

Today will be *Part 2* of the series entitled *Fighting for God's Way*.

Again, in *Part 1* we focused upon a spirit of Laodicea, the attitude there, and understanding, as what was said last week, that God will not accept that in His Kingdom. That's become abundantly clear, especially as we've been focusing somewhat on what's going to happen in the last hundred years, understanding that there are going to be so many who aren't going to choose God's way of life, who resist God's way of life.

But something that we addressed a little bit is that there's this attitude of kind of, well, let's call it lukewarmness, if you will, kind of an attitude of kind of gliding or whatever, taking it easy, going through the motions, keeping the Sabbath in the sense of coming together on the Sabbath or on the high days, the annual holy days, even giving of tithes or saving of second tithe.

People have to come to an understanding that that doesn't guarantee, that isn't a part of what's going to be a certain thing for you being in God's Kingdom at all by any measure. Because you can do that in a lukewarm spirit, in a lukewarm manner, just go through the motions. God requires much more because we have to fight for this way of life. That's why we're going through some of these things and using certain measurements we can look at in our own lives, to see if indeed we are fighting or not and address those matters if we're not, because if we're not we can be kind of just gliding along and being lukewarm about what we're doing. God doesn't accept that.

There are going to be many in that period of time, that last hundred years, who just don't want it enough to fight for it and won't fight their spirit, their attitude, their mind in order to be transformed. Again, to understand that they're going to receive the same punishment, if you will, the same reward as those who fight against God, as those who resist against God, those who just flat out say, "I don't want that way of life." There are going to be others who are going through the motions, who have probably deceived themselves into thinking that's enough, but they're going to be told enough for the hundred years that that isn't enough, that they're going to have to go through the same things. Life will just end.

So again, those things to me are rather sobering to think about, to realize if you want this way of life you have to really want it, you have to fight for it, you have to desire to want to be of the same mind with God, and if people don't want that, God isn't just going to give us spirit life, life for everlasting time.

So again here, we read **James 2:17** that says, **Even so, faith if it doesn't have works, is dead, being alone.** So that's a good example there. If we're not living the way of life that God has shown us (and there are things we can measure doing that, to check that), if we're not living by those things, we're not living by faith. Faith is a matter of believing what God says, and one of

the primary things He shows us is we have to fight self. We have to fight this nature because it's a mind that fights against God. God says it's at enmity with Him. "It's not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." So that doesn't just change because someone is baptized; just become someone goes under the water all of a sudden your mind just doesn't change and now you're subject to the law of God. You still resist it. You still fight it, your carnal nature does. So we have to be in a war, in that respect, of fighting against this mind and wanting it to be changed. We have to truly desire that with all of our being.

So those things are able to be focused upon in the sense of seeing certain things that we can check. We talked about prayer. What is our prayer life like? Because that's a good measure, to look at do we have a relationship with God, are we trying to build on a relationship with God or not, and if we recognize our need for God's spirit we will be crying out to God. If we don't then we're doing it on our own and we're just going through the motions...and that's not acceptable.

So we were going through this section that Joshua gave concerning the outline of prayer in **Matthew 6:9**. We'll pick it up there again where He said, **Therefore, pray after this manner...** So he just gave an outline of prayer. We talked about some of the kinds of things that we think about, should think about as we pray, when we pray. We have to be on guard not to get into a rut of just repetition of the same things every day. Some things we're going to pray about every day.

I cry out for God's spirit every day. I want God's spirit. I desire to have God's spirit within me. Again, those kinds of things we focus upon, but not in the same way in the sense we just get into a rut and repeat the same things, like what's called *The Lord's Prayer* here, just repeating that over and over again. It gets to a point where it doesn't mean anything.

That's why we addressed things about praying around a meal, because it gets to a point in time that people get into this rut and it just becomes repetitious, the same thing, the same thing, the same thing, and after a while it has no real meaning in our life. We're not feeling it. It's not something that we're really thinking about.

It's kind of like sometimes what happened in the Church when we have the songs every Sabbath and after a while you're just singing it without thinking about the words, because we really need to think about those things as we sing them, but you can get into a rut of just singing it, but not thinking about what's being said because we know the song so well. The same thing is true with our prayer life so we have to be on guard to those things.

Let's read this again, pick it up in **Matthew 6:11—Give us this day our daily bread**. What does that mean? It's not about physical food. We thank God for the abundance of life we do have, we thank Him for different things at different times. Not every day about the food we have - that's not what's important. That's a given if we understand this way of life, but at times we can thank Him for the abundance of the things that we do have, that we're able to have those things, but not every day because then what does that mean?

But to have God's spirit, to understand this is how we live, this is what our life depends on. Yes, we understand physical food and the importance of it for sustaining life, but that's just a part of physical human life. I thought of some different examples I can give that I won't go into. But there are certain routines of life we just have and it's not a matter that God wants us to pray about those things on a regular basis. But He does about His holy spirit.

Give us this day our daily bread. So that's why I mention that something I want to be a part of my life is crying out for God's spirit because I need it, I want it, I need it in order for self to change, I need it to be able to see my human nature. So if we're not asking for those kinds of things regularly and not just exactly the same thing but in different ways we pray about it, that we need God's spirit. Perhaps something you did that day or the day before, or whatever; you recognize the greater need for God's spirit. You ask for help to be able to see those things more clearly. You're praying in detail about some of that. That's what we're to do.

"Give us this day our daily bread," the bread of life. That's what's important. That's what our calling is about and that's his desire for us and God's desire for us. That's God's will, is to give us of His spirit. He's made it available to us; Christ has by what he went through. That's why he died. He died, yes, so that we can start the process by being forgiven of sin and by being able to have access to God, but it doesn't stop there, it continues on. That's where we recognize we need their life living within us. That's why he died, so that life could live within us.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. We talked about that in part already as well, but again, an attitude of mind if we're not willing to be forgiving towards others, if we don't learn about God's mercy in our life... Because that's what it teaches us. We receive God's favor and help and grace in our life being forgiven of sin and if we're not willing to forgive others and have that kind of attitude toward others then God makes it real clear we're not forgiven either. We're not going to be forgiven.

Verse 13—And let us not be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. So again, it's just an outline of prayer and so there are things we're to think about from time to time, and actually, to go back through this in our thinking from time to time as well.

"Let us not be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil." What does that mean? So we think about those things and what does it mean in my relationship to God? That's what we're to ask. What are the temptations in our life? What is it we're battling? What is your 1, 2, and 3?

I was thinking about that the other day, number one is always going to be number one because it's about God in my mind and a relationship there and if anything gets in the way there it's idolatry and I don't want that. So I want to be focused on that one and always be reminded that every time I do something wrong that's the worst one to break, is putting something before God. Again, those kinds of things we pray about. It's about a relationship with God. He knows what you're doing. He knows what we're doing all the time. But what is it we want? What is it we

desire? Where is our mind, and are we fighting for it, are we crying out for it? So that's a good measure to see if we're getting into a rut of being that of a lukewarm spirit before God.

God wants a relationship with us and it doesn't have to be a long time during each day. Sometimes it'll be longer than others depending on what you're going through in your life, but a consistent, continual, daily type of relationship with God to converse with Him, to share with Him what you're battling. He already knows, but He wants you to express it, what you're going through, what do you want, do you want His help, do you recognize the need for His help? And if we do that should be quite simple, we're going to be crying out for it. What do we believe? Do we really believe what we are? Do we really see our selfishness?

Because I fear sometimes people really don't see their thinking and don't think that they're bad. Your carnal human nature sucks! It is evil. It is against God. Mine is, and that's what we have to combat. Selfishness is ugly. Selfishness is everything that brings about every drama of human life that is the opposite of God's peace, that is the opposite of God's way of life.

So if it's the opposite of God's way of life are we fighting the battle? Are we fighting self? Because this is where it all starts - self - and if we're not fighting, if we're not engaged in the battle then we're just going to keep being the same way we are without change. God wants us to change. He wants to help us to change.

That's why I love the scriptures about being transformed. Our minds can change. We don't have to stay the same way. I realized this past week that some of my numbers have changed, the things I have focused on, because a certain area of battle it's not there in the same way anymore at all. It's slipped way, way down to maybe twelve or more. I don't go that far because it's the top ones you're mostly focused upon. But if I were to have to do something like that I'd say, man, it's a long way away now. And you think, been a long period of time of fighting certain things and that being number two, and sometimes you go through things you realize that you've been blessed, God's given help that, you know, there's been a great breakthrough. Then another one I was reminded of during the trip that it's probably slipped up into two or maybe down to four, but it's still in there. It's self. It's selfishness. It's the mind, of what comes out of the mind when the mind itself isn't happy about whatever it is that causes it to be stressed, uneasy, whatever it is in life that we fight and battle.

So, "Deliver us from evil." I mean, how many people really believe that about what's inside them, "deliver me from evil." Generally, it's looking out. The evil is out there. The evil is in the world around us. The evil are the things that come at us and give us a hard time and attack us and make life hard for us. Well, why does it make it hard? It's in the mind. How we react to everything in life is dependent upon what's going on in there. That's where the battle is.

So "deliver us from evil." So I sometimes wonder about certain situations in people's lives and does everyone really see that this inside is evil. That which resists God, that which fights against God is evil, and if we don't see that something is wrong with us spiritually, because we can get

into a rut and begin to think that we're doing pretty good. Well, maybe we're doing better and maybe we've grown, but self will always be here.

If we really see what selfishness is we'll really hate it, we'll loathe it. The more we are able to see it, hopefully, the more we hate it. So we ask God not to be led into temptation, of following our own desires, our own human nature, our own whatever it might be. I'll get into some of that a little bit later.

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory... Do you know why it says this at the end? It brings us all the way through all the things we've talked about so far in this outline of prayer and then it comes to this: **For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory...** That's where our life is. That's what we want. We want that power. We want that spirit. We want that strength in our life and it's God's. God's to give to us, and if we don't recognize our need for it then we're not going to be crying out for it, we're not going to be fighting against our own carnal human nature. We're not going to be on guard to the things we know are our weaknesses.

That reveals whether or not we're of a Laodicean spirit, a lukewarm spirit, a spirit that God can't accept. That's why He says, "I wish that you were cold or hot." "I wish that you were cold or hot." Most situations in the Church when somebody is hot, you know they're hot. They're zealous for God's way of life and you know there are no worries. If someone is cold you know that too because they're doing things that are being manifested, they're coming out in their lives, and it can't be a part of the Church so it's told, "You can't be a part of the Church. Quit deceiving yourself. You can't live like that and deceive yourself into thinking you're part of the Body of Christ."

Then there is that which is in the middle, which is neither cold nor hot. It's lukewarm. That's the hardest thing of all to deal with because we can share together in fellowship, we can go through the motions of things together, see one another once a Sabbath or on holy days or whatever it might be, but if we're not doing this and we have other little things going on in our life that we're not really engaged in this way and on fire for God's way it's a frustrating thing. That's seen too.

So again, if we're not fighting against our own nature and seeking to work at these matters then, again, we're of that spirit. As it says in **Revelation 3:17—Because you say I am rich and increased with goods.** Now, this is a spiritual thing that I think is very difficult sometimes for people to see in themselves.

"I am rich?" What does that really mean, "I am rich?" It has nothing to do with physical wealth; it has to do with self-reliance and self-satisfaction, being content with what we have at that point in time. That's why people when they're lukewarm, that's where they're satisfied. They're not fighting. They don't see the need because they're satisfied with where they are. It's that attitude of self-reliance, of not looking to God. Because if we're really looking to God, our prayer life is going to reflect it, other things in our life are going to reflect it. That fact that we're fighting

against self, that we're seeing things in our self and we're crying out to God for help, that will reflect it. Only we can know those things, whether that's true in our life or not.

Again, "I am rich and increased with goods." So God is saying that's an attitude, it's a spirit. Increased with goods - we've been given so much.

That's why in the Great White Throne and through the Millennium this is going to be a battle because people are going to be blessed mightily with having the God Family on earth, 144,000 and Joshua the Christ as King of kings. Those who are born during that period, that's going to be their norm. That's hard for us to grasp, but that's going to be their norm. They're going to be accustomed to being able to be aware of their presence, that they're on this earth and they grow up with that and after a time it's going to be very difficult for people to grasp what they're really like because the world is not like it is today.

Today it's easier at least to see some of these things, to see what human nature is like, to see how ugly it is, to see all the evil that we see in the world. But it's always difficult to see that in ourselves. It's going to be worse. It's going to be worse, in that respect, during that period of time, as far as being able to see one self. But they'll be told and prayerfully learn.

Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing... Do we recognize what we have need of? **—and do not know that you are wretched...** It's only used twice in scripture, "wretched," to understand what we're like, our carnal human nature. It's ugly. We're wretched, our nature is.

...and do you not know that you are wretched. Now, this isn't just talking to Laodicea, it's talking to all of us. Because it's like saying, "Well, I'm not Laodicean and so I don't have this." Yeah, we do. This is the way our nature is. Our nature is wretched. It's **miserable, poor, blind, and naked** of and by itself. If we're relying on self, this is what's inside of us, this is why we have to be on guard and cry out to God when we see that come out of us. Without God's help what can we see? So we're blind of and by ourselves.

So where does the truth come from? Where does the ability to be sustained in the truth come from? Where does the ability to continue in the truth come from? It doesn't come from our own ability, of how smart we are, how good we are at certain things. It comes from God, and if we don't believe that, I wish we could see our history. There are thousands of people who have gone by the wayside because they didn't grasp this, they couldn't grasp this. They came to a point of just not being able to see. If there are things you can see there are reasons for it. It's spiritual. Where does the ability to see come from?

Now, if we really see these things and grasp them spiritually that's why we're going to pray to God. That's why we're going to fight against this, because we realize that if we're not fighting against this we're going to become stagnant. We will be lukewarm. We will try to glide and just kind of wait. You can't wait.

Now, we wait, but you can't do it with that attitude, of waiting for the wrong reasons, just waiting to bide your time until things finally happen and take place. No, we have to fight against self while we wait, otherwise, before we get to the end we're going to be as blind as a bat and be separated from the Body because God will not accept that spirit!

That's why there is a need to make it abundantly clear, not only in the Great White Throne will a spirit of lukewarmness not be received or accepted by God into His Kingdom, it won't be accepted before we get to the point of time of Christ's return in God's Church. So either we see these things and we're fighting and engaged in the battle and trying to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, the Messiah, or we're not. That's up to each one of us how much we're really battling and fighting against this.

"...wretched, miserable..." I don't know that many people recognize our human nature is miserable. It's a miserable spirit. Whenever you're not happy about something, satisfied with something, when something isn't going your way, when you are stressed out about something because everything isn't going as smoothly as you think it should be in your life, whatever that might be, it's a miserable spirit, self, selfishness. Because it's not God, it's not of God's mind, it's not of God's spirit. That's why we have to repent of those kinds of things and fight against them and ask God to help us be in control of our thinking rightly so and not to allow such things to be in us. Now, that's a battle because the reality is these things pop up in our life day by day by day.

"Blind and naked." So if we want to really be clothed with God's way of life, and remain clothed with white raiment that means we're in a battle, we're in a fight because there is no other way to do this, there is no other way to live this except to be in the battle, to be in the fight.

Romans 7, the other place that this particular word is used about wretched, being wretched, understanding our nature, understanding our spirit, understanding our mind, how we think as human beings apart from God. That's why we have to understand. That's why Paul talked about this war, this battle that's going on in our lives. Once we're baptized, once we have God's holy spirit there is that which we are able to see spiritually and then there is that which is in us that fights against it and we have to be able to see both of those. We have to be able to see what God is offering and what He gives to us through the power of His spirit and we have to see what's against that. That's where the battle is and if we don't grasp that then we're missing the mark.

Romans 7:22—For I delight in the law of God after to the inward man. So it's kind of an expression here, that which is in our thinking, in our being, in our mind. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." So again, it's that thinking and thinking about God's way of life.

But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. So there is truth that God gives to us and that which has been impregnated in our being, in our minds, and then it's strengthened by the continual flow of God's spirit. Because if we begin to cut that off and begin to glide, and so forth, then God's spirit begins to get cut off and we begin to rely more on

self and we're not crying out to God. We can't rely on self. Relying on self is a lukewarm spirit. It's wrong. It's evil. It's sick, it really is.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man. In other words, we know, we recognize God's word, we're able to see those things, and we're thankful for that, we delight in that. I mean, when you look at God's plan, when you look at the truths that God has given to us, when you look at the holy days and the beauty, from Passover to the Last Great Day, it's incredible what we have, the understanding. So we delight in those things, we are excited about those things, but there is something in self that battles against it, that's lazy.

That's why I mentioned about work. We have to have a mindset that is one of wanting to work at this. Fighting doesn't just happen. You have to work at it and we can't be lazy. We can't be lazy physically. If we haven't learned the lesson physically in our life we'll never learn it spiritually! That's just the reality of life. We can't be nonchalant in life and what we do in our lives. That's why God talks about work so much. Six days we work. The seventh is a rest from our ways, and we learn from that as well.

But he says, **I see another law in my members...** What is that? It's a law in our members he says, and it's battling against God. It's battling against the truth. It's battling against the very thing that God blesses us to see in the mind spiritually. **I see another law in my members warring...** Do we all see that? Do we recognize our nature is warring against God?

Now, that's a mouthful, it really is. Either we believe that or we don't. Either that's true in our thinking or not. I know that in me, within my being there is that which wars against God, and that's why I cry out to God, that's why we should all want to cry out to God, "Save me from this! Deliver me from this!" That's what that outline of prayer is about. "Deliver me from this. I want to conquer this." As long as it takes, whatever it takes, as long as I am in this body I have this battle. I have this war until I'm dead or I'm changed. There'll be a few that are changed from mortal to immortal, but not very many will ever in all of mankind's history be able to fit into that category. But there are going to be some at this point and even later on.

But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, that which is revealed to us as the truth of God, of God's way of life. There's this battle going on. But if we don't recognize it, you know what? We're satisfied. We're rich and increased with goods. That means you don't recognize the need for anything else. "I'm rich and increased with goods. What do I need?" Now, I know that exists in God's Church to different degrees. Hopefully individuals who have some of that in their life can come to address it and realize, "I have a battle on my hands. And you know what? It's me. It's me." If we can't say that, acknowledge that before God, "I've got a battle and it's my human nature." It's just the way it is. Incredible, what Paul said here.

So again, **I see a law in my members,** the way I am as a carnal human being, **warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

Selfishness is sin. That's the spirit of it. It really is. When we react to selfishness, we yield to selfishness—which we do every day. There is not anyone alive who does not yield to their own selfishness every day of their life. Their way, their way of seeing something, their way of judging something, their way of feeling or whatever it might be that's in them, it's there. That's because we're a carnal human being.

But we have the blessing of the impregnation of God's spirit. But just having the impregnation of that is not enough. It's got to be kept alive. It's alive when God's spirit is flowing through it, into it. It becomes stagnant and becomes asleep if we're not careful. That's where the battle is.

That's why he says in **verse 24**, this word that's only used in these two places, **O wretched man that I am!** This is God's apostle. After so many years, all the things we went to, Paul, in writing these things and all that God had given to him to understand in these things, and he's making it clear what "I" am like. "Oh, wretched man that I am." That's the way we are. Incredible!

Again, that's something we have to see in ourselves. It's just the way we are. So do we recognize that, do we acknowledge that, that we're wretched, that our nature is wretched and that the only way we can be something different, the only way we can change, the only way our thinking can change and we can begin to come out from the captivity of that (because it says it's a matter of captivity) is through baptism?

So God is blessing us since the time we were baptized at being able to come out of captivity. But it's a lifelong process and it's a lifelong battle. It's a fighting against this. It's easy to say, to look at the demonic world and Satan and we recognize there is a fight there (because there is), but self is where it starts. The ability to fight that starts in self and being filled with God's spirit.

Anyone around us that maybe makes our life a little more unpleasant, I can think of one organization that does that for me, and it's how we deal with it in the mind and take those things before God and cry out to God for strength of mind, of looking to Him to go through whatever it is in your life and to change the mind.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death? So do we recognize that's what this body is? I mean, do we really believe it? This is a body of death. It fights against God; it resists God and I want it to change. I've been in this battle since 1969 and I'm not stopping now.

So how convicted are we of that? When were you baptized? Are you continually fighting against self? Are you continually crying out for God's spirit, that you want to change, that you don't want this nature in you? Because it's sick, it's ugly. Selfishness is the mind of Satan. You want to see ugly? That's what it is.

That's what God wants us to see - that mind cannot be in His Kingdom. If we grasp that we'll fight against it. It doesn't just change just because we're in God's Church and we go through the motions. Not at all. It's a daily battle.

I thank God—through Joshua the Christ! So then, with the mind... So that's how we're able to do this, **I thank God—through Joshua the Christ our Lord!** So we recognize where the help comes from to change, to fight against this being wretched, this being miserable, this being blind as what we are of and by ourselves. The only way that we are able to see the opposite of being blind, the only way we're able to be the opposite of those things mentioned back there, about being poor and being truly rich with God's way of life and not being naked but clothed with white raiment—that means without sin—is with God's spirit in us.

We can't do it. Too often we try to do things on our own and you can't do it on your own. You can't fight against this on your own. That's why our prayer life with God, that's why our relationship with God should be so strong, it really should be, because that's where our strength is, that's where our help is, that's where our life is. That's why we pray, is because we recognize, "I need God's help." So if your prayer life is weak, you're weak. If your prayer life is consistent and you're crying out for God's spirit and help to change what's inside, well, that's where it is, that's where the battle is.

So again here, just making a contrast here he says, **I thank God—through Joshua the Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God.** So it's in this in the choices we make. Here is where the battle is and we want to yield to that, we want to cry out for God's spirit. **...but with the flesh the law of sin.** It's just the way it's going to be. Our carnal human nature, it's always there so we have to fight it.

Let's turn over to 1 Timothy 6 next. This expression of "warring against" in the phrase above here where we just read it, "But I see another law in my members warring against the law in my mind." Again, it's a battle. It's showing that this isn't something simple. We have a war on our hands. If you have a war on your hands we don't just stay in the foxhole or we don't just ignore it or turn away from it. We have to address it.

1 Timothy 6:9—But those who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare. Now, a physical example, we can see that, we can grasp that, but the point is to understand what it's saying spiritually to us because that's what it is to the Church. **But those who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and to many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of,** it's translated "money," but it's the word "riches".

If we can grasp it, it goes back to the same thing it's talking about in Revelation, "I am rich and increased with goods." It's how we see things. It's how we think. It's what's going on in the mind that we need to focus, and it's whether or not we're in that mindset and that thinking in our mind. "I am rich. I don't have need of help. I don't have need of more. I'm not in a battle." That's what that attitude is like. "I am rich and increased with goods."

Again here, someone who is relying on self, someone who is coasting, someone who is lukewarm has this spirit and they don't grasp it and so they fall into, as it says here, "temptation and a snare," because God's not there, because we're relying on ourselves. That's not the kind of riches

God wants us to have. He wants us to be rich filled with His holy spirit. That's where the strength is. That's where the life is. But not in self.

"But those who will be rich," in attitude and spirit and think that way, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." So we just make life worse. We get into a rut in certain things spiritually in our lives, we do things our way, we don't think about what it is God's will is, what God wants "me" to do, we just do what we want to do and somehow expect God to intervene for us, and somehow expect God to clean up things for us. It doesn't work that way.

Candidly, some of the things we get into are the very things that God will help us to learn from. But He doesn't just take it away. He lets us learn then from the error, from the mistakes as He works with us to deal with it so that we can be wiser the next time around in how we deal with various things in our life.

For the love of, as the word is, it's a word from covetousness, **riches...** **For the love of riches** - that kind of a mindset, that kind of thinking. See, we either love one or the other. We either give into self and our way of thinking, our way of looking at things and thinking we're okay and we go through the motions of religion or the other. It's a matter of mind and how we think.

For the love of riches is a root of all evil. So again here, that mindset that's self-satisfied, that relies on self because that's all we're doing if we don't have a prayer life with God, if we don't have a relationship with God, we're just relying on ourselves and how we deal with various battles because we don't grasp, "I can't do this without God's help." What a mindset not to rely on God, not to go to God every day and say, "I need help! I need, I want Your spirit because I can't think right if I don't have Your spirit. I can't deal with things in life if I don't have Your spirit." And we can't!

But in the Church we can begin to think we do. We can begin to think we're okay, we have enough, and we don't see ourselves and the ugliness of self for what it really is. There is the contrast.

"For the love of riches is a root of all evil." Being self-satisfied, that, for sure it's a root of evil. It really is because that's the mind of a being and what he did and why he did the things he did. He relied upon himself. He didn't rely upon God. He didn't look to God. God wants us to learn from such foolishness, such a mind, to be self-satisfied, to get to a point where it can begin to be jealous of other things and begin to want other things, begin to see things in a wrong way opposite of God.

So it's a root of evil, **which while some coveted after...** Think, what do you mean by that, "covet after"? That's a real perversion because that's how bad our human nature is. Our human mind can be so selfish that it can let down in prayer and a relationship with God. It's been given the truth to see the truth so it knows these things about Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the

meaning of holy days, and we've been around for so long we've heard these things and we learn them, but where are we spiritually?

Again, this attitude of spirit of relying on self, of whether or not we're really relying on God or not, it can even be engaged in the spirit of covetousness. It says, **which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith.** So you think of how many people have erred from the faith, turned from the faith, have made foolish mistakes in their life because of this, because really, deep down inside, they want something different.

Someone who is lazy wants something different! They don't want to work! That's the truth of the matter. So either we love to work and fight and we receive the reward and the blessing of being engaged in work, whether it be physical or spiritual, because they both go together. So if we can grasp that then we can grow. God can bless us and strengthen us in understanding and the power of His spirit.

Again here, we covet after something different. We have to see that for the reality it is. If someone is lukewarm they don't want to work. They don't want to get to a point either where they just say, "I don't want God's way of life." They don't go that far but they're not willing to fight for it. There is something in between there that's evil. Because something that doesn't choose God, a mind that doesn't choose God - Why? What is it you want? "I want it this way. I don't want to fight against my nature. I just hear how ugly my nature is and I just don't want to hear that." So what are you coveting? Do you want to hear the truth? Do you want to hear where the battle is or do you want to hear the easier way because you have a mindset that's lazy?

A lukewarm spirit really is lazy. It's not willing to admit, acknowledge the battle that's before us right here, in self. That's what we have to be on guard against constantly - because the whole Church went into Laodicea and into this mindset and began to slumber and sleep. What a horrible thing! It didn't recognize its need for God because something else seemed to be easier. It's amazing how the human mind can deceive itself, it really is. It's ugly.

So sometimes we don't recognize what it talks about when it says, like this word "riches" comes from the word "covetousness," to examine our thinking and to say, "Yeah, if I'm not working at it, if I'm not fighting at, then what am I doing because I'm not really desiring what God is offering. I'm not really desiring that with all of my being." Because, you see, that's a right kind of desire. To desire anything else is covetousness. It's a wrong thing for our life.

So what is it we desire? "I desire not to have to work. I desire that it just kind of be handed to me." Isn't that simple? "Oh, I'll go to services, I'll tithe, but when it's all said and done I just really want what God says I can have, but I don't want to put the work into it. I don't want to fight self. I don't want to see things in myself. I don't want to see ugliness. I want to see good things." It's amazing how the human mind will deceive itself into thinking it's doing pretty good and "I'm pretty good. I'm not that bad." Oh, yes, we are. We're just downright ugly. Our human nature is just really downright ugly.

Now, in God's Church with God's holy spirit—if we're all doing it and to whatever degree we're doing it—we're fighting against that and we're striving to learn how to love God's way of life, how to see family, how to appreciate one another, how to really appreciate and love one another because we're learning to see God working in people's lives. That's what we want anyway; we want God to work in everyone's life, to bring us all through this because we're all in this together. The Church is doing that better today than it ever has but still this exists and this is always a battle.

And candidly, there's not a point in your life where you can stop fighting, and yet we do. Every year there are people who have quit fighting. Some have quit fighting a long time ago because to get to this point now where they're gone or leaving it means they haven't been fighting, it's not real enough to them. So they're coveting something else. What is it in the world you want that's different from what God's offering? Incredible.

...which some have coveted after and they have erred from the faith. That's exactly the process we go through spiritually if we're not careful, because without God's spirit flowing through us, without fighting the fight and fighting against this that's what's going to happen, we're not going to be able to live by what God has given us to believe because you can't do it on your own. That's rich and increased with goods. That's self-reliance and you're not fighting.

Only if you're fighting can you have God's spirit in you. Only if you're asking and crying out for it and fighting against this nature and asking God for the help to fight against this nature and to see it more clearly for what it is, only in doing that can we live by faith.

“Faith without works is dead.” Faith without works is just lazy, and there is that middle road that can be very lazy spiritually, doesn't want to fight, doesn't want to engage in the battle, doesn't want to see self for what it is, doesn't really want to address that because that's really hard to do. Yeah, it is, it's hard to do. The reality is you can't do it on your own, you have to have God's help. That's the only way this sick mind can change. Then as times goes along it becomes transformed, it becomes stronger.

But I'll tell you what, no matter how strong you are if you ever get to a point where you begin to coast, to lag behind, you can lose it all. There have been a lot of people who have gone before you—and I'd say you all know some—who have come to that point and it's gone.

They have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. To be separated from God, life isn't good. Life is hard out there. Life is evil out there without God. It's evil enough as it is, but without God there is no hope. Without God there's not an ability to deal with reality and deal with things in our life in a way that gives hope and strength. Many have gone that direction.

Verse 11—But you, O man of God, flee these things. Run as fast as you can away from such attitudes, such thinking. Recognize the danger of it. All the more then be convicted of crying out

to God for deliverance. “Deliver me from this!” It’s not just everything out there on our job or how hard it might be. Yeah, it’s hard. It’s a sick world out there and it’s getting worse. Or from other things we see in the world around us or from family situations and from drama and we want things to be peachy keen and nice and yet that’s your life, that’s where you are, and that’s where you’re to grow!

I think it was Jim Jamieson: “Grow where you’re planted.” Thanks, Jim! Certain things like that can be in your mind and you realize, yeah, this is where God called me, this is where I am. I might move someplace else, but I’m planted there. I’m kind of taking the whole pot with me and going there now (the planting pot), and help me to continue to grow wherever it is. If you’re in a particular spot then you’re going to have battles, you’re going to have things going on around you. So that’s where we cry out to God, “Help me to grow. Help me to fight these things.”

Because I don’t care where you go on this earth, you’re going to have battles out there. There are going to be things going on that are going to come at you in your mind and you’ve got to deal with them. It wasn’t meant to be easy. It’s tough. The more we can recognize that the more we realize, “I want to be delivered from this.”

That’s why even that kind of a mind should help us in dealing with the world round us. They can’t help it. If anything, we learn from things like that, it’s like, “I can. They can’t. So how am I going to respond to them?” Whether it be on the job or in family that’s not a part or whatever it might be, “How am I going to respond to them?” It’s a whole lot easier then to say, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they’re doing.” Basically, “Help me to be forgiving toward them.” Because there’s the problem, see. That’s where we need the help.

...and pierce themselves... But you, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness. So what does that mean, “so follow after righteousness?” Nice little expression. It sounds good. “Follow after righteousness.” Yeah, that means you’ve got a battle on your hands. You’ve got a war on your hands because that isn’t your natural nature. On the contrary, your nature is one of backing away from those things and fighting against it, resisting it, resisting God. That’s the way we are. That’s why you have to fight it every day, fighting for God’s way. Because if we don’t see that, if we don’t see it, we’re not fighting, we’re not working like we should be against self.

But you, O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness... They don’t just happen! What is godliness? Striving to do things God’s way, fighting for God’s way. Peace! What about peace? How hard do we fight for peace? Because there are things that tell us about being peacemakers. Are we really striving to be peacemakers in our thinking, in our minds? I love peace. I truly hate drama with all of my being. That’s where we have to be in our minds because the more we do that, the more we see that, the more we’re going to fight it in self. I want peace.

So how do you get peace? It doesn't just happen. There are things that have to change in how you do things in order to have peace. Even if others around you are warring you can have peace. On the job? You can have peace. You can have peace. Okay? You can have it. Some can keep coming at you and trying to take everything away and you can have peace. It might be a little difficult at times but you can have peace because it's a matter of a relationship with God and how you think toward God and realize, "This is God's battle. I can't fight it." You can do what you can to whatever degree in your life you might.

That's the way life is. Things will come at you to take from you, to take the truth away from you, to try to get you to compromise, whatever it might be.

So again ...**flee these things, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith...** How you live, what you live in agreement with God doesn't just happen. ...**love, patience, meekness.** Those things aren't just a natural thing within us. On the contrary, we're different from that except what God has molded and fashioned to this point in time in our lives, and then that's what we embrace, that's what we want and continue to cry out for more of.

Fight the good fight of faith. That's what this is all about. It's a fight, a good fight, and it can happen in no other way. Faith doesn't just happen because we hear a sermon, because we read truth, whatever it might be. We can have the knowledge, we can have the ability to see certain things and believe it, but then we have to act upon it. There are things that we have to change in our thinking then. That's what this is about. It's a fight! Fighting anything that resists it, whatever that might be.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life... How do you do that? The bread of life that comes from God - it's in Christ. We want it to dwell in us. We recognize that if it isn't continually flowing through us and we start quenching God's spirit by certain sin we're allowing in our life and not addressing and not fighting, if we're not fighting against it, it'll start to quench God's spirit and it can kill you, it can cut you off totally from the truth, from God's way of life to where by next Feast you can be gone. By next Feast there are going to be more who are going to be gone. It's just the way it is. What a horrible thing.

So we all have to decide, "Am I going to continue to fight? Am I going to cry out to God more to fight more, to strengthen me in fighting?" Because some aren't fighting. The ones who might not make it to next year's Feast definitely aren't. It means they have to repent.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life where unto you also are called... That's what God called us to. He called us to a battle, to a fight. It's not just something that's handed to us on a silver platter because He did give us everything on a golden platter, but it's up to us to take it then and put it to use in our life, to use it.

So again, **lay hold on eternal life where unto you also were called and have professed a good profession.** A confession, an agreement, in other words, that that's what the word means in the

Greek language. It's something that you agree with God and it begins to be reflected in what your choices are in life. That's what this is about. Are we professing that, in other words, by how we're living? It's in agreement with God. The more we come into agreement with God, candidly, the more we're going to be living what is right and the more we're in agreement with God and how He tells us about how to cry out to Him for help, you know... He said, "Why don't you receive?" Because we don't ask.

You know what that is in context? The whole context is about His spirit. It's about His power to live in us. That's what He's wanting us to cry out about, to see the need for His spirit in our life.

Again here, it's **before many witnesses**. So people see our lives and others within the Body see our lives, and within the Body we want to see everyone come through this and be successful and that they come to see the frailties, the weaknesses that they might be battling that could be harmful to them. Because those things can be more evident to someone who's been around for a long, long time, but our spirit and attitude toward them should be a desire to see them saved, desire to see them come through this and to pray about some of those kinds of things for others at times then and God's intervention in their life to help them to come to grips with, how to see those things and whatever it takes, as much as we'd pray for someone who has a horrible physical ailment.

So which is the greater thing to pray about? Which is more important in a person's life? The physical or the spiritual? So it's a matter of what we see, what we think, and what we're fighting for.

Romans 8. We read a part of Romans 7, what it talks about there, again, that we read earlier here about this war and "O wretched man that I am" and "thank God through Joshua the Christ," God the Father and Joshua, what we're able to have spiritually. Then it goes on in Chapter 8, because it's really written without chapters anyway but mankind has divided it up, and sometimes we think that subject stops, but it goes on.

Romans 8:1 it says, **There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Joshua the Christ**. So that's what that's about. When it goes through and talks about "O wretched man that I am," and some of the other things that are mentioned here as you go on in reading it, where it talks about "there is a law in my members warring against the law of my mind," and that's what it's building up to.

Again then, when it talks about this, "there is no condemnation," because there is to someone who is not in the fight. There is a condemnation. The reality is we've got to get a hold of that, or indeed God's spirit is going to begin to be quenched in our life and we're going to begin, and we're just going to be going through the motions, if we're not careful, and coasting for a time.

I've seen people coast sometimes for years. God has allowed that at times. Sometimes for the Body to learn from it, sometimes with hope, depending on the situation, of giving people an

opportunity and time to address and hear things and to respond to it. Because God gives incredible opportunity to people, great room sometimes for ability to repent and change. So there comes that point in time where if God's spirit isn't being cried out for in the person's life they're going to go by the wayside because they're not fighting the fight. God will make that clear. So we see that on a regular basis. Sometimes it's just exists in God's Church and it exists today—much less than ever before, but again, a little bit is too much and our desire should be that it not exist and that we have God's spirit dwelling in us.

...who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit. So choices, choices, choices; it's all in our choices. What happens, where we go, what takes place, what fruit if produced, what isn't produced; to walk in the flesh is to rely on self. It's the same spirit, this lethargic, lukewarm spirit. Because that's the way the carnality is, to walk in the flesh. But God wants us to walk in the spirit, and again, the only way to do that is with Him living in us.

So to those who are in Joshua the Christ, walking in the spirit. That's the only way we can do it. **For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Joshua...** So he's talking about this law in our members, but there is another and a power that exists in Christ. The reason he died is so that he can live in us. You have to ask for that. You have to cry out for that. You have to fight for that. It doesn't just come into your life because we go to services, because we save a tithe, because we go to the Feast of Tabernacles. Again, God gives us great patience in those things and works with us through time, and yet there comes a time of reckoning.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Joshua has made me free from the law of sin and death. It means being forgiven of sin. It means we're fighting the fight. If we're fighting the fight we're being made free from those things, even though they exist in us. That's what separates us, what's going on inside. It's the ability to go before God in asking for forgiveness and crying out for His holy spirit and those things being forgiven and we're able to keep moving forward. That's where the fight is and that's what this is talking about.

For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Joshua has made me free from the law of sin and death. Do we understand what its saying? In this is a power, is a life that resists God, that is filled with sin. Selfishness is just sin, and if we give into that, if we yield to that - which we do every day if we can see it. If you can't just ask God for help to see it. He'll show you. Ask to do it in mercy though. I'd forgotten that a few times earlier on in my life and I learned right quick like ask for it in mercy because what's inside here is really bad, our human nature. It really is. It's just downright evil. It fights against God. It's a sick mind.

But if we see that and we're asking God to forgive us when we sin like that, when we have those things happen in our thinking, in a wrong thinking. It doesn't just have to manifest itself physically in life in something we've done. Hopefully, as you grow in time, it comes to a point where you capture it in the mind before it ever comes out of the mouth or in some other way or through the eyes and then it come into the mind or whatever it might be, or through actions, or whatever it is. The tongue does a lot of it.

If we can catch it before it ever hits the tongue or the eyes or whatever it is, that's great. That's a blessing. That's the goal, to grow, to grow in spirit, and it's by this life living in us.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh... I love this because sometimes traditional Christianity, they say, "See, the law has been done away with" and their blah, blah, blah that follows after that, and you think, "You don't even begin..." They can't see. They can't grasp what we're blessed to see. To be able to see this spiritually is an incredible blessing.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh... It just means we're weak. We can't obey God's law on our own. We can't be self-satisfied, we can't rely on our self, we cannot, in that respect, not go before God. We can't be of that mind, or this isn't happening. Because we are weak in the flesh, we can't keep God's law on our own.

If we grasp that we're going to cry out to God for His holy spirit to live and dwell within us every day, because you can't live this way of life without His help. You can't think right without His help. It's a spiritual thing.

If we recognize that about our thinking and the flaws and the fallacy of our human thinking apart from God, that's where this lukewarm thing comes in. This is where reliance on self, rich and increased with goods, and that's what it leads to. Sometimes for people it's not enough that they fight or that they hate God or that they hate the truth or the Sabbath or the holy days, but it's just enough that they don't want to work for it, they just want to be satisfied with what they've been told and not enter into the battle and somehow think that we're doing okay. No, you're not.

...what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, because we're weak, we need help, **God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.** He condemned our carnal human nature, because without God, apart from God, it is sick, it is perverted, it is wrong, it works against God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God," and it means what it says. That's in every one of us. But that's why he says, "I thank God through Joshua the Christ and God and that I'm able to have this life within me." There is no condemnation to those who walk in Christ, who walk in the spirit because He's living within you because you know you need that so you're crying out for it, you're in the fight, you're working at it.

For God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin...condemned sin in the flesh so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. So what does that mean? We're never righteous of and by ourselves, but with God's spirit in us we're forgiven of sin and able to walk in the truth, able to walk in this way of life and fight for it, and God says He attributes that to us for righteousness because we believe Him, we believe what self is - a big pile of you know what of and by itself apart from God. This pile is always going to be here. It's just going to be there. There are going to be wrong things coming out of your thinking until you don't exist in this Body anymore so you've got to fight it and you've got to fight it every day.

...so that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. It's a choice and you've got to fight, you've got to work. If you've got a physical work problem you've got a spiritual work problem. Sometimes we've just got to address these things in our life. We can have this of and by itself even if we're a workaholic. You can have this spiritually, not fighting for it, not wanting to see self the way it is.

Verse 5—For those who were after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. What does that mean? Well, it means we're satisfied with the way things are physically. We're not crying out to God like we should because we don't really believe or see things the way God says they are so we're just content to go through the motions, just go through the motions.

...walk in the flesh. So what does it mean to walk in the spirit? You had better be fighting, you had better be crying out to God for His holy spirit because He's the source of it. It's as simple as that. It's not owed to us. God doesn't just in the morning when you wake up and you start going out here and all of a sudden, "Oh, they're awake. Time to give them holy spirit because there's battles out there and they've got to fight against their mind and help make them be strong." It doesn't work that way.

If the mind doesn't want it, if the mind doesn't cry out for it it's against His law to give it. It's only in the understanding of what we are, of our need for it, that we cry out for it that God gives it. It's an incredible thing to know, to understand, to see. The more we see it, the more we understand it, the more we're cry out for it, "I need God's spirit always, every day in my life."

So those that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. That's why I keep hitting prayer life so hard, because it's about a relationship with God. He is the source. It is from Him. That's what we want. That's what we need. If we're to fight this battle, if we're to change, we've got to have His holy spirit. So how much do we really believe that?

Do you have trouble with your prayer life? Then you have trouble believing this! That's why you have trouble. That's why it's not consistent if it's not consistent. If it's not every day in your life, why not? Well, because you're rich and increased with goods. You're satisfied with something else. You're not really getting it, what God says about yourself, about the carnal mind, that you've got to fight it.

That's why we pray and cry out to God, "I need Your help! I know what I am without Your spirit and that scares the you know what out of me." It's just maybe a good way to get rid of that, isn't it, that big pile. You want to get rid of it? That's how you do it. Because that should scare it out of you so that you do do it, so that you accomplish it, so that you fulfill it, so that you cry out to God and, "I want Your spirit. I need it to fight this. I can't think right without You." It's a beautiful thing, it really is. That's what God wants to give you, but He'll only give you that if you're doing it in this manner. If we believe it then we're living by it, which is faith. It's a beautiful thing.

...those who are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, not of God's spirit, not praying, not fasting, not digesting the things that God gives to us. It goes in our ears and we walk out and it's gone. How does it come in the mind? We pray about it. We pray about things we hear during the week. We pray about this and maybe even certain verses and open it up before God and say, "I believe this. I need help. Help me to digest what You gave me this Sabbath, this past Sabbath." If we don't do some of those kinds of things in our life then we hear, we go. It's like the Protestant world. They come and they feel a little bit better about themselves and then they go away and it's like, hmm.

That's not God's way of life. That's walking in the flesh. That's rich and increased with goods because I don't really need anymore. I heard it. I came, I saw, and I went. But where is it?

For to be carnally minded is death, it's one or the other; it's not both. You can't have both. That's lukewarm thinking you have. "I" have it, but don't have it and we're not fighting for it.

...but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Life, God's spirit in us daily, crying out for it. That's the only way we can be spiritually minded because that mind isn't ours, it's God's and it comes from Him. The source is God. **...and peace**. Peace that it'll give you? Awesome.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. It fights against God. Your mind, my mind apart from God, if I don't cry out for His spirit I know it will resist and fight against Him. Mine will. Yours will. It does. That's the way it works. We're either engaged in this walking in the spirit, crying out to God to forgive us of our sins, for help to see our sins, for help to see our selfishness and we're engaged in the battle against it, which just doesn't happen, or we're not. We're engaged in it means we're fighting, we're crying out to God, we're trying to do things differently in our life to grow.

...for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. That's why an entire Church was spewed out of God's mouth. Incredible! Tens of thousands of people spewed out of God's mouth and He's making a declaration, "I will not receive you like this. This doesn't get it. You are not owed anything. You are not going to be given eternal life. You have to fight against that spirit. You have to fight against that mind. You have to seek to be forgiven of that kind of slothfulness, that kind of laziness," because it doesn't reflect a desire for God. It reflects rich and increased with goods, self-satisfied. You know, that's of the spirit. To really see that is of the spirit, that kind of thinking. You have to cry out to God to see it.

So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if, that great big IF - just ought to be in great big letters up here, "I" "F." Great big letters - **IF so be that the spirit of God dwells in you**.

People can deceive themselves that God's spirit is dwelling in them when they're not fighting for it, when they're not praying. If you're not praying for it regularly it's not in you like it could be,

like it should be, and your life could be so much richer if you'd cry out for it. I know there are a lot of people hearing me today that that's the case.

IF so be that the spirit of God dwells in you. If we're not crying out for that every day of our life it's not where it could be and should be and we're not as full of joy and happiness and fullness of life. We're not seeing things to the degree that God wants us to be able to see them. He wants to give us more of His spirit, more and more and more. He wants to see us grow. He wants to see us produce a hundred fold over and over and over again. But that depends upon our choices and what we want. Do we really want that?

But you are not in the flesh but in the spirit, IF so be that the spirit of God dwells in you. So don't deceive yourselves into thinking that God's spirit is in us every day of our life just because we're baptized and we went to Sabbath services last week. Doesn't work that way.

Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is none of His. So very strong words here in what it's saying. So do we want it? Well, then you're going to work for it, you're going to fight for it. It takes work. It takes a fight.

Revelation 3:18, again, going back to this thing about Laodicea and what it says here. It says, **I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire.** We understand what that means. It means we see something, we want something. If we don't see it, we should want to see it, we should cry out to God to help us to see it. Because I want the gold, to be rich in a right way. Not in my own reliance in self, but in what is the true riches of life that God offers us. That's what this is talking about.

I counsel you to buy... So what does that mean, "buy of me gold tried in the fire"? Fire means trial. It means hardship. It means what we have around us all the time anyway. We live in fire. We really do. Do we grasp that? Do we realize this is where we can be refined if we cry out to God, that it's in the fire, it's in the hardships of life that we can come to see things more deeply, that we can come to appreciate God's way of life that He's offering us more deeply and cherish it more and want it more? The more you cherish it, the more you're thankful for it you know what? The more you will fight for it. The more you see it, the more you'll fight for it.

That's what it's talking about here, "Counsel of Me to buy gold tried in the fire." Don't look at everything that's happening in your life as something that's evil and bad and you want God to fix it for you. Just come in here and it's like waving this magic wand and you're okay now, you don't have to do anything: "That's okay. You don't have to face that. It's okay. I've taken care of it. Breathe in, take it easy. I just took it all away from you. Don't worry anymore. I'll take care of everything for you. You don't have to do anything." It doesn't work like that, does it?

Things are hard and you've got to cry out to God to go through whatever it is you're going through in your life and to realize that it's in whatever difficulties on the job, in life, of things around you, that you want to do it God's way, that you want to see God in this and how it's

resolved, how to take care of it, how to address it in your own life, that it not consume you, that it not tear you up. Because how are you responding to the little trials or the big trials in your life, to the fire that's around you? Is it a matter of God's being involved and you're going to God and crying out not just to remove it and make everything, "Oh, it's okay. I took it away." Doesn't work that way!

What do you have to do? What do you have to do to change that? Because that's what it's about! What do I have to do to see a change? If it's the way I see it, if it's the way I'm addressing it, whatever it might be, the peace comes from in the mind when God deals with it and works with it to help us to see things properly, to see this as a blessing. Whatever it is you're going through in life, I don't care what it is, it can turn into a blessing if you keep God in the picture, if you're crying out to God. He'll work with it to mold and fashion things within you that could come in no other way. You can learn things that you could learn in no other way.

Do we recognize there's gold in that fire? That's what it's talking about. There is gold in the fire. But it's how we go through it that counts. If we do it with God, if we do it in looking to God, not just to clean it up and take it away from us, but on the contrary, ever how hard it gets, bring it on! Whatever it is that "I" need to change and to grow so be it and "I" want You in it, "I" need Your help to address self, to see it properly so that "I" can have a right peace of mind and right thinking and know that "I'm" addressing it properly in how "I" think, because how we deal with things is all in the mind in our own little thinking, our own little warehouse up here and how these little clogs are, you know, how they're churning up here all the time, how you're dealing with life, how you're dealing with trials around you, how you are addressing them.

So often we want everything else around us to change as long as we don't have to work on self. "I want change. I want You to change this. I want You to change that at my job. I want You to change this person and that person - especially that person..." You have to fight at it. Self is what you want to change. Self is what has to change, your thinking in your mind. Only God can do that.

What an incredible thing the things that Satan sees, candidly, is the things he wants to destroy us by are the very things that can be the best things that happen in our life. Those are the things that you can go through that he doesn't understand that with God's spirit He can mold and fashion things within you that can happen in no other way.

In writing this book I have been dumbfounded by that process. Everything we've gone through that's been horrifying and sick as far as the world and things that have happened within the environment of the Church, and all those things have brought us to where we are now. The truths we see, the things we grasp and understand is because of all those hardships and trials we've gone through. It is an awesome thing, it truly is. I wouldn't change any of those things for anything in the world. Though when you're going through some of those things it's not a picnic, but it's a fight. There is where God can give us peace, will give us peace if we're looking to Him.

I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire that you may be rich. There is the riches you want. You don't want the attitude of mind of being content with self the way it is and just going through the motions of religion like the Protestant world does. I mean, that's just sick. You've got to fight for it. You've got to want it. You've got to cry out to God for it. I repeat it over and over again because it's hard for self to get that sometimes and to see ourselves for what we are.

So we want to be rich in what God offers us. That's in living the truth, believing the truth, seeing the value of His spirit in our life, the value of being able to be forgiven. How great is that that we can be forgiven of sin? You can just go before God and say, "Father, forgive me. I am sick of this. I am sick of what I see. I'm sickened by it, of that which would lead to that," whatever "that" is in our life that we're not doing right or we've said wrong or thought wrong, or whatever it is that happens.

I counsel of you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire that you may be rich; and white raiment... See, not naked. It's hard for us to grasp that, that if we don't have a close relationship with God and we go to Sabbath services, we can deceive ourselves into thinking we're clothed with God's righteousness, with the truth, and the reality is, no, we're not. It's a spiritual thing. It's not a thing of knowledge just because it's there. Thank God it's staying there if we're not yielding to His spirit and growing in His spirit. He's patient with us in those things.

...that you may be clothed so that the shame of your nakedness does not appear. Because the reality is in sin, in our selfishness, it really is a shameful thing. If we can see, if we can just be ashamed of our carnality, be ashamed when our thinking isn't right, be ashamed when we're selfish inside and we see that come out. We have to be ashamed of those things. To be ashamed whatever it might be in the smallest of things in life where that comes out. Thank God for that because it's when we can't be shamed and feel ashamed that's a great danger. We should be able to be ashamed of what we are apart from God. The reality is it just comes out of us every day, things that we should be ashamed of. Ask God to be ashamed of sin, to be ashamed of selfishness, to be ashamed of that which wars and fights against Him because in self, it does.

...and anoint your eyes with eye salve... I love this description in the Greek language. This is like taking something and rubbing it thoroughly all the way through in every part of it, just rubbing it in, this eye salve, **so that you can see it.** There's the extra effort involved in it that you have to do. Anyway, that's what we have to do. We have to anoint our eyes with eye salve, to ask God to help us to see. Because the ability to see isn't something that just happens every day when we wake up and we're in God's Church because we were impregnated with His spirit at baptism. That's just a beginning.

As many as I love... And who is that? Every one of us. Every one of us who is able to still be here to this day, we have been exceedingly loved by God. We truly have. He loves us, He wants us to succeed, and He gives us much time.

I think of different ones who have gone by the wayside, that they were given so much time, and sometimes so much counsel, but you can't do it for anyone. You can't do the work for them. They've got to want it and do it themselves if they want it. If they don't want it then they're not going to engage in the battle. When they don't then at some point in time they just go by the wayside. You've got to be on guard and fight against this all the time because it just wants to do things that are opposite of God, of what He says is good for us.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. God does that through sermons and things we read in the scripture, whatever it might be. We're able to see things in there about ourselves and say, "That's right. That's the way my nature is and I hate it. I don't want that. I want what God is offering me and I know I've got to do something about it. If I'm going to walk in the spirit there is something that has to happen." Your legs have to be moving. Some examples that Paul gives is it's a race. They're not just moving, they're running in the right direction. That's hard.

You know, I have a lot of respect for people who get out there and can run...run...run at all. Because I can't even run anymore. My body won't let me. But I got to keep at it so I can walk. But for people that can go out there and run long distances and so forth and they push and drive themselves? I know that battle. I know what's in the mind. That's what this is about. It's about being engaged in that kind of a battle in your thinking spiritually, to fight for this way of life and to fight against this nature.

Anybody that's in a race knows exactly what I'm saying today. I can see some heads nodding right now, in Cincinnati especially. Certain of them have gone out there in some of these 5k, 10k's, 26, whatever that is. I can't think of the exact mileage for a marathon. But anyway.

I think you're nuts. I highly respect that because to do that I know that I can't. I know that my body can't. At least I know it can't now. It probably could have a long time ago. I did one ten mile one time and that was the last one. There is a battle in the mind. I have a lung problem. It kind of runs in our family where I can do a short distance, but my lungs, I just have a horrible time. But maybe if I'd applied myself more, I don't know. But I know it's not for me.

But this is. This is the marathon. This is an endless marathon, if you will, where you keep wanting to run spiritually. There are things you have to do to accomplish that and it's a constant battle in the mind. If we understand those examples that Paul has given in scripture, that we run a race, that means a lot to people who have run races, because they know how much they've had to fight against self to go from one marker to another one to another one.

I think of that. I'll never be able to forget it, 3½ miles in Bricket Wood in England, Ambassador College, one big race that we had. We had track and we ran track and did things there, but that was nothing like going on the longer runs and some that did. Some of those guys talked me into running cross country with them, 4½ miles in that beautiful countryside, and I did some of those, but I took time to build up to it. But it's hard. You would look at one hill, one valley, one stream, one fence, because they had these things over there in England where you had like stairs that

would go over fences, and so they'd make those available out there in the different areas so you could go through these different areas throughout the countryside. It's a battle and you just have one spot upon another that you're looking at.

I remember to this day - that's been a long time ago - I could draw the map of the area I ran. I only ran it once in this race with all these guys up by the chicken farm and on back around this road. And finally, the last area of road where you finally come up to where the dorms are and that hill was hideous. Because you're out of it anyway inside and you're putting more into it because you want to be somewhere that's reasonable (vanity), rather than the last one across the line. But you know what? That's an achievement.

So you're coming up this hill and you see it, finally, where the track is. You still have a ways to go but man, it gives you strength, the last marker. The last marker. I hope I'm seeing the last marker - but I may not be. It was that way in that particular race because I'd never been on those roads but I followed the group that was ahead of me because I didn't have to worry about being out front. So I was able to see them, where they were going, and I saw these different areas they're going, and that hill, okay, we can do that one. That's the way this way of life is for us. You've just got to keep pushing yourself and driving and realize this isn't meant to be easy.

You're in a race. Do you want to run or do you want to walk? If you want to walk and that's the only thing you can do, at least walk, walk in the spirit and you'll get there, but don't quit and don't give up. Because I saw that. Keep...keep in the race. Don't become satisfied with going halfway. Don't become satisfied because you can't be in a certain spot or have a certain thing or certain things haven't worked out for you the way you wanted them to or it's just too hard and I want things to be easier. Well, they're not. To fight against this, that's the biggest battle you'll ever have in your life, fighting against it.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Change.

That's it for this Sabbath.