

This is the continuing story of Christ, entitled *True Life Story of Christ*, and this is *Part 5* today.

We ended in the account of John 12 where Christ was riding on a donkey's colt going into Jerusalem there toward the end, and particularly on a particular Sabbath, that particular Sabbath before Passover, and everyone there along the way that was putting down palms and branches and so forth, and crying out as they did as he came into Jerusalem on that particular Sabbath before Passover, and how they'd gone into the temple and then toward the evening, it was getting late then by the time they'd been in the temple on the Sabbath and had looked around the area there. Christ was teaching them, talking to them about various things. Then they returned back to Bethany.

Again, Bethany was the place where they stayed. When you look at the time when Christ actually died it was Bethany they returned to. The women went back to Bethany. This was the area of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and that was only about two miles outside of Jerusalem.

So again here, the story flow, we're going to pick it up in **Mark 11:11**. It says, **Then Joshua entered into Jerusalem, and then into the temple**. Again, that Sabbath before Passover. So we're picking up part of the story again. **Then he looked around at everything there and by then the evening had come, so went back/went out, went back out to Bethany**. They left, went back to Bethany **with the twelve**.

**Then the next day...** So, this is on the 11<sup>th</sup>. This is on the first of the week, Sunday, on the first month. ...and when they were come from Bethany, it says, **he was hungry. And he saw a fig tree afar off with leaves, and he came to it hoping that he might find fruit on it. But when he came to it he found nothing but leaves for the time for its figs had not yet come. And Joshua responded by saying, No one will ever eat fruit of you forever. And his disciples heard it.**

So again, making this comment, but for a purpose. And so people have wondered about, what is this all about, what does this mean, why would he say such a thing, and so forth? So, people, as a whole, when that happens and don't understand what's being said, why he would say something like that, they tend to read right over it and continue on. But the point of this is that the fruit would not last, the point being, forever. It's not going to continue on. That's why he said there'll never be fruit on you again forever.

So, a little bit later we're going to read how the tree started withering soon after that, so it definitely wasn't going to produce fruit. But he used an expression here to show something that was more important in time, primarily for the Church, that there is one true fruit that will last forever, and that is in him, through him and so forth. This is what this is about. This is what he's referring to.

Matter of fact, good to turn back to John 15 where it talks about this in part, in a manner, because he's talking about referring to those things he still taught at this season of the year. Because if you know the account of John, John 13 is about Passover night. This is about his initiation of or his giving of a new Passover to be observed and his keeping of the last Passover to be observed in the manner of roasting the lamb. Then the day following, or the things following that night, I should say the things he taught, and on into that night before, morning there before he was taken, all those things he taught are through John 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, in through there.

Some of the most important things that he gave were toward the end of his ministry and that is a large reason this particular series is being given, because it's about that period of time around Passover. Because this is what his life was all about. He came to fulfill the Passover. Again, it's all leading up to that and that's what some of these things that he's teaching all about.

But going on here in **John 15:1**, he says, **I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away.** So again, it's this process of how you can have fruit in your life, how fruit is produced, where it comes from. **...and every branch that bears fruit He purges**, in other words, cleanses it in the form of pruning if you will. Especially if you look at a grape vine, it's a process of pruning.

**...and so that it might bring forth more fruit.** So, it seems backward sometimes to people. Sometimes when people do pruning, they're afraid you may be cutting back too much. But actually, sometimes it's healthier for a plant to do that. So there are various kinds of even flowering plants, primarily roses (I've gotten in trouble a few times for seemingly cutting them back too far), but they come back and they produce more flowers sometimes when you keep them pruned back a little bit.

But the same thing with grapes. If you prune them, they will actually produce more grapes, better grapes, better quality grapes. Not necessarily more, because if you get to a point where too many are being produced then it robs the ability of the plant to produce a good grape. And so, this is a part of what it's talking about here, the ability to produce more fruit. Again, **so that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are already clean**, in other words "purged." It's using that same word here. **...through the word** (through logos, through God's word), **which I have spoken to you.**

He goes through this process here talking about this, which to me is some of the most exciting things that have ever been revealed to mankind. Where it says now, **Abide in me, and I in you.** So he's talking about this process of how God can dwell in us through the power of His holy spirit, that He can continually come into our lives and live and dwell within us.

**Because the branch cannot bear fruit of itself.** So this is what it's all about, the ability to produce fruit. And so, if a particular plant, whether it be a grape or anything else here, the fig tree, as we talked about there, that's spoken of back there in Mark, if it's not producing fruit forever, again, it's showing that there is a way that you can have fruit forever in your life. There's

only one way and it's by abiding in the vine and this is the process of what he's explaining here in John 15.

He says, **Abide in me, and I in you, because the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine.** So, an awesome thing to understand because if we understand that then we will come to understand in time what it means to not be able to abide in the vine, and that's because of sin. Sin is what separates us from God. Sin is what separates us from the ability to have God's spirit dwell in us, to live in us, to continually come through us. That's why Passover is so important to us then, what he came to fulfill and why he's teaching so many of these things at this particular time.

Because it's understanding that through our Passover, we all have sin, we have to be forgiven of sin on a regular basis, and so we have to cry out to God. We don't want to be separated from the vine. We don't want to be separated from God, the ability of that power to flow into our lives that produces fruit. Because if that's not there, we can't produce fruit. That's just a reality. God's spirit has to be there. Christ and God the Father have to dwell in us.

He says, **I am the vine, and you are the branches. Anyone who abides in me, and I in them, the same brings forth much fruit.** So, it's a promise. Things are going to change in your life. Sometimes we don't think along those lines. Sometimes we don't understand what's really taking place in our life because we live this life day by day and it becomes a routine. It's difficult for us to grasp what has taken place from the time we've been called, and through the years as time continues on, and then to see what God has produced in us at any moment in time.

We see our frailties. We see our weaknesses. And that's a good thing. But sometimes if we're not careful we can beat ourselves down by that too. There's a balance in that that God helps us to come to understand, that yes, we have sin, thank God that we have a Passover, because then His spirit can continue to dwell in us, and when we ask for forgiveness, to have a confidence and to grow in that confidence it's gone.

And so, the more that grows within us the more our mind is transformed, well, it's just a beautiful thing. That's what this is talking about. It's talking about fruit then that's produced in our lives. Sometimes people don't grasp the fruit that's there. They don't grasp the change that takes place in the mind if you allow it and if you want it. But you've got to want it on a continuing basis. Because even that can be cut off or choked out at any time. Anyone who's been in God's Church for any length of time has seen that in people's lives, where people have begun to choke out the flow of God's spirit, where they become weaker.

Hopefully, the desire is, is that God will bring a person to repentance or that the person will respond at some point there, be shaken by whatever it takes to be drug out of the fire, as the examples are given, and repent and have that growth continue then in their life.

So again, we have to abide in the vine. That power, that fruit, or that spirit if you will that's in us, because it's the nutrients that come through that which is likened unto God's spirit, that's the

power, that's what feeds us and strengthens us and produces the fruit. Because as it says, **because without me you can do nothing.**

That's a good thing to know and to understand. Without God, without God's spirit, being cut off from the flow of God's spirit, choking out the flow of God's spirit nothing will be produced and that's a scary thing.

I've seen hundreds and hundreds, and hundreds and hundreds of people go by the wayside because of that, because they've choked out God's spirit. It gets to a point where they not only can't produce anything but what they had begins to be lost, and if they hold on to any resemblance of the truth it becomes a Protestant thing, which to me is an ugly thing if it's just a belief in something that you have by knowledge but not by the power of God's spirit, not by seeing it because you see it spiritually, and you hold on to certain things that you've chosen to hold on to that you still want to believe and it becomes so empty. That's a horrible thing - truth with emptiness. What a horrible thing to experience.

So, it says, **If anyone does not abide in me, they are cast forth as a branch.** So, if it's non-productive, if change won't take place, if fruit is not produced through this process of time, whatever God allows, whatever God grants, it says, **it's cast forth as a branch and it withers.** It's non-productive. It's better that it be cut away.

Sometimes that's hard for people to grasp too, that if something will not produce fruit—on a vine it's easy to see—cut it off, because then the grapes that are produced are going to be so much better. That way it won't be robbing from the grapes, that which comes through the vine to feed the plant to keep it healthy, to cause grapes to grow and cause them to grow healthy, and one area, just one bad branch, in that respect, can hurt the whole vine. And so, it's far better to cut it off.

Now, that's a hard thing when you're dealing with human beings because the desire is for all of us, is that everyone would succeed, that everyone would make it. Our tendency is when we first come into the Church is to believe that everyone is converted, that everyone is convicted, that everyone is convicted of this way of life to the end. But time and trials come along and that isn't the case. Because we're tried along the way and we have to address things along the way. The real fruit is in the consistency of sticking to the battle, of sticking to the fight, of really wanting God's way of life.

That's why I talk about so often, you have really got to want this way of life. You've got to cry out to God for it. You've got to fight for it. Because it doesn't just come naturally. It doesn't come easily. A lot of that determines what you're going to put into it, how you think toward God and in that then God can cause fruit to be produced. The more a person will fight, the more fruit that's there, the more character that's there, that which can be used in the future whether it be in time, obviously, in Elohim, but even living on into a new age that some are going to have the opportunity for.

So again, this has been probably been one of the hardest things for me to deal with throughout my ministry, and that's coming to a point where people have to be separated from the body. But I also came to a point where I realize that it's the healthiest thing if they will not repent. If they will not change and they try to bring that in within the Church, within the Body, it's like Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 5 there concerning the Days of Unleavened Bread and Passover, that a little sin hurts, a little leaven leavens the whole lump.

That's what begins to happen. It begins to spread. It's like robbing the others of what they need, the nourishment that's needed, because of that influence, that negative influence that drags and pulls away from the rest of the Body.

It's far better for the Body that if a person will not repent that they simply be cut off. That can be a very hard thing. Sometimes it's hard for people to deal with others that they know of that are close to them in a relationship because of such things. But the reality is there are times that just comes to that. So be it. Hopefully, and prayerfully, at another time they'll repent and change.

That's why I think of so many. There are far more people who have been called into God's Church than those who will be in the first resurrection. Far, far more. I think one day when we really learn we'll come to find out it was exceedingly greater.

So, I think of the Great White Throne, when it talks about there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth and when people are resurrected and they come to a point in finding out they have to live this physical life again—in a far better world—but “Oh, if I'd lived it right the first time!”

Incredible to realize that, what is healthy for the Body. The hope is that someone hasn't been lost or they've gone too far, that they can still be stirred, awakened and stirred in a new time when the whole world, they see the evidence of everything that God has done for a thousand years, and then hopefully and prayerfully... It's certainly going to be made easier for them. But again, choices, choices all the way to the end. What do we want? Do we really want what God has for us?

As it says here, **and they are cast forth as a branch and wither; and are then gathered and cast into the fire and they're burned.** So that's the ultimate in the sense of never repenting. That's going to happen to some. That boggles the mind to think that there are going to be people - throughout time, it's easier to understand for those who just have minds that are so far gone in some cases that won't be able to come through it all, will never want God. Just like what happened in the angelic realm, a third of the angelic realm that came to a point where they didn't want what God was offering them anymore. They wanted something different.

And with mankind, to think that there could be that kind of a percentage or higher? It's kind of astounding. What's even more astounding is to understand that many of those who were called through time, through the past 2,000 years, there are going to be people there that are resurrected that aren't going to want God's way of life during the hundred year period. There are

going to be people who reject again God's way of life. That's a horrible thing to think that that's possible, but that's a reality because of choices people make.

So, then the ultimate there is they will be gathered together at the end of that hundred years if they continue to reject God. Anyone who continues to reject God, this is what will happen. It will be an end of life.

**Verse 7—If you abide in me, and my words...** What does that mean "my words?" Everything that God gives us to see, to know, to believe at any moment in time. Because we're judged by what we have to any moment in time.

When I think of that I think back to the time of Abraham and I think of, how much truth did he have? Then beyond that when you come to the time of his descendants and you see Moses raised up and God began to give him a lot more at that time, a codified law, a priesthood. Here Abraham only had an occasion to visit with, to talk to what was manifested to him as Melchizedek, High Priest of God. He didn't have what Moses was given.

You look at these different periods of time and then you look at the time of Christ that we're talking about here and you think of all that God, Christ in this case here, began to give that God had given him. It was in him. It was his mind. It was his being, the Word of God made flesh. All that he began to teach at that time when he came, all these things, some of these things that we're going through here in this series that began to be taught so much farther, so much beyond what was given during the time of Moses or any time in between. You have these different stages of time and you marvel.

Then by the time of the apostles, much more was given then because what Christ had given to them began to be expounded upon by the apostles, and they began to even tell more and give more, were inspired to record more, and so we have those books beyond the first four gospels.

Then I think of the end-time and God beginning to work to strengthen the Church again during the time of Philadelphia, to revive the truth in His own Church, to restore that truth, and then bringing us through the worst time ever prophesied in the sense of God's people, the Apostasy, and then the things that God has given because of preparing for the second coming of Christ. It's been incredible and our history is awesome, to be able to think upon those things and to realize what God has given us.

But we are judged by what we're given at any moment in time, the word of God that He has given to us because the truths that He's given to us reflect His mind, His being, His thinking. The more we see that the more we really come to know and to see God, the mind of God, the being of God, and being at one with God then takes on far greater meaning then.

These are the things it's talking about here: **If you abide in me and my words abide in you.** So, if God's word abides in us, we're going to be of the same mind with one another. We're not going to have the kind of divisiveness that I experienced ever since I came in the Church in 1969. Because there was always divisiveness - in the ministry, in things being taught by some of the

evangelists, all through the period of time. Some of it I didn't even know about until later on when I could look back and think, man, that was just wrong, it wasn't true at all!

We learn as we go along and what an incredible thing to go through. It's only been because of what God is doing in the remnant that He has brought us together in the sense of being more solidified than ever before. That is in large part because we're smaller than ever before, the way we're organized in a way that's never before been done, in that respect, as far as the Church is concerned because of technology that's there that enables us to do the kinds of things that we do now, which we should be exceedingly thankful for so that we don't have this divisiveness where there are so many different ideas that people have with different doctrines and different ideas that we saw.

Well, that finally came up then, didn't it, after the Apostasy. That's why there are so many organizations out there. 600+ splinter groups that happened within just a few years there after the Apostasy, and all that because of people having so many different ideas about God. Incredible, what we experienced.

So, if his words abide in us, as it says here, **and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.** I think early on, so often when people are first called, this tendency is to think that we can pray about anything in our lives and God's going to do it for us. That's not what this is about. It's about the things that God tells us that are the most important of life.

And what is the most important of life? We're reading about it right here in Chapter 15 and Chapter 14; Chapter 14 especially, when it gets very specific about a comforter that's going to be sent, a paraclete. It's referring to the holy spirit that's going to be given. It can dwell in us, God can dwell in us, Christ can dwell in us and we can dwell in God on a spiritual plane.

It goes through Chapter 14 discussing these things, of what can live in us and how we can live our lives and it goes through there talking about praying to God; it goes in there talking about not quenching God's spirit.

The most important thing in human life is to receive of God's holy spirit that's made possible through our Passover. Because it's only through the forgiveness of sins that mankind can have a relationship with God. How beautiful, how awesome is that?

These verses here are exceedingly powerful and my greatest fear sometimes in the Church is that because we know these things so well, because we see them so clearly, that we can begin to take them for granted. Because this hasn't always been known. These things, to understand this process of God, of Christ continually coming into our life has not been known that long in God's Church.

Sometimes it's difficult for us because if we didn't live what it was like before not to have it, for however long that was, and then all of a sudden to have it and to see its greater value, well, that's what makes it tough sometimes. That's why people have to cry out and ask God to help

them not become lethargic or complacent with what has been given, but to treasure it, to see it for what it is, to be thankful for it, to think upon these things and to realize it hasn't always been with us. To know these things and to see them, what kind of a value do we place on that?

So, what is the greatest value? What is the greatest thing a person can pray about day by day, that God wants us to have? Well, His Son paid the price so that we could have it. He gave his life's blood. A soldier speared him in the side so that we could have the ability. How incredible is that—to have the ability to have the truth in our lives, to live in us. It's God's spirit. And so, an incredible price was paid for that. His very life. He gave his own life so that we could receive of this spirit into our lives.

That's the most important thing you can pray about, not to be cut off from the flow of His spirit, to be forgiven of sin through our Passover so that He can dwell in us fully, to actually search out and look for those things day by day in our lives. Where am I falling short? Am I not living up to what I need to?

Because every one of us have weaknesses and faults in that area - things we say, things we think, whatever it might be in life, whenever we're selfish (which is 99-point 9/10ths percent of the time). That's just the way we are! We are selfish human beings and you have to fight against that selfishness.

When you find yourself doing those things that are selfish you've got to go to God and repent and pray for help to continue to fight that and even if the fight is primarily one of repenting because you see it's wrong, because you're reminded of what you are. "I'm reminded of what I am. I'm reminded of what I am, and I don't want that. I want to be what God is offering us in His Family, Elohim, always, forever."

**...you will ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.** So, the greatest thing you can ask for that God wants you to have is to receive His holy spirit through the forgiveness of sin, that He continually abide in you. What greater thing can a human being think of having than to have God Almighty and His Son spiritually dwell in our lives, working in our minds to change us, to transform us? There is nothing greater. There is nothing you can have physically in the world that would be greater than that.

So, anything you value that we might feel that you would like to have, you want to have, you desire to have, is nothing compared to that. It really isn't. It's absolutely nothing. That's why in reality we have to be of a mindset to be willing: "It doesn't count for anything compared to what God offers us." So, if you think that way then you're willing to do basically anything that's needed to get from here to there.

**Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.** Why? Well, because that's His will. He's glorified when we respond to Him. I think of the one who turned back that had the leprosy. The others didn't. But one turned back and glorified God and thanked God that he'd been healed. The others didn't. It shows a mindset of human beings.

And so, if we're deeply thankful for something, God is glorified. How pleased was Christ to see that? He was pleased. You can count on it. When someone responds with gratitude because they see something that gives them the ability to be thankful like that, where they can really see the value of it, acknowledge that with a true spirit, then that's an awesome thing. This is how God is glorified, in that respect. It pleases Him.

How pleasing is it when we respond in a way that so much sacrifice has been given to give us what we have and when we grasp that and we're continually thankful for that then this is what glorifies God's purpose because His purpose is to save us. His purpose is to bring us through this.

**Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.** His desire is that we be Elohim and getting from here to there there'll be a lot of fruit produced in our lives. **And so shall you be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; continue in my love.** To me, that's a beautiful thing because it means to fight against selfishness, to understand God's love is totally different than ours, to continually want to repent and have that kind of a mind, though we don't have it yet, but we have a taste of it by knowledge, by understanding. That's why we repent as often as we do about the things that don't fit into that category because we love what God's showing us and that's what we want.

Continuing back in Mark 11 now. So again here, returning to that account about the fig tree on the 11<sup>th</sup> day there, on Sunday, the first day of the week. So, after passing by the fig tree they returned again to the temple going back in on Sunday and this is the account here.

**Mark 11:15—Then they come to Jerusalem: and Joshua went into the temple, and began to drive out those who sold and bought within the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves.** To me, that would have been quite a sight! Because it wasn't done mildly. It wasn't done with hesitation. It wasn't done apologetically it was done with strength, with purpose, and with force. "Get out of the temple!" I mean, can you imagine going up to tables and just throwing them over and everything that's on them? Because that's what was taking place. Who's going to stand up to that inside the temple? You think, for that to have even been in the temple? But anyway, to throw them over, to turn them over and anything that was on them, things that they were selling, bringing in and so forth? Incredible here what's being said here. So quite an account.

**...he turned over the table of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves; and then he would not allow anyone to carry any merchandise through the temple.** He was guarding the way. He is making sure that people were driven out and not allowed in, not allowed to carry anything through there. If they were, he was addressing it and with strength.

So, it's hard to think for people when they come into God's Church to picture Christ being like this because of how he's painted or pictured by stories of traditional Christianity and of someone who was meek and weak.

Those things, I hate when I see it on TV, when so often when a preacher, a minister of some sort is interviewed and I can't even imitate it, it's so repulsive to me. But it's like these fake tones. There's one that's been on TV a lot. I have to turn it off or turn it to another station when I hear him because he comes on and I don't know if they practice this, I don't know. But it's this tone, and anybody, you should know what I'm talking about. It's a fake thing. It isn't real. It's like this pious type of speech.

If you heard different people talk you could almost walk down a line, say, "Ah, you're a preacher." "You're a preacher." You could almost do that because of the way they talk and the way they present certain things and what they talk about and how they do it. It's like, whew, let me out of here! Because it's fake. It's not real. It's not true. It's really repulsive because that doesn't picture the way God is. It doesn't picture the way Christ was at all in any fashion or form. But that's how they paint him. That's how they picture him, as very mild mannered, pious. Anyway.

**That he wouldn't allow anyone to carry any merchandise through the temple. So he taught them, saying, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer?** "Look what you're doing to it! But you're to come here to draw close to God!" Now that was on a physical plane, but that's the purpose of it, that's what the purpose of it had been, to come before God, to honor God, to sacrifice before God, even in a physical sense up to that point of time - though they couldn't even begin to understand the spiritual part of it, what that would mean, because they weren't called to that.

So again, he taught them, and most of the things that he says here it wasn't for them. It was for us. **Is it not written My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer? but you made it a den of thieves.** "Look at what you're doing. Look at your attitude toward," in essence, his Father, "Look what you're doing toward God." It reflected a lot and it was very repulsive to him. We ought to be able to understand that, things that are repulsive that have been done in the name of God, using God's name, telling stories about God.

I am convicted and convinced that the main reason churches want to reopen right now is for money, because of passing around the pot every Sunday. Because they're hurting. Because they're I don't think they're probably getting a relief fund of some sort that I know of, like a business. Though the way the government treats you it should be that way. Anyway, another story. Because we weren't really treated as a church. At least, I wasn't.

Anyway, so you think of this fakery, this stuff that goes on out there, and I am convinced that that is why they want to reopen. This is why they're screaming out so much. It's not because they have such a deep, profound belief toward God Almighty, it's toward something else. But anyway, sad, sad, sad, pathetic.

**Verse 18—Then the scribes and the chief priest heard it...**

Though all would deny it with great arguments.

**Then the scribes and the pharisees heard it and looked for a way in how they might destroy him.** They hated what he was doing. They had already decided, determined because of what happened with Lazarus they wanted to kill him. They wanted to put him to death. We've already read through that portion. They wanted him to die. They wanted him not just to disappear somewhere, they wanted to have him put to death somehow.

So, they wanted him destroyed **because they feared him.** Because of what he was doing. They never had the guts to stand up for what was wrong, being done wrong in the temple. They knew that that wasn't right. They knew the things that were written in scripture about how service or things were to be done at the temple, and so they knew that this wasn't right. But they condoned it because they benefitted from it, they profited from it. They benefitted in many ways from it just by the way people would treat them and talk to them and look up to them, and this spirit, like we see in the world today. It hasn't ever gone away.

**...they looked for a way how they might destroy him because they feared him.** He was a great threat to their position, to their authority. That's what it was all about. He was a great threat to them financially as well, but to their positions of authority and their relationship with the Roman government and the like.

**...they feared him because the people were amazed by his teaching.** Oh, they wanted them to be amazed at them! They wanted them to be amazed. They wanted that for themselves. They didn't want that for someone like him. I mean, where is he from, you know?

It's that same attitude and spirit that Satan eventually had toward God. Lucifer. Same attitude and spirit that finally welled up inside within his attitude toward God. It's the exact same spirit. This is what they got caught up in—jealousy, envy, lust for power, lust for authority.

**Then when the evening had come, he went out of the city.**

I might mention here how many who have been in the Church for a long time have witnessed that? Lust for power, lust for authority? There's been a lot of it.

Matthew 21. Again, these stories that coincide here. They so often add just a little bit, something different, something to sink your teeth into.

**Matthew 21:12—So Joshua went into the temple of God,** again, this was after the account of the fig tree. It's still in the same day here. **...and cast out all those who sold and bought in the temple.** He drove them out. I mean, he not only turned over the tables, he got rid of them. He forced them out, made them leave. **...and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of those who sold doves, and said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.** He's quoting the Old Testament here. This is his mind. This is his being. This is who he is.

**Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them.** So, this is adding a little bit more here. So again, didn't make the Pharisees and the Sadducees thrilled, again,

something happening right in Jerusalem, right at the temple, and here Christ is here healing, as it says here, the blind and the lame. Awesome!

I'm always amazed by and inspired by the fact that so many of the things that Christ taught, so many of the things that he did happened in the last two weeks of his life in his ministry. He had a 3½ year ministry, but the vast majority of it happened toward the very end. That's exciting! There are reasons why God does things in that manner and why things in time will happen in a similar manner.

**Verse 15—So, when the chief priests and scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and the children crying out...** This is a word that means, literally, “shouting out.” They were shouting out. This means vocalizing it loudly. It's not weeping crying, it's crying out with their voices in the things they were saying **in the temple, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David. And they were highly agitated.** So again here, this jealousy. They never cried out when they've said something or done something, but here they're doing it for him! And just absolutely eaten up with jealousy. Incredible!

**And he, speaking of the chief priest said to him, Do you hear what they are saying? So Joshua said to them, Have you never read...** I love that, how he says those things too, just drives it home. **Have you never read...?** In other words, how are they going to take that one? They're not going to be endeared because he said it that way. It's not a matter of how to win friends and influence people and making people like you, it's a matter of telling things like they are. In this case here, what he was doing, “Don't you know?” “Haven't you read?” It's like, “Then why aren't you doing it?”

**Out of the mouth of babes and infants you have perfected praise?** So obviously, they would never have read that and understood that for anything that Christ might be doing, and so he's telling them, “This is what's taking place.” They're familiar with Old Testament scriptures, but to apply it in this manner just made them more irritated inside, more agitated. **Then he left them and went out of the city unto Bethany; and he lodged there.** So again, going back then on Sunday evening there just as they did on Sabbath, went back to Bethany. That's where they lodged. That's where they stayed.

Going back to Mark 11. So, we're now looking at those events and the teaching of Christ just two days before Passover now, which is the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, that Monday now. We've gone through the Sabbath last week, now through this period of time here on Sunday and the things that he was doing and saying and teaching, and now, finally, on Monday during the daylight hours. They're going back from Bethany now back toward Jerusalem and they're going to be passing this fig tree again.

**Mark 11:20—Then in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up by the roots. And Peter recalling it, thinking about that and seeing this tree then, right back in his memory, and he said unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which you cursed has withered away.** This happened so quickly.

**And Joshua answering said to them, Have faith in God. For truly, I say unto you, That whosoever shall say to this mountain to be removed and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but believe those things which he says shall come to pass; it shall be done as he says.**

So, what do we tend to do as human beings? Well, we tend to look at things like that and think, well, that's pretty big. It's physical. To look at a hill, to look at a mountain, a mountaintop here, a hilltop here and just kind of, like, whack it off and say, "Now be cast over into the sea." Boy wouldn't that be great to have that kind of power? You know, that's like kind of like superman thing. You can kind of picture some of that. For us, that's a great thing in our minds. We think along physical lines. This isn't what he's talking about. He's not talking about doing something physical.

Because first of all and foremost, as the story goes through here and as we read before, it has to be things that are a matter of God's will. The only way a person could have confidence of anything is a matter of God's will. Is it God's will? We just talked about, what is the greatest thing that's a matter of God's will? It's that we repent. God's will and desire for us is that we repent of our sins through our Passover, because that's what his life is about here. It's about to end for the very purpose of giving us that. So the greatest of value. This is far greater than having a mountain moved.

Because what good is that going to do except to show off or to draw attention to self? You know, that should never happen to a physical human being, really, as a whole. To be able to go out and do something like superman. It's like, right away to the head, "Look at this. All these people are watching!" You think that wouldn't go to a human being's mind?

I think in the ministry things that have happened that go to people's heads. I think of the difference between Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Tkach, two totally different attitudes. One that when people would begin to look to him, praise him, applaud for him, he would stop them. He would get upset by it. I saw him up there on the stage. If you've ever seen Mr. Armstrong get a little ruffled? You knew when he was displeased about something. It was in his expressions and his age there it's like, "Don't do this!" Basically, "This is wrong." He would tell people to stop and people would stop. It's like... "Ugh" And because that's uncomfortable. Well, it should be because it's not something that people should be doing.

Then the other, after had to be five or more minutes of applause stopping them and saying, "Oh, come on. You can do better than that," and raising his hands and arms repeatedly to encourage more. You think, who do you think you are? Well, we found out who he was. But it's that mind and it's a different thinking and it's wrong and yet that's what the human mind, the carnal mind apart from God's spirit tends to do.

So not being of God's will it's not going to happen anyway, because God's not going to allow it, but we can be thankful for that, that people aren't going around doing some of those kinds of things because there would be battles, as a whole, in too many people's lives. Then people would see that, and they'd want to do the same thing.

Just like these were eaten up with jealousy, the scribes and Pharisees, because God wasn't working with them like that, and after all, aren't they ministers and preachers, or whatever, or belong to the priesthood, the high priest himself? Doesn't that account for something? Isn't that important? Aaron was the first high priest and going on through time, shouldn't we have this recognition from the people? Don't we deserve it? You think, "No, you don't." Carnal mind. Incredible.

They went by the fig tree, saw it was withered, and Joshua making this comment, **Have faith in God. For truly, I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain to be removed and cast into the sea and shall not doubt in his heart...** So, what are we to learn from that? That we're supposed to be going around casting mountains into the sea or trying to? It's like people who pass around snakes and like you better have enough faith that you're not going to get bitten by it because that proves then you're a spiritual person, you know. I mean, how nuts can human beings get? But people do because it's physical, it's carnal, it's about self, it's not about what is true.

**...and not doubt in their heart.** Well, there is the key. So, what is God's will? Well, we're to learn that through time. We're to grow in that through time. We're to become more in unity and oneness with God's will as we grow. What is God's will in our life? Simple things - to repent, to see ourselves for what we are, to continually thank God that we're able to see our carnality, our selfishness, and the hope that He gives us that that can change. That's what's valuable in life. Far more important than throwing something into the sea and everybody being able to see it. Because that wouldn't be healthy for us and that's not of God's will.

**But believe those things which shall come to pass. It will be done as He says.** That should give us greater confidence to pray about and to know what it is that God wants to give us that is of far more value. Things that are spiritual? You know, we don't take anything with us. When this is over, when this heart quits beating, it's done in this life and there is not a thing you take with us, with you except what's in the mind. Nothing! Nothing in your bank account. Nothing that you possess. Nothing in relationships...until later depending on how they live toward God.

The reality is that's what's important. God is concerned about what is in the mind because this is what He can put in a new body with a new mind, with a new spirit, not with selfishness any longer. I look forward to that one. I'm not in a hurry to get there right yet, because I want to see this through to the end if possible, but don't we all. But if not, so be it.

**Therefore, I say to you, Whatever things you desire...** What do we desire the most? That's what it comes back to. What do we pray about? What is our motivation for prayer? ...**when you pray, believing that you shall receive, and you shall have it.** Basically, that's what it's saying here, what it's telling us.

**Then when you stand praying, forgive.** So, you think, so what are the most important things? What is it that's God's will? His will is that we forgive others. His will is that we not hold things against others. His will is that we come to understand the most important thing in life, it's about relationship and how people think toward each other. That's hard for human beings because we don't do well there. We put people in certain categories and that's all because of our sick, carnal minds.

It's hard to be in unity and oneness with God. The reality is we really can't be unless we're continually crying out for God's spirit to help us to think in those ways. Then as we grow, we're able to spot them more quickly, but we still screw up, if you will. We do the wrong things. We think the wrong things. We say the wrong things at times and wrong things come out of our minds, our mouths - and our minds, that's where they start.

It says, **when you stand praying, forgive.** So, what's he showing here? He's showing the most important thing here. It's how we live our lives. We can't live right and forgive others unless we're close to God. We can't truly forgive others and put things where they need to be without God's help. It's impossible. You. Can't. Do. It.

It says, **forgive; and if you have anything against anyone: so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.** Because that's what God's will is. That's a big thing.

But, see, that's the problem. We don't tend to think that way. We tend to think that, you know, being able to pick up that mountain and throwing it in the sea, you know, winning the lotto, whatever, lottery, those are the big things. "I could do so much more! I could give so much more." "Oh, yeah, that's what you want to do. You want to give so much more." It's amazing how the human mind deceives itself.

God's desire is to forgive us and if we aren't able to forgive others then He's not going to forgive us. **But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses.** Incredible!

**Matthew 21:20—And when the disciples saw it,** speaking of when they saw the fig tree that was withered, which was, again, on the Monday, on the 12<sup>th</sup> day, two days before Passover, and they were returning back to Jerusalem it says, **they marveled, saying, Look how soon that fig tree has withered away.**

**And Joshua answered and said unto them, Verily, I say to you, if you have faith and don't doubt, you shall not only do that which is done to this fig tree, but also if you shall say to this**

mountain, **Be removed and be cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.**

Then when he had gone into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, **By what authority are you doing these things?** So not real bright. But they didn't have God's help, they didn't have God's spirit. It was all carnal in nature. What were they trying to do? That's a good question to ask. What were they trying to do? Well, they wanted to find grounds to kill him. They wanted to find reason, ability to have people turn against him, to find flaws in things that he said that didn't agree with scripture and their idea of what God was like.

**By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority? And Joshua answered and said to them, I will also ask you one thing...** So, he oftentimes, again, responded in this manner because it's not what they wanted. They wanted something else. **...which if you tell me, then I will likewise tell you by what authority I am doing these things.** Then it says, **The baptism of John—where did it come from? From heaven,** in other words, did it come from God? Was his baptism something from God, that God was doing in John, **or from men?** Or was it something he just did out here on his own?

**And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say to us, Then, why don't you believe him?** You have to laugh at some of these things sometimes because you talk about carnality and the way human beings think and this is it in the raw. The reality is they really didn't have the ability to grasp and see and know those things. But it shows what mankind is like without God. Mankind has to come to see that.

That's why we're getting ready to go through what we are. Mankind has to begin to come to see himself for what he is. Slowly but surely those things are beginning to be seen more in the world, but not enough by any measure. It has to be a whole lot more. People are beginning to see how futile, how screwed up, how bad government is, that we really aren't able to govern ourselves properly, effectively as people. All the fighting and the bickering and the warring is getting nothing done.

I used to get a charge out of some of the things Gijs and Mieke would comment about in the government there in Belgium, that they'd go a few years without an established government and things would go along fine. So, something like that, kind of paraphrasing, but that was kind of the gist of it. It's like it still goes on without them anyway, even if they don't have a formalized government established, because of all the things that go on sometimes in politics and forming sides and to get something done. And you think, what good really gets done? What is really...? Anyway, it's so frustrating.

But more and more people are having to see this. Corruption everywhere. To me, it's awesome. Corruption being exposed in every facet of government, truly.

**And they reasoned among themselves, saying, If we shall say from heaven, he will say, Then why didn't you believe him? But if we say of men, we fear the people, for all hold that John was a prophet. So, we're fearful of the people, we're fearful of this, we're fearful of that, if we say certain things. Catch-22. So they answered Joshua saying, We cannot tell. And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**

I love stuff like this because it's like, wow, you know, getting to the heart and core of a matter, of their spirit and of their attitude by something as simple and basic as this that exposes them for who they really are.

Then Joshua continued with another parable. Again, remember that he was doing all this leading up to Passover. All these things being taught, all these things being done now just two days away.

**Verse 28—So what do you think of a man who had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go, work today in my vineyard. But he answered and said, I will not, and then afterward repented and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I will, sir, but he didn't go. Which of the two did the will of the father? And they said to him, The first. And Joshua replied to them, Truly, I say to you that the tax collectors and the harlots will go into the Kingdom of God before you.**

Now, that's pretty profound. Now, they understood that he was talking about them. There is much to be learned from things like this. It's about an attitude and about a spirit and if the attitude and spirit is right, we will see ourselves for who we are. These are situations here, people's lives that were looked down upon, judged harshly.

I think of those whom God has called. He's called the weak of the world, not the great and the mighty that think they're great and mighty. I mean because that's what the difference is. Those who use the world or are able to use things in the world in a wrong way oftentimes to get what they want, to get where they're going, and he's showing here that, in essence, the ability to see one's self for what they are is far, far better.

Because we're all guilty of great sin in our life; worthy to be put to death. That's why Christ had to die - because sin is the transgression of God's law and the transgression of God's law requires the death penalty, and yet that's difficult for people to grasp when they're called into the Church because the world, traditional Christianity, doesn't teach that in that manner.

He said, **Truly I say to you, that the tax collectors and the harlots will go into the Kingdom of God before you.** Because of attitude, because of spirit. The willingness to accept, "I know who I am; I know what I am."

That's a blessing. If you're able to see yourself, you're blessed. If you're able to see what you're like as a human being how blessed are you? Not just when you're called but for the rest of your physical life, to be able to see your selfishness, to see what you are inside by your nature, and that your strength and only hope is that which God gives in the transforming of your thinking in your mind to think in a different manner and to strive to live in that different manner, like in how

we judge others, how we think about others, the ability to forgive others. All those things that are so important when it comes to right relationships.

To know and understand you cannot love like God. You don't love like God. I cannot love like Christ did. I can't love like God did - not in this physical body. I never would be able to, and I know that. I don't deceive myself into thinking I could. I want to strive to live more by that life, by that kind of care and concern for others, but I know that I don't have it in my mind, in my life. It is not a natural thing! We love self first and foremost - how we take care of it, how we pamper it, how we try to protect it. On and on it goes. That's the way we are naturally as human beings.

To think the other way, to be able to see in the other way requires God's spirit. That's the only way we can. That's an awesome thing to understand. How blessed are you to be able to see your carnality? And yet if we don't think right, we begin to get to a point where we think, "Oh, I'm so tired of hearing how bad I am." Well, suck it up! It's just what you are! You're a carnal, selfish human being. Just acknowledge that. Do you not see it? Because if you see it then you can live a better life. You can start changing some of that. You can start thinking in better ways that are more in unity and oneness with God.

It's a blessing to be able to see our carnality, because then we know where the battle is, we know what we have to fight. If we don't see it, if we don't acknowledge it, we're not repenting of it.

So where is the greatest of value? The ability to see it. I'm thankful to see it. I'm thankful to know how lacking I am in those things in life as a physical human being.

**For John came to you in the way of righteousness, God's way, teaching the importance of repenting. Now, this was a physical thing; it was a physical baptism, if you will, not a spiritual one. It was a physical thing taking place here.**

**It says, John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn't believe him; but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and you after you saw it, did not change your minds and believe him.** So, it didn't bring about change in their life, real change.

Going on. **Listen to another parable: There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and he made a hedge (fence) around it, and dug a winepress in it and built a tower, and leased it out to the vinedressers, in other words, to tenant farmers.** This was, basically, the type of thing that I've seen done when I was in Kansas, when I grew up in Kansas, that people could kind of rent or lease a land for a certain percentage of crops or whatever, things of that nature. This is basically that type of thing. It can be arranged to be done in that manner. So, the better the crops, the more work done in producing the crops, the better both are going to fare, the person who does the work and the person who owns the land. This is what it's talking about.

**So he leased it out to tenant farmers, and went into a far country.** Left it to them. So whatever he had done to work and to build up his life, his land and so forth, now he could go and do some other things that he desired to do while others took care of it and produced a living on it, that

they could then pay back a certain percentage, whatever it be, a quarter, a third to whatever back to the owner.

**Then when the time for the fruit drew near**, in other words, time that things had ripened for harvest, **he sent his servants to the tenant farmers, that they might receive the fruit.** So knowing it's time for the harvest, to produce, this is the time for collecting and so whatever percentage was his was to be collected at that time.

**...the produce of it. And the tenant farmers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. So again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they all did likewise to them.** So, the whole story. We understand what that story is. That through time this has been how God has given us everything on this earth and He's told us a certain percentage is His. People don't respond to it. They want it all.

Everything belongs to God and yet human beings haven't responded in that manner, as a whole, to be thankful toward God, to be thankful that they have life and the ability to sustain life and the ability to dress and keep, to cultivate, to grow, to do whatever, and then to maintain those things that God has given. We don't acknowledge those things by nature to God. We're to strive to do that in the Church, obviously.

And so, this process of the way it's been through time, this is what's happened. So many things the prophets of old have gone through, so many people have been put to death. I think of the disciples, the apostles in the beginning there, that only one that we know of for certain that was able to continue life, and that was John, that it's believed that he was the only one that stayed alive during that period of time. It's happened to God's people, different of God's peoples. Stephen early on, you think about him being stoned and being killed right from the get-go. That's the way it's been because people haven't wanted what God has to offer to them and they want something else.

So again, **He sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.** Then it comes up to this time because this is what Christ is fulfilling.

**But last of all he sent his son.** Isn't that amazing? You think the story like this doesn't have great meaning in it? It's awesome. Can you imagine, here is the Son of God, here is the one that this is all about that he's telling, and this story then to everyone that's there. "And then He sent His Son," **saying, They will show honor to my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves (or the tenant farmers), This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance.** "We want what he has. Kill him and then," basically it's about the people, it's about authority and power. This is the parable. This is what he's telling them. But it's so close to how they're living their lives, it's so close to things they've already heard about the Messiah, about Christ and his life, that they begin to get a good inkling here, "Hmm. He's talking about us."

It says, **And then they caught him**, as the story goes on here, **Then they caught him**, speaking of the son that came to the vineyard, **and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him**. So, this is prophetic, in that respect, as to what was getting ready to happen. He knew it. He told his disciples and they still didn't understand, obviously.

**Therefore, when the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers? They replied to him, He will put those wicked men to a miserable death and will lease the vineyard to other tenant farmers who shall render**, in other words, **give back to him the fruit (produce) in its seasons**. And really, that's about the Church. It's exactly what's taken place. Because it wasn't to be received physically on a physical plane as far as the physical priesthood was concerned. God had a purpose and a plan of something far greater that was going to be done through His Son here and by the very fact that he was going to be put to death.

So, it's an incredible parable, if you will, incredible story that he's telling them at this point in time.

**And then Joshua said unto them, Have you ever read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner. This is the LORD's doing, and it is an amazing thing to see?** So again here, he's quoting these Old Testament scriptures again here and in essence this is about himself, "the stone that's rejected by the builders," and "this is something that God is doing," God Himself was doing. So earlier he wouldn't tell them by what authority he was doing what he was, but this here, it says it all.

**Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** So, who is that? Spiritual Israel. Physical Israel, Judah that was still remaining at this point in time, it was all going to be taken from them because it was never meant for them, because they couldn't receive it. Because they were to be an example of what it's like to be chosen among all people on earth to be told about God. Other's weren't. They went off on different ideas of religion in the world, all kinds of goofy ideas.

Some of them I see in my mind, I think it's amazing what human beings will believe, whether it be a fat Buddha or a bunch of monkeys or certain things holding up the earth on their back or elephants and all the goofy things that human beings will think of about God, what they think a god is like. There is this thing within the mind of human beings that has to deal with this concept of God, of something greater than them. So very few, compared to all the rest, are true atheists, but after they've seen some of the other things in modern times, understandable.

But anyway, here one people, Israel, but it was never truly meant for them, but it was for the Israel of God. So, this is where we are because of Christ's life. This is why he's coming to die - so that it could be the beginning of the Church now. It's going to be given to spiritual Israel who will bring forth the fruits that God desires, that God longs for.

Verse 44. Now, this is translated differently and I'd love to see, and I guess we'll have it before too awful long, but scriptures written in a way that really translate properly, the exact things as they're being said in whether it be modern English or other languages and so forth that's modern and people understand. Some of these things are very poorly done because they don't understand the purpose and plan of God.

**Verse 44—Then whoever falls on this stone shall be broken; so, it's going on here, whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind to powder.**

Now, this is really the right way of it being translated, because of how it is in other scriptures and so forth it gives a wrong impression of what is being said. The point being is the last part of this is really from a word that has to do with the spread of a winnowing fan. This "grinding to powder," it's really not the words that are used in scripture at all in the Greek language, but it has to do with this fanning that takes place. As the example was, has been given in other parables and so forth, like the threshing floor and of those things that are separated from the productive grain and from the rest that's of no value that's taken out, winnowed away, fanned away, and then taken out and burnt.

This is the example being given here, two examples, two things that take place in human life, and both having to do with this stone, if you will, which is about Christ. "The one the stone falls on, it will break." What does that mean? I think of so many scriptures that talk about this process that has to happen to carnal human nature. Our nature has to be broken, it has to be humbled, it has to come to a point where the pride and the haughtiness is like just dropping a giant stone on it and smashing the "you know what" and getting it all out.

Because that's what has to happen in our lives. Thank God it does. Because everything that is selfish, everything that is bad and wrong, it needs to come out of us. And so, the weight of that, after a time we begin to realize, no, for us in conversion it's different. It changes us. As we humble ourselves that weight isn't upon us anymore. We learn how to live life in a right way. That could be a sermon in itself.

But the other, as it says here, "it'll be like the winnowing fan" again here. It's not the "grinding to powder." That's not what the words are. It's the separation that's going to take place. So the response to Christ is going to be one of two things - either people will be humbled and change and begin to respond or they're going to resist and in time this is the winnowing fan of separation and be burnt with fire, as we read earlier as well. So different examples being given here.

**Then when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he had spoken of them.** You know that had to endear them even more. **Although they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they looked upon him as a prophet.** So, the other people looked upon Christ as a prophet and as the Messiah. That's what they thought. That's what they were proclaiming. Again, this fear of the people.

That's something I really hate. I hate to keep going aside here but you think about politics and you know, people wait for polls to come out and things to come out to know what to do and how to, and whether to... Because there are certain things, they want to please a certain pack of people in order to get more votes. This is the same kind of spirit except done as far as that which is religion is concerned - attitudes, thinking.

Mark 12. Let's turn over to Mark 12. Again, the same thing here, but it adds a little bit more.

**Mark 12:12—Then they wanted to lay hold on him, but feared the people, for they knew that he had spoken this parable against them. So they left him and went their way.** So, it says here they knew it and they separated themselves then and left. More than they could take.

**And they sent to him certain of the Pharisees and the Herodians.** Now, these are political supporters of Herod, Jewish people, a position in the administration of Herod's government but Jewish, over the Jews. So they were more concerned, those who had religious standing, they were more concerned about losing that recognition and those places of authority, responsibility, and others who were of a political type of position in government as far as the Romans were concerned.

It says here that they **sent certain of the Pharisees and the Herodians to trap**, in other words, **to catch him**, as in hunting is what the word is here, **in his words**. So this was constant, ongoing, because they had to find something to be able to bring against him. And what was it they finally came up to? "You said you were a King. You claim to be a King." Messiah, that's what it means. That's how they finally put him to death as far as the Roman government was concerned.

I just want to read this in **Luke 20:19-20**. You can turn there if you want, but it says, **Then the chief priests and the scribes that same hour sought to lay hands on him, yet they feared the people, for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. So, they watched him and sent forth spies who should feign themselves**, in other words, falsely represent themselves or pretend to be something different, as it shows here, **as just men**. So, in other words, like they're really seeking his guidance and direction.

When I was going through this and thinking about some of these things, I think about all the things that have happened like this in the Church. That's a horrible spirit! Because there have been people who have come and gone, people who have come along that had no other purpose than to be deceitful and to find things and to find things that are wrong. It's sad, especially after the Apostacy, these kinds of things that took place. They didn't happen a little. They really ended up happening a lot when it was all said and done. But it's a horrible spirit because it's even more conniving, it's even more deceitful because it tends to be one with everyone else, in with everyone else, of the same mind of everyone else, and yet what's in their heart, what's in their mind is something totally different.

Anyway, it's amazing what we've gone through, but it's good training, it's good teaching to learn things like this by personal experience, to be able to know these kinds of things exist, in order to hopefully, perhaps be able to help others in time, whatever that time might be, to see these things, how ugly they really are.

So again, **that they would feign themselves as just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him to the power and authority of the governor.** So, their whole desire was, again, was to put him to death, find something they could convict him of.

So, back to Mark 12 now and continuing on if you happened to have held your place there. **Mark 12:14** it says, **And when they had come, they said to him, Master, we know that you are true, and care for no man (no special favor given), for you are not a respecter of people, but you teach the way of God in truth.** I think of someone doing something like this, if someone were to come up with saying things like this and just trying to whitewash, trying to receive favor, "Oh, we're one of you. We really want to know," and yet what they're really doing is being about as deceitful and as crooked and as vile as you can be in their purpose.

**They said, Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?** So, they had to find something. So, if they could do this one here and he's teaching something subversive, then go after him because he's teaching something other than what the Roman government is saying. And so, looking for grounds to put him to death because this is sedition, this is heresy, this is against the government, if you can prove this... And it doesn't take much to prove some things. But anyway.

**But he knew their hypocrisy, said to them, Why are you trying to test, or the word entrap me?** "Why are you doing this to me?" He knew full well. He had the mind of God, the ability to know attitude, spirit, purpose of people, what's in their mind, what's in their thinking. **Bring me a denarius,** it's a small silver coin of the Roman Empire at that time. **Bring me a denarius so that I may see it.** Then they brought it. **And he said to them, Whose image and inscription is on this? And they said to him, Caesar's.** And Joshua answered and said to them, **Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.** And they marveled at him.

So, they didn't trip him up. Instead, he gave an answer that got right to the point of how people are to live their lives.

And with that, a good time to stop before we go into some of the other things that are covered next as we draw closer and closer here now to Passover.