

As we were going through the last series about the mystery of God to be completed over a period of, actually, 1,100 years, it was being discussed how at the end-time there potentially will be billions who will not have chosen God and His way of life, and that's an incredible thing to understand, but it's something that God's giving to us to appreciate more fully, to grasp what we've gone through in time that makes scriptures come alive a lot more.

Just as we've been told that many have been called but few have been chosen, we understand that and we understand a process of time of what has been experienced within the Church when so many have gone by the wayside because they haven't fought for God's way of life, because they haven't fully understood or appreciated what they've been given, and to more fully come to a point in time where you realize this, God does not owe us eternal life.

God has blessed us with physical life, which is an awesome blessing in itself, if people could understand that. To be able to experience human life, whatever time that is on earth, is a great blessing because that wasn't owed to us either. But God gave it to us but with the intention of giving us more if we choose Him once He reveals Himself to us.

Again, just like in writing this book, it hasn't been God's purpose over 6,000 years to do that, to reveal His plan and purpose to mankind. This is difficult for people to grasp and understand, especially in traditional Christianity because they believe that God's purpose has been to try to save the world, to try to save everyone. That's what proselytizing is about and all those kinds of things that people become involved in. Because it's like if we don't get people to accept Christ it's over with for them, there is really nothing else. It's hell, whatever that is to them. They don't understand God is not like that. It isn't God's plan and God's purpose.

So what we've been given is really quite incredible, to understand that, candidly, the mystery of God, the mystery that's spoken of in scripture, the mystery of the ages that Mr. Armstrong wrote about, that God's purpose and plan is for us to have the opportunity to become a part of the God Family.

People don't know what we're going to become. That's an amazing thing to realize. What are we going to be? Are we going to be something like angels? Are we going to have wings? You feel sorry for people because they don't know because they haven't been given it yet, but they have received something different from the world and from a being who wants to deceive people anyway.

So it's really quite incredible what we've been given. So to be thankful for the physical human life we have is needful, which so many people don't even acknowledge God, that God gave them that life, and because of that then they go about living their own way of life ever how they want

to and no one is going to tell them how to live or what to believe or what to do. You think what a horrible thing! But in time people will start listening and they'll have the opportunity to hear.

So again, it's incredible to understand how that so many through time then haven't chosen, who have been given the opportunity in the Church in the last 2,000 years, to choose God's way of life, who have given into various pulls and different desires, different things that they have wanted. God has brought us through a period of time where we experienced an apostasy; we had to come to understand that even with God's spirit that doesn't guarantee you're going to be in God's Kingdom. That doesn't mean you're going to continue. Once you receive baptism and receive the impregnation of God's spirit it's no guarantee. It's like if that happens then we're all going to be in God's Kingdom.

You think, no, it doesn't work that way. Just because someone is baptized? That's why I comment about the experience one time a long time ago when God began to show that, when we lived in Houston, Texas a long, long time ago, before I was in the ministry, that a young person died, 19, had just been baptized for two weeks and got killed in a car wreck. There was this attitude in talking that, well, he's going to be in God's Kingdom, God's Family in the resurrection. You think, no, that doesn't make sense. Two weeks and still hasn't changed, hasn't really addressed certain changes in his life yet? Where is the transformation that has to take place? In two weeks that can happen?

The reality is God has shown through time, no, it can't happen over a short period. The reality is he has to wait until the Great White Throne, but he has an incredible head start on everyone. He's going to be a young man, aged 19, resurrected to that body again, whole, healthy, complete, but he's going to be far ahead of everyone else that's resurrected because very few who are resurrected during that last hundred years will ever have known God, will ever have known the truth. He will so he just continues on with what was given to him. God resurrects him, he's still impregnated with God's spirit, and now he can start to grow and change and he's going to have great asset on his side if he continues to choose this way of life, in being able to help others.

So we learn as we go along. God teaches us things in His time for whatever plan and purpose. Some of that was happened then, and things that happened in time, in order to teach things later on, which is what He's done by those kinds of experiences that He's given. So we grow through time, we learn, and we learn that not everyone at the end is going to choose God.

There may be vast, vast numbers. A third of the angelic realm didn't choose God after possibly millions, perhaps billions of years. We can't comprehend that kind of time. But in that which they were involved in, in the creation of the universe, God didn't just say some kind of words all of a sudden and here was the universe. It didn't work that way. They created. They worked.

When God recreated life on the earth, when He brought life back to earth again and did the things that He did it talks about a period of six days that that was done in. He gave the angelic realm certain powers and abilities in those things, responsibilities that we don't know yet, we

don't understand yet...though I could speculate easily. But I won't because that gets you in trouble. But anyway, you know, until God reveals all that, the meticulousness of it, the awesomeness of it we just don't know.

But if that took six days, if God spent a period of six days and then rested on the seventh there are things we're to learn from that. The universe just didn't pop into being all of a sudden. It took time. It took planning. There is so much out there and we've only seen a teeny bit of a speck of it. Billions of light years in time that we don't even begin to grasp, and they think that's the edge of a certain period of time out there, and they don't know for sure because they really haven't been able to see it yet. Anyway, we're ever learning.

So they're involved in those things, but yet a third of them still rebelled against God in time. To think of human beings who are carnal, who are selfish from the get go. They weren't. They weren't that way. They were created spirit beings. They never had sin. They never had anything in their minds of thoughts that were contrary to God and His purpose until Lucifer did what he did. Incredible! Then a third rebelled with him, third of the angelic realm became known as demons.

To think that mankind won't have those kinds of numbers, I think, is rather foolish on our part if we think that isn't going to happen. Could be fifty percent, could be more. We don't know. But everyone is going to have free choice. Everyone is going to have the opportunity to choose God or not when it's all said and done. That's awesome to understand. So to grasp what we've been given, how blessed are we?

While covering that sermon then, or going through that series - we're not going to continue on in it and I'm not going to continue covering anything in that chapter because a lot of it I touched upon anyway in the series, and other things we fairly well know, so there is no point in going through that and you can read those later on when they come out. By the way, Chapter 2 was put up yesterday. So we're planning on putting up a chapter every two weeks at this point.

Anyway, while covering that particular series I was struck by something that I really had not thought about before covering that particular part of the sermon, and it had to do with the spirit of Laodicea and how any with that spirit at the end of that hundred years will not be accepted into God's Kingdom, God's, into His Family, into Elohim. Now, I'm talking about a spirit, an attitude.

Now, we went through an era of Laodicea from the time that Mr. Armstrong died to the time of 3½ years until the Church, the remnant Church was established. Laodicea continued on for that period of time. We had to learn that through time. That's not something we automatically knew until we were able to look back and realize what God had done, "Now I can see. Now I understand."

So it is in going through things like this, in talking about what's going to happen in that last hundred years. To grasp that there is going to be that kind of a spirit because when people are resurrected and they're given a hundred years to live, to be around so many in the God Family. Now, they're going to be in human form. They're going to be functioning. They're going to be able to talk with them. They're going to be able to work with them. They're going to see vast numbers of them because by that time after the thousand years there are going to be incredibly large numbers in the God Family

But people are resurrected from time, throughout time. To grasp and imagine those who are resurrected that went through the flood and to know the kind of minds they had by that time—the reason why God did what He did to the world anyway in the time of Noah was because of how much people had polluted their own minds, of how corrupt the human mind had become by that time. Because, you know, we live, we've been given, basically, seventy years to live (three score and ten as it speaks of in scripture), but back then they lived several hundred years.

Then there are people, "Oh, people can't live several hundred years. That would have been impossible." Well, sadly, they're dumb; they're foolish. Because that's exactly what happened. God meant what He said and He did what He said He was going to do and so He ended earth at that time as far as human life was concerned except for some on a particular boat out there floating around on the water, you know, in an ark, a family.

But those people who are resurrected their minds are so corrupt and when God gives them an opportunity to see His way of life they're not all going to choose it. You look through time.

You know, when visiting Europe there are times we've gone through some of the castles there, some of the ruins and some of the ones that I don't even like to go through. It's been a long time since I've done it anyway. But to go through and see some of the areas and some of the things they like to highlight, it seems, and bring back and put in those castles are the areas where people were tortured.

Some of the things that they did to human beings, one another, it's hard for the human mind to grasp that, and perhaps some have seen movies of some of the things that have happened during various times of the reigns of different people. Some of the things the church, a church, a church used to do to people to get them to hopefully recant certain things in order to acknowledge certain beliefs, and if they didn't do that they were drawn and quartered, they were tortured, they were ripped apart; the atrocity of some of the things that were done to them is unimaginable for the human mind.

Now, that kind of a mind when it's gone that far is so vile, it's so corrupt. But yet God's going to give opportunity to people who have experienced those kinds of things, perhaps not to all, perhaps some have already been judged that their minds have gone too far that they can't be helped. So we don't know that yet and God will reveal that in His own time.

So to think what's going to take place during that hundred years, it's kind of difficult for us. But I'll guarantee you, the work is cut out. It's not going to be what we used to think it was. Because the concept used to be that it's a utopia, that because God promises a hundred years life to everyone who lives, it speaks of a child who can stick his hand down in the hole of an asp, a snake, and not worry if it's bitten or if it were to be bitten because it won't happen. God makes that clear. He's going to change the nature of various animals. We don't understand that. A lion beside a lamb and it won't want to chew into it? That's against its nature so God has to change its nature. But God says that's what's going to happen.

To realize that you could walk up next to a lion, anyone can, and it's going to be docile? It's not going to want to take your arm off when you reach out to pet it like you would today, if you do something stupid like that. Like some people do when you see them in some of these places where they get out of their vehicles and they walk up to take these pictures and you think, "How dumb can you be?" and then to be shocked that it would turn on you and try to attack you and eat you? Bears? Some of the stupid things that people do.

Every once in a while you see some of these things on TV of what people have done and try and take snapshots or trying to take a selfie. You know, here's a bear behind you. "It's getting larger!" Anyway, I'm sorry! "It's coming fast!" Anyway, stupidity of human beings sometimes.

Anyway, it's not going to be a utopia, and I think that's a good thing for us to understand. So we see things properly for what they are, so we understand human nature for what it is, so that we can understand our human nature for what it is, so we can be sobered by the reality that God does not owe us because we're in the Church, because we have the impregnation of His holy spirit, that He owes us His life, His way of life. He wants to give it. He's given us everything we need in order to grab a hold of it!

But I think of the thousands, people I've known, which I believe to be in a few thousand, personally, that have turned from this way of life, who have left this way of life. It's horrible that what can happen in choices of the human mind.

Now, obviously, during the Millennium it's going to be easier for people. That's a large part of all this in the first place, that that's going to be a major time of salvation for human beings, for human life and people being able to have opportunity to become a part of Elohim. But God's still going to give it in the final hundred years as well, but not everyone is going to choose it.

So today we're going to address the importance of continually fighting against such a spirit, one of Laodicea, because the more you're given in riches spiritually the easier it is to have that spirit and that attitude. It was the last era of the Church and there was much to be learned from that, of what we went through as a Church, and to understand that it's a spirit, it's an attitude, a spirit of lukewarmness, a spirit of being rich and increased with goods because we get lifted up with haughtiness and pride, if we're not careful as human beings, by all that we think we know and understand.

Indeed, looking at Philadelphia, the era of Philadelphia and all that was given to Mr. Armstrong to restore to the Church, that had been lost during the era of Sardis, all the truths that had been given. Then in time a vast ministry and around the world, the kind of work, TV and radio and publications that far exceeded any, any religious organization on earth, which is hard for people to grasp and comprehend, how vast it was, yet people still didn't recognize God's Church because it was so small even then, 100,000 baptized members, 90,000, whatever it was, 150,000 attending church...or the Sabbath. That's pittance in this world, small, and so it really wasn't known by the world. But those who did know it, what an incredible thing.

Then to go into Laodicea, to see what happened to the ministry, to see what happens to human beings when they're left alone, like Lucifer was. For a time he had his area, his domain, an area, whatever it was he was given, it was the same sort of thing, "You're to govern this. You're to take care of this. You're to administer this."

Ministers were placed all over the world, "You're to be faithful in administering and teaching God's way of life." Various regional superintendents were set up that ministers would converse with and talk over problems and so forth with, but sometimes they wouldn't even discuss it with them because human nature enters in and personalities enter in and they're not going to humble themselves to go and ask someone who is their superior about how to handle a situation so they do it their own way. After a time people are kind of off doing their own thing because they're still not in the God Family.

We learn that. We can't be fully trusted as human beings until we are a part of Elohim, until we're a part of God's family. We can still turn away. We can still move in a different direction. We can still cause problems. My experience through time has been a lot of problems that have been caused that finally led up to an Apostasy. We're to learn from that.

This sermon is entitled *Fighting for God's Way*, because you have to do it. If you really want it that's what God wants to see because Elohim is offered to us, but you have to fight for it because you have to fight self. You have to fight your own human nature because you have to make choices that you don't want this anymore, you don't want the way of selfishness, the way of whatever it is that stirs up contention, the way that stirs up competition, the way that stirs up disagreement and adversity in life, drama in life. To learn and want the way of peace, the way of cooperation, the way of unity, the way of oneness, to see how precious, how awesome that is when people can be of the same mind. Just to think of what it's going to be like when people are able to believe the same thing because that's what's true.

That's one of the things in the first two chapters, hitting that pretty hard. You don't even have to have God's spirit to look at some of those things, to see, to look at certain things because certain choices on a physical plane can still be made and be judged by that to be able to be able to make a distinction. "Oh yeah, something different did start in 325 AD." Yes, that's when the teaching of the trinity did begin, because before that it didn't exist, it's not in the Bible, and they admit it. It's not in scripture.

The changing of Passover to Easter; it's a part of history, it's what is written. They acknowledge what they did. They acknowledge that they outlawed the observance of Passover, yet God's Church continued to keep Passover. But the Roman Empire, a great church began to outlaw it, its observance.

There are certain things that you can look at and come to understand this is when it changed, this is when it changed the seventh day Sabbath. Finally, they started teaching a different day, the first day of the week, the sun-day on Sunday, the day of the sun. What connection could that have?

Anyway, that's why I feel blessed in some of the things written in the book this time to help drive some of those things home even more so, of where so many things have come from. Some of the worship of false deities, false religions, false gods and so forth, and it's amazing when you really start studying. These aren't things out of the Bible. These are things that happened physically in the world. To start being able to see out there - and today they're a lot easier to find than what they used to be - because it's all over the internet. You plug in a few words and up pops the history of certain things. Most of it is so-so. It's not the best in some cases because mankind has always tried to change things in history. But certain things they'll acknowledge out there.

A lot of it has to do with 325 and what happened then, but a lot of it goes back to the custom of the Romans. To me that's awesome to understand. That their custom, in order to have peoples that they conquered begin to be able to be knit together more cohesively, was to mix their religions. So where they conquer a certain people over here they take certain things of their deities and bring it in and mix it in with similar things with their deities. What's incredible, a lot of it was very close anyway because of a being out there, that he knows what he's doing and how he deceives people. But anyway, some of that history is fascinating.

That's why I love the history about things about Europa. You go and ask people today and they have no idea. Europe? They don't know. "What's Europa?" Oh, you don't know how you got your name, huh? To understand who Europa was, she was a princess, a Phoenician princess, and Zeus, this god Zeus, supposed to be a god, a deity, he transformed himself into a bull and kidnapped her and took her, Europa, the princess, on his back into Crete. You have this history that goes back that they understand in mythology and in some of their history and so forth, and it's because of what happened with her and being taken into that part of Europe, if you will, the beginning area there, and the history. They finally called the whole continent after that, Europe, Europa.

I think about that crazy coin, the two euro coin of Greece, of all places, to make it live again. One side of the coin is a woman on a bull, you know, on the bull. Incredible!

Now, in Revelation it shows it having different, a lot of heads, but each period was a single bull with one head, with Europa on top, so they have statues in Europe. There is one in, I believe it's by Hyde Park if I'm not mistaken. There is this statue in honor of, is it king Albert? Not king...The

Europeans are going to get on me on this...I mean, especially those from Great Britain. There are four statues and I think it is Hyde Park.

But anyway, there is this memorial to—I'm positive it's Albert—but anyway, one of them, it has different things on each corner depicting different parts of the world because of Great Britain going into different parts of the world. One of them is a great big bull with a woman on top. Ole Europa and Zeus, you know, and they don't know where things like this come from.

It's like this snake on a pole. People don't know where that comes from. They have no idea this goes back to the time the Israelites were in the wilderness. They don't know the symbolism. Anyway, incredible.

Sorry, I didn't mean to get off on all that, but to me it's such an incredible thing. Just things that are physical that people can look at. What's interesting to me today now, there is a younger generation coming along that they're more willing to look at some of those things. To me that's an awesome thing. They have come to a point where they're willing to look at various things in the world and see that there are things that aren't right, even in religion.

PBS had this documentary on TV at one point here talking about how that Christ's name was Joshua. On PBS! You know, very liberal, but yet they acknowledge that. I asked, basically, did they go into more of the story there about where some of that came from, but they didn't. At least that knowledge is out there more and more right now to where people are able to look at certain things. Then when you have it written down like that and you're able to compare that can be a powerful tool that I can see that God can use in a mighty way to jar people's thinking and to help them come to a point of having to evaluate on their own, truthfully so, what is right and what is wrong.

Because when you go through all that, if you're willing to go through all that and read it, you have to make a choice. Just on a physical plane; I'm not talking about a spiritual one, because we're just talking about knowledge that's out there already. So what do people want to do? Choices.

So anyway, let's turn over to Revelation 3. To start with, how many of us lived during Laodicea? Quite a few in this room. Before the Apostasy. We lived in Laodicea. For 3½ years after that Laodicea still existed, until the Church was established. So we've gone through a lot of things in God's Church all for purpose, all as a part of God's plan of what He's teaching, of what He wants mankind to grasp and understand especially during the Millennium and the Great White Throne. Because the vast majority then are going to have opportunity, obviously, of learning all these things that others have experienced through time. Just like we do, we get to learn from people who went before us and suffered so mightily.

If we think we've suffered, we haven't had the kind of suffering that so many of them had in the early Church. We haven't come close. It's one thing we've gone through maybe mental suffering

because of things we've gone through in dealing with various things in the world around us. But some of them had to go through some horrific physical things, they truly did, especially some of the prophets of old. And anyway, it's like people going west in the beginning, they paved the way. Pioneers paved the way for others later on and made it easier.

God's plan is very much like that as well, of what's been happening for the past 6,000 years and not at a point where it's going to be made much easier for people.

But when looking at this attitude and the spirit of Laodicea and what happened in the Church, we need to understand something right at the beginning here: The spirit of Laodicea is just as bad as the spirit that fights against God.

Because, you see, it's difficult sometimes for people to grasp... It's easy to see when someone is fighting against God and they don't want God, they hate God's Church, they hate the truth, they hate things about the Sabbath, they hate the teaching of Passover, you know, like Judaism, especially them, they do. Others aren't bothered by it because they believe something different and they don't feel that's being attacked.

So anyway, different ideas that people have they hate it. They hate it when they come to find out you don't believe in Christmas and you're not going to let your children observe Christmas anymore. You're not going to let them have a tree and celebrate, giving of gifts and receiving of gifts. You're a cruel parent because of that. I mean, people think that way! Then they hate God's Church because they don't understand God's truth and what God desires to give to them that can free them from those things that hold them captive, that hold them in false things, hold them in lies and so forth, because the reality is there are so many of those things that are just a lie.

I remember being pretty young, somewhere around five or six and I began to realize rabbits don't lay eggs. I came to realize there is not this great big fat man coming down the chimneys. Something is wrong here. I've been lied to. Anyway, at some point everybody has to address that I guess in their life. But religion is that way as well.

So this spirit of Laodicea is just as bad as someone who actually fights against God. But when we lived it we didn't think that way. We didn't think that way in the Church. We didn't even see it happening. We didn't see a slow but sure lullaby that was taking place, a lulling us to sleep spiritually and in time that's where we were. It happened to everybody in the Church. Not one person was immune to it. Everybody went through that. That's a difficult thing for people to acknowledge.

I wanted to mention something else, too. That's why, when it's all said and done by the end of that last hundred years, both those who fight against God's way and those who do not fight for it, Laodiceans are those who do not fight for God's way. They're both going to receive the same reward. God does not owe them eternal life. God does not owe them existence in His family for all time, for everlasting life.

So they have the same judgment. That's what it means to receive the same reward, because God's going to reward everyone according to their works, as it's made very clear in scripture. If the works are for God's way of life, for fighting for God's way of life, then we receive a certain kind of reward. If people don't fight for it or they fight against it they receive the same thing, a different kind of reward, the opposite, which is an eternal judgment as well but one that they'll never be resurrected again. It's just death for all eternity or all time.

Revelation 3:14—To the angel of the Church of Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. Now, when you look at the life of Joshua the Christ and you understand the things that have been given to him, he is the head of the Church, he is the chief cornerstone, he is everything that God has built everything else upon. It all begins with him. He is the beginning, and from the very beginning of God's plan and purpose, everything that He created was based on His Son and what He was going to build upon His Son because it was about the family of Elohim and it's all accomplished in His plan through His Son. It's an awesome plan! Incredible, how meticulous and how beautiful it really is and how that's magnified through the holy days that God gives to us.

These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, I know your works. You know, you look through time, you look through 2,000 years and when this was given from God to Christ to give to John it's incredible to think about He's foretelling things that are going to happen over the next 1900 years and there is an outline then of each era that's going to come along and things they are specifically going to go through. He had His hand in working out certain things for various purposes to teach things, but it's all about teaching, molding, and fashioning an overall family and those who fit into different places within that family.

So different ones have experienced things in different eras of time because it's essential to what He has planned for those who are going to be in His Family and what their function is going to be. God knows how to mold and fashion our minds and so people have gone through things at different times in order to prepare them for whatever job, whatever responsibility within the temple of God, within the 144,000, of where they fit. Because it's not just a random thing that here He's got a number and okay, now, where are we going to put everybody? What are they going to do when the Millennium comes? Let's think about that. It's all planned out.

It's like any construction of any building. You know, before you build it it's wise to have plans instead of just going out there and going to the lumber yard once in a while and, "Well, we better pick up another twenty 2x4's 8' long because we need a little bit more to get this wall out to where I really want it to be." It's kind of a good thing to have it all mapped out ahead of time so you know what the costs are going to be. (Parables are given about that as well.) It's good to have it all planned out on paper, sketched out, you have a diagram of it, you have a design of it, and you can, candidly, go through (if you'd want to), to know every nail that basically that's going to

have to go into it. You can figure that out. Things have been done where you can figure out almost everything that goes into a construction of something.

Well, God's Family is far more meticulous than that, and the design of what He's doing, the building He's creating and bringing to pass, every part is essential to where it fits. It's going to be complete, beautiful. If we could just grasp things like that on a spiritual plane and what God is doing.

So He says, "I know your works." So before it ever came to pass God knew what people would do in various periods of time under various conditions. God knew what would happen when various things were going to happen in the world. God knew what was going to happen around the 1400's as soon as He gave to mankind the ability to begin something that just hadn't been there. The things of certain invention began to be given in understanding. They began to understand certain things of science. Someone came up with the understanding of how to make, build a printing press.

Now, why didn't they have that 4,000 years earlier? Or 2,000 years earlier? God didn't allow certain things. He didn't give it to man. Like, mankind thinks he's so great. "We came up with this on our own. We did 'this' and we did 'that.'" They don't recognize, no, there are things that God has given to you, certain abilities that God has given, and there are times that God has withheld certain abilities.

I think of when they built the temple. You go back and read that, God gave abilities to people that they didn't have. He gave them ability, mastery over various things that they weren't able to do otherwise, they hadn't been able to do. You go back and read some of that and it's like, wow, that's awesome, to realize that God gave abilities to people in order to do something on a physical plane, to build something of that magnificence and beauty. Anyway, how much more as time has gone along?

God knew what would happen to man when the printing press was there and all of a sudden certain things that had been written out by hand, that took so long to do, now they could be done in a more of a mass production. A slow process and then that would get faster and faster and then the proliferation of books. And you know what books they were? The Bible. That's what the thrust was. There's always been within that part of the world, within Europe, and then moving over here and other places because of what God did with the scattering of the children of Israel that people don't understand.

But anyway, all these things that began to take place, God knew what would happen within the Church because of that. He knew that the Church would go into a period that once this mass part of freedom that people thought they had, of moving away from a particular church that they did not agree with in certain areas, because they were able to read things now on their own out of a book that before was impossible for most people to ever have access to, and still was even when

it was first started because it cost a lot of money to have that. But to have scrolls before that? That was even more impossible, as it were.

So to have books now that people could read and study, this was a new thing and it opened up new doors for people and they felt this freedom of something that they themselves could decide for themselves what it was saying in scripture. Some things they clearly understood were just not quite the same as this other church, or at least that's the perception of human beings because now you get a lot of "authorities." But they still didn't have authority, they didn't have the truth.

That carried a tremendous hardship upon the true Church of God because now there are all these different ideas of religion out there and it began to make and work upon the Church and it became weaker and weaker because of this explosion in traditional Christianity and all these churches that began to spring up. Hundreds. Incredible, what's happened through time.

God says, "I know your works." So He knew what would happen after a period of time when by the 1930's God said, as far as a Church was concerned, "You are dead." Spiritually the Church had come to a point where it didn't have enough truth to be alive, so God raised up an apostle in the era of Philadelphia that began in the early 30's and He began to reveal truths to him to establish truth once again within the Church, truth that had been lost during the era of Sardis. Incredible history that we have. It really is. I hope we embrace it with excitement, with appreciation of God.

Because none of us would be here if He hadn't done those things, not a one of us, and so He began to reveal things about the holy days, other things about God's plan, about how the process of salvation works. Awesome, incredible what was given, so the Church rose up in Philadelphia, became strong, began to grow, and as I talked about in the beginning here, churches all over the world, ministers all over the world to feed and take care of churches.

Dallas had five churches, or was it four? Four, four churches. 1200 or so, 1500 people maybe? 1200, somewhere in that area. It's about like Cincinnati. I kind of remember the similar numbers, but I think Cincinnati was up to five churches then in a single metropolitan area. Different churches east, west, north, south, and middle area. About 1500 people when they'd get together on holy days because they'd all come together in larger areas then, rent a larger facility so they could all observe God's holy days, annual holy days that way.

Through time then that had an effect on people and Laodicea came out of that. But as long as Mr. Armstrong was alive and as long as he had that strength that God gave to him in a very powerful way in the late 70's, 79, early 80's and on into the time he died. He came back with incredible zeal after he had his heart problems, his health problems, and so forth, and God raised him up and he came back stronger than ever.

I remember times this frail man would walk across the stage there in Pasadena and you would watch him walk, at times with assistance, and with the cameras coming up close you'd see his

hands, and you know what happens in old age when you get up to your nineties and you see the bones. Then he would start to beat on the pulpit. He got pretty strong and he talked about putting the Church back on the right track because he saw what was happening to it in the late 70's there and what had happened to so many of the evangelists and what they were doing and people taking sides and all those things. The Church was really protected from a lot of that knowledge.

He always had a sense of urgency. Anyone that lived during that period of time, he always had this sense of urgency. It wasn't done lightly. Even in his writing, capital letters in certain areas. That was his style, you know, just to drive it home, and you could see him, because that's just his personality, and it was like driving it home. If you didn't get it, well, you're not living like you should be toward God because you knew what that meant when he highlighted those things and they had an impact with it. We live through that—awesome— the Church did.

Then Laodicea came and one who wasn't an apostle sitting in a role of authority in God's Church who became the man of sin, the son of perdition. Incredible, what happened to the Church.

God knew these things would happen to the Church! God knew what would happen in Laodicea. God foretold what would happen at the end of Laodicea, that it was all a part of a purpose and a part of God's plan to teach, to mold and fashion His Family. We had to go through these things in order to have all these things to the benefit of Elohim and the 144,000 who would teach during the Millennium. Awesome! Because you really couldn't have it properly so without this experience. I hope we see the hand of God in those kinds of things and understand what was learned from it.

I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. Awesome! God knew that's what was going to happen. You give a little bit of time, you take away, you let him live a full life and then at about, was it 93, he dies, and now that personality is no longer there, that vibrant personality that in his 30's was so robust and powerful that God saw, molded and fashioned, candidly, to prepare him for a job later on that he was going to give to him—knowing the kind of personality it was going to take to push something forward to accomplish what it was going to do over the decades that followed. Awesome! Incredible to understand.

He can run circles around me. Probably get a bit of a chewing out if he knew I wasn't doing more than what I was with all the ability I have at my fingertips with computers today. You know, you can write a book on a computer. Back then they had whole departments that helped out with editing, with everything else that took place, research and so forth, huge departments, tons of employees. Today it doesn't take that many. Of course, we're not doing on the same level either. When you talk about 8 million *Plain Truths* going out in the world in 10 different languages, it is a little bit different.

So again, to understand that God knew what was going to happen and what people would be like when there was no longer an apostle around, when there was an individual who was jealous of Mr.

Armstrong, to understand that what would happen through time, what would happen in the Church.

So He said, “I know your works, that they’re neither cold nor hot.” You now, we’re either cold or hot and through time I learned why that was so important. I came to appreciate that more deeply, what God was saying. God’s desire for us is that we’re cold or hot. He says, “I would that you were cold or hot.” He says, “You’re neither cold nor hot,” speaking of Laodicea. He says, “I wish that you were,” in essence. That’s what it’s talking about here. This Greek word “I would that you were,” it’s stated, it’s something that’s used to express an unattainable wish in how it’s expressed. It’s not really attainable. It can’t be done. But that’s God’s desire, “I wish that you were either cold or hot!”

He goes on to explain what that means, and we’ll come back to it a little bit later. But the reason for that is because it’s a beautiful thing when someone is hot. You know it when someone is hot, meaning they’re living this way of life, they’re fighting for this way of life and not just sitting back on their laurels kind of like in the courtyard, kind of like they’re a part but they’re really not fully engaged, they’re not really fighting like they should be, they’re not zealous like they should be. Because if you want this, you’ve got to fight for it; there are certain things you have to do, and if you don’t do them then you can’t be hot or zealous spiritually in any fashion or form and you’re going to kind of land somewhere in the middle between...

Now, if it’s cold, you know it. If someone is cold it’s obvious. If someone is not doing God’s way of life, not living God’s way of life, contrary to God’s way of life, fighting against God’s way of life, causing division within the Church, doing other kinds of things, then when people are cold God manifests that quite quickly. You can see it quite quickly and you can deal with it quite quickly in the Church.

But there was so much that was in the middle. It was like, where are they? They’re in this little area in between and it’s not cold so that you can deal with it and it’s not hot so that you can know and be comfortable with it; it’s this zombie zone. I don’t know what you’d call it. Anyway, I’m sorry—walking around like you’re maybe a part of it, but something is not really genuine about it.

That’s what I’m talking about today. We either love God’s way of life, we want God’s way of life, we appreciate what He’s given to us, we see the value of fighting for it, and so we’re willing to fight against self because this is what resists God. The carnal mind is enmity against God. That’s what Paul wrote. It’s either true or false. The carnal mind is at enmity, fights against God! And yet you tell that in the world, tell that to people in traditional Christianity, “No, I don’t fight against God! I go to services every Sunday. I’ve accepted Jesus Christ. I accept him as my savior.” It doesn’t mean anything. They don’t understand.

He says, **I know your works, that you’re neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot.** So again, first it focuses on what is said here, “I know your works.” That’s what it’s about. It’s

about works. It's about what we do. Everyone has works. When you're lukewarm there are not a whole lot of them, but they're still works. They're not working the way God says to, they're not doing the works God says we should be doing, but there is something going on in their life nevertheless. That's what people have to come to see. "I know your works," again, "being neither cold nor hot."

So in 1 Corinthians 3, let's turn over there, let's notice what it says. Now, we know these scriptures, but looking at them in a unique way today and talking about this process of fighting for God's way, that that has to be in us. This will reveal it, whether we are or aren't, because it doesn't just happen by osmosis.

People go and they hear a service that lasts 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes on a Sunday or whatever, or maybe even on a Saturday in some places, because of different beliefs, and then they go their way and it doesn't have a great impact in their life. There is nothing that causes a great change in their life in striving to live differently and striving to bring certain things in subjection as far as their own mind and their own thinking is concerned.

I think of this young man I used to know, part of that great church, and talked to him at certain times about various things that he believed and it was like this attitude you could go and you could go once a week and basically have everything forgiven and go back out and live what you wanted to the next six days, because you know that every week you can come back, ever how you lived, and you can just go right back in the world. But every week it'll take care of it if you do that. Whatever it is that this mystical thing that takes place and all of a sudden you're fine again - take a wafer, take some wine or whatever and have this communion thing and you're okay again. With him there was no object, no desire, there was nothing to change; it was just this routine you go once a week and you're okay. "Awesome."

1 Corinthians 3:9—For we are laborers together with God. What an incredible thing that God says about His people, about the Church as far as the Church is concerned. We work together; we're working together with God in something that we have to have help from God in order to do.

You are God's field, God's building. To understand how we're called, we're a part of a field, if you will, God's husbandry, God's field, and there are certain things He gives to us in life and then what is produced, the fruit that comes of it, that's up to us. If we're blessed to be a part of His field then the fruit that's produced it's going to be up to the choices we make, how much we're a part of working together with God. That's what it's talking about. "For we're laborers together with God." God does, basically, really, everything, but then we have to be a part of it if we want to receive the benefit of why we're there, a part of His field, a part of His building, if you will, here it says, "We are of God's building."

So to understand that there is a construction taking place, we still have work to do in order to be a part of it. We're not just set some place and all of a sudden then everything is there. No, we have to be engaged with it. We're workers together with God.

According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation... So it's like there it is, here are the tools, you have been told what you need, here it is, it's all laid out for you, this is how you're to build upon it now. It's all there. Here's the foundation. Now what are you going to do as far as the construction and your part in it from there on?

So again, the tools and the materials have been given, **and another builds, or others build upon it. But let everyone take heed how he builds upon it.** So in other words, building requires work. So we have to be careful, it says, how we build upon what has been given to us.

God gives us everything we need. How blessed are we to know the truth? But that's not enough, is it? To know the truth, to come to a point where you make a choice "I want to be forgiven of my sins. I want this way of life that God is showing me. I want to be forgiven. I want to go under the water. I want to come up and walk in newness of life," and then the whole purpose of why Joshua died. Yes, so we could be forgiven of the sins, but then so He could live in us, so the power of God's holy spirit could dwell in us because there is work to be done.

That's what follows with the laying on of hands. God then gives us the ability of impregnation of God's spirit so that now the holy spirit can dwell in us from that point forward. What an awesome thing! But for that to continue we have work to do...or else it'll get cut off.

Because it's not just you do one thing and all of a sudden you're going to be given everlasting life in Elohim, it's owed to us somehow, because that was kind of an attitude that people had in the Church. It doesn't work that way.

Verse 11—For no one can lay any other foundation than that which is laid, which is Joshua the Christ. So here it is, he is the foundation. Everything is built upon him. We begin with Passover and then we go on, High Priest, because then now that intercession, that ability to be forgiven of sin and then have God's spirit live within us so that we can change and become something different, so we can be transformed, that process that takes place.

Now if anyone builds upon this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw... In other words, it's showing here, using these physical things to show that this is how a building can take place. This is what a person could do.

Now, I don't know how much you would think about building with straw. You know, some people have thatched roofs and they're so tight they do a great job, they're really thick. But you've got to know what you're doing and it takes a lot of hard work. It's not something that's just thrown up there. But that has its flaws and fallacies when it comes to construction, especially if you

think about some of the things it's talking about here when it talks about hay and straw. They're not real good materials to build with, basically, if you're doing an entire building that way.

...each one's work will be made clear; for indeed, the day will declare it. So what does that mean? God is saying that for every one of us we're told we have work to do and we're to be a part of the construction. We're laborers together with God and we have to make choices then as to whether we're going to be engaged in the building process. Because we have to be. We have to be.

So again, **the day is going to declare it, what our works really are.** So there's coming a time, basically, it's showing that it's going to be made manifest what work we've put into it, **because it will be revealed with fire.** Now, we know what fire is. We understand it's about trials. And since I've been in the Church, since 1969, I've seen all kinds of trials that people have gone through in life, the fire. We all have to go through hardship. We have to go through trial because those are the things that cause us to search more deeply inside self. It helps to reveal what's taking place in the mind, things that we couldn't otherwise see, that God manifests. It's like, "Now, what choice and decision are you going to make?"

There are all kinds of things that happen in our life when it comes to that. What choice? Sometimes you really don't know—you might think you know—but you don't really know until you are there. That day will declare it; it'll reveal it. We're tried by various things.

I've mentioned this before. I can't help when I think, talk about this, I think of those two elders I talked to in Toledo, Ohio that time right after the Apostasy and told them I was resigning and the Church now is going to be looking to you as to what you do. Now, I knew that the Church would be strengthened, that they saw the leadership, the elders, stand up and say, "We support what Mr. Weinland has done. We understand why he's doing it and this is why he's doing it. We need to understand this as a body— it's a matter of holding on to the Sabbaths, the holy days, and not receiving the things that we've been told that are all changing all of a sudden. It doesn't work that way." That would have helped the Church.

So I told them, "You don't have the luxury of time. Tonight it's upon you, what you're going to do. You either choose to support me... And if Mr. Tkach were here, I'm going to tell you he would tell you the exact same thing. He would want you to support what he's saying. It's upon you now which one you're going to choose." They didn't like that. They thought I treated them poorly, badly because whatever. I don't really understand that. But it was like, "You're too hard and so we're going to support Mr. Tkach." Well, you know what, it was all decided before they ever came to that meeting. It was in them. But they might not have known it. They might not have known exactly what they were going to do until that moment in time. But the day declared it. That day did. They made a choice and it wasn't to follow God, it wasn't to continue on with what we'd been given.

So there are different things that happen in people's lives. There are different things that come your way and you have to make a choice as to what you're going to do.

...each one's work will be made clear, for indeed the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is, what kind it is, what kind of work. So it's work. So what kind of work is it? What are you working toward? Was it doing something like those two elders did that was working in a different direction and willing to accept certain things because they'd already been hearing certain things coming in from another area and they'd already heard some of these things and they were kind of leaning in that direction toward acceptance of going back in traditional Christianity and being more like those around us rather than holding on to the things He'd called us out of those things and revealed to us the truth. So what are you going to do? Well, it was already there. The work was already there.

If anyone's work remain (abide) which he has built on it, he shall receive a reward. So in time this is what happens to everybody in the Church. At some point in time there are things that are going to happen that are going to try people, and whether we continue to forge forward and fight for this way of life, that's what's going to be revealed or whether we succumb to something else, whether we become weak, whatever it might be, and we've started messing with doing whatever it is that human beings do sometimes to let down and become weak and then begin gravitating toward some pull, some fire, some trial that comes along and they can't withstand it and they give into it because they don't recognize the need at that point to fight anymore. They become so weak spiritually. So we have to fight.

Verse 15—If anyone's work is burned, he shall suffer loss; the wood, the hay, the stubble, the things you really can't build well with in an entire building. You have to build with other things that will withstand a fire, because there is going to be fire. That's the point of all this.

So the things that can withstand fire have to be stronger than the wood, hay, and stubble. That's what God reveals to us, that with what you use and how you build you have to use what God says to use, the things that will endure the times of fire, the times of trial, the times of testing. They're just not there automatically. You have to grow in them. You have to fight for them.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God? Awesome! The building of God, of what God is constructing. He's called us out of the world to give us that opportunity now. We don't have to wait until the Great White Throne. How blessed are we to have such opportunity? We're not better than others; it's just by God's calling and purpose that we're here. We have an opportunity. We're not to question it; instead, to latch on to it, to be thankful for it, to be grateful for it, and fight for it. That's the choice.

If anyone defiles... Do you not know that you're the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? So either it's there or it isn't. That's the point. Either we're a part of the temple and God's spirit is obvious in us or not. Because if it's not we're not able to fight this fight, we're not fighting the fight because for God's spirit to be there means we're fighting for God's way.

If anyone defiles (verse 17) the temple of God, him shall God destroy. It can't be that way. We can't defile the temple of God. We can't do things in a way contrary to what God says we should do them. He says that Laodicea is contrary to Him. Being lukewarm, being on the fence post, being blasé about what He's offered us He doesn't accept.

There will be a lot of people at the end of that hundred years who fit into that category. It will be the predominant spirit at the end of that hundred years. Don't let it be a part of your life. We've gone through it. Many of us have experienced it. We know what it's like. Run from it with all your being and so with that experience cry out. Don't let it happen to you. Because there are definite signs that reflect what it is and how it comes about.

If anyone defiles the temple of God, him will God destroy. So at the end of the hundred years if people aren't fighting for God's way, they don't love it and they don't want it and they're not fighting for it in their lives God's not going to give it. He doesn't owe it to them. It would be horrifying that God would give someone to be a part of Elohim who wasn't in agreement with Him. They would do so much more damage than what Lucifer did, who became Satan. So much more power. In the God Family, far more powerful!

The kind of mind, the kind of being that God is offering, to become far greater than the angelic realm, God isn't going to give that unless we want it with all of our being, unless He can say, "Now I know you," and know what we'll do when He gives us that life. He has to know, indeed, we all support that, we realize that's the only way it can be. **Because the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**

So reading again here, I'm going to read this quickly, **Revelation 3:16—So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.** That's the way it has to be at the end of the hundred years as well. Those who are of a lethargic spirit, of a Laodicean kind of spirit who don't grasp the depth of what they've been given, who don't love it with all of their being, who don't appreciate it as they should, that's a choice. They're being taught with greater knowledge available to them at that point than any human beings have ever had. They'll have more than what we have at this point in time, far more. They'll have the experience of what God has done over the thousand years and what He's revealed through that period of time. Incredible!

So there are many things that can reflect whether or not one is lukewarm or whether one is hot or cold. James 2:14. I'm just going to read these verses quickly; you don't have to turn there. You can just jot them down if you want.

Be good to consider this: **James 2:14—What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith and yet does not have works?** The Protestant world has so messed up in this area about faith and what it is and what it means to have works. The only time they don't like works is when it has to do with obeying God. "What? You're trying to be saved by works." I mean, that's really what it boils down to. You tell someone, "No, I keep the Sabbath. I keep the holy days." "Oh,

you're trying to be saved by works. Don't you know that Christ died for us so we don't have to be under this harsh law?" Well, what does that mean? You can just not be under law, you can just go out and do whatever you want to? Hmm? I'm sorry, but some of that is so stupid just in logic. But anyway, they can't help it. They're captive to it until God removes that captivity.

...what does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he have faith and yet he does not have works? So we understand that if you believe the truth, faith is built upon what God has given to you to believe. When God gives you the ability to believe the Sabbath, the holy days, Passover, the laws, and you understand how they affect human life, even physical things, which is a physical thing.

Clean and unclean meats - when you realize that there are certain things that God has made in the world that just aren't healthy for the human body and He says don't eat it, so it's out of appreciation and thankfulness that God is telling me what will pollute my body. Of course, if we had that today there would be so much we'd probably not eat, so many chemicals. Anyway, so much unclean out there today. But God will clean that up when time comes, but He's given us an outline of various things so don't eat shellfish, don't eat pork, don't eat, whatever, you know, because it's not good for your body.

Even in those things, do people respect and honor God? So we have works. We believe those things. We believe the most of physical things like that even. But we believe also then, even above and beyond that, things about the Sabbath, the holy days, and other things about the plan and purpose of God, and because we believe that that's how we live. That's what faith is. Faith is acting upon, working by what you believe.

You attend Sabbath services because you believe what God says about the Sabbath, therefore, it's reflected in the fact that you're sitting here today. You plan for the Feast of Tabernacles. You believe in keeping second tithe so that you can obey and be there and be able to enjoy something that God wants us to enjoy for eight days and be fed spiritually on a spiritual plane (and even physically but spiritually) to where we can rejoice before Him and learn from that period of time and appreciate that more deeply than ever before of what it pictures, of what it's all about, why He gives us that opportunity to be separated from the world that many days. Then we long for it don't we? We can't wait until the world has this, when they have that kind of freedom.

Can faith, it goes on to say, in other words that kind of faith without works, **Can faith save him?** So again here, it has to be with works. It's not just with words. It's not just by going through the motions of things. Sometimes people get in their mind if they just go to Sabbath services once in a while or even most of the time that they're a part of the Body. That doesn't prove whether someone is a part of the Body at all. It's one thing out of many that reflect that.

Even so, faith (verse 17) if it doesn't have works, is dead, being alone. So faith has to have works, otherwise, it's not faith, it doesn't mean anything. We live by what God has given us to believe.

We're going to break that down a little bit as we go along here because this makes a difference in the mind of whether someone is becoming lukewarm or has that in their minds or not. Because you've got to be one or the other. You can't be in the middle. You've got to be hot or cold. That which is in the middle will receive that which the cold receives as well when it's all said and done.

So consider some of the works that can reflect if one is living by faith, whether one is cold, lukewarm, or hot. Let's consider some of those things that are said about prayer. Because God gives us an ability to believe certain things, He's told us various things, a lot of things through Christ, and if we value them it's a part of the picture of building upon a foundation, of whether or not it's a part of our life.

Mark 14:38. We know what it says here. Once I start reading it you'll know what I'm talking about here. **Watch and pray.** It's not a suggestion. He didn't just throw it out there and tell the disciples this and tell the Church this is something that would be nice if you do once in a while. We have looked at the word in times past in sermons, of what it means to watch. It's a word that has to do with being on guard.

It's like the sentries at a post and they're protecting, they're watching for the safety of a city against anyone that might come into the city to loot it, to do whatever, to fight against it. There are people placed in certain posts as sentries and that's what a watch is, the night watch. They were on guard. That's what the word comes from. It means to be on guard, to be watchful. God says you have to do this.

If you live this way of life you have to be alert, watchful. Well, how do you do that? "I want to be watchful. I want to be alert." There's a lot involved in it. To be on guard, you know what the major thing is to be on guard in this battle? Self. To be on guard. To not just let your life happen and live life and get in a routine of life without thinking about what God is doing and your part in God's plan and how you're living your life and etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. There is so much involved.

Watch and pray. Because the point being is you can't be on guard unless you're praying. You can't be spiritually alert unless you're praying to God in a fight that you're in, you're asking God for help to be able to see things in your life. When you leave today, when you go out the following week here, to pray about the things that God has given in the sermon about prayer! "Father, help me. If I am being lukewarm in my prayer life help me to see it."

Let's see, how often do I pray? That's where we begin. Let's see, that's going to kind of reveal it right there. Is it something I do on a regular basis? Is my mind toward God?

Now, it doesn't have to be for long periods. It used to be in the Church that, well, you pray for half an hour or you pray for an hour. I remember Big Sandy we had these little booths in Booth City—we called it Booth City—these places where you could have six to eight people or four, I

guess it was, living in and you have bunk beds. Then there was this one area where you could go in this one building and you would have these kind of like closets. You know, “Go into your closet alone and pray.” We had these closets so it’d make it more convenience. Because when you’re living in a booth or in the dormitories, they had some dormitories as well, but if you didn’t have a place to go alone it’s a lot harder to pray. The closets there weren’t made for your ability to get in because you just had enough room for clothes to hang.

So it was nice that they put these places there where you could go and you could check, and I don’t remember exactly how you knew that someone was in a room, but anyway, it seemed like it was locked or there was a sliding thing. Anyway, you would know if someone was in there, and you’d experience all kinds of things. You’d experience someone who wanted everybody else to know that they’re praying because they’re praying out loud. They’re almost screaming and hollering. It’s like, “Okay, you’ve got a little ways to go, but I hope you get there and learn it’s between you and God. You don’t have to holler it out so everybody else can hear and know that you’re in there praying.”

You could kind of get into this routine, if you’re not careful, I don’t want to go in and someone see me go in and then come out too quick, either, you know. People, every once in a while, you hear snoring; somebody would fall asleep in the booth. So these things happen because we have human nature and we’re talking about being young and so forth and things that people are going through as they’re first coming into the Church. So many things were learned as a part of that, but again, they were made available.

When I think about some of these things I can’t help but think about the booths and about praying and what was kind of thought by many at that time. It was like if you don’t put in 30 minutes or an hour or whatever—and some ministers gave sermons like that—that you’re just not... Well, that’s a bunch of bull. A relationship is not based on the fact that you have to be there for a certain amount of time and then you’re okay. Because you can get into false thinking there then and it gets to a point where what does that mean then if you’re spending an hour repeating the same thing as you did yesterday, hmmm, what does that mean?

He said don’t have repetition of prayer. Now, we do. I pray about different things and some things are very similar. Sometimes they’re exact as what they were the day before in part because I want to keep focused on certain things and so I pray about that to God because I want my mind to be focused. So it depends on what I’m going through and what I’m experiencing.

But the point being is we have to be careful. It’s about a relationship with God. You’re sharing with God. It’s to become personal, something between you and God that’s private, that’s about you because God knows everything about you anyway so you might as well share it. You’re not hiding anything from God and so it’s good to be open. “I have this battle. I did this. I did that. Forgive me and help me so that I don’t think that way, so that I can fight against that, so that I can see it when it starts to crop up just the slightest little bit so I can spot it. Then please give me the help then to fight it at that time.”

So there are things we see in our lives that God reveals to us. If we recognize those battles and we're praying for help, you know what? There is that which God gives through the power of His spirit that is unique in itself, that God just gives help in those cases if we're doing that because there's a power there that He wants to share with us. He wants us to cry out to Him about those things and then He'll give us the help to be more on guard, to be more alert.

That's what this is about. It's about a battle. It's understanding that you have a battle. And so, so much of prayer has to do with understanding your battle and it's yourself. We all have that. We're a mess. Our selfish human nature is really ugly. I'm thankful the more that God shows us how ugly it is because the more we can come to see that the more we loathe it, the more we don't want it, the more we want something else and the more we'll strive to have that, to live that and cry out for God to help to build that within us. So it's a growing process and fruit will be produced. God wants to give us help.

It's about a relationship, but if we're not doing that regularly why would it be there? How could it be there? What would be in its place? Laodicea. Laodicea will be in its place. A lukewarm spirit will begin to take control. It takes control because it has to do with being sluggish, it has to do with being sleepy, and after a time unless God shake the tar out of you by something you're not going to be able to see what you need to see and you're not going to be jolted out of it and many have proven that. Only by God's grace are there some of us here today, because He did shake "the you know what" out of us - tar (put it nicely).

We're blessed to be able to be here because He shook us and woke us up. Otherwise, we would be with everyone else, and so God has a plan and a purpose of how He works these things out, but what an incredible thing.

So it goes on to talk about some of this in a moment, I'll address that, but first and foremost we've got to realize we don't want that kind of spirit. We want to be on fire. We want to be hot. It doesn't just happen; you've got to fight for it. You've got to be on guard to those things that will interfere with that.

So what interferes with it? Routines of life? Oh, you can get into routines of life that if you're not careful will take you away from a focus and a relationship with God. Truly does. It's happened to hundreds and several thousands of people in God's Church even in recent times. We're not immune. It's a battle.

So we have to realize we're in a fight. What's so hard about that? We are in a fight and we can't fight this on our own. We can't fight this by ignoring the things that God says we're not to ignore but we're to address. Prayer is one of them. It has to be a vital part of our life. It's about a relationship with God. It's about remembering God. Whether it be driving down the road and you're by yourself and you're praying to God and asking and talking about various things, about the day or whatever you're going through, and about a desire you have.

And candidly, some things are to be repeated. “I want Your spirit. I need Your spirit. Help me, please, to be on guard. Fill me with Your spirit, with Your mind.” There are some things you can ask day to day, you know, and that doesn’t fit into the category of repetition.

Some of the things that fit into repetition is things we think we want and need and we get so consumed with them because it’s on a physical plane and we think we’ll be better if we win the lottery, whatever it is. I’m sorry, you know. But spiritual things God wants us to ask, and if we don’t ask, basically that’s what Christ told us, even about this, ask and you shall receive. If you don’t ask?

So what do you want the most? I want God’s mind. I want the spirit of God in me. I want God to live fully within me. So I cry out for it. We all must cry out for it, otherwise, we can fall asleep on a spiritual plane. We can begin to lull ourselves to sleep spiritually. We can begin to become lukewarm and just go through routines of life.

We can get into a routine of sending in a check, saving up another check over here for the Feast of Tabernacles, get into a routine of going back and forth from services. But is God in it or did we just get into a routine sometimes like people in the world do when they do the things they do, go to church on Sunday, go to bible study on Wednesday, do this and do that, whatever it might be.

Watch and pray, unless you enter into temptation. That’s what’ll happen. Test, trial, something that can pull us away from God, we become weaker and weaker. Because if we’re not on guard and we’re not praying about the things we need to be praying about in our life, to be on guard, to be watchful and so forth and having a relationship with God then something can begin to pull us away if we’re not careful.

The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. God’s spirit; He wants to give us His spirit. He’s desirous to give us of His spirit but we have to cry out for it, we have to want it. We have to pray for it. We have to seek God for it. We truly do.

Mark 11:25 says, **And when you stand praying...** So you can be standing and praying. You can be on your knees and praying. You can be on your whatever driving down the road praying. It’s about a relationship with God. It’s about honouring God. There are times to show more honor. There are times to strive to be more honorable toward God. There are times when you may not be able to do that but God still wants to hear you and He’ll receive it when you’re standing or when you’re sitting in a car or sitting wherever it might be. Perhaps you can’t get down on your knees. That’s fine. God knows. But to be praying, that’s the important part. What we pray about is important.

And when you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone. Whew! A lot of people in God’s Church have gone by the wayside because of that one and became lukewarm because of that one, because they would not forgive others. They weren’t forgiving. They didn’t learn from the grace of God.

The grace of God has to do with all the things that God gives. It's an incredible study in scripture, what it's all about, and the world doesn't grasp it at all, obviously. But it's about receiving the favor of God and it begins with the fact that God begins to call us and give us of His truth. Then He gives us opportunity to make choices and then to be able to be forgiven of sin, the blessing of being able to be forgiven of sin through our Passover. Incredible grace and mercy that God gives. Then on and on it goes from there, of the blessings and the favor that God gives to us in life and what He wants to pour out upon us.

But so much of it has to do with right there in the very beginning concerning our Passover. To grasp and understand what God has done for us, that any time you go before God and ask for forgiveness He'll forgive you if your spirit is right and you're fighting. Now, if you're not fighting the battle and you're not trying to change then that can mean nothing, like those who go once a week and supposedly have whatever it is, water sprinkled on them or some kind of cross thing done and they're okay, or take a wafer and a little bit of wine and all of a sudden you're okay until next Sunday. It doesn't work that way, and neither does this. There is a certain process we have to go through and it has to be in spirit and in truth toward God. One of the things then in the very beginning here that He hits so hard and we have to understand is if we don't grasp we've been forgiven of sin and how merciful God is to us, how is it we can't forgive others. How is it we can't grasp that we have no right to hold anything against anyone in the first place? And though I preach about it I hope that everyone grasps and comprehends it, and I feel like we are more and more as time goes along, but to understand that if we do hold something against anyone else, if we're not willing to forgive we're cut off from God's spirit. We're just cut off from God's spirit because that's against God.

Not forgiving others, not being of a forgiving spirit toward others is just against God's spirit. Christ died so we could be forgiven of our sins and we want to hold something against others. We won't forgive someone else? We kind of hold it in our minds and judge them according to something that maybe was done a year or two years ago or three years ago or a month ago. We don't grasp if God's forgiven them who are we to still hold something against them? I tell you, those are hideously dangerous things. It really is a spirit of murder if we could really grasp it. That's what God calls it. It's murder not to do that, and that fits into that which is spiritual which is far worse than physical murder. Because God can resurrect them, but if it's spiritual? Damage can be so bad that some can't come through it.

Some of the things that happened up to the Apostasy, there are some people who were affected by that, sadly, and there are opportunities that they will never receive because of that, because of their minds, of what they did. They defiled the mind so much that it can't be worked with, it'll never repent. Some are the cause of that, the start of the cause. They made the choices.

And when you stand praying...if you have anything against another one, so that your Father who is also in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Because the reality is if we won't forgive we are not forgiven. We cannot be forgiven because we're sinning, until we repent of that

sin and cease to hold something against someone else, and many, many, many have gone that course.

So that reflects, that's another area that can reflect very powerfully indeed are we fighting for this way of life, are we fighting against our own human nature and our own selfishness to do such things toward others? Because it's really a selfish thing we do, this judgment that we get into. That's why we had that particular series. So we have to be so careful in how we think in these areas.

Matthew 6. So again, do we strive to build up strength in our prayer life and the manner in which we're to pray? That's what Christ gave us. He gave us an outline of how we are to pray. Now, just repeating this over and over again doesn't mean anything, but adding to it and building upon it does mean everything. Again, we hear people in the world, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom..." and it's like if I do that I'm better. No, you're not. If it's not alive and it's not filled with God's spirit what does it mean?

So we go through this. **Matthew 6:9—Therefore, Christ said, pray after this manner: Our Father who is in heaven...** It's good to be reminded of that, to think about that, to think of the awesomeness that the Great God of the universe has created everything that's out there. We understand the vastness of it in ways that mankind never has, and to be in awe of that and to thank God and glorify God because of that, that He would look down and choose moi? To be thankful for that, to thank God for that. "You're there and yet I have this opportunity," and to be moved by that. That goes to the depth of our thankfulness and our gratitude, of what's in our mind. Because if that's not there what's going to motivate us for other things, the fight, to fight for this way of life?

Our Father who is in heaven, Your name is to be sanctified. That's what this means, to make holy. "Hallowed be Thy name," that's what this means. It's an Old English way of saying something that this is what it's saying, "Your name is sanctified, to be made holy." So how can we be a part of that? What does that mean in our life? How can we do such a thing?

Well, for us we should understand some of that shouldn't we? We begin to learn that in God's Church when we begin to learn about the commandments. We start learning them about the physical aspect of it, to not have any other God's before God and all the different things and some of the words. "Don't take God's name in vain," so we learn to stop saying certain things that are contrary to God, taking God's name in vain, whatever. We usually think of cursing and swearing that the world does so much.

I think about TV. You know they'll curse and use God's name, but they'll give it a bad rating if you use the "f" word, which has to do with a sexual relationship, which isn't nearly as bad, nearly as vile, nearly as sick and perverted as taking God's name in vain. So they don't address that. No big deal if you use God's name in vain, but if you use this slang term for immoral sex or whatever it might be, then give it an R rating because we can't have that. Think of the hypocrisy, the lying,

the disgust that that is. Anyway, I'm sorry but it just riles me up a tad, the hypocrisy of mankind. To not elevate and to realize that we shouldn't take God's name in vain and misuse it and curse and swear? But so we start on a physical plane and we start understanding some of those things.

The Sabbath, we begin to realize the seventh day though we don't understand its great meaning yet. That's learned through time. There are things every one of you in this room are going to come to understand more on a spiritual plane as time goes along. I don't care what level you are in your life spiritually, that you'll come to know more later on of the depth and the meaning and the beauty of the Sabbath day and its deep, deep spiritual meaning in our lives.

You think you have it all yet right now? You don't. I don't. We'll ever learn more and more about God's planning and purpose and those things that are involved in these things because I have learned in that area alone in ways that I had never thought would have happened because I didn't realize what I didn't know. The more God gives you and the more you realize what you don't know the more we're able to glorify and honor God, to thank God for His greatness because we're really little peons in the scheme of things but He offers us so much. It's amazing. Because He loves His plan, He loves us, He loves what He's molding and fashioning in us if we'll yield ourselves to it and want it and fight for it.

"Your name is to be sanctified." So we start out on a physical plane looking at those physical things, but later on we learn what it means to really not take God's name in vain, and it has to do with how you live your life. To take God's name in vain, that we should be called the children of God, the Church of God, the Body of Christ, carries with it far greater meaning in how we should, what kind of life we're reflecting in the world around us. Because if we're reflecting certain things that are not right by our conduct, by the way we speak to others, by the way we treat others in the world, in the Church, it doesn't matter, if those things don't honor God because we're living a way of life that honors God, that's obedient to His way of life, if we're doing something else and living selfishness those are the things we must repent of because they're taking God's name in vain.

So we learn that spiritually what it means. And that's what this is talking about. God's name is to be sanctified. I carry, you carry the name of God in your life. You are a part of the Church of God, the Body of Christ, as we were asked earlier, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you?" What does that mean for our life? But that had better be what we're reflecting then.

Laodicea does not reflect that. It doesn't reflect it at all. So we have to be hot, you know, on fire for God's way of life, zealous of God. We have to be fighting the fight, engaged in the fight. Every part of every day in our life our minds should be toward God, thinking about what we're living. And when we do things that are wrong, we think wrong, we better repent of it just as quickly as we see it and ask for help to do differently, to act differently.

I have to do that every day. If you don't, you're not seeing something. Because your mind, your life has selfishness in it. You can't help it. Every day something happens in your thinking that is not right. Something happens because of selfishness that isn't right, it isn't good. Selfishness is not a good thing; it's something to be fought against every day.

If you think your mind is pure and you have nothing that enters into your mind just ask God for help to see it, and prayerfully He'll help you to see it. And really, that's what we should be praying about, "Help me to see the things I don't see. Help me to see where my battles are. Help me to see what I'm oblivious to, to my presumptuous sins that I don't grasp yet."

So again, **Your name is to be sanctified**, to be made holy. So isn't that something to pray about, to ask God for help in? "Where I'm not doing as well as I should be..." That's why that number one that I have. If God is not being held up high and if I do something selfishly, which I do every day, I can't help it. I fight against it and I'm working in my life to have that more and more refined. And if we do that we will become more and more refined. But you'll always find something there because you'll always be a physical human being who has selfishness in it. It's what we are. So we have to be engaged in the fight against that. And God will bless us in that. It's a beautiful thing. And so that's a part of sanctifying God's name and asking for help to glorify His name, because it's in us.

Your Kingdom come. I think we all want that one. You know, our minds as we see the things going on in the world around us, especially today with modern technology, there are things we can see. And frankly, the more we draw closer to God the more we can see a mind that is so vile and so contrary to God's purpose and plan for mankind.

If we think that certain parties out here are correct, if we think that one side is so much better than the other we're missing the mark. Everything is wrong. Everything has to be changed. Everything in government, everything in what is called judgment and justice in the world is wrong. It's based on wrong principles. It's based on things that can't be done right because God's not in it, because God's spirit... Only God's spirit can make things righteous and right.

And so everything that's in the world around us, everything, as far as motivation, as far as purpose, competition, all the things that are out here, greed, all these things, they're contrary to God. And sometimes it's hard for us to see those things and to fight against them because we're a part of it in the world, we're in the world. But the spirit of it we need to fight against.

And so the more we see that the more we can cry out to God. I think of Lot where it says he vexed his righteous soul from day to day because of what he saw happening in his part of the world. He saw what was happening to young people. He saw the environment they were coming into as though they have no chance for help to change, to receive God. And that's the way it is in the world until God changes this and brings His Son to this earth. Thankfully we live at the time when that's going to happen.

And you better be on guard because you don't know when it is. You don't know when it is. You think it still can't happen soon? Oh, yes, it can. We're to keep watch. And we have these markers in front of us. 2020 and 2000, what was it, 23? Anyway, you think about how long these things have to do, well, there may be something about in between we don't even know yet but those are definite markers that God has given to us. And we fight and we keep moving forward.

Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, what does that mean? Some, it's almost, if we're not careful, that can be something like this utopia in the hundred years. It's not real. "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." So you have to break it down. What does that mean in your prayer life? If you use this outline, what does it mean "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" Where does it start? Right here. It's your desire to do God's will. It's your desire to live God's will. And the only place that can really happen is in those who want to do God's will, who want to yield to God's will, who don't want to do their own will and their own ways.

Because that's Laodicea - not fighting for it is doing your own thing. It's easier not to fight. It's easier sometimes not to work, people think. That's a bad trait and bad thinking. Not to work, not to fight for certain things? We need to work. We need to fight. There are things to be learned from physical things in life that apply to us spiritually in life.

So **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** So what is God's will in heaven? His will for me is that I fight! His will for me is that I pray. His will for me is that I have times of fasting in my life because I know how much I need God and how easy it is to get into a rut. And at times I'll want to address that and so I want to humble myself and cry out to God for help to fight against that in a greater way. Because it's a powerful tool, to add that to it as well, to prayer life.

And if we're not doing those things what is reflected in our life? Laodicea. Fighting against God. Christ died for us so that we could fight against our carnal human nature, so that we could enter into battle. Because this way is a battle. It's a battle. It's a fight. It's a race. That's why those things are given as examples in scripture. And we have to be engaged in that. It's a work that has to be accomplished and done. It doesn't just happen because we sit on our butts once a week in a service. That's what we do. That's what it's called. So we sit there and it's up to us what happens up here because this can make this sleepy, tired, weak. And we've got to fight against that.

I remember in (I hated English), at Ambassador College, and I've told this many a time. There were times, because it was after lunch, and right after you eat a meal all the blood rushes here and it's digesting and it doesn't rest up here. It's not a good time to go into a class. And I'd have to sit there in English class pinching myself. I had to pinch myself at times to stay awake. It was a battle. And I still didn't get much out of it. But anyway, I tried...at least to stay awake.

So we have to try to stay awake. We have to be fighting. We have to work at it. And there are things you have to do sometimes that hurt, that hurt self. It doesn't feel good to grab a hold of some fat down here, to try to find some and just twist it. Because that's what I did. And so

sometimes you have to do certain things that are uncomfortable, that hurt, in order to live God's way of life. You have to fight against self. And sometimes that's a battle. That's always a battle.

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It doesn't just happen. And you can't change anyone else. God has given that you change self. That's where the battle is. You have to change yourself. We can't change others. Too often we try.

Give us this day our daily bread. If we just think about that in a physical way we're missing the mark. It's about that which is spiritual. So why should God give us something daily if we don't cry out for it daily? If we understand what we need the most is spiritual strength and spiritual life and to be on guard against those things that might cut off the flow of that spirit then that's what we're praying for, "Give us this day our daily bread. Please fill us with Your mind and Your purpose in what we're doing. And most of that I understand is just fighting against this. Help me to see things that I do that are wrong. Help me to see the things I can do that are right."

And forgive us our debt, as we forgive others. Boy, what a telling thing each day we pray, or when we pray, that we have this outline and we remember to say this, "Please forgive me. Help me to be forgiving of everyone else. Help me not to judge Your people. Help me not to judge others, to be condemning of others. Help me not to condemn others, because those in the world, they don't know You. And so help me to have the mind of Christ, the mind of Stephen when he was being put to death, "Don't hold this sin against them." "Father, forgiven them, they don't know what they're doing." That's a unique mindset. To be able to really do that and not be affected then by that. Because you can't change that yet and they can't be changed. They're in bondage.

Do we base things upon that understanding or do we just live our old ways and expect things of people that they can't deliver? Well, that tells a lot about us and where we are spiritually, doesn't it? The same thing spiritually then on a spiritual plane within the Church. We have to be on guard.

And let us not be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. A lot there. The things that pull at us in this world, the things that can pull us away from what is true, the things we might allow into our minds, into our lives, into our thinking, to be on guard against. Are we really on guard against them? Do we really fight against them? Do we engage in the battle?

There are some things in life... I think of a conversation, a little bit of a conversation that was happening recently and some were discussing this thing of that which is around them constantly in the world. And it is. We have things in the world that pull at us in our thinking. And there are some things that are just natural that pull at us but you're not to give into them, you're to fight them. And so we learn that. We're to be engaged in the fight. It's a matter of how we think. It's a matter of understanding our weaknesses.

For a man it might be seeing a woman go by who is loosely clad and she's beautiful. ("Shock!") No, she's beautiful. There is nothing wrong with that. But what you do in your mind can be wrong, isn't it? See? And so you learn. You learn there are times to control - start with these two little things right here. Where do they go? That's where we have to start. And so it's a matter of learning to fight. It's a matter of learning to be in control. It's a matter...

And after a while certain things become a habit. My wife will ask me sometimes, "Did you see this?" No, I didn't see it. It's because of that battle for so long. And there are certain things that just become a natural routine after a time. A hundred percent all the time? No. You have to be on guard, you have to fight. That's just being honest the way we are as human beings. We have to fight as human beings to be right with God.

And there are certain things that happen in our life then that are just natural things but they're not right in the sense of misusing them. To see certain things, to understand certain things in life, depending on how we think about it, that's where jealousies come from. People see certain things and if they're not careful they think the wrong thing, they allow certain thing because they're seeing it in the wrong way. And they have to be careful of what they allow into their mind because there are certain things that are just natural with the human nature. And so we have to be on guard against that and to fight against those.

So whatever it might be. This thing of not forgiving someone, of judging someone else, why do we do that? So we have to understand our mind and why we think that way, and then to realize that's just a natural proclivity of the human mind. And so how do we fight that? How are we fighting it? There is so much to learn. There is so much to do in the transformation that takes place in our minds. But it is a fight. It's a matter of fighting for God's way. And if we really want it we'll be engaged in the battle, we'll be working. Because it takes work.

You've got to be kidding! It's 4:20? Sorry. We're stopping there. We'll come back and finish that outline of prayer because I have more to say about it. We're close though. Time got away from me. Sorry about that. I don't mean to go that long. It's *Part 2* next week.