

We are now continuing in the series *It is God Who Calls Us*, and this is *Part 3*.

Hopefully it's plain to us that it is God who does the calling of those who are given truth. When we begin to see and understand truth, God's word, God's way of life, the laws of God, the purpose of God, it's God that has to give it. He begins drawing us as a part of that process, and that word that we first come to when we see that process is the word for "drag," because our human nature resists, and it resists even after we're called. But now with knowledge, with understanding, with choices that we're able to make, that we understand a human nature that we have that resists God.

"The carnal mind is enmity with God." It means it's an enemy to God. It fights against God. It resists the laws of God. It resists the ways of God, and so we understand from that, we learn from that that the world is trapped. It's in spiritual Egypt and it doesn't understand that. We have been blessed to begin coming out of it. We begin coming out of it as God drags us along at the beginning, as He begins to reveal certain truths to us, and then lets us know, basically, we have a choice to make.

He's given us an opportunity from the very beginning. We have to make a choice. I can't help but think of people we've visited in times past who once they were being drawn, dragged, if you will, and they'd been brought to that point where they see the plan of God, it's in their mind, and they have to start making decisions. Are they going to step forward and follow through and do what God has revealed to them that they must do, that they have to do if they want to continue on with the truth, in the truth?

That is a matter of being brought to Christ, being brought to understanding that he's our Passover and the process that begins there, the need for the forgiveness of sins. I think of so many people that we visited over times past who couldn't make that step, they wouldn't make that choice because of pulls, because of family, because of finances, because of job, whatever it might be. Those are the primary reasons why and yet those are the very things that many have to deal with even after being baptized, as to continual choices that people have to make as to whether they're going to continue once they've been even baptized in God's Church.

We know from that that many have been given that opportunity and still aren't going to be a part, if you look back over the past 2,000 years, aren't going to be a part of the 144,000. "Many have been called, but few have been chosen" from that period of time. We understand the uniqueness of our time too, that there'll be those who go on into the Millennium and those who have opportunity for that change that comes.

So again, it should be plain for us to see that God does the calling of all who are given truth, and then drawn to Christ and the need for our Passover. Just, that's the basic knowledge.

That's why I love Leviticus 23. All of God's plan and purpose, everything fits together in such an awesome way and it really is beautiful how God has written things, how He's revealed things to us, and the fact that He gives us a day that is not a Holy Day. I love the meaning of all that because before you can get to the first day of Unleavened Bread, the first annual Holy Day, you have to deal with Passover, and if you're not willing to do that and deal with that as you should, you can't enter into God's purpose. You can't enter into God's plan. You can't enter into the process of coming out of sin, because that requires being baptized, receiving the impregnation of God's spirit, and then you can begin a process of being transformed, of coming out of sin. One thing leads to the other.

It's to me, fabulous, awesome to be able to see those things so clearly. The world keeps holidays that have no real meaning in them. Fat man coming down the chimney. What does that mean? "I get to get more presents under the tree that's all decorated! Isn't that beautiful?" Anyway, sorry. It has no meaning to it all. What does that mean? What is the purpose in all that? We have things that we see incredible purpose that's beautiful, something to grab a hold of.

Asked the question before this: What have we been able to learn as a result of the years that followed the Apostasy when it comes to this truth? Because I marvel at this, even in giving this sermon, that so much of the Church had lost that. The ministry had lost sight of this truth by the time of the Apostasy, that God does the calling. It escaped people. It escaped their mind. The reasoning of why we do as we do, in that respect, as far as a calling and what it means. It was gone!

We have been so blessed to be able to grasp and understand this process because when it came up to the time of the Apostasy, although so many in the ministry had lost this understanding, but if you hold on to basic truths like this, something that's part of the trunk of the tree, in that respect, as far as to how God draws us, calls us, works with us, if we understand that and we understand we're part of a calling, a part of what God has chosen for us to be a part of, then we'll be able to look at it in a very unique way.

Because everything should be seen from that light. Everything that happens in the Church to us, we should be able to grasp that. That's why if we have growth, why do we have growth? Because God does the calling. No one has control of that.

That's why I have referred back to, especially during that period of time, we should be able to see things that happen in the Church (which I'm going to speak on more at the Feast of Tabernacles this year), because you can learn from that. You can learn about what God is doing by observing various things, and the Church is one of the primary things we should be able to see and understand, as we see things happen in the Church, because this is God's focus! We are God's focus. We are God's purpose. It's not the world yet even though He's drawing the world closer to that time in mass people are going to be drawn, but we're still not there. So, over the past 6,000 years only those whom God has called have been worked with and you can learn much from that.

There is much we have learned by being able to look at the past 4,000 years, of what has taken place, and especially once the Church began after 31 A.D. and it's God that did it. Every area that began to grow, the different Churches that were raised up, God did the calling. It doesn't matter what apostle went there and spoke to them. It doesn't matter who preached.

Paul addressed some of those things to the Corinthians and others, that it wasn't the individuals, it was what God was doing. And if God was going to raise up different ones?

I look at what Mr. Armstrong did, going out west when he did and all of a sudden in the Willamette Valley of Oregon God began to call some people. It's because God was doing that work. It wasn't in other areas. Then as *The Plain Truth* started going out in little areas and spreading around and a radio broadcast was going out God began to raise up some other people. Because God does the calling. That's a beautiful thing to understand!

It was in the United States as well that God began to raise up the Church at the end-time here. It wasn't anywhere else. What can be learned from that? I've mentioned that recent time here. It's because of prophetic things that God said would happen at the end of this age. The wealthiest nation in the world the world has ever known - we live in it. The most productive, wealthiest nation the world has ever seen - we live at that time. He used that, powerfully so, to raise up a great work to do in the end-time so that the gospel could go into all the world and then the end would come.

God did it, and if we are called to be so blessed to be a part of it, how blessed are we? How many have had such an opportunity to be called? Not very many.

So again, I marvel at things like this. *The Plain Truth*, I don't care what magazine it might be, whether it be a radio broadcast, or a television telecast like we used to have, and you would see different areas pop up. Some areas given more growth than others, where there were ministers and the need for ministers because without help of being able to be fed there could be no growth.

I'll tell you, there has been so much that has been learned after the Apostasy and then that point forward that's about a calling that's been reinforced in our minds if we have the eyes to see, that was lost by so much of the Church that became scattered.

We've learned from this through time. 2007, 2008 - people started coming, requesting visits, having a desire to be a part of the Church again. Not large like we'd experienced in Worldwide, because it wasn't God's purpose. But still, people that were coming along and being given an opportunity for change, for growth, for being called. Because, candidly, after the Apostasy it wasn't happening.

Do you know where growth was primarily coming from? Just from people who were scattered. Just from people who were scattered. That's where anyone that was out there in the scattered groups experienced growth. It was only from the scattered group. God wasn't calling anyone at that time.

I think of scriptures that talk about the time period and how difficult it would be for the young. A warning, and so God wasn't calling people at that time, because that would have been one of the most dangerous times for new people to be called. And so, God is merciful. It gives people opportunity for the Church, did give people opportunity for the Church to become stabilized and stronger, yet very small. Size doesn't matter.

Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians 9. So, candidly, as a minister serving God, made a lot of decisions based on what we could see that God was doing. There were times when we put more into what we were doing and promoting various things than at other times. Other times we've pulled back because realized God isn't calling right now. All you have to do is look at the Church. Right now, God isn't calling anyone. As a whole.

Every once in a while, there is someone who shows interest and we have people out there we would refer to as co-workers, who get to a certain point, but they're not ready to make that extra step in their life. I think of the time of Herbert Armstrong and Worldwide Church of God and how that there were thousands and tens of thousands of co-workers, and blessed to be a part of something but yet not a part of the Church, not baptized into God's Church. The same sort of thing still continues on. Not that many. But we're not that many. We can learn from that.

I am inspired by that, blessed by that, to see those things. You are. To be able to recognize this is God's Church. Awesome! It's by the truth that you have. God has blessed us in being able to have that. He reveals many things to us as a result of a calling that we can grasp and understand.

1 Corinthians 1:9—God is faithful, by whom/through whom you were called... That's where it starts.

I love this in the very beginning because some of you who have been around for a long time that came from Worldwide, came through that process especially, you've seen these things over and over again, that there are those who came along who felt that they were able to do and see things on their own ability. Some of that happened at times. It wasn't a matter of recognizing God's calling, it was a matter of lifting self up in pride, of being prideful that they were able to see and understand certain things by their studies, by their wisdom, whatever it might be.

You think, what a horrible start if you have something like that in your mind and you have to fight that. Because if that doesn't change quickly, you're going to lose the battle before long. That's what we learned from. That's what we saw, that people in those situations began to lose out in time. If they didn't conquer that quickly, it conquered them. Because it can't be there and a person grow, and not give the honor and glory to God Almighty for everything we have, for the growth we have.

We, when it comes to truth—How can I put this?—without God just giving it to us in our minds we're absolute idiots. We're stupid. We're ignorant. How else can you say it?

You can't learn diddly squat on your own that is of great value to you spiritually in your life. You might learn certain things to a point that might be a benefit to a point. You might learn about the

law of tithing. You begin tithing somewhere - not even to God's Church - and you can be blessed because there is that which God blesses.

The more you live by what is right, the more your life is going to have, per se, blessings in it. You strive to live a right life, whether it be in a marriage or a family, the way God says to do it, you're going to have a happier life. You learn how to deal with people in a better way in life and various laws that are associated with that, you're going to be blessed.

You have a faithful marriage, you're faithful in your marriage to a wife and to a husband, you're going to have a better life because of that. People who do the opposite of that and go and cheat, they destroy matters of trust that sometimes can never be re-established to a level that is good without God's help, if it be a matter in the Church. These kinds of things have happened in the Church.

So, over and over again the more that people in the world live by what is true, by what God has given as basic things of life - not murdering, not stealing - you're going to live a better life. Your life is going to be better because of it. You can say it's blessed, and it is blessed, but not blessed on the level of what we understand when we come into God's Church because of the truth and begin living by that.

I hope we understand the difference. When you begin to see the truth of God because of the plan of God it's God that's given it to you. Thank God for that because you haven't received any of it because of your intellect, because of how smart you are, nor of how good you were. That goes flying out the window because nobody is good enough. There is no such thing in human selfish life.

It's God's mercy and God's grace that we have all that we have in a calling. What a beautiful thing to know and to understand. The more we see that the more blessed we really are, happier we are, the more sound minded we can be.

God is faithful, by whom you were called/through whom you were called. We're the ones who are unfaithful. We have to address that in our life. Now, we strive to become faithful in every facet of our life, but every time you sin, you're being unfaithful, you're being untrue to God, you're raising up an idol before God.

It's only been of recent time that I've begun to see that clearly. I don't know how to explain that fully. But if that be your motive for not sinning, is because of that number one, it's a beautiful thing. Let's put it that way. To be able to recognize that you're not going to do it because of God, because of your relationship with God. You don't want to put something before God.

It's kind of like the seven days of the week. You know, it's easier even with a carnal mind but still with God's spirit, to live in harmony and unity better with God on the Sabbath day and on a high day than it is on other days of the week. If we don't see that difference...? That should exist because God is more in our focus, in our thinking. This is the day God has given to us, and so there are just naturally things in your mind through a matter of conversion and having God's spirit

that you're going to strive to live better. Because this is the Sabbath. That's more in your mind and because it's more in your mind you're able to nip sin in the bud quicker and prevent it from happening than the other six days of the week.

The more you can live that the other six days of the week, you are blessed. Because that's the reason we should strive to obey God, to love God, to be at one with God, is because we don't want to raise up some stinking, rotten, ugly idol, whatever that idol might be, and just flaunt it before God Almighty, whatever it is...whatever it is in life that we have problems with, with our number two's, and three's, and whatever we have. To understand our calling and our relationship with God, how important that is.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, so that we can enter into a fellowship that for us is primarily seen in the fellowship of the Body of Christ. The better we live that and observe that and understand that and see this, one another as God's people, we're able to grow then in a closer fellowship with Christ and with God. It's the way it is. Because this is our arena of life whereby it proves what's in our mind, in our hearts, in our being.

It's not something in a corner somewhere where we just have in this private relationship like when we're told to pray to go into the closet, a separate room, whatever it might be (not a real good translation of the word either), to a room by ourselves and to be able to pray to God. We don't just have a private relationship: "It's God and me!" "It's Christ and me. It's God the Father and Christ and me and I have this relationship with them," but I'm not watching out for my relationship with others in the Body and how I think toward them and what I say to them and how I think about them.

No, no, no, no, no. It all goes together. The better this becomes, the better that relationship becomes with God Almighty and His Son, truly. ...**the fellowship of His Son Joshua the Christ our Lord.**

Now, continuing on from that verse in verse 10. This is where we were last Sabbath. **Verse 10— Now I implore you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Joshua the Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions, no schisms among you.** What a blessing. As a result of a calling that God tells us, lets us know in the very beginning, we're to be in unity and oneness with Him. We're to grow in that. We're to desire that with all of our being. That means then with one another as well. That means to be in harmony and unity with what we're being taught.

Anyone that has come through Worldwide has lived this, where there have been schisms and divisions, and people coming up with different ideas and teaching different things to pull people away or to get people in their line of thinking and what they're seeing. "Do you see the same thing?" Things even about God's apostle, Herbert Armstrong, at the time. Judgmental, condemning, divisive. We've lived through those things and those things were there to try us, to see how we'd respond and whether we're going to go in that direction or choose something different because of what God has revealed to us.

Because we have to make choices to reject or to accept. We have that all during our life. We, candidly, live at a time now in the Church where those kinds of things don't exist even anywhere close to that same level, and if they pop up their ugly head they generally don't last very long. They generally don't last very long. Primarily because we're still going through a period of time of a type of refining within the Body as we get closer and closer. God Himself, and Christ dealing more directly with those things because of where we are in time, because they're speeded along now compared to what they used to be where certain things continued on for a time and the Church was able to learn from that. Yet now we're at a different phase of how God's working with us.

How can we know that? By looking at the Church. By being able to see where it was thirty years ago, forty years ago, twenty years ago, ten years ago, five years ago, and now. It's God's Church and you can know what God is doing by looking at God's Church. We are God's people. What an awesome thing to understand. Much can be learned about God by what He even gives in His Church at different phases of time in sermons, in truths. It's about God. It's a beautiful thing.

...that there be no divisions among you, no schisms, as the word means, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, in the same judgment. A lot said there. The same mind - unity of mind. It starts with doctrine. It starts with truth. If we are in agreement with those things as we go along then we can grow together and if in some area people don't agree, you know what'll happen? It eats away like a cancer. It truly does. It eats away to where they can't control it anymore because it just eats away at their mind and how they think.

We've lived through some of that not too distant past here within the Body and it eats and it's destructive. But God didn't allow it to go very far and He brought things to the light. I think of different times of fasting we had when some incredible things were revealed - wham, just like that. Incredible!

For it has been brought to my attention, brethren, by those of Chloe... In other words, of that household. So, it wasn't like being able to say some particular group in some area. I hate to mention any area because I'm, "Oh, they're talking about..." anyway. Think of some area where there is nobody located. My mind is not working on that right now, but I could pick out some different cities and everything, but I've got to think, "Is there somebody there in that particular city?" No, I don't want to do that.

But it's like saying someone in a particular Church area. That's what we would say today, whether it be Cincinnati, whether it be Dallas, whether it be Spokane, whatever it might be, Phoenix, whatever it might be, we might mention the name of a city.

Back then this is how they addressed it because the Church wasn't large. They didn't have meeting establishments like this. They didn't have places where you could go and rent and large places like we had in Worldwide that we could rent and have hundreds of people come. No such thing existed. The Church was scattered far and wide and little pockets here and there.

Households, because that's primarily where people met. There are small groups that met together in homes and households. That's what they did. Here he's addressing this.

So, maybe different pockets of the Corinthians in different places because travel then, you couldn't just jump in a car and drive an hour and be there. So, people would have to even more so, wherever there's a group called in a specific location, that's where they would meet, in a particular household.

He says here, **for it's been brought to my attention, brethren, by those of Chloe, that there is strife among you.** Arguing among you. So, right away, here is the beginning of the Corinthian Church, Paul is addressing it, and something that needs to be addressed within that body and others in the Church then to learn from. Because this shouldn't exist. Arguing, bickering, fighting, whatever it might be over, it should never exist among God's people.

Now I am speaking of how each is saying, I am of Paul; or I am of Apollos; or I am Cephas; and if those don't work, or I am of Christ. That's even better isn't it than of Paul or Apollos? So, you can see what's at work in something like this. Kind of comical. Human nature, obviously. It's not a pretty thing. So, for whatever reasons that different people have sometimes of why they pick different ones and they want to be associated with them, they want others to see them in that light, makes them better.

Verse 13—Is Christ divided? Is the Church divided? It should be in unity and harmony and oneness. **Was Paul nailed to a pole for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?** So, being called and drawn into the Church, because we have carnal, human nature, and after a time we get to know each other, then we have to work on the differences of personalities and what we're like. Because God puts together all kinds of people.

Now, how are you going to live? Is God going to be at the forefront in the sense of how each of us treats one another and that that's our focus, that we want to work even more so than we would work, obviously, in the world around us because we have that which is forced upon us, in that sense, by God's spirit, by being called into God's Church, by having a desire to change and grow, that something has to take place here in our life? So, where does that happen? It has to happen in the fellowship that God brings us to. This is our arena to be tried and tested to see what we're going to do.

So again here, **Is Christ divided? Was Paul nailed to the pole for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius; unless any should say that I had baptized in my own name. Then I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Other than that, I do not know whether I baptized any others.**

He knew that there were different ones he baptized, but as time has gone along and he's travelled around in so many different places and doesn't get to see people that often, to remember exactly who it was and understanding that it's not a matter of that being important, of who baptized whomever. Things to be learned from in all that.

For indeed, Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel: and not with wisdom of words. So again, it's not a matter of how great an orator someone is, it's a matter of whether God's spirit is in it. So again, all these things we have to learn to judge properly in and grow from.

Going on here: **Not with the wisdom of words**, in other words, not of your own abilities. Because if that's what it's about, if that's where preaching was to come to us, which, candidly, by the time of the Apostasy that's where most preaching was coming from. It wasn't coming from God. It wasn't coming from God's spirit; it was coming out of individuals by what they had studied on their own and maybe mixing some truth into it and some lies into it. Anyway.

Not with the wisdom of words, unless the nailing of the pole of Christ should be made of no effect. For the preaching of the nailing to the pole is to those who perish, foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God.

So again, what an incredible thing to be able to see, to perceive, to know that there is power and strength because of our ability to be forgiven of sin, and only because of that can we receive of God's spirit and receive of God's word when they're preached. Because otherwise, it's of no value, like anything that might be taught in the world on a Sunday. It has no value.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, meaning mankind's wisdom, when people think they're smart, intellectual, wise in how they do things and yet everything that mankind does, every government, everything that's organized, everything that's a matter of different kind of things to do with an economy, they're all wrong. Every one of them is wrong. Every one of them is based on wrong principles. Every one of them has to be changed, actually, destroyed. Because they're all bad. They're not God's. They're not of God's way. Only God can establish something of that nature, which He's going to do when Christ returns.

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. That's what God is getting ready to do to this world. ...**and will bring to nothing the understanding of the intellectual.** It won't be done the way people think.

That's why today we're bombarded on TV with "Well, what do you think about this?" They'll interview someone, maybe who's just written a book or who is elected to a particular office, and "What do you think?" And their thinking isn't the same as everyone else's. Everyone has a different way of seeing something in a unique way (their way), and people pick up a little piece, "Oh, I never thought of it that way before. Oh, wow!" Impressed by it. You think, give me a break!

How blessed are we that we know all this is getting ready to be washed down the sink - maybe a better, flushed down the toilet, because it's all wrong. People can't help it because that's what they're imprisoned to. They're in bondage to Egypt.

Where is the wise? The philosopher. Where is the wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this world? The great speakers, the orators? I think of one in the Church at one time

who had a lot of charisma about him, in that respect, as far as that is concerned, his ability to speak, what he spoke on. Did some telecasts and did an effective job as far as the world is concerned. God couldn't use that because it was too much about him, his ability, what he was doing. It wasn't all based on what was true and what was of God's spirit.

It was hard for all the people in the Church to learn to discern the difference. In time they had to make those choices. I think it was by about 1982 when that division came within the Church. It was very hard.

Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Those words could not be more truly spoken than they are today. Because of technology it's like we're having it crammed down our throats. You can't escape it. Yet it's something that as a whole the world wants in its own way. We see greater division because of it.

"Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Some of the things that sometimes happen. What is it the other day here? Was it a governor or someone, a head of the health organization of a particular state up north? Now when they have teleconferencing they are to wear their masks. If you're in your home and you're on a meeting with others? It was just on Fox here the other day, and I don't know about the others. I have a hard enough time with that one, but the others I really have a harder time with.

Yeah, Wisconsin. I'll just say it. So, if you're on some of these meetings. I can't think of the type of meeting it is. It's one of these things that can take a lot of people at one time. Anyway, in a type of a conference, you are to wear your mask. Think, what is the purpose? I don't get it. Somebody thought that was a wise thing to do, a smart thing to do. I guess it's going to travel through that line and bite you, I don't know. It's just stupid. Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid, ignorant, foolish.

The foolishness of the world, and we're being bombarded by it every day. Don't get caught up in it. Because you know what? It's one of the greatest plagues in the world today. It used to be that if something was written in a book or whatever it must be true and that hasn't changed too much. Anything that's written in a newspaper or on a website anymore, on the internet, it must be true, and so, people pick and choose. Yet you can read things about both sides of an issue anywhere and it's out there because there's such division in the world.

What is it? A sheriff down in Florida now, "No one can wear a mask. If you do, going to come down on you," anyone in that department. Okay. So, the reasoning is I can show you as much proof that you shouldn't wear one scientifically as you should that's out there. Well, that's true. There is stuff out there about anything and everything on all sides of an issue.

So, we see such division in the world and people who don't want to work together, cooperate to try to do something. And are you sick of it? I hope you're getting really, really, really, really, really sick of what you see in the world, because the only solution to it is exactly what God has shown to us, that we're nearing, getting closer to.

For indeed, God in His wisdom made it that the world could not come to know God. What an awesome thing to understand. No one on their own ability, with their own thinking, with their own wisdom, with their own intellect, can come to know God. No one! You have to be called. God has to communicate it into your mind. What an awesome thing.

...since it pleased God that it should be through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. It's through what is preached, words that are spoken. Yet that's where the truth is. Those who have the ears to hear it are able to see it and know it's true. Because there is much of that in the world. So how can one discern one from the other? You can't unless God gives you the ability.

God chose a method that is used by others in the world, but He is in one place, and wherever He is those He draws to it can hear it. Others who listen to it it's like tuning into a dial on a radio like people used to do and hear Herbert Armstrong. Some were being drawn to it, could see what he was saying was true. Others, many others hated it with a passion, loathed it with a passion.

Verse 22—For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom (the philosophical). That's what it's talking about, the philosophical, how we reason and talk about things and books that have been written about such matters. People ooh and aah over them. Think, it's God that shows us what we are. It's God that shows us what is true and what is right. But the world can't see that.

The Jews, they just want, as it shows here, saying here, this is something in their thinking, they want to see some kind of proof of something like the Red Sea opening up. "Then! Then I'll know this is from God." But then they get on the other side and they reject that too. But there's that something in them more than in certain other people, is what He's bringing out here.

There are two kinds of thinking, those who want a sign of seeing something and then they'll believe. No, they won't. That isn't what causes you to believe the truth. Just because something happens at a particular way or certain time, that isn't what causes you to believe what is true. The fact that you can figure it out on your own or...? Anyway, God has to show it. It comes from God.

That's why I think about the Feast this year and some of the messages that are going to be there because of a process we go through, which is the only way we can learn, is the way that God teaches us—because we're tried along the way—that other things can be revealed to us. It's all about how God is working in our lives and where we are in time.

Verse 23—But we preach Christ nailed to a pole. You think today of that being taught as far as the world and the gospel going into all the world, it was a powerful, powerful message in the very beginning about someone who came and died for the sins of mankind.

If you look at the different religions that existed in the world at that time, especially that were throughout the Middle East, this became a very powerful thing, in that respect, as God used this to begin to open people's minds. But it was a message that went out. This is what they taught,

powerfully so, because they'd never heard such a thing. Now, in the world today of what we call traditional Christianity people have heard about this, but they don't know the truth.

But we preach Christ nailed to a pole; unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. So, the Jews have difficulty with it because of their upbringing and because of their concept of the Old Testament, of things that, as it says here, it's a stumbling block to them. Passover became a stumbling block. What happened on that day, what is said about him was a stumbling block for them. They couldn't deal with it. They couldn't accept it. On and on it goes, and unto the Greeks just foolish, to other nationalities, other peoples of other religions.

...but to those who are called... To those who have their minds opened up and God communicates truth to them. How much do we treasure that? How much does this so impress upon our minds how unique and special we really are? We are special to God. He called us. He opened our minds. He put truth in it, His purpose and plan that others in the world cannot see. They turn the dial and they couldn't hear what others heard.

...but to those who are called, both Jews and gentile, Christ is the power of God. We learn, we have learned especially now in this period of time that these things were determined before anything was ever created and we are in awe of what God has done and God's purpose of things that are being revealed. We live in a time when now they're being revealed.

...Christ is the power of God. One day that's going to mean a lot more to you than it does right now. There is so much more we have to learn, so much more that's to be revealed, of what this is all about and the time will come.

Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Absolutely! He is the Word of God made flesh. We understand that it's the same way as speaking of Proverbs and the wisdom of God that speaks of there. It's the word, it's the mind of God, it's the being of God made flesh, and now, the first in the God Family, Elohim, the first of the firstfruits.

...and the wisdom of God. So that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Well, you can't even make a comparison there. What is that? What does that mean? There is no such thing.

...and the weakness of God is stronger than men. But men are so filled, mankind is so filled with pride that it's hard for them to grasp that. Instead, I think about what's written about what mankind has preferred to worship - worship things of creation more than the Creator. What a crock! What a bunch of stupidity! What incredible ignorance to do something like that!

For you see your calling. Do we? What does it mean to understand your calling, that God has called you, that God has opened up your mind, that God has given you the truth?

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. We learn as we come into God's Church. It says, *are called*, but those words aren't there but it's in a context of talking about a calling. But we learn that in time, that this isn't what it's about. It's not about our own abilities, it's about what God gives to us.

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Whatever God, whomever, we could say, God has called, He's called no one that's wise. There is no one wise in the world. Not with God's wisdom. That's a distinction when you read things in scripture, when it's talking about wisdom. We've read some of that already. There is the wisdom that is of the world, of mankind, and its stupidity before God because there is not true wisdom in it, there's not truth in it. It's just from the ways of human beings that's based on selfishness.

Anyone whom God calls is foolish, foolish. Because that's the way of the world. I hope we understand that, what's being said here.

Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. When you talk about that which comes from God's spirit it's a matter of what God gives. It's not a matter of what any of us have. **But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.** So, he's going to make a change in us. Everyone who has ever been called. I don't care if you go all the way back. Maybe the first one you come to you think of that God worked with for a period of time, longer period of time, Abraham. Or if you go back before that and look at the life of Noah. But there's not a whole lot written about them. Then more as time goes on is written by some of some.

Then Moses. What was he? Who was he? Well, until God drew him to a point and began to reveal more over a long period of time, which it was, and instructed him to do various things because of things that aren't written about what happened in his life, in his relationship toward God and his thinking toward God, a change took place. But it was God. It was God Almighty who molded and fashioned his thinking.

That's an awesome thing to understand. To fulfill what God was going to fulfill He began to work with someone at a very young age to prepare him for a particular place. There weren't a lot of other people, in other words, that were being molded and fashioned and prepared to do what he was going to do, lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Because that wasn't a last-minute plan. That was planned long, long time ago. God worked with a man, Moses, but He molded and fashioned him to be in a place, to be able to do a particular job when the time came. God has that power. There was only to be one Moses, so He molded and fashioned him in a particular way. Incredible.

We should be in awe of God, what He's able to do with the mind and working with us and preparing us, let us experience all kinds of things at different phases of time of humanity. Out of all that God is molding and building a temple with every piece to fit into its place. You cannot begin to comprehend that, the magnitude of it. We can only stand back and be in awe of it and be thankful that we're going to have opportunity for that, that we've already been given.

So again here, **God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.** Because of that change He does and it creates and makes within us. Think of just looking at his physical life, of Moses, in what God did with him in time. Awesome! I think of Mr. Armstrong and what God did

with him through time, being involved in the kind of work that he did, the kind of personality that he had, different things that were at work in his life. All you have to do is read the autobiography. And you know what? You can see God's design in what He did in a human being.

Are we perfect? No. We all have weaknesses because of our carnality. But to have something molded that serves in a great purpose of something that's going to be molded into something that's incredible, that's mighty by the time it's through is awesome, and so you look at a life and what was accomplished and what God did. Awesome! For a purpose. Within the temple as well, because that's all for a purpose and a place in the temple. I hope we understand.

...and God has chosen those who are without power in the world to confound, in other words, to put to shame, **those who are powerful**. So, it's all a matter of how people perceive themselves in the world, people who think they're important, people who tend to look down upon others.

Sometimes when you pick up on people who are smug, people who are arrogant and look down upon you and you know it, it's just hard to watch that. You think, don't you realize what you're doing to your life? But they don't. They can't until God calls them and helps them to see themselves for what they're doing. But judgmental attitudes, condemning...? I say this because we, my wife and I, know someone in a particular area (not anything to do with the Church, not anything to do with any relatives), just someone in the world, that when we see them there is something there that's very clear to us. It's like how many times can you say hello to someone, wave at someone, be friendly to someone and they ignore you because of an attitude and a spirit that's there? It's just hard to imagine the human mind can be that way. But human beings can be that way because they see themselves as so important.

That's, to me, a beautiful thing. If we were looked upon in the world, any of us and all of us together, as has been done in Worldwide or later on, we're looked down upon just for what we believe first of all. That's why people have these things that they like to say. "They're a sect." "They're a sect." So when you do see what we would maybe call indeed a sect out here, and they're a far off in their thinking and things that have happened to people out here, and it's like, "Yeah, don't you be like that because you look like you may be." And so, we're judged in that way.

People who are raised up in pride and haughtiness and so forth in how they judge. That is what God is saying. God is going to dumbfound what is considered by individuals themselves and by masses, because this is the way people think, they think they're great, whether it be in leadership, whether it be in knowledge, whether it be in power, whatever it might be. Anyone else, as a whole, they judge by how they see themselves.

This is what God is showing. He's going to humble mankind. I love that! Because there is no other way to work with someone until they're humbled. People have to be brought down. That's why we understand this world has to suffer like it does. It has to go through some of the hardest times of all earth's history, some of the most horrifying of things that have to take place, because there

is no other way to change, to alter the thinking of mankind on a large scale to where people will begin to listen once that power exists on earth as far as Christ and the 144,000 is concerned. God is going to do a lot to prepare the world for that period of time. There is absolutely no other way to bring in God's Kingdom upon this earth than He do this to this degree.

That's why I can't help but think about this change that's getting ready to take place and the more we see that and the more we understand it the more we agree with God, well, He gives us a focus that's unique to us and gives us strength and power, truly does.

...and, it's not a word for **base things**. It's the Greek word more to do with those of no family important or recognition. In other word, it's like in times past, and even today to certain extent, there are things that, well, especially you see it in politics sometimes where there is this circle of individuals with power. Sometimes it's within families, if you look even in times past as far as kings and queens and reign of different people. It's who you descended from, Lords, whatever it might be. It's like there is like this, because someone is not of that particular circle they're judged in a different way. Truly! And so, the world has been very much like that through time as far as the importance of people.

That's what this word has to do with. It has to do with those of "Oh, what family? What is your name?" A lot of things are based upon things like that. Well, anyway, so whether there is that kind of recognition. So, this is what this word is about.

In other words, to God that is of no value whatsoever. It means nothing. On the contrary, it's going to be hard for some of those to be humbled even in the Great White Throne. Because they see themselves as so important. They see themselves as so much better than others. Those are hard things to go through regardless of when you're called. Now or in the Great White Throne, or at the beginning here as we enter in the Millennium.

Because you know what? When it comes to government, when it comes to wealth, whatever it might be, all those things are going to fly out the window. There is going to be a whole new system set up and established. It's not going to be a matter of how much someone might have in the stock market, how much someone might have in real estate. Because you know what? Everything is starting all over...all over, new, fresh. Don't know how fully, but it's going to be totally new.

We're not going to have the DOW anymore, NASDAQ, and whatever else exists in the world today. Everything in those areas is going to be changed. A lot of thinking has to change with that. Babylon is being gotten rid of.

Again, as it says here, **those who are without power in the world, to confound those who are powerful**. Those of family lines or whatever it might be, a family recognition of the world, **and the things which are not despised**. It's a word that means "looked down upon." Because that's what they all do.

And you know what? We can judge, if we're not careful in our lives, we can look at others and say, "Yes, that's the way. A lot of people are like that." We're all like that. We all have the problem spiritually. We may not have the recognition in family, we may not have the recognition in wealth, ownership, power as far as leadership, or whatever it might be concerned. We may not have that, but we have the same spirit, we have the same minds as human beings in that sense as far as carnality is concerned. I hope you understand what I'm saying here.

So again here, this is what God is revealing, Paul is revealing, God has given to Paul to reveal. ... **and the things which are looked down upon.** This can be one of the greatest problems when it comes to relationships within a Church, and it has been over time. Because people tend to judge one another and judge by various things of where they place them in this spectrum of things.

Judgment has to be there, but it had better be the way God judges. It had better be because it's in unity and agreement with how God does things, not the way we decide things. There's a night and day difference in that. It takes a lifetime in God's Church to grow in those things, to see those things in a better way and to conquer some of those weaknesses in our life. Because those things are really, really, really ugly in life. Because so much of what we do in life and relationships is all about judgment, and we have to learn that our judgments are wrong, only God's is right and if we're not in unity and oneness with God then we're just wrong. There is much to learn in those areas of life.

...**and those who are despised,** or in other words, another word, **despise,** because it's not a matter of despising someone but yet that's the spirit of it, the way God sees it in the sense of disdain and something that's shown for others. It's looking down upon others.

So, why do we do that as human beings? Because we're better. There is something perverted in carnal, human nature that makes us feel better, that lifts us up, more importance: "The reason I can make that judgment is because I'm more important." That's what we're saying. There is this perversion of the human mind that isn't right that God wants every one of us to address and change and He'll give us the help and the power to do that.

...**and those who are not, to bring,** or it says, "bring to nothing," but it's a word that means "to abolish" or **to render inoperative those who are.** In other words, God is getting ready to change everything in how things are done.

All the systems of this world, the families, the wealthy, the owners of wealth, whatever that might be, it's all going to be flattened. It's all going to be flattened. Do you think people are going to have their own real estate and everything that they have? We don't know to what degree but so much of that is going to change. It truly is.

...**so that no flesh should glory in His presence.** That means to lift up ourselves in God's presence. Because we have nothing without God. Everything is being put in its proper perspective here as to how we should see our calling, how we should see things, why and how God is working with us as individuals and as a collective body.

...that no flesh should glory in His presence. And yet in the Church of God I've seen this over and over again, where the tendency of human nature even when baptized can glory in God's presence. It can glory in God's presence in things, if you go back in Worldwide, that we can all see that was done in an opening or a closing prayer, the leading of songs, the being in a choir. I could tell you stories, and here in Cincinnati you know what I'm saying. Those of you in Worldwide, I just have to say the word "choir" and you already know two churches that I'm talking about and what they were doing - both wrong.

Incredible things that we have learned from, that we have seen and understood from that are wrong, that are not God's way. That's why they existed - so we could learn and make those discernments and make those judgments and come to see this isn't of God. Then what is of God, we're to hold onto with all of our being, hold fast to it.

That's what it means to prove certain things and hold fast to it. That's how you do it, by learning it within the realm that God gives us, the arena of life that God gives us and a fellowship of life that God gives us. There is much to be learned in that way.

So, no flesh should glory in His sight. So, again, or whether it be in a sermonette or whether it be in a sermon or split-sermons, or whatever it was. I look back and I've seen so many things in those areas where people were lifted up by it to where the glory wasn't a matter of God's or it wasn't for God, it was for self.

When those things existed, they just, when you come to see them, they make you want to kind of have a little bit of vomit in your mouth. Because it should be that distasteful. It tastes that way because it's not good and it should be repulsive and something you want out quickly, you want away from it. That's the way those things should be in our life. We should want to never have anything like that enter into our thinking, in our being, in our minds. It's never about self being elevated. Those are the kinds of things to be horrified by in our carnal, human nature. Because they exist in human nature and they're some of the ugliest things of human nature.

...so that no flesh should glory in His presence. Now, from out of Him you are in Christ Joshua, and from God is made unto us wisdom, how this is properly translated all the way through, **And from God is made unto us wisdom.** It's because of that relationship we have in the Body of Christ and the Church of God, and the power and the strength we have through the forgiveness of sin and the growth that is able to take place spiritually in our lives. It's a beautiful thing.

...righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. So again, a spiritual matter.

Just a few verses here. Ephesians 4. Over and over again it talks about a calling. We've just covered in 1 Corinthians 1, it's highly illuminating, if you will, of our calling, of how God draws us out of the world and what is so wrong in the world that we have to escape from, that we have to be drawn from. It's through this calling of what God gives us in our minds. Then we learn from that everything that we have in us that we're able to grow in comes from God.

Then we come down here to Ephesians 4. You know, one matter that we come to quickly grasp in God's Church as a matter of calling is a matter of how God works. It's the matter of the order and the way that God works. It's a matter of how God governs in our life and we have to come to see those things early on. The earlier we see them the more blessed we're going to be. The more human beings resist them the more difficult it's going to be.

Ephesians 4:1—I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you are called. There used to be a time when I would read this and I would think of what was kind of taught at different times, of how when he spoke of being a prisoner of the Lord and so forth, that it was a matter of this bonded service he was doing.

No, so often when Paul referred to it that's what he was. That means a lot more to me now than it used to, because when you go through certain things in your life you realize that's just the way it is and whatever in life any of us experience in life in God's Church we're to grow from, we're to learn from.

It's a beautiful thing when God is in the constructive part of it, if you understand what I'm saying. He molds and fashions us individually and collectively as a Body. When he says this he means what he says. It is literal.

...beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you are called... And so, it's a matter of striving to grasp how valuable this is. The reason we're going through a part of this or discussing it is there is that which God wants us to grasp and understand in the sense of a special relationship we have with Him that is awesome and special, that we are unique in this world. A holy priesthood—that's how it's described—with which God is working, and yet it's hard for us to sometimes grasp. What an awesome thing that of all the people in the world we have God's spirit in us, we're a part of His family begotten now. To understand what that means in a relationship with God? That should give us incredible strength, it truly should, and focus and desire to keep fighting what we're fighting for.

Because there are those who let up and let down and you can never do that in God's Church. You have to keep focused always. You have to keep fighting always. As long as you're in this human body you can't quit fighting against your own nature. You can't quit fighting the battle, the spiritual warfare. Because that's what refines us; it's in that process that God can transform our thinking. If we want it and we fight for it, He'll work with us. He'll help us. He'll ensure it. As far as He is concerned it's guaranteed. It's just that we have to keep making those choices to keep fighting, to keep doing what we need to do.

The more we grasp our calling, how special that is? How many people do you know that have it? Not very many. Not very many.

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worth of the calling with which you were called. It came from God Almighty. That's how we have it. It's a powerful thing. It's a precious thing. It's valuable beyond price.

...with all humility. That's a tough one, humility. It means we don't look to ourselves in any fashion or form in the sense of being raised up with any kind of pride of how good we are. Being better than anyone else? Pshew! What a joke! "With all humility." Everything we have that's right and good comes from God. God, God's Family - but we're not there yet. We're part way. God receives the honor and the glory, the thanks, the praise for what He's offered us, what He's given to us.

That should be ever in our thinking. Because as I said, even now before we get there to the end of all this, as things are getting stirred up in the world... I'll tell you what, I don't care what week you look at right now, if you're seeing a lot of headlines in the world and news and so forth, it's about the preparation for war, war, war. Four years ago, you could hardly ever find an article and now it's every week! Nuclear war! Threats! Different things being said that are coming out of Russia, that are coming out of China, that are coming out of Japan, that are coming out of Vietnam, that are coming out of India, they're coming out of Pakistan.

We're at the threshold door right now. It takes some time, whatever that time is in God's hands. But I'll tell you what, it just keeps getting speeded up and ramped up more and more, more intense.

That's why I have my eyes on Trumpets. We don't know how quick some of these things can explode in the world and when it's God's time because the sealing is finished, it's going to burst loose. God knows when the sealing is going to be done. God knows. But He hasn't given it to us to know, and in that we grow because we're tried and tested. We're able to be transformed, draw closer to God, become more at one with God through that process.

I'll tell you what, if you're watching things out there it just ought to sober you to the core of your being. Now they're even measuring in some cases here, again, what it would be like just in one part of the world, small scale nuclear war because of things happening between certain nations. People are looking more in that area at the possibilities and what it would mean to have a nuclear winter just from that. They're kind of finding and starting to dawn on people that it's not going to take very many nukes that can raise incredible devastation on the earth.

It used to be that that was more known. But now it's coming back out again. But the fear of it, the destructiveness of it is far, far greater now, far, far greater than it used to be in the thinking, because the arms were so small compared to what they are now.

And so the fact that they're even being discussed out there? I know because I have searched news for years and years and years and years and years, because of the focus God has given to us, because of what we know is coming next concerning the end. We know that everything in the world is gearing up to the third world war. We know that.

So indeed, looking at words, at thinking between governments and so forth, and it hasn't been in the news like it has in the last year and a half. Every month it gets more intense and the things being said are sharper, more cutting than ever before. These things are not without purpose.

These things are not by accident. These things are part of a design, of what the world is going to do regardless. It's just that it's going to work in God's timing, in God's way. We're there. We are so there, truly. When it's done...? I don't want to get into some other sermons.

Anyway, scary stuff out there. It really is. Sobering. Dumbfounding. All you have to do is read headline after headline day after day.

...with all humility and gentleness. So again, **humility, gentleness, with patience or longsuffering, bearing with...** I love that word, forbearing, exercising the right kind of tolerance when we talk about tolerating something. I love that word because of that. It's not a matter of a tolerance in a negative way, you're going to tolerate something in someone else. No, it's a matter of allowing for the differences. That's what the Greek word means. Allowing for the difference.

Because as human beings we don't tend to do that. We find fault in differences. What a horrible thing. We should be allowing one another to be unique. Yes, a desire within the Church especially that we're all growing and conquering and becoming changed, drawing closer to God. But the greatest of that change has to be in ourselves, of what it means here to enjoy the differences and that God is creating and molding something different within each and every one of us that we are to be different.

Instead of the human carnal mind of judging that as bad or finding fault in the differences, on the contrary, to strive to look at it in the way that God gives to us to see it.

Anyway, I'm going to stop there. We'll start there again next week, continue on and conclude probably next Sabbath. Though sometimes it gives me a long time to get through some of these. We may take longer.

Next week, *Part 4*.