

This is *Part 3* of the series *True Thanksgiving*.

As stated in the beginning of *Part 1*, we're living in a world today where being thankful and people expressing it is becoming more rare. So much of that is because of the trend that is moving in a rapid pace toward greater selfishness and extremes in that area of life because of technology because of other things we're experiencing in this world.

So, we're going to continue today by going back and picking up in the last part of Colossians 3 where we left off before, Colossians 3 toward the end where we were.

Colossians 3:15 it says, **Even let the peace of God rule in your hearts.** Now, that's a choice and it's a battle as well because it's something you have to work toward because it doesn't just happen. That's why this sermon series is entitled *True Thanksgiving*, because there is that which is in the world, but it isn't what we're striving for. We're striving for something that goes far beyond that because of a relationship with God, because God's in it, because it's a matter of God's spirit working in us.

That has a lot to do with what we just mentioned here in this first verse, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." It's not a suggestion, it's something that should happen. It's something that we should want. It's something we should embrace. Again, peace being the opposite of drama, that's a choice. It isn't a choice in the world because people don't understand how to have the kind of peace that we have access to through a change in our thinking, through a process that takes place.

Again, always battling human nature in this because it's always there. And so, it's a matter of coming to recognizing those things in our life when they happen, of rejecting it, loathing the things that have to do with drama, the things that have to do with that which robs us of peace, and knowing what it is that has to take place in our thinking to change all that. That isn't a simple process.

That's why we're going through this because we're ever learning. Even in this there is so much that is here that we can go through verses like this and read them and not grasp at all what it's saying because it is a spiritual thing. It's a matter of what God wants us to understand and grasp spiritually in our lives and to understand the battle involved in this, a matter of being alert spiritually, desiring to be close to God.

So again, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," because one of the two will rule. It doesn't mean that we're not going to make mistakes in that, but it means that's what we're striving for. We want God's law, God's way of life to rule in our lives. Because either it will, or our carnal selfish nature is going to rule. That's it.

So if our carnal human nature is ruling and we're giving into it and we're letting it happen, we're not fighting it, then we're going to have drama in our lives. That's something we want to reject and conquer.

...to the which you were also called in one body. So, more emphasis is being placed on this then as a matter of importance, as a matter of the way it should be. Because we have been called by God Almighty for this purpose, to learn these things, that peace rule in our lives, not drama, like is in the world. They don't have peace. They don't have peace that comes from God.

Then it says **and be thankful.** Again, not a suggestion. It's a matter of something that should be in our minds. It should rule in our lives, as much as what we started with in the beginning here, because this is a part of letting the peace of God rule, wanting the peace of God to rule in our lives, which is a matter of God's way of life, His laws ruling our lives, not selfishness. The same thing here about being thankful because if it's true thankfulness this has to rule in our lives, we have to fight for it, we have to work for it.

It says here, **Let the word of Christ...** Again, this word "let," it's not a suggestion. Again, it's a matter of something that should be happening. It's something that should rule in our lives. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,** because that's where true wisdom comes from. It comes from God's word, it comes from God's way of life, it comes from the mind of God. We have that blessing of God's spirit, of Christ and God the Father dwelling in us and we in them.

As it says here, "In all wisdom," because God has all wisdom, and He wants to share that with us. He wants us to grow in wisdom, which is a matter of His mind, being of one mind, that same mind.

...teaching and admonishing... As we mentioned, as I mentioned last Sabbath, this "one another" doesn't belong in the translation at all. That's not what it's about, that we're going around teaching and admonishing one another about God. That did exist in the Church at one time. But it shouldn't be there. That isn't what we're supposed to be doing. That isn't how we do it. There's a way that God teaches us, works with us, admonishes us, as a whole, and then at times we have our part in it as well – another subject which we've covered in times past and recent sermons.

Let the word of Christ/the mind of God/the word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves. That's the correct translation. This is something we have to do. We have no control over other people in life though sometimes it seems we try. We try to work at that it seems like in judging and so forth. But the reality is self is what we can control, it's what we are to control, it's what has to change, and only each one of us by ourselves has the ability to yield to that process. So, this is what it's telling us.

Teaching and admonishing yourselves... We don't go around singing psalms, as it says here, ... **in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and grace in your hearts to the Lord.** It's our heart. It's why it starts out up here, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart." It's about our heart, it's about our life, it's about what we can do in that process and how we have to yield to that process and fight for what God has placed before us.

So again here, this is the product. This is a matter of the rejoicing that's inside of us, the ability to think about God and the blessings of God. And what does it produce? Thankfulness! It produces a relationship with God and with Christ as we grow and become more and more thankful in understanding of their love. We have a greater confidence of their love for us and how they work in our lives.

Indeed, whatever you do in word or deed, so again, speaking or in actions, whatever we're doing, **do all through the name of the Lord Joshua, giving thanks.** That's what it's all about, learning to do that, learning to become stronger in that and thinking about those things. If those things are in us then the product is going to be what it says here, this rejoicing that takes place. Because this is about a spiritual plane, "psalms, hymns." It's not something we have to go around singing psalms to ourselves or thinking about that. It's about something that's happening inside of us on a spiritual plane of rejoicing before God and God's way of life, being thankful to God, producing true thankfulness to God.

Let's turn over to Ephesians 5 now. Of course, we do those things oftentimes then, most often through prayer—needs to be stated—when we do these things and giving thanks to God, that's how we do it.

We're going to continue now by focusing on other verses that admonish us to keep thankfulness as a major part of our focus and relationship with God. It has to be there. Again, as I said last Sabbath, I don't know how anyone can have a prayer (unless it's just really quick about something specific and has to be quick), but as a whole, without having thankfulness in it, without thanking God, without thanking them, something to be in our mind of a gratitude toward God.

Ephesians 5:8—For you were once in darkness. It's good to remember that, on occasion to be reminded of that, to remember what we were and what we still are. But to also be thankful for the change since that time until now and all the blessings that have come as a result of learning to live God's way of life, of learning to embrace the things that God has given to us and desiring that His way of life rule in us, truly.

"For you were once in darkness." How can you live life without thinking about this sometimes, especially in your prayers? Because this helps us to remember what we are. It helps us to understand the mercy and the grace that God has given to us, to be able to have a family like this, to be able to have the kinds of friends that we have that are of the same mind and going through the same kinds of things, that none of us are in this alone, that we're in this together.

Though we're exceedingly small compared to what we used to be, as an example in Worldwide, it's about what's in us and what we do have at the time, at any specific time, if you will.

So, "you were once in darkness." Again, to really grasp that and to hold on to it in order to nurture thankfulness. It's something to think about on a regular basis. Then that also helps a person to battle and fight against pride, which is so ugly, where we can become lifted up if we don't really see ourselves and realize what it is that God is transforming, if we yield to that and be thankful for that.

...but now light in the Lord. So, we have that because of God's mercy, because of God's love, because He's brought us into a Body and all the blessings that go with that. The greatest of blessings have to do with that relationship and what He's doing in us. He's called us to be in His Family and so we have to go through this, whatever period of time it is, and though it's hard for us, especially the younger we are, but as we grow older or as we are longer in God's Church we come to see this more deeply in time because it's something we grow in, to grasp this in a deeper way, to grasp that life is short for a purpose. Thank God this physical life is relatively... well, it's not just relatively short, it's exceedingly short in the scheme of things, it really is. It's a hiccup in time, it's a wink in time as far as God's way of life is concerned because it will go on forever.

We can't grasp everlasting life. We are given knowledge of it, we can think of it in part, but we really don't see it, we really don't grasp it. We just believe God, how awesome it's going to be, how awesome He's planned and preparing everything for millions and billions of years into the future. Of things that are difficult for the human mind to comprehend. What an awesome thing.

"But now we are light in the Lord." We have light. We can understand and see things the world can't. We can watch the news and see how people are caught up in various things in the world and realize what a blessing to be free of all that, what a blessing not to be caught up in that. Yet sometimes if we're not careful we can get caught up in that and begin to take sides and begin to listen to certain things and begin to promote certain things ourselves, which is stupid, foolish spiritually. It's not what we are to do. Because everything in this world has to be changed. Everything is screwed up from top to bottom, it truly is.

Walk as children of light. Again, a choice, a responsibility - having to do with how we choose to live our lives, of what we let come through our lips, what comes out as we have air that goes over the vocal cords where we can express things. Too often what we express is not good, so we have to fight against some of those things don't we, and change.

For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. So, we have a battle on our hands, because if we're honest with ourselves we realize how blessed we are that we have access to God's spirit, we can pray to God, we have this relationship with God, with His Family, and yet we see self and we realize there's a battle here until we're no longer in this. It's to the end of human life.

For the fruit of the spirit, that which comes from God, that which is given by God. Because there are things we can't know, we can't do, we can't accomplish except for God's spirit in us that helps to change self and helps to change our speech and helps to change our actions because you can't do it on your own. You can't decide you're going to go out here and obey God's way of life, like Judaism has through the centuries because they hold on to things about the Sabbath.

They haven't done so well with Holy Days. They change those things up every once in a while and then they add something else toward the end of the year where you have twelve candles that have to be lit. But you think, "Get as close to Christmas but stay away from it because the world is doing this and so our children see those things, so what can we do? Oh, Hanukkah, we can do this for twelve days! Woo! And try to tie the Bible into it somehow. We'll work out a way."

Then, of course, Passover, because you can't acknowledge that Joshua was the Christ so let's change that up a little bit and have a Seder on the 15th.

For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Only because of God's truth. All these things come from God, the fruit of the spirit. Anything that is a fruit is produced by God's spirit. It's not produced by us. We have to act upon it, we have to make choices in it, and we have to work like it depends upon us (and it does, on our choices), but it's accomplished by the power of God's holy spirit to be done right, to see it through in the truth, motivated by the truth because we see it. That's a blessing of God's spirit in our lives, a fruit of God's spirit.

...**proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.** So, what does that mean? Well, in how you live your life. There are things you hear. There are things you learn. You pray about it; you want to do it. And so by doing it, the more we do it, even though we may not fully understand it, because we do it we begin to learn things. We prove it. You don't know until you try it. That's what it's about.

Just like examples in the New Testament, oxen, an individual is able to take oxen out and he's anxious because perhaps he's using some other type of means of agriculture before that of tilling the earth, and maybe by hand. And now to have oxen? Don't know what he had before, but to have an oxen, that was the height of what you could have at that point in time, to go out and prove them, to try them, to see how they work, to see what they're able to produce.

That's what we do with God's way of life, to prove it, to try it, to see what it produces. Then that causes greater gratification and thankfulness toward God because we see the fruit of it, and we realize it can't come in any other way. It's an awesome thing.

"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." In other words, what He set for us as a way of life that we're to live, and then by doing it we embrace it more and more, we become more and

more convicted this is the only way to live, by doing things we're told as God teaches us from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Like getting a Covid shot before the Feast so you can attend the Feast because we recognize how important a Feast is. If we're able to be there we want to be there. It's a very physical thing. But to have unity in the Body someone has to have the ability, the authority to make a choice and a decision that's best for God's Church for a purpose and a reason. If we've learned through time the importance of being able to have that and do that, then we rejoice in that, that God has given us that, that we not have the kind of confusion that's in this world.

I think it's kind of interesting that someone mentioned from overseas in their monthly report that this thing of Covid is revealing something far more to people over there as people can see the mass confusion between countries in Europe. Even within their own countries, who makes the decisions? Who makes the choices? How come there is so much variance in it all? Absolute confusion. The result, the conclusion, even as this individual said by their neighbors, "We can't govern ourselves." It's bringing it to the open more and more, even Covid!

We are not able to effectively govern ourselves. We fight, we argue, we have different opinions, and we base some of those opinions strictly on maybe political lines or other, whatever it is, massive confusion. You stop and think about that a little bit, and you think, what an awesome thing, with God there's one truth, one way, one way as far as administration in God's Church, one Church, one Body, one government, one truth, and on and on it goes. Sometimes that involves very physical things because we happen to be in very physical bodies. Shock!

So, we have to make choices along the way. Yet I think of all the mass confusion we've had even within the Body at times and getting to this point where we're, well, not all on the same page because we're still not there even in that issue. We're still not there.

I went out and got another jab the other day, different one than I had before. This one hurt more. Just have to be honest, it was that Pfizer thing. Tougher than the Johnson & Johnson on my body. Might not have been on yours, but it swelled up more and it's almost gone now, and I have to touch it now to kind of tell where it was. But three days ago I didn't have to touch it. Two days ago I didn't have to touch it, I knew it was there. Doing some of these things because of travel first and foremost, for the sake of the Church, to be able to go to different places not knowing what the government might do at any moment in time, which they might do anything.

That's why I'm praying more vigorously about the Feast of Tabernacles on a regular basis, that if the Trumpets haven't started by that time as far as the fulfillment of them, then that we might be blessed with an awesome Feast this year and that we be able to have the ability to travel, that we be able to still do those things, all of us wherever we are. Australia that was totally locked down and still struggling through some of that. I think it's in the ninety-some percentile now that they're vaccinated. Mind-boggling!

I guess you learn after a while that if you can't do anything, you can't shop, you can't do "this," you can't do "that," without a shot, it kind of helps some people maybe to get motivated. Well, we don't have that here. Instead, we have arguments and debates and Supreme Court having to get involved. And you think, mass confusion!

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Be at one with God. Strive to learn what God has given to us in order to have what is precious, unity. How beautiful it is in God's Church. The part that isn't beautiful is the part that doesn't yield to that, that fights against that, that resists that, and that other people in the Church know about, that that doesn't help, that hurts. It drags. I wish we could learn that, but I guess that will always be there until the end as well.

"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." You know, when you do certain things you begin to learn. Until you do it you can't learn; you still are resisting and fighting. You can't see yourself, you can't see what's going on in your mind. But when you start proving it and doing something then its like a blind that's been there and now it goes up and now that you can see it, you can begin to grasp and understand why it has to be this way and what's even more important.

What's the most important thing that we should have learned through all of this? The importance of fellowship together with God as much as we have ability to and power to do, to recognize the value of that fellowship at that time of the year in coming before God and rejoicing. Not having our way because we're going to hold on to some principle that we think we have that's different from others, that some are still holding on to out there. They think they have some principle above and beyond what God has been given to His Church! I think, what are you doing here? If you can't break through that one what on earth is going on in your life? And if you get offended, that's your problem.

See, because the word of God shouldn't offend us. On the contrary, it should be something we embrace and love because we believe in it, and if someone out there doesn't believe in it, which I know is still out there, you're missing the mark in a horrible way.

Even have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Look at this world! Even with this matter of this crazy thing and the variants that keep going on out there. Omicron. You think, who cares! Variants, let them go, whatever has to happen to be a part of humbling this world, so be it. We're going to experience some of that and we're going to suffer with it because of some of that.

God isn't going to intervene and protect everyone. This is something else we should have learned through all this. God doesn't just "magically" give everyone protection to where you're not going to catch it even after you've had it (the shot). But what would have happened if you hadn't? Do you know the answer to that?

Anyway, we're very blessed by God. Our lives are in God's hands and that's what should hold us up more than anything else, to be at peace with that, comfortable with that in every way. That's our life.

"Even have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." So what are some of those? Taking sides with this party or that party or this idea or that doctor and what they have to say and their authority. You think, haven't we learned yet that our authority isn't from the world, it doesn't come from governments, it doesn't come from doctors? Though we participate in various things that have come through a matter of science or whatever it might be, but it's from God, that we look to God and what God gives us in instruction Sabbath by Sabbath?

"Have no fellowship" because that's what fellowship is. It's not a matter of just rubbing shoulders with someone or talking to someone. Sometimes it's a matter of listening to what someone else is saying and then taking it in and beginning to think, "I am the authority," on a particular subject or "I have an understanding about something that some of you others don't have because I studied it on the internet!" Anyway, sorry, but some of that stuff really blows my mind.

People don't even know today that when you start doing a search, because you're prejudice already in many cases and you look for a specific thing, that's what they'll feed you more of. It's programmed that way. Whatever it is you search into, all of a sudden, there's more of that out there, not the other side. This is a sick, sick world we live in; it truly is.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove. Now, what an awesome word if we understand it. "Reprove," it's a word that means "expose." Expose it, see it for what it is, come to learn, come to understand. Another part of it, "be convicted." So, it's a matter of exposing something and being convicted of something, God's way. Exposing certain things that aren't in the light and seeing them for what they are and becoming more and more convicted of what is right, what does come from God.

Verse 12—For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved, exposed, convicted when it comes to conviction because of seeing something in the light, evil, wrong, things that are in error, whatever it might be. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light. What does that mean? From God. God is the one through the power of His holy spirit that will help us to grow in these things, to be able to clearly see and distinguish between things that are coming out of the world and things that are coming from God, being moved and motivated and inspired by God.

...for everything manifested is light. So, if something is truly manifested that has to do with anything concerning God, which is what we are focused upon, the peace of God, the mind of God, being at one with God, it's a matter of something that it'll be a matter of God's spirit, the light, that which illuminates, helps us to see. Because you can't see without God's spirit. Can't see what you need to see without God's spirit.

Therefore he says, Awake you who sleeps, and arise from the dead. Because if we fall asleep spiritually it's like a death. I think of what happened around the Apostasy and the falling asleep. And unless God awakens us it's like being dead spiritually because you can hold on to certain routines of what you were taught, not to eat pork, continue to observe the Sabbath, believe in the Feast of Tabernacles, but without God's spirit in that and being fed by God in the midst of all that God isn't there. It's not alive anymore, it's a routine, it's like what the world does in their religions.

God's spirit is the only thing that brings things alive in what we hear, in what we're able to see. Awesome to understand that.

Awake you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. It means he'll bless us to be able to see and to learn and to grow. Because it's something we have to have in our lives on a regular basis. To see, you have to see something in order to grasp it. So much of that has to do with seeing things inside of us that are hidden. You should want to see whatever is hidden and expose it to the light, have it exposed. Because without that we can't repent, we can't change. Because we have to make the choice to repent, to become more at one with God.

See that you walk circumspectly, or as the word means "with exactness." So, we want that, we want that, a right relationship with God. ...**not as fools.** Sometimes people choose the way of foolishness. To resist what God gives even administratively within God's Church is foolish. But He says to do it is wise, yielding ourselves to God's spirit so that we can learn.

There are things we can learn and see and grasp that we can't see until we practice it, put it to the test, to prove it. Then, all of a sudden, it's like, in time, doesn't mean it happens immediately, but you're going to begin to see things that you couldn't otherwise see.

...**redeeming the time,** making the most use of time, buying it up. That's what the word means, to buy up the time that you have, whatever time you have. Time is short. It's getting shorter. ... **because the days are evil.** We live in an exceedingly evil world, we truly do.

Therefore do not be unwise. God doesn't want us to be foolish, because that's what "unwise" is. Why listen to Sabbath services? Why keep the Sabbath? Why tune in on the Sabbath unless we are seeking to see self and grow and change and draw closer to God and asking for help.

Therefore, do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Why does He want us to hear on the Sabbath? Why does He really want us to hear not just the words but to hear, to see on the Sabbath day?

Do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess. So again here, giving a physical analogy of something so we can learn something spiritually; a contrast is being made here. So, it's showing here that one can drink wine or whatever, strong drink, and have excess of it. ...**but be filled with the spirit.** What is to be learned from that? You can't have too much of God's spirit.

That's what it's talking about. That's what it's giving the contrast of. Understand what is important.

...but be filled with the spirit, speaking, again, it's "yourselves." That's the word that should be there, within, as we do, whether it be at times of prayer or as we think about a certain matter, think about a sermon as we're hearing it and maybe later as we think about certain things that were said or listen to something that God has given to us.

...speaking, in essence, to yourselves. It doesn't mean you're going around, "Okay, what's this thing," and then you answer, or whatever it is. It's the mind and how you think. **...in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.** So, it's the same expression again that's being used to show that there are things we can learn and grow in, and if we think on these things in a way that is because we're being filled with God's spirit because we understand the need for God's spirit and yield to that, then we're going to be able to rejoice spiritually inside in our hearts and our minds more in a relationship with God and His people.

...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. That's what it's about. It's about what's inside of us that especially when we're praying there is that which is thankful, grateful, that's excited to be able to pray to God and to think about whatever it is we're praying about. Not just about selfish things. We should pray about things we know we need, especially on a spiritual plane in our lives, but whether it be about things within the Church or others or whatever it is that we're praying about—like I mentioned a moment ago about the Feast—if that be God's will always, because there may be a purpose in it why we're not to come together at that time. And we'll learn from that.

But if we pray about it, if it's possible that we have this, that we have God's favor and help in this to open up those doorways, and that means governments and things that otherwise would restrict us, it's good to pray about it. Then whatever transpires we're going to know that's God's will, it's God's purpose. Something we can learn from that if it's a different answer or whatever. If any of our prayers should be like that, we are to learn from it. What are we to grow in?

...making melody in your heart to the Lord. It's this relationship with God and how we feel inside. **...giving thanks.** That's what follows! When you do this if it's genuine, if it's true then this true thanksgiving, it's going to be inside of us. You can't help it to be thankful to God when there are things you see and grasp what God has given that you value, like a treasure, as a treasure because they are on a spiritual plane.

...giving thanks always for all things, whatever it is in our life, whatever it is we go through. It may not be easy. But to look upon it as something to understand, "My life is in God's hands. I've experienced this. There's a purpose in it," because God is the one molding and fashioning us. We are His creation. He is creating that within us to be able to be in His Family. That is not a small thing.

We're not just attending Sabbath services and going through the motions and going to the Feast of Tabernacles and all these physical things. It goes way, way above and beyond that for this purpose because of a creation that's inside of us, of a transforming of the mind. Our lives, my life, your life is in God's hands. Where else would we want it to be?

Because He's molding us. He's not working with the world to transform the mind. He's working with each one of us in the Body of Christ, in the Church of God. We are the most important thing on this earth right now, God's people, because He's creating that within us to become part of His Family. Later on, it'll be others in the world where He'll begin to give them grace and favor and help and ability to become part of a Body. But it's not now. This is now. We are now. What an awesome thing to know, to understand. It's beautiful.

...giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Joshua the Christ. Everything possible through him. Awesome.

Thinking the other morning here about what an incredible thing. I don't know how many parts there will be to this. I'm positive there are going to be four. There may be five, there may be six, I don't know, but we'll keep going to a point where God makes it clear I've said enough. I thought want an awesome thing Sabbath after Sabbath to have our minds on one thing, thankfulness. It's so important.

And by doing this, that's what should be in our mind through the week because we're more cognisant of it, we're thinking more in those terms, and we're going to be able to rejoice more here because we're going to grasp more fully the value of those things that God has given to us because we're thinking on them and to thank God in those things. It's a beautiful thing in this part of a relationship with God, to become focused on this so we can grow in it more because that's what we're being offered - to grow in this more because it's beneficial to us to our growth. That's why God wants us to focus upon it, because it's a blessing to our growth if we yield ourselves to the process. It's an awesome thing.

2 Corinthians 9:6—But this I say, anyone who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. Choices, choices, choices; what do we put into it? Well, whatever that is, we get that out of it. Physical things in life should help us to learn that in a very powerful way and to be able to see spiritual things then that we can relate to that equally so, more so.

Anyone who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and anyone who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Don't we want to be strong spiritually? Don't we want to draw closer to God and Joshua and to one another? Well, then we have to be focused upon those things and praying about those things and putting a lot into it, learning to put more into it.

Each should give as they purposed in their heart. Because again, it's a matter of what is true. If it's in our mind and we're doing it because we're motivated for right reasons, striving to be motivated by right reasons (because if we're not that's going to be clear as well). So again, it's

going to reveal really what we purpose in our heart and in our mind, what we do and what we don't do, how much we put into something and how much we pull back.

...not grudgingly or of necessity. So whenever we see something that we are doing that brings out this point of, "Oh, I don't really want to do that but I'm going to go ahead and do it," we have a battle on our hands because we have to work to change that. If it's something for a good purpose then we should strive to change our thinking in it so that we are doing it for the right purpose.

So, "not grudgingly or of necessity" because God isn't pleased with that, and neither should we be pleased with that. Because that's not real giving, that's not really yielding ourselves to God's spirit, and if we see we're doing that in our lives then we need to cry out to God for the help of His holy spirit to change that.

For God loves a cheerful giver. Now, He loves us, but when this is there there is more, more ability for God to bless us, to give us more. Because God can't give us more just because it's there to be given. What are we doing? What are we putting into it? That's what this is about. What are we putting into it?

So like, if we pray once a week, we're not going to get a whole lot out of it. If that's all that we're doing in going before God, is praying once a week, as an example, or worse, where is the growth? Can God just give us of His spirit, of His way of life, of insight to see things and grasp things and see things about ourselves? No, it doesn't work that way. It's going to be a lot longer process to grow, to break through what we need to break through, to accelerate. We should want to accelerate to our growth as much as possible, to be as close to God as we can.

Each should give as they purposed in their heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; For God loves a cheerful giver. In other words, learning, in essence, each one of us, more and more to enjoy giving, to love giving, to really come to understand that the greater fullness of life comes from that. It truly does.

Now, God is able to make all grace. In other words, God can give us more, but it's going to depend on us, what we put into it. Because He gives us everything we need so it's up to us; we have to make those choices. He doesn't just give it to us because we've been baptized or whatever.

Now, God is able to make all grace... It means mercy, forgiveness, patience, tolerance, various blessings of His spirit and way of life, the ability to see and grasp things. **God is able to make all grace abound toward...** Now, this word here is kind of unique and I was kind of surprised how often as we go through Corinthians here it pops up. Because it's going to express something as we build upon this that grows and grows and grows in a very powerful way, because that's what abounding means. It's this thing of growing and abounding. It's showing this excitement, if you will, of growth and how it's produced in our lives.

So, it says God is able to make all grace abound toward us. He has everything and He already has made the way for us, it's just there's so much more we could receive. And what holds it up? Us. We're the only things that hold back His ability to give us more.

Now, God is able to make all grace abound toward, in other words, it's a word that means "to be over and above." Over and above. What an awesome thing to think over and above what we have now there is so much more.

...abound toward you that you always having all sufficiency, all sufficiency. Now, this word means "self satisfaction." Fulfillment in the mind. Self sufficiency in your thinking and that helps to take away this thing of wanting something else that we think we have to have in order to enjoy life, to be fulfilled. No, God's way of life is what gives this. The truth is what gives this. Understanding of these things in a very powerful way and what really counts in life, in this physical life that we have in the Body of Christ.

Because it's not the physical life. That's a means to an end. Everyone has to have that before they can have that end that they hold on to. The end they can have, want to have, God's way of life, the Family of God.

...always having all sufficiency in all. In whatever part of life that we experience. We get in trouble when we don't have this, when we begin to desire something else, want something else, especially if it doesn't agree with God.

...may have an abundance. In other words, **having all sufficiency in all may have an abundance for,** same word, "above and beyond," **abound toward every good work.** This is where it comes from. It comes from what we do. It comes from being productive. It comes from striving to work at God's way. We have generally five days, forty hours, basically, minimum in life that we have been given that we should strive to work hard on a physical way, whatever that might be, at whatever job we have that God has blessed us to have in life. We're to learn from that and relate to that on a spiritual plane, that we have time as well that we are to invest that is a matter of a relationship with God. We're exceedingly blessed with that on the Sabbath Day. Thankfully, God has commanded it every seventh day, otherwise, it probably wouldn't happen. Well, we know it wouldn't happen like it should with human beings.

So again, this "being able to abound above and beyond in every good work." That's what we should want to be in our life. It's the fruit of God's spirit. That's what we're talking about, of things we can grow in that God wants to give, as it says here before, to make all grace, every favor and blessing and help and fruit be produced in our life.

As it is written, He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the... The word "poor" isn't what it says at all. You know, sometimes these translations just bowl me over. Totally miss the mark. What does that mean, "poor," "poor in spirit," "poor and humble" maybe? Is that what it's about? **He has given,** well, again it has nothing to do with the English word for "poor." Literally, it means **to work for one's daily bread.** That's what the word means in the Greek

language, “to work for one’s daily bread.” Because it all goes back to this thing of what we put into something, of the work we put into whatever it is that we value, and that God can make all grace abound, but work is required on our part, choices that we have to make.

So to work for one’s daily bread, in other words, “one who works for their living.” So it’s showing here something on a spiritual plane that we have to learn physically, as I was stating a moment ago, of something we have to really put ourselves into if we want to excel in physical life, to be able to do things physically, to have things physically in life that are good for us, that are enjoyable in physical life. But there is that which surpasses that comes from God above and beyond, far beyond.

So again, **He has dispersed abroad, He has given to those who work for their daily bread.** So, we can look at that physically, but what about spiritually? Our daily bread? What comes from God? If we want that that we’re able to be fed by in the mind, the way of God, the word of God? Christ said, “I am the bread of life.” We understand what that means. We should. And to grasp and understand that we’re able to have that from God that nourishes us, that we have every day, and hence, the need to pray every day, to have a relationship with God, to think about God, to think about God’s purpose and plan at different times that something might jolt that in something we’re doing physically, whatever it might be.

Verse 10—Now He who supplies seed to the sower... So, this is all about work. It’s about growth. It’s about productivity, what we put into it, whether it be on a physical plane, God wants us to understand on a spiritual plane.

Now He who supplies seed to the sower... God has done that. God is the one who has given everything physical on this earth for us to enjoy. What a thing just to thank God for, whatever we have in life. We live in such an incredible time in earth’s history, the conveniences, the ease. We have to be careful with that. You know, 5,800 years before this, well, starting from the beginning all the way up to 5,800 years, people had to work a lot harder to do various things just to have a meal, just to have a fire, just to have some place to be able to have fuel for, whatever it might be.

It’s not like today. You push a button - “Oh, that’s hard. Let’s get it so we can do it from our phone and sit down and do it all.” “Oh look! Point it over there!” (I’m sorry.) It’s amazing what we have out there now. You can’t even keep up with it there is so much. All these little gadgets.

I’ve gotten to the point where when I go out for a walk, I sure don’t want to go out the garage and put those four numbers in there and wait and make sure it takes the first time. No, I can carry the clicker with me. But now if I add something to the garage door opener I can do it from my cell phone. At the same time when I take the securities button off because I can connect to the house with security now and push the button and wait for it to unlock the house, so the alarm doesn’t go off, and then at the same time push the other button right beside it and my garage door comes up. “Oh, what a wonderful life. It’s all on my cell phone.”

I mean, it really is amazing what mankind can do now. Now they want, they've given us an app to use for the vehicle, control everything pretty much. I hate it. I loathe it. It's almost getting to the point where you can't even get in a vehicle and drive it—Seriously! —unless you have the app. It's like, okay. I'm sorry, but we live in that age, so much that we have.

It's hard for us to conceive of what it was like long before unless you happen to grow up having an outhouse, you didn't have electricity, you know what it was like to have a pot belly stove and wood had to be put in or coal had to be put in it and meals that had to be cooked on top of it. Not that you did it but that you lived in that environment and so forth and you began to realize how fast things have proceeded since that time.

I wish everyone had that experience because it's easier to make comparisons about things and realize where we are now. We are so blessed, so blessed. We have so much, and we have to be careful of that. Like no other generation, we have to be careful of that, to keep our eyes on what's truly important and of the greater value first and foremost.

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, the bread of life, supply and multiply your seed sown. God will bless us. The more we put into it the more we receive out of it. God gives us more. It's an awesome thing. And above and beyond that even.

I can't help thinking about some of the things that God has given to us since the Apostasy. I am dumbfounded by what God has given to us. All the truths that we have that give us understanding of what we experienced.

We know we had an apostasy. We know all the symbolism in the scriptures that talk about what Christ gave concerning the end of the age and would happen just before His return, and on and on it goes. It's like, what a peace of mind to be able to understand those things, to see those things.

...supply and multiply your seeds sown, and will increase the fruits of your righteousness, in everything being enriched for all liberality. Most translations "singleness of heart," is an expression that's used, so "enriched." In other words, it's about our purpose and so forth, and yes, we are liberally blessed by God, but it's a matter of our focus and understanding what we have to do. In other words, God is first, God's way of life should be first in our thinking, fully focused on that.

...which causes thanksgiving. I love this! Again, we can read through this, but you have to think about it. You have to think about it. You have to ponder what is being told. These aren't just words that we read over quickly. There are riches here, brethren, there truly is. It's about how we're able to grow in this mind of thankfulness and gratitude toward God, how it can become stronger in our life, and it needs to be. God gives us that opportunity to grasp and understand what it is that creates this because it's a fruit of God's spirit, it's a product of the peace of God ruling in our minds.

It's a product of what we put into it. The more we put into it the greater thankfulness and gratitude we can have. Because that's what stirs up this peace and the joy and this fullness inside of us that you can't grasp, that you can't have unless you experience it. It's by doing it that you experience it and grow in it more and more.

I think of how human beings seek to have this in a sense of physical things and that's just temporary. It lasts but a little bit. This is something that lasts and lasts and grows and grows and it's more fulfilling.

...which causes thanksgiving through us. In other words, it's going to come through us, in that respect, a thanksgiving—what—to God as it says here, through us to God. It's about a relationship. It's about growing in it more and more.

Verse 12—For the administration/administering of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints... So, this is talking about our needs as a part of the Body of Christ, and there is an administration as far as what God has given to us, an administering of a certain way of life through the power of the holy spirit. ...of this service not only supplies the needs for the saints but also is abounding, same word again, “also abounding,” this thinking that abounds in our life. There is so much to receive from God, and we can grow in it more and more, and because of that the fullness in our lives, the excitement in our lives of God's way of life.

...but also was abounding through much thanksgiving to God. In other words, it's something that just grows and grows and abounds. It multiplies. Awesome. And we learn it by living God's way, proving God's way, seeking to draw closer to God, putting more effort into it, more work into it even on a physical plane.

That's what it says: **While proving this administration they glorify God.** Different translations here are not good. As it says here “for the obedience of your confession.” What does that mean? Or as the King James says, “for your professed subjection.” Again, a little awkward. What does all this mean?

Again, “While proving this administration.” So, there are things you have to do because to prove something you have to work, there's effort you have to put into it, even if it's just walking behind the oxen. Because they're doing most of the work in front of you. You have to do a lot of work too. You have to work there, and you have to hold it down in the ground and control things.

By our work, by what we put into it, “through their agreeing,” as this word, this has meaning in, **they glorify God through their agreeing to submit to the good news of Christ.** Well, that's what the right translation of this is.

It's talking about an administration of change, of growth, of transformation that's taking place in our life. The more we yield to it the more effort we put into it, and the blessings then we receive as a result of it because we're putting effort into it, proving it. Then so it goes on to say, “While proving this administration they glorify God.” It's an automatic thing because it's

something that just lives in us more and more, the more we do the things we're being told here as we go through this sermon.

"Through their agreeing to submit." You have to decide yourself to submit to whatever way God has given to us to live life, to submit to what it is we have to fight in order to have this mind that is working harder. You have to do it. If it's a matter of prayer and stepping up your prayer in relationship with God day by day, then work at it! Submit. It's something you have to submit to. You have to yield to the way God says it needs to be done. We have to make the choice of whether or not we're going to seek to draw closer to God and how we're going to go about it and how we're going to strive to change and what we're going to include in our prayers to cry out to God about, that they don't just become repetitive, and on and on it goes.

Takes work to do those things so that every day it's not always the same. "God, are you tired of hearing me yet?" That's why I don't like these prayers around food at a table. They're not balanced. After a while they don't mean anything. So, people get around a table and they thank God for food. Now, it's great to thank God. Awesome! But to get in the habit of doing that at three meals a day because the family is together at three meals or two meals or one meal, whatever it is, and everybody is there around the table, and you take this time to everyone bow your heads?

Again, there are things, ways to teach children to pray and so forth, but that isn't one of the best. It really isn't because of the way it's used in the world, in traditional Christianity. Yet there are occasions (I thought I'd throw that in here today), there are times that we should do that, that we should practice that to get back to a balance in what that is. Because the other isn't balanced.

Prayer is something God wants from us alone. It's like you go to where you're alone or you are alone, basically, in what you're communicating to God, and you have to focus upon that and think about those things. And so, it's about this communication with God whenever you choose to have that. God wants to know what's inside of us. What are we thinking? What are we striving to change? What is it you want to grow in and thanking God? What is it you see that you're thankful for? On and on it goes, of things that need to be in our prayers. Not just something quick of just something that is the same.

I think of like, "the Lord's Prayer" that sometimes people repeat and that's it. Think, okay, what does that mean? You don't even think about what it says? After a while it's this repetition over and over. That's what the world has.

You don't have that. You have a relationship with God of things that are to be different in that, of things that should be unique in what you have to say from time to time. Because generally I strive to include continually, "I need, I want Your holy spirit!" I don't want to go by a day without crying out for that to be in my life, that God the Father and Christ dwell in me. I want to see whatever things I'm doing wrong that I need to change, to repent of them, to try...so that I am heard, and so that, again, I can receive of that power in life and dwell in God and

God in me. But that should be something that is not a repetitious thing. It's something that's deeply embedded inside of us because we grasp the need.

That's why we pray everyday, because we grasp the need. "I know if I don't have it, I'm going to become lacking; I know I'm going to let down. I know I'm not going to be able to fight as I need to fight." Then so many other things then to add in the whatever the prayers are.

I just wanted to throw that out about praying at a meal. I think it would be good on occasion when there is a large group or whatever, if it's a part of the Body of Christ and whatever, that if the occasion seems right that maybe a prayer should be asked. I'm not saying we should do that for every occasion like that but I'm saying on occasion, especially with younger people, children or whatever are around, they should see that as a part of our life. Balance. Even determining when and how? Balance. Asking God for help.

So again, this mind toward God, this singleness of heart and ability to grow in thanksgiving.

So again here, horrible translation in many ways, and that makes it so difficult sometimes to grasp what is being said. **They glorify God through their agreeing...** I love this, this right translation. **They glorify God through their agreeing (agreement) to submit.** Because that's what it takes, isn't it? It's about an agreement to submit to whatever God shows us we need to do. Because the carnal nature fights against certain things that God has shown us, and if we want God's way of life we're going to submit to the administration. The way it's administered, the way God's spirit is administered in our lives and the administration that God has given us to teach us those things in our life.

...through their agreeing to submit to the good news of Christ. Everything that's preached, everything that's given to us is about God, about the word of God, the mind of God, the good news, the gospel. **...and for,** again, not the word "liberally" here but, **and for singleness of heart.** Because it's a matter of your focus. It's a matter of what it is you want that's deep inside of your being. That's what God looks for. He loves a cheerful giver. It's what's inside. That's what He looks at. That's what He wants to see and wants us to grow in that.

...and for singleness of heart, sharing of yourselves unto others. In other words, what does that mean? Learning to give, learning God's way. Herbert Armstrong put that in such awesome terms, two ways, give and get. We want the give way. We want that to be more of our mind.

...and by their prayer for you, as it says, "and by their prayer for you." In other words, we learn to pray for one another as well within the Body and that can vary a great deal depending on the need and what is there.

So again, what an awesome thing here that this is a part of it. It's about the Body. It's not just about a relationship with God and that's it. It's about what He's given us for our relationship in the Body, in the Church.

And by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God. So, he was addressing something unique to them in a very physical plane to teach them something spiritual, and again, going through some of the things of a different region, of things that had happened during this period of time as well. He addressed things of famine and different ones who were giving to other areas and praying for different individuals in areas as well that they knew of.

So he's addressing some of these on a physical plane to teach something spiritual, but we should learn indeed that which is spiritual from all this.

“Who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God,” or “the grace of God that excels.” It does if we grasp and understand God is able to make all grace abound toward us. Every favor, every blessing, every fruit of the spirit in our lives.

Because of the exceeding grace of God in you. It's supposed to be in us, and if it's in us, the mind, more the mind of God, the fruit of God's spirit, it's going to be a blessing to others in the Body. It's going to be a blessing in our relationships with each other, toward each other, how we think toward each other, how much we treasure that and grasp that we are a family and see one another as a part of that family.

It's easy for us to do that on a physical plane, to see someone in our family and how we think about each other and this mind to protect, this mind to see and want growth, this mind to give. But to do it in an extended family that is on a spiritual plane, that's another matter. That takes work. That doesn't just happen. It takes prayer because it's not natural in us.

Then it goes on to say here, **Thanks to God... Thanks to God for His unspeakable**, in other words, indescribable, inexpressible **gift!** You can strive to do it, you can strive to appreciate and thank God for various things, but we're so inadequate. There is so much more we don't even begin to grasp and comprehend. It's something you can grow in. There's no limit. There's no end of it.

Well, a few chapters before this Paul speaks of this process that can and should work in us in order that we have the right kind of focus, again this singleness of heart, as it talks about here to have this kind of mind, this right kind of focus that we need to have, that we have to cling to spiritually—but we have to see it and want it—that can produce true thankfulness. Because that's what gives the full joy of life. When that's in your life, the more we can have of this, the more ability to rejoice inside and to be at peace inside that we're going to be able to experience and to have, to know.

So again, “Thanks to God for His indescribable, inexpressible gift.” So, that's why sometimes in prayer we should feel pretty lacking because we can only see in a limited fashion. But to be grateful and thankful for what we do see and thank God for it.

So again, 2 Corinthians 3, backing up here, as I said. Going all the way back to chapter 3 and seeing some of the things that lead up to what he's addressed that we've just gone through.

2 Corinthians 3:1—Do we need to again establish ourselves before you? So, Paul is asking the Corinthians. They came out of a very difficult past, very difficult environment, and battles that were there, incredibly unique. Different regions that Paul went to, everyone, all of us, we all have different battles, different things, different experiences that we have to conquer and overcome whether it be our own past, but so often our environment reflects a lot of that, wherever that might be.

It says, **Or do we need...** So, he's saying here, "Do we have to go through this all again? Been before you, the first book came to you, instruction and guidance and direction and things we addressed, and yet there are problems here to be addressed. Do we have to establish ourselves again before you," in other words, "of who we are, of what is coming to you, where it's coming from?" This is what he's reasoning with them about.

Do we need to again establish ourselves before you, or do we need as some would, to have letters of commendation to you or of commendation from you? In other words, he's asking them some pretty pointed questions here and pretty sharp language, of what he was saying here. "Do we have to be received as some might to come into an area? And where are these letters going to come from?" in essence, "Who's going to give them? What do we have to go through to establish ourselves," in essence, he's saying here, "as God's ministers before you, of this is coming from God?" Because they're a part of God's Church, they should know and understand certain things, but something has happened here. He addresses those things all through the book of 2nd Corinthians.

"Or do we need letters of commendation from you? Are there certain things we need to receive from you in order to teach you?" A little bit of tongue in cheek in all of this, and those who were resisting would have had a difficult time with it. I have no doubt some left because of this, because of what he wrote. Because that's the way it's always been in God's Church. Some become offended by what's being said because they don't like what they're hearing. Because Paul isn't mincing words. There are oftentimes we can't in God's Church in the ministry mince words. How can we know what needs to be addressed? The truth has to be clear and things that are wrong need to be exposed so the light can shine through.

Sometimes people don't like things to be exposed. "Well, you're talking about me." Sometimes people say, "How did you...?" It's by God's spirit that things are given. Sometimes certain things come into the mind, I realize what God is addressing, and in some cases who within the Body. Sometimes the ones who take it the most, receive it the most, are pricked in the heart most are those who need it the least. That's a beautiful thing too. To me, it's an amazing thing how God's spirit works in our life. But that's what we should all want, that we should all learn and grow from whatever is given at any time. That's awesome, beautiful.

Or do we need, as some would, to have letters of commendation to you or of commendation from you? You are our letters. Awesome! Of commendation, in other words —

written in our hearts, able to be known and known again by all to be clearly seen. In other words, made visible, manifest.

...and clearly seen the letter of Christ. To know, to be in God's Church long enough to know, to learn and to know where things come from, that God the Father has given all things to Christ. Christ is our High Priest; he gives everything to the Church that we need at any moment in time. For whatever is needed within the Body in an area or around the world or whatever it might be, it comes from God by God's spirit. If it didn't, what are we doing?

So, this is something we all have to become convicted of in our own time, to grasp and comprehend the incredible grace of God that comes from God and what He has given to us, that we see God in the picture, that our focus is upon God. We know that everything we have on a spiritual plane comes from God and we have to put a lot of work into it to continue to grow in it. That's what Paul is getting ready to talk about, so he's addressing some things in the beginning to set the stage.

...to be clearly seen, made manifest, the letter of Christ administered by/through us. So, later on in chapter 9 he's talking about some of that administration, the administering. That's what he's talking about, how God's spirit is administered in our life, how we're able to grow and become more at one with God.

...administered by/through us, not written with ink, in other words by a letter of commendation, but by the spirit of the living God. So, that's why it's a little bit painful sometimes when we have to go through the things we do, but God loves us and blesses us and gives us time.

Like, I'm going to use that physical thing again because it's so apropos and what we learn from it, Covid, a jab, and all the attitudes and feelings and things that people were convicted of that fought against it and ideas that people had and things that they listened to that filled the mind then sometimes and then cause us to resist what God gives to us. And not to grasp this is coming from God to teach us, to help mold and fashion us so we can come to see some things in ourselves that we don't yet see, or things that we maybe become weak in that we need to address and conquer again and get back to the trunk of the tree and have a singleness of focus and heart and mind and ability to rejoice more before God.

Because that takes away from it if we fight and resist. People aren't at peace if they're fighting and resisting God. It's still going on out there. There is still some fighting and resisting in some very physical things and it shouldn't be.

...administered through us, not written with ink but by the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on fleshly tablets of the heart. In other words, of the mind. What an awesome thing that which we desire that's in our minds, in our thinking. Circumcision of the heart, it's a spiritual thing.

Now, we have such confidence through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves. So again, even within the ministry whatever it is we share in the Body we know how God works. We know how God's spirit works in our life. It's not something private between each one of us and God, that it's like I have these things that I know. No. ...that don't always agree with others in the Body.

...not that we're sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves. We should never be lifted up haughty and think that things come from us within the Body, that we have such knowledge and insight and spiritual strength and power. Be thankful for what you have that's in the Body, that's in unity, that's in oneness. That's a beautiful thing, but don't be lifted up in pride. We've had so much of that in times past in the Church it's just putrid. We've had so many examples of that.

If you've been around for a long time, if you were around through Laodicea, you know what took place, what was in the Body and how people were lifted up by various things, that the exact opposite here of what Paul is talking should be existing within the Body - from the ministry, through elders, through deacons and deaconesses, and different ones who had different jobs, and this pride that was so ugly that would rise up. Sick! All the way down to people having pride of who's going to be in charge of the cookies! I mean, some of these things just blow your mind.

You think you've seen everything, and then all of a sudden, you think, we're going to have a battle over who's going to bring the cookies? Where is God's spirit in all this? You mean, you think we need to have somebody now because we had it in times past be in charge of where people park their vehicles outside because we're too dumb to know how to park a vehicle, and maybe walk a little way. Oh, forbid! Let's get closest to the door, the front door as we can. We need people out there. We need people in charge to show everybody where to park. I'm sorry but gone through some crazy things in God's Church, we really have.

...as not being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. That's where it comes from. God is the source of everything that strengthens us, that gives life to us, that we're able to see that we need to do that brings us into unity and doing the same thing, being of that same mind, being in unity with God. That's awesomely beautiful, it really is.

That which resists is like a real thorn in the flesh. But you know what? So be it. You know, just because I get a thorn in the flesh doesn't mean I stop pruning the roses. I just cut a whole bunch off the other day, and I got stuck a lot. My wife says to wear the leather gloves. I'm slow at learning sometimes.

So, some of those were really bad. Sometimes within our lives we get a thorn or we're the cause of a thorn, and you know what? Because you love what it produces, especially in God's Church, you're willing to put up with a jab here and there. Not this Covid jab. And even that jab, so be it, whatever it takes. But if it's a thorn and somebody is fighting and resisting to have patience, to wait. Sometimes that waiting comes to a halt and God says, "No more. It

needs to be addressed. It needs to come to a screeching halt. We need to change whatever it might be.”

And so, we don't react immediately to something necessarily just because we got poked, you know, and lash out or something. That's not God's way. And so we learn, we love, we have a desire toward one another, we want to see one another grow. But it has to be done God's way. Another sermon in itself.

...but our sufficiency is from God. We all need to understand that in our lives. To be of this mind where you're content, where you're satisfied, where you're fulfilled but you hunger, you want God's way, but you understand that you're fed by God on a daily basis. What an awesome thing to experience, to draw closer and closer to God.

...who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant. So, in other words, he's saying here that that which is true, that which comes from God, that which continues to, it will be that which comes through that system of administration that God has given and organized. Our prayers should be that for that process.

...not of the letter, in other words, of the law, **but of the spirit.** So, it's not just a matter of striving to do things or giving in to do things or grudgingly do things what is given, “Okay, okay, I'll get the shot. Not going to go unless I do and other are going to think of this and that of me if I don't do it.” Without the mind of realizing the important thing here is unity, is the mind of unity, of oneness, for the purpose for the sake of fellowship, so we can have fellowship with rejoicing.

Who gives a flip about a stupid shot? “Well, you're old. You probably don't care, but I'm young and I don't know what that's going to do to my body, to my mind, to...” whatever. Well, you know what? I don't like shots. I don't like all this junk that's out there. Just like the flu shot. I heard some people talking about how that they go and got a booster and then they gave them a flu shot at the same time. So much so that I thought, well, surely, not in the same syringe! So, I brought it up with the individual and they said, “No, it has to be two shots. They don't mix these things together.” I said, good (I didn't tell them), but I don't like flu shots. Now, if it got really, really bad and there was a need for what Covid did, I might get it, you know, if it was for the Body.

But anyway, we have to make choices along the way. But again, there's a way that we make those. By what we hear. Because unity is what's important. Oneness is what's important. Fellowship is what's important. Things we can learn from the whole process, which is what God has given us over this past year and a half, two years almost.

So, “Not of the letter,” in other words, not just because something was said, “Okay, I'll do it that way,” but because we're convicted of it, because we're convicted of why it was said and what the purpose of it is and what was explained, and on and on it goes, whether it be that or any other thing that God gives to us in the administration of His way of life.

...but by or of the spirit, for indeed the letter kills. If we do it for the wrong reasons and we do something just because it's a letter of the law and "I'm going to do certain thing because," whatever that reason is. No, it's because of conversion, because of what we see on a spiritual plane, because of what we want spiritually in our lives.

...but the spirit gives life. So again, all within a theme of recognizing God working in our lives, this matter of grace and of giving thanks that it produces. Because that's what Paul is teaching here, see. It's about gratitude. It's about thankfulness. It's about this relationship with God that fills our life, our heart, our mind, if you will, with rejoicing in God's way. That's gratitude. That's a spirit of thankfulness that it produces. That's what it produces in us.

It's like the Feast of Tabernacles. God commands us to rejoice. So, what does that mean? Is it the physical things we go out and do? Well, that's a part of something we can enjoy, but that's not what it's all about. It's way beyond that. It's about a relationship with God and being so thankful with that, like this matter of sitting in booths that we see things and we grasp why we're able to be there, how we were able to be there, that fact that we can be together as one, and what that should produce in us, the joy of it, the fullness of it on a spiritual plane.

Because that can only be experienced spiritually. The closer you are to God the more you're going to experience that, that joy, that happiness, that fullness of life, that thanksgiving to God that's like a melody, that's like a psalm to God. "Thank You, thank You, thank You God in heaven for Your mercy, Your kindness, Your patience, the blessings we have, to be able to be together, to have this family." The more real that is in our minds the greater that gratitude and rejoicing before God. It all goes together. This is what Paul is talking about.

Verse 7—But if the ministry (the administration) of death, in other words, through the letter of the law that he's addressing even more so, **written and engraved on stones, was glorious...** So, he's dealing with them in a matter of learning things on a physical plane about something of the past as far as Israel was concerned even though this was a gentile people he's speaking to. But they learned from that.

...written and engraved on stones, was glorious so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which was to be done away, "to render inoperative" or "to abolish," speaking of the system and not of the law, **how will the administration of the spirit be not even more glorious?** In other words, to go through something physical, it's not enough. What Israel experienced, it's not enough. It's not what it's about. It's about what's inside. It's about what's in our mind.

For the administration of condemnation had glory because of what it revealed... The law. It's how you learn. There are things we shouldn't do that hurt. There are things we should do that produce a peace even on a physical plane to a measure.

I'm going to stop there. I'm not even going to finish the rest of this sentence because we need to back up a little bit and make sure next Sabbath as we go back and look at those last few verses to keep everything in context for what Paul is going to talk about as we continue on.

But again, it's about a process here that works together, of something that's inside of us, that the more we're growing, the more we seek to be closer to God, the more we're able to grasp His Family, what He's placed before us. Again, that's what causes this fullness of life to be inside of us. We have this mind of sufficiency spiritually. Because as human beings we don't have it physically. There's always this desire for something else that doesn't satisfy.

Anyway, we'll bring that back into context next Sabbath.