang! Wayne comes out." They're the things we repent of. We go before God.

So we remember the former days before our calling. I'm sure we all do. Now, one of the beauties of baptism, that we repent of sin, so everything from that period of time backwards, for me it was 1983, that from that time, from '83 backwards everything that I did that I don't want to recall, I don't want to talk about it, it's gone. Because baptism, a new man comes up. Well, a long process, but the new man comes up who wants now to overcome, who wants to fight to the end. That's what happens to all of us. So we've now been called so we now see, God's given us the ability to see self a lot more.

...**you endured,** so we, this great struggle which we have, we're suffering. You have this suffering involved in this, great suffering, because the self wants to come out all the time. Well, got to keep fighting self, denying self continually to the end.

Verse 33—partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations. I think we've all been through that. "Weird Wayne," or weird whoever it is. They think something is wrong, something has gone really wrong with this person. "You've changed!" Well, I hope I am. That's what we want. We wanted that. I want to change. So we've had these reproaches, we've had trials and tests ...**and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated,** other brethren. It's weird. It's like going to the Feast, isn't it? And here we all are, we haven't seen each other. Some people at this year's Feast you won't have ever met and you're going to see them. Because we've got people coming from the United States that you've never ever met.

It's like you're brothers, which you are brothers and sisters in Christ. But you meet them and, "Hi! How are you going?" The like minds! God's spirit meeting together and it's an exciting thing.

But they think it's weird, these people, that you pack up and you go away for eight days or something like that, and you meet up with these people you've never met, never, ever met, and you're going to stay with them for eight days. Well, there's a suffering in that. Some may have to lose their jobs this year because of it. Just a trial. Knowing that we have these companions of those who were so treated, other brethren, we're going to meet with other brethren. They think it's really weird that you won't spend time with your family but you'll pack up and go and live in a hotel with these other people that you've never met ever before for eight days! Sounds weird, doesn't it? Well, there's a suffering because you've got to go home and they say, "How did you go?" "It was great!"

Verse 34—for you had compassion on me, it's Paul, in my chains, so he's in jail, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods... So here they were, someone they'd never met, but they were willing to sacrifice, plunder their goods, sacrifice physically for the benefit of someone they'd never met. Now, I can imagine what that's like. I've been very blessed that my wife and myself were called at the same time, baptized, basically, the same day, and therefore, I've never had to face that. But if you're in a relationship where you are married and you've got somebody else and here you are sacrificing to this person you've never ever met...never, ever met, and you're going to sacrifice for them at the Feast and you're doing these deeds for them.

Well, this is Paul in jail, here they are they're having their goods plundered. In other words, their giving above their tithes and offerings. They're giving to somebody to help. "But I thought we were going to buy a new car?" "I thought we were..." You can see how that applies. I've never lived that but some of you have.

...and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods knowing that you have a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. In other words, it's with God. So God sees your heart, our heart and intent, why we do it. Although others don't see it and they look at it and say, "Oh, you're really weird. You're giving 'this' and you're giving 'that' and you're doing 'this' for these people that you've never met, and don't you know, I'm your wife," or "I'm your husband! What's wrong with you?" Can we understand that that's the way it is? But we know that in doing those things that God sees it and God looks at the heart. God looks at the intent, why we're doing what we're doing. We love the brethren. We love the brethren.

I know in various conversations some people have said that their wives or husbands have said, "You seem to love the Church more than me." Fact? True. True. Because if we love one another, we love God, because we're here because God placed us here. We're in the Body because God placed us here, therefore, we love the brethren because we show expression of loving God, and therefore, the answer is yes, we love the Church more than our physical relationships.

Do we think they can understand that? There's no way they can understand that. Some people have had to face that more than others. Some tolerate it - the word "tolerate" - more than others. Some put up with it, others don't. Can't expect much more from people with the natural mind because the reality is if we weren't called we would do it. I know my nature that if my wife had been called and I hadn't the marriage would not have worked. "There is no way you're running off with a cult and giving all this money! There's no way!" But everyone is different. Some it's not a problem; other's it's a problem. So, blessed are we if we're in an environment where the other person is tolerating of our affairs, our love of God and love of the brethren.

Verse 35—Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. So let's not cast away the hope of salvation. So no matter what happens to us we should always remain focused on the spiritual component of life, salvation. What's the purpose of life? Salvation. So no matter what trial goes on and all the drama that goes around us we shouldn't have drama. But it goes on around us. It's the world. That's what happened. It's just everywhere you go. It's in the work environment; it's in family environments because families can't function properly because they don't have God's spirit. They can't think the right way. Human nature, selfishness will dominate, and at some point things are going to go wrong in those lives, therefore, it will affect us. People around us are going to think differently than we do. They're going to behave differently. So there's drama all around us. As long as we don't take it on.

But we have a great hope, and that confidence is eternal life, life in Elohim, a spirit life. That's the purpose of our life. That's why we're in the Body at this time for salvation.

Verse 36—For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. That's a lot of what we're here for, and in part of this receiving the promise, it's about our access to God on an ongoing basis by approaching the mercy seat.

Verse 37—For yet a little while and he who is coming will come and will not tarry. Which, will not delay. Christ is coming, it's just in God's time. No matter what happens we endure to the end, we just keep going. We love the brethren. We love God. We put God first no matter what, whatever it takes. That's what we have been called to.

Now, if you look at it this, I believe, is one of the most incredible times that a person could live, to have this opportunity, to have the knowledge we have. Because soon, once Christ returns, and over a period of time, the world (after a period of time), the world will have the knowledge we have and they'll look back and go, "Wow! Isn't that incredible?" They don't have Satan anymore. They don't have the dramas that are going on. Over time there will be different tests and trials they'll have. But what a great time we have knowing the purpose of life, knowing we have access to God now, that He is the Creator, He is almighty, He is all powerful, He can do anything. He can remove a trial from us now if He wanted to. He can heal us now if He wanted to. When I say "If He wanted to," it's about what is best for you and me.

So if we are in a trial it's the best thing that could ever happen to you. I know when you're in it, it's difficult, but it is if we handle it with God's spirit. But a trial can be a worst thing that could happen to us if we're trying to do it on a physical level, not involving God in the trial. So if we have a trial, let's involve God. Let's endure that trial because it too will pass. Isn't that incredible to understand that and know it? All trials will pass, just at the moment some people have trials that have gone on for 30, 40 years, and it doesn't look like it's ever going to pass. But 100% sure God says all of it's going to pass. Physical is going to pass so the trial will pass.

There are lessons in all trials. Some people have trials their whole life and are learning different lessons because in the future they will be able to communicate to others to help them. So it's not about self and the trial that we might be in, it's about helping others in the future.

Verse 38—Now the just shall live by faith, which is what we do. We live by faith. We believe the truth and we continue living the truth. ...**but if anyone draws back, My life has no pleasure in him**. Now, this is about somebody drawing back. We know what drawing back is. It's like a game of football where you see someone just drawing back. They're not getting involved in the sport anymore. They draw back and they just stand there. Well, we can do that on a spiritual level. We can draw back. And what is that about? How does a person draw back? By not approaching God in prayer, approaching the mercy seat looking for mercy, we draw back - self-reliant. We become self-reliant. We don't see the sin that so easily ensnares us. We all have sin.

God says, well, God doesn't have any pleasure in that person if they're willing to draw back and not rely on Me, not approach Me in humility seeking My help. Because God wants to see that we need Him, we desire Him, that we acknowledge that we need Him.

Verse 39—But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, to destruction. Because if we draw back too far and get cut off from God's spirit God in His mercy may give us another opportunity...He may give us another opportunity. The majority, I think, will probably have that opportunity because they don't do it willfully. They do it out of just laziness or whatever, certain tests and trials overcome people. Well, God in His mercy He says that He will pardon sin. Maybe people were given time in the hundred years. Well, we don't draw back to destruction. ...**but of those who believe to the saving of the life**, which is eternal life in Elohim.

We'll work to a conclusion to here. Just quickly, Leviticus 16:13 which is covering the Day of Atonement, which has been covered. **Leviticus 16:13**. So this is on the Day of Atonement. **And he shall put incense on the fire before the Eternal, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die**. So it's talking about prayer going before God's mercy seat. And if we don't—so if we don't pray and don't go before God looking for mercy—what's going to happen? "...lest he die." Because we can die spiritually by drawing back. So this is physical pointing to something that is spiritual.

Hebrews 4:12. Just got a few scriptures to cover. **Hebrews 4:12—For the word/logos of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even the division of the life and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** So what God is looking for is our motivation. What is our motivation and intent? That's what God is looking at. What is driving the action behind us? What is it that drives our thinking? When we go before God what is driving our thinking? Is it, "I want," "I need"? Well, the one thing we need more than anything is God's mercy, an attribute that He wants to give us if we're willing to acknowledge it.

Verse 13—And there is no creature hidden from His sight. Well, you wouldn't know that today, would you? In today's world people do not believe that their actions are being seen. Everything is seen, and more importantly, every thought, every intent, every motive is seen. Now (not being in the Church), it's selfish. Ours should not be selfish. But God sees it. If it is, well, this is what we want to repent of, that we don't want to be selfish. So there is nothing hidden from His sight, **but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him (God) to whom we must give an account.** So how do we give an account? Well, this is not about the way the Protestant world would think of it, "Got to give an account when you die and you go to the pearly gates and there is Peter and you've got to give an account." "Well, this is what I did." It's got nothing to do with any of that.

This is about giving an account day by day, hour by hour because we have the power to examine ourselves hour by hour, minute by minute, second by second if we want to. If we want to stop and examine my motive of why I did what I did, we can do it at any time. But spiritual laziness, we don't do it that often. Sometimes we will carry a sin a lot longer than we should. We should approach God and seek that forgiveness knowing that it's forgiven and forgotten. We don't have to draw it up every five minutes about that problem. Once it's admitted and acknowledged God gives the mercy and that's it.

So we've got to give an account now. Judgment has begun on the house of God. We're under measurement now so let's give an account to God at any opportunity that we have if we've done something wrong.

Verse 14—Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Joshua the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. Let's hold fast to the calling. We've been given a calling and it's a wonderful gift and a great blessing. We're to hold fast to the truth. We're to hold fast to a prayer life, going before God's mercy seat. We're to hold fast to that. Nothing else in this world matters other than approaching the mercy seat when you look at it. Nothing else matters. All the other things that are going on and all the other things that are said and done, whatever happens to us, the most important thing in your life and my life is my access to the mercy seat, knowing that God is actually listening. God is listening and willing and desiring to give mercy.

Verse 15—For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses as humans. Christ was a human. ...but was in all points tried/tested as we are, yet without sin. Now, we're tried and we sin. That's why we have access to the mercy seat, which is a great blessing. **Let us, therefore, come boldly in liberty to do so because we've got the freedom to do so, to the throne of grace (mercy), that we may obtain mercy, so let's do it, forgiveness of our sins, and find grace/mercy to help in time of need.** So what a blessing!

Ephesians 2:1—And you who were dead in trespasses and sin... Because before our calling and before repentance we were dead. Why were we dead? Because the wages of sin is death and we sinned, and therefore, we were walking around with the death penalty that had to be applied to us unless we were called to repentance, which we were. **...in which we once walked according to the course of this world, Satan's system, Satan's way of thinking, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.** Because before our calling we were always disobedient because that's all we could be. Now we've been called we have to move from disobedience to obedience, and it takes time, a lifetime of continually moving to obedience. **...among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others.** That's what we were like, and therefore, in that, if we really think about it, that's why we should live mercy to others. Because we were once like them and God's shown us mercy, so surely we should show them mercy. We should live it.

Verse 4—But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... So God loved us first. We didn't love God. We now have the power to love God back because He first loved us by calling us and giving us His holy spirit. **...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive, with the gift of God's holy spirit, together with Christ (by the grace of mercy we are saved)...** It's only by the Passover sacrifice.

Luke 6:32 in finishing up. **Luke 6:32—But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.** Now, this is talking about selfishness. So if we only sacrifice for people that we, so-called, like or love physically, what's the good of it? Didn't Pharisees do that? Didn't they do that? They looked after their own, in other words.

Verse 33—And if you do good to those who do good to you, which is a common thing in this world. You only do good back to someone who did good to you. So someone gives you a present, well, of course, I've got to give you one back. It's deed for deed sort of thing because that's just the way the human mind works. We don't want to be indebted to anybody do we? "I owe them." **...what credit is it to you? For even sinners do the same.** That's what man does.

And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is it to you? So if we lend or give something to somebody as a gift and we walk away with an expectation of something coming back from them to us we're sinning. **For even sinners lend to sinners to**

receive such, as much back. So they're going to get the same back. So, "Here it is for you. Well, I'm expecting something back." Well, when we give we give not expecting anything in return.

Now, that needs to be clarified to a point. There is a time to lend but the conditions of that lending should be laid down. If we're giving a thousand dollars to somebody and we don't want anything back we should say we don't want anything back. "You have the thousand dollars, that's it. Don't want anything back." Make it clear. But just to lend someone a thousand dollars, well, you know what their action is going to be. Their mind is going to say, "I have to pay it back," because that's the natural mind. It's like for like. You've got to give it back.

Well, there are conditions sometimes a lending can be given, "Well, I'm expecting 1,100 back," Because it's a loan based on a financial transaction. You can use the land, but. Or else you can use the land and nothing. It's a choice. But we have to make it very clear, not use it ambiguous to put them under pressure. So we're to make it very clear if that's what we want. We should give and not expect anything. But there is a time when giving are under certain conditions, if you understand what I mean, based on certain transactions.

Now, talking to the Church, **And if you lend to those whom you hope to receive back what credit is it to you** Now, this is talking about giving of something, giving or sacrificing for someone. Well, if we sacrifice for someone we shouldn't expect anything in return. **...for even sinners lend to sinners to receive much back.**

Verse 35—But love your enemies... This is spiritual. This is spiritual. It sounds easy until your enemy does something to you you don't like. It's really difficult. But the only way that we can live this is by the power of God's holy spirit because we can see this is what God does. This is what God does. **But love your enemies.** Mankind has been an enemy to God since Adam. Mankind has been an enemy to God since Adam.

Love your enemies, do good... That's what God does. He does good to mankind. Look at all the things mankind has. They don't give Him credit for it, but God's done it. **...and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great,** so it goes back to this intent, **and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.** So God just keeps giving but man keeps rejecting.

Verse 36, which is the end of the sermon because this is a difficult thing to achieve at any time, but this is talking something spiritual and this can only be achieved by the power of God's holy spirit that has transformed our mind to think differently. We understand mercy, that that's how God is. Well, God wants to transform our mind so that we become merciful; we live mercy because of the way we think.

Verse 36—Therefore, be merciful, just as your Father is also merciful. God has given us mercy and continues to extend mercy even though we sin against Him. But God says if we have the right attitude in humility He will give mercy. God will forgive. So it goes back to this "in humility." So,

finally, we are to be merciful. It takes judgment. There's a time to extend mercy. Not against God's law like, you know, the rapist of a three year-old child. Locking him up for a while is not merciful. That's not merciful at all to anybody knowing that he's probably going to be released and the girl is going to grow up damaged, and the parents and everyone else, family, the thinking. That's not merciful.

But God says we have to live a spiritual mercy, **Therefore, be merciful, as your Father is also merciful.** We've experienced it and we experience it every time we go before the mercy seat.

With that we'll conclude.