

This will be the last part of this particular series today, then next Sabbath we're going to follow it up with a follow-up that ties into this. I think it's going to prove to be exciting as we continue on here.

This is really a tough series because it's a subject that people think they seem to understand, or they seem to think they understand it (maybe that's a better way of saying it), and yet history has proven that it's not understood very well, and experience in the ministry reveals that it hasn't been understood very well either.

But I am in awe with what God's doing with this last era of the Church because He's given us so much knowledge, so much understanding of things beyond what we had in the past in the sense that when Herbert Armstrong came along it was a Church that was striving to have truth taught to it for the first time, in that respect, because they didn't know it. Sardis era had almost lost everything and so Herbert Armstrong's commission was to restore truth in the Church, or at least the foundational truths in the Church.

As I've mentioned that first one was about government, and though people feel that they understand it and comprehend it, sometimes in a person's own life one comes to understand it hasn't been that well understood, that it's one of the most important things ever to God that we grasp and comprehend because it brings everything together as far as His purpose and His plan. Because His plan is about Elohim, and especially now after 6,000 years, His coming Kingdom to this earth, the Kingdom of God, which is, obviously, very much about government. It's going to be government in the world, government in the Church, how things are ordered, how things function and are supposed to in the right way.

There's much that mankind has to learn and relearn. The best way to relearn something is to just get rid of the old and start anew. That's basically what we're shown we have to do because we have everything upside down, everything is messed up, and it is really messed up today.

So, this is *Understanding Government, Part 5*, the final portion.

Again, we've been focusing on how being able to come to understand government more deeply can only come by learning through experience how to judge or to live, as I said, righteous judgment. That means there are things in our lives that we have to do when it comes to idea, thoughts, thinking that we have, and judging those things, and especially when it comes to relationships.

Because everything is about relationships anyway, relationship with God, relationship with one another, and there is government or law that regulates that to produce right things in our lives, right fruit, good fruit. Judgment has everything to do with being in unity and oneness with God

and getting away from our own kind of thinking, and that isn't something we just learn overnight.

This process here of living judgment in the sense that we're practicing it, we're thinking about it, it's in our thoughts in a sense of a relationship with God and how we're supposed to do things, and to do things in unity with Him. We don't generally think that way. Well, we don't *generally* think that way - we just don't think that way. Our natural normal reaction is one of human nature.

The more we grow in God's Church, the stronger we grow in God's Church, the more we're able to change and become something different. Our minds can begin to think differently.

But as a whole as we grow, generally our first reaction is one of human nature, and even if we are able to be transformed and come to a point we're able to deal with certain things in our life because of experiences still those things can pop up in our mind, the things we have to battle. Because being able to judge things rightly has to do with being able to know what is right, see what is right, desire to do what is right, and battle self.

So again, this process largely depends on our willingness to question our own judgment in matters. We don't generally do that. I mean, who stops and thinks about a decision, a choice, an idea, a thought, whatever, rather than just coming out with it? Do we stop and think about it, "Is this right?" Well, we generally don't do things like that.

We have to come to a point in our lives spiritually that we do begin to question things. As I was saying, we are a unique generation because going back to Herbert Armstrong's time and truth being restored to the Church, we're at a time now in this phase of God's Church, a remnant that has come out of the last era of the Church, out of Laodicea, and we are unique in that respect. God's giving us more and more, more truth than we ever had before, in that respect, things that haven't even been known by mankind in the sense of those with whom God has worked. And so, we've been given incredible opportunities.

Well, what we need to come to grasp and see in all this is we are unique. Every generation of people have been unique in the sense of God working with them and what He's molding and fashioning in their minds. We're not all the same and we're not supposed to be the same.

But there are different times or time periods, if you will, that the Church has existed or that different ones with whom God has worked, and in that process then they have gone through different things then and those are there to help them be molded for something that is unique to them that God desires in His Family, that God desires in His Kingdom. We've gone through some series here recently that shows that process, that incredible long work that God's being doing to accomplish this.

We're in an incredible time right now just before Christ returns and all that he's given to us to know, to understand. This is one area that we really need to get because we're being trained in this.

So much of the focus of things we've gone through from Philadelphia on have involved government, very much so, and the history of the Church is that it hasn't gone very well. But we're to learn from that. Everything that led up to the Apostasy, we're to learn from those things, and so, we are unique in that regard.

The Church was never structured like it was in Philadelphia to that degree, worldwide, communication like it was and growing in that. For a time calling itself the Radio Church of God because it was such an incredible thing to be able to have radio in the world, to where you could record something and put it out there in different parts of the world. Astounding! It was such a marvel of technology and such a change it was bringing on mankind that it was moving, moving to the Church, moving to Herbert Armstrong.

It was changed not too long after Laura's parents first came into the Church. Then it became the Worldwide Church of God because all this led into a worldwide work, the ability to get a message out there, to fulfill a commission at the end-time of the gospel going into all the world. Incredible what we've lived through.

Some of us who had the opportunity and blessing of being in that period of time of Philadelphia, that's been an awesome thing as well, to be witness of some of those kinds of things that led into a change in Laodicea then, a change in mentality in people and more so even in the ministry and trickled down through the Church in a horrible way, candidly, until we finally had an apostasy. Government, government, it all screams government. Incredible!

Now, we're unique because we've gone through that and God has pulled us out of that, a remnant, a group to be worked with. This is some of our primary teaching. Who else has had that kind of teaching? What other group of people have had that kind of teaching? No one. Absolutely no one in 6,000 years. So, that's unique to us.

So, there's a purpose in that. There are things that God is molding and fashioning within us because we're different, we're different from other eras of the Church. Because each one had something that was needed at that time to mold and fashion things within individuals that are going to be a part of God's Kingdom.

Now, we don't understand those things. We can't yet. One day we'll come to understand that, once we're in the God Family and He begins to show us how those things happen, why, and so forth. We'll be more in awe of God. But it's always an exciting thing when we come to say, "Now I understand. That's awesome!" It's going to become more awesome to us, to see how God has molded and fashioned His Family, and especially over the past 2,000 years, because that's where the majority of the 144,000 are coming from.

Again, small, but what an awesome opportunity. No one else has gone through an apostasy, called out of it in the sense of being spewed out of God's mouth and then brought back, awakened from a spiritual sleep. We have learned so much from that. The one word, again, that just cries out over and over again is government. That will become more incredible.

It might even be in the next sermon. I don't think it is in this one. No, I think it's in the next one that ties into this one. This is hard. When you're working on Feast sermons and trying to get ahead in other sermons so you can do other things, it's so easy to jump into one of the others. Anyway, trying to refrain.

So again, so much of this of coming to understand how government is to work in our lives is coming to understand we all have opinions and that's not a healthy thing. It's just a natural, normal thing of human beings. We have opinions. As a whole people out there feel their opinions are right. They're right. They don't believe wrong things. They know what's right.

That's why there is such disagreement, especially in the world today, people fighting and arguing because each group is right. Then within a group there are those who know they're right above others in that same group that basically have some of the same inclinations. They don't agree. Why? Well, because each is right about what they believe, about what they think, how they think things should be done. Incredible, such confusion.

We are to learn from that. Just like that little sign says, "No drama Llama!" Because that's confusion. It's chaos. Drama, that's what it produces. There's a lot of drama in the world as never before, confusion and chaos, the opposite of what government, God's government is to produce. Awesome. Beautiful when we come to see those things.

It has to do with us and our thinking. That's why, again, I love the word repent. It means literally in the Greek language, "to think differently." If we're going to change, if we want some kind of change to take place in our life, become at one with God, we have to learn to think differently. We have to get rid of our own thinking, our own thinking process.

So much of that has to do with questioning self. Why? Why did I do that? Why did I think that toward that individual? Or why did I say that to them? Better make sure you're right or in unity with God. Because that's where judgment comes in. Even in how you said it. We fail in that so often. This all has to do with government. Even in how you say it. You may be right about a matter, and if it's not done properly it's not right. It could do more harm than good. Sometimes it's better to keep something to oneself than to blurt it out.

So, we have to be careful and cautious. Is this right? Is this right to do? These are not easy things. These are things you have to learn over time. But we have to begin doing it more in a more concerted effort, in that regard, because it keeps popping up even within the Church, even toward the ministry, and that's something we should have a handle on by now. It just keeps happening and keeps happening and keeps happening.

With the Covid thing, it blew up! Incredible! The first thing we should have been able to do in that was to look in a spiritual mirror and see ourselves and think about our decision. Where is it coming from? What am I basing this on? Where am I basing what I know is best for God's Church, what I know is best for me? That's like saying, "No one is going to tell me what I can and cannot do." That's a bunch of bull.

God tells us that all the time what we can and cannot do. If we want to live what is right, if we want to change, if we want to live His way of life of love and giving and a mind that is that way, one that's merciful, true mercy, true love, then we have to change our thinking. We're just wrong in some much of our thinking. And so, the more we can see that, that's a blessing. It really is a blessing to be able to see ourselves and to fight against self. To me, that's a beautiful thing. We don't have to stay the way we are. Thank God we can gradually make change.

Now, we'll never be perfected and perfect in that regard, but we can grow in that, we can become more at one with God. That's an awesome thing that when you do something, when you say something, to know that it was right because it's in agreement with God in every aspect of it. There's a peace, there's a comfort in that that I don't know how you could describe it fully. It's just a pleasant, pleasurable, and good thing to live.

So again, we have to begin to question our own opinions, our own ways of doing things, of seeing things. So much conflict comes out of that because of people not able to agree with one another. Well, first of all, we have to agree with God, and then work from that.

God very clearly reveals to us that our ways are not His ways. And what is the big thing in government in the first place, about our ways not being God's ways? Why is His way, and in what way is His way so special, and what is it marked by, known by? His love. That kind of love. It's one thing to have knowledge of things that come from God and grow in understanding of those things, but to see it in the fullness that it is with the motivation behind it, it's always about love. So much of judgment comes from that love. God's judgment, everything that God gives us in His word, His ways, His law is about love. We have a tough journey sometimes conquering the selfishness in ourselves and having that mind developed in us more and more.

Let's turn over to Micah. We've been looking at some of those things that God says about this process, of how we're to judge, and where that ability to judge rightly comes from. It's very simple things but we still struggle with it.

**Micah 6:6—With what shall I come before the Eternal and bow myself before the High God?** So, this is God is revealing here what He desires from us, what He is looking for in our lives and in our thinking.

**Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?** So, it's not about the physical things we go through, and sometimes even in the process of what we might think is spiritual, that putting so much time into Bible study, so much time into prayer. God isn't

looking for that kind of thing. Now, we should do those things if we want to grow, draw close to God, but it has to be motivated by the right reasons. Not to make us feel better about ourselves, not to be lifted up by it. We can get lifted up by how often we pray, how often we fast, how often we study the Bible or how long we study it.

It used to be that way a lot in God's Church because of immaturity, because we were still growing, and we're still growing now. But at that time there we were very, very young in Worldwide. We truly were. And so, we went through a lot from the 50's and the 60's and 70's continuing to grow. But it's along process, it truly is.

**Will the Eternal be pleased with thousands of rams?** So now we know what that answer is. We've heard things like this often in God's Church. But sometimes we don't get what is being said.

So again, **Will the Eternal be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil?** In other words, if we had the kind of wealth and riches, is that's what it's about, to be able to give that much? Is that going to be pleasing to God? Not one iota. That's not what it's about. It's about what's in the mind. It's about what is in the mind and why we do what we do.

It's like the widow's mite and what she did. Incredible! And it wasn't for show, it was something she did out of her heart and out of her mind, and so it was that attitude of thinking that was in her that was so pleasing and right before God. Because it was a sacrifice in the mind, in the thinking.

So again, it's not just the physical part of it, it's the motivation and the reason behind it and what it meant.

**Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life?** We know the answer to that; that's easy. Sometimes because it's so simple like that and we've heard it so often we just kind of switch off because "That's so easy."

**He has shown mankind what is good. What does the Eternal require of you? But to do judgment...** It's about our thinking. It's about our motivation and our thinking. ...**and to love mercy.** So, it's this attitude of wanting to be right with God and being in unity with God, of honoring God, of esteeming God, of glorifying God. God first in everything!

"But to do judgment." Again, that always means being in unity with God, that our motivation, our thinking is based upon that which comes from Him, not from ourselves, not from our own thinking.

"And to love mercy." Why is that there? Because sometimes in our thinking and making judgment, again, what are these things about? So often it's about relationships, why we do what we do. Often mercy is needed there. Sometimes people can be just hard, and God wants us to learn to be merciful. Not to a fault, not in error, not to something that might hurt

someone, but there are times to go in that direction rather than the other, to be more merciful, to give more time if one can.

Again, it's a mindset, to be merciful. So, judgment isn't just a matter of knowing a certain thing that's from God and then enforcing it, telling someone else what they should be doing or shouldn't be doing. "You shouldn't do that." "You should do that." Now I'm going to kind of an extreme here, but just to make a point because sometimes in God's Church people have gotten on to people for doing certain things.

Sometimes individuals will say something, "Well, this needs to be addressed." Sometimes we'll come back and say, "Well, where is the sin?" It seems like a simple thing to ask. If they've done something wrong, what's the sin? You don't agree with them, you feel like they've done something wrong, where is the sin? If there is no sin what are you going on about?

Now, I'm going to tell you, this has happened a lot over the years. So much of counsel comes back to that sometimes in working with people. Where is the sin? What is the sin? Then how should you deal with that? Then so often it's a matter of dealing with it just like God does with us. He's merciful. He's patient. Not stupid, because it has its limits as well depending on the individual's response and how they respond.

**...but to do judgment and to love mercy, and to walk humbly.** Wow. That is the biggest one yet. Why? For human beings, because by nature we are not humble. We just aren't humble. To think we're right about a certain matter, that's pride. To think our opinion is right about a certain matter, that's pride. To give the example of Covid, to think "I'm not going to do that. I have my own reasons. I'm not going to do that." Hmm. Humble? Is it one of humility or one of pride? Hadn't thought it through, didn't think it through properly.

Sometimes, especially if we disagree with a certain matter, that's even worse, where we should examine our thinking and strive to ask God to help us to see, "Why am I thinking this way? What should I be doing? What is my response? Where is that coming from? What should it be? So often we don't do that because "I'm right." And that's just pride. It really is. Pride is such an ugly, ugly thing, to be lifted up with pride. To walk humbly, as it says here, **with your God.**

That means we have to have a certain mindset to walk humbly with God. We're not trying to lift ourselves up. And yet that's been a big thing in God's Church through time. I think of the Philadelphia era, going on into Laodicea era, that so often people were lifted up with themselves and what they knew and what they thought about themselves and their abilities and why they should be given more of certain things and have certain jobs. There was a lot of that kind of stuff that went on, and it wasn't good.

Well, we're a group that is able to look at that and realize, especially if we lived in that, and to learn from that. I've been made much richer because of that. Hard experiences. Bad things to go through. But wow, I wouldn't trade it for anything because a lot of it was hard to receive, because I was on the receiving end of some of it. Different ones of us were.

We learned from that this isn't right, this isn't the right way that that should be done. This isn't of God. That's not the mind of God. So, we should be able to judge that way.

Sometimes we're just not too merciful to others. Sometimes we're just hard on people, demanding of others, especially the more we think and believe "I'm right." Where does that come from? Pride. How do we work that out? Is that God's way? Is that a right judgment? No, that's not how God is or how God desires us to be. Not just desires us but requires of us to be.

**Zechariah 7:8**—Then the word of the Eternal came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaks the Eternal of hosts, saying, Execute (Hebrew: judge or govern) true judgment. So again, we've gone through many things already in this series here about the right way of doing that.

It can't be because of our own private feelings towards someone, esteeming someone else over someone else, having friendship or whatever it might be and then judging them in a way that gives favor to someone else over another. This is done in the world all the time. It's so sick! Things that people get and receive from others because of favoritism. That's not God's way. It should be because it's right, because it's true.

**Execute true judgment and show mercy.** Now, we read through something like this and if we're not careful we're just lost by it because we don't see this as something we do day in and day out. Every day when we have an opinion, when we state something, it's a judgment from us, from our thinking. We think, well, that's kind of a small thing, it's a physical thing in the world, whatever it might be that's going on in your thinking, and yet that's not the point. What we do with it determines what we would do with the big things. How we do the small things in life reveals what we're like.

Sometimes it's difficult for us to grasp that by relationships we're able to be judge mightily so by God. He knows where we are. He knows our mind. He knows our thinking because of the way we talk to one another, because of the way we think toward one another, the way we treat one another. Where is that coming from? Does it agree with God or are there some things there that need to be cleaned up? We all have things that continually need to be cleaned up until this is all over, to grow.

**And do not oppress, means, do not do wrong the widow.** Now, it's using things that are of a physical example here in that respect that we can relate to that would be atrocious, unthinking to do, and somebody mistreating and doing wrong to somebody, taking advantage of somebody. This is basically what it's showing here but it goes beyond this on a spiritual plane. It has to do with us and a relationship within the Church and how we think toward one another.

Someone that's forsaken, someone that is having some difficulties in the Church because of certain things that they're going through, and whatever that might be and they feel alone. There are things we can do to try to help in things we might say, and so forth, and not to make it worse, not to take advantage of someone in that particular case.

...nor the fatherless. I think of spiritual here (we're going to go into this later on so I'm not spending much time on it right now), but the fatherless. Just something for us to think about. How does this apply to our lives spiritually? The fatherless? Well, who are they? Well, you know, if somebody is becoming weak because of sin, whatever that might be, and they're being cut off from God we should want to do whatever we can.

So often in the Church I've seen people just ignore that because they don't want to lose a friend. They don't want to say something to someone because they're afraid of their reaction, and then they just let them continue in doing something that's wrong, and then after a while it becomes too late to even help them. By the time it comes to the ministry who might have been able to help early on, what can you do they're so far along, they're so far gone in this?

Because sometimes we don't stand up and do what we need to do because we're afraid of a reaction. Well, who do we fear? God? Or helping someone? That's hard to get, it really is.

...the stranger, nor the poor, and do not let a person imagine or think evil (bad) against their brother in their heart. So, it all goes back to here, how we think toward one another in this respect and what our desire is for them. So again, as a matter of growing in God's kind of love and desiring to live right toward each other and doing it God's way because it's the only way it can be done to help them.

Going right on in the next chapter, **Zechariah 8:1—Again the word of the Eternal of hosts came to me, saying, Thus says the Eternal of hosts, I was zealous/jealous for Zion with great jealousy; and I was jealous for her with great fury.** Now, sometimes when we read words like this we put the kind of thinking we have in human jealousy upon God. It's not that at all. It's not that kind of thinking. First of all, God is right in all things, God is all powerful in all things. What He tells us how to live life, it's up to us to respond to those things.

But when God is working with someone, whether it be a nation of people (which this is referring to), and then that much more for a spiritual nation that He's working with, those whom He's called that His spirit is dwelling in, that even becomes that much more important, of God's desire for them.

In other words, it's this protective mind to be zealous over them, if you will. There is one definition I read before that I want to give here that applies to the word "jealous" if you will. "Fiercely protective." That says it all. "Fiercely protective." That's the kind of love that God has for us. "Fiercely protective and/or vigilant of one's rights or possessions."

So again, all belongs to God, but especially when God begins to work with a nation, physical if it be, or spiritual depending on their responses and so forth, then it shows the mind of God toward them. He has great desire to help them come through it all. That's what God's desire is. He wants us to be able to be blessed, to be able to prosper, to do well. We're the only ones that get in the way.

**Verse 3—Thus says the Eternal. I have turned back to Zion.** Now, this kind of gets in a little closer to some of the stuff we're going to cover at the Feast. **I have turned back to Zion.** If we understand what some of these things are and what they're about, again, sometimes it's so amazing to me when God shows us things and how important even this Body is right here, the remnant, just before Joshua returns, and what the Church did, the Apostasy. That is such a monumental thing in the history of 6,000 years it's mind-boggling. It really is. The more we come to grasp that.

Because it's going to be one of the greatest lessons ever told people that they are to learn from, what every human being with God's spirit is capable of doing. Every human being. Under those conditions every human being would have done exactly the same thing. Because I think sometimes people can go through those things, "I would never have done that." Yeah, you would have. You'd been swallowed up with the rest of it. You lived through Laodicea, that's why you were Laodicea.

But anyway, here is a unique expression where God says, "I've turned back to Zion." There's one primary time that's ever happened, and we've lived through it, a remnant. Because it's about the Church. It's about what God is building. It's about what God is constructing, His Family. We're all to become, in that respect, a part of holy Jerusalem in time. Some of it might be later on, but for that which is going to complete the 144,000, this becomes even that much more important because that work has to be accomplished before an end can be brought to everything and God's government comes to this earth.

These things become exceedingly important. God is revealing that more and more, and there's more to learn from it.

**I have turned back to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.** Again, it's about the Church, Jerusalem. It's not a physical place, it's about a spiritual one. **And Jerusalem will be called a City of Truth.** That's what we're to have as God's people no matter when we were worked with, but even more so the closer we get to the end and focusing on this end-time especially.

To know what God is molding and fashioning within us, giving us more and more, if you will, of truth, of those things that some things that have never been known. Then Christ is going to come and reveal so much more to us. But leading up to this point in time we're living through and experiencing some incredible things.

**Jerusalem will be called a City of Truth, and the Mountain of the Eternal of hosts, the Holy Mountain.** So, all must come through this, and in order for this last part to be accomplished this is what God is doing. He's turned back to save, to help, to work with, to complete, if you will, that first phase of 144,000 that's going to be in His government. Because truth, we've been blessed to be able to recapture if you will, all truth that was given through Herbert

Armstrong. But to be able to go beyond that? What a beautiful thing to be able to experience all that.

**Verse 16**, dropping on down, **These are the things that you shall do: Everyone speak the truth to his neighbor.** Okay, now there's a huge challenge. Because what comes out of our mouth and how we talk to others should be in agreement with God. That's the only thing that makes it true. If it's a matter of agreeing with certain things we hear in the world, so much of that it's just not balanced, it's not sound. You may find a tidbit here and there that's interesting as far as something someone has said and learned something from it, but only because of the world and the way the world is. But of that that's lasting and that will be carried on?

Sometimes we can put such a heavy weight or put too much upon certain things that are happening. We're screwed up. Everything! Everything we have in this world, we've messed it up and it has to be changed.

Looking at an article here today about Lake Mead, how bad it is. Some of the things that are taking place, and nobody is addressing it. It just goes lower and lower and lower.

And how long do people think they can get by with pumping water in certain areas and having cities grow out of control, larger and larger, and keep feeding it water? Water downstream becomes less and less if they can allow for agriculture and other things. So, it's a catch-22.

Just in things like that alone that mankind does they're mind-boggling. Because of what? Greed. Selfishness. "I want." "I want to get what I can out of this while I can." That's really the nature of mankind.

God tells us in our relationships with others what comes out of here should be the truth, should be based on what is right. We have to be careful when we get opinions about things in this world.

That's why I hate conspiracy theories, will come down upon them every time as hard as I can. They need to be squelched. They need to be conquered. They need to be gotten rid of. Some of those things are some of the worse, stupid, idiotic, destructive, hideous things that people can immerse themselves in, and yet it happens in the Church year after year after year after year. There are still some that exist. Can't get rid of it all. But in God's time, He'll get rid of it.

But you think, why would this exist after everything that's said? And yet people latch on to things out here. Maybe they don't realize they're conspiracy. They don't think they're conspiracy theories. You know why? They think it's the truth. "It's not a conspiracy! What do you mean conspiracy theory? It's the truth! It's what's happening. It's what's going to happen." It's like, how can you reason with that?

But when that starts going out to other brethren in the Church it causes a lot of damage. Always has. Always has. I've seen so much of that in God's Church since I've been in it, it's

mind-boggling. So, God tells us we better be careful of what comes out of here because that's just wrong thinking which is wrong judgment. It isn't in agreement with God. God has warned us over and over again about things like that, and yet it continues on.

**Everyone speak the truth to his neighbor.** If we give our opinion or advise someone? Oh, that's something. We don't realize it. We like to give our advice in a matter. Someone tells us something they're going through and we're ready for advice. Why? Because we're pretty sure we know what would be good if they did it. "If they would just do what I'm getting ready to tell."

Now, there is balance in that. Sometimes we can help someone by a person story of something we've gone through. But we have to be careful we're not trying to coerce, change them to do something your way. Sometimes that's the motivation of individuals. But to be able to just be there for individuals that are going through a hardship and to let them know, basically, that you understand, you've gone through a certain thing, or whatever. But to try to change them or to get to do something different, not always the best course. We have to be very careful about trying to change others to do something our way because of the belief we have that our way is right.

Sometimes that's done within the ministry. I try to work very closely with ministers and finding out certain things to help them to do something better so that we don't make those kinds of mistakes. Because that kind of thing can only hurt others, not help. We have to be very careful about what we say to one another within the Body and how we do it, what is our motivation, what are we saying, why are we saying it.

So again, we have to be careful when it's our own opinion, our own advice because we think it's best. We think it's right, and we don't think we're wrong. Where does it agree with God? Does it agree with God? Is it something that's important to a level that God has said something about it? Some things just can't be given.

**Verse 17—Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against your neighbor.** So again, over and over again these things come down to how we think. It's about judgment? Yes! Be careful. Because if you think something toward another and it's not good? Now, we may see someone doing something wrong, and you have to be careful how you judge that and how you work with that. That can become difficult for you as well. You have to be careful.

Do you say something? Who do you say it to? Do you insert yourself in their business? Do you not? Be very careful. You have to take these things before God, and sometimes a minister if it's important enough. If it's not important enough, just let people live their life. We all learn through things we do, and much of that we learn the hard way because we're hard-headed. So, sometimes we just learn things the hard way, and it's a good teacher. We have to experience bad things.

Philadelphia? I've experienced a lot of bad things. When I got into Laodicea, I experienced a whole lot more, much, much worse. To the Apostasy, experienced a lot of bad things. But that's how we learn. Even things I did wrong as well going back in those periods of time, had to learn from them.

**Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against your neighbor, and do not love a false oath.** In other words, that which we declare is right, "This is what's right." "This is what's best." "This is what you should do, and this is how you should do it." Be careful of that kind of thing. Is it that important that you get yourself involved in someone's life? Do you really know them? Do you know how God's working? Do you know how God is working with them? Do you know what they're to experience and not to experience in their life? Do you know that if you might tell them something they might go off and make a different decision and not learn from this at all and how God's spirit is actually working with them? We have to be so careful!

You know what we have to work on? Self. That's what we have to constantly do, look at self. You've got your hands full. I've got my hands full. I hope we're all able to come through this, that we all respond to what God gives us and says, and that's going to be in each one of us, our own hands, in that respect. But when we start to meddle, sometimes we start to meddle in what God is doing, and we have to be careful.

**...and do not love a false oath. For all these are the things I hate, says the Eternal.** So, we might think our opinion, our ideas are right when we start telling someone something.

Just like Covid. It doesn't matter. If one came to find out later on that some of these shots are actually in the long run, if we live long enough (I don't have to worry about that), but if some who are younger live twenty and thirty years and find out later on somewhere up the road that it changed something in them and it's a detriment, but they lived through Covid, but to come to understand it was a matter of something that God gave the Church and the reasons for it that we are to judge by, not by what we think is right or wrong. That's a tough one sometimes for people to work through.

John 5. I'm going to go through these scriptures here because it really says it all because it's about a deeper understands of how God's government is to work in our lives. God's government. We have to yield to it. We have to submit to it. Not the way we think things should be done, not even in other people's lives. Who made us the judge, especially of someone in God's Church, of God's people? Who made us the judge that we can judge someone and determine what they should change, what they should do? We have enough things in our own life we should be looking at that we know we ought to change, and to fight those things. We have to be careful of the other.

**John 5:19—Then Joshua answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself.** How much less us? This is speaking about Christ. If this is about him in

what's being said here, how much more for us? Can we learn from this? He never sinned. All of us, we've had so much in our life that God's forgiven.

**The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do.** He never saw Him do anything. It's about something spiritual, what he "sees." It's in the mind. It's of the spirit. It's basically saying here, especially in the Old Testament, things that were written, it's the mind of God. It reveals the thinking and the mind of God. How to work with situations and people. Over and over and over again there is so much there, and we have sermons about it from time to time.

We read about some of these things. Just like we already have in the Old Testament there, Micah and Zechariah. But to absorb those things, we're unique, we grow. He was able to see them. What a mind! Born with that mind that when he ever was able to hear or read any of those things he saw it.

It's like when we come to see something that we've never seen before, a new truth perhaps, and all of a sudden we see it and it's always been there in scripture. It's like, wow, isn't that amazing! I think of Pentecost and how we finally saw that it was on Sunday and not Monday to start with. It's like, wow, it's always been there, but we didn't see it.

Now, he is able to see everything right away. That's hard for us to grasp but that was his mind because of who he was. He was given that kind of mind from God, his Father, so that when these things came along he saw them, he knew exactly what it meant. Incredible. We learn through a long process of time what some of these things are and what they mean, and basically, even as God reveals them to us, helps us to see them.

**The Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these also the Son does likewise.** That's our goal. When we come to see certain things in our growth and our ability to deal with various matters in life, if we're able to start to see them, if we can start to see them and hold on to them, that's what it's about, the way God desires us to be, how we should be, how we should function, how we should be in unity with Him in the sense of how He directs life and tells us we should live, because we want His laws, His was to govern our thinking, to be in unity with that.

**For the Father loves the Son and shows himself all things that He Himself does.** God does the same for us, but again, over a longer period of time. He loves us and He reveals to us more and more because we have a different mind. Our mind is totally human, carnal. We have access to the mind of God, we're blessed through the spirit of God to see and learn things, but it takes a longer time because our minds have to be transformed. His didn't. Ours have to be transformed over time. It's a matter of submitting to that and yielding to that.

**For the Father loves the Son and shows himself all things that He Himself does; and He will show him greater works than these, so that you may marvel.** So again, that's been happening for the past 2,000 years and Christ working with the Church and molding and fashioning and all

the things he's been involved in, and especially right now at this end-time more is being given so we have more to deal with and able to grow in. It's an incredible process.

**For as the Father raises up the dead and quickens**, in other words, makes them alive, **even so the Son quickens whom he will**. Every power and authority has been given to Christ to fulfill God's plan. That's an incredible thing to understand.

**For the Father judges no one but has committed all judgment to the Son**. So, what does that mean for us? He teaches the Church; he molds and fashions the Church, aet some in the Church in various places to help mold and fashion the Church. He is the one responsible over it all. Incredible. He lets many things happen within that so that we can learn because we have to learn from the good and the bad.

**Verse 23—So that all should honor the Son**, in other words, understanding government. If we really grasp that we will understand that in the Church. Like for Herbert Armstrong, God's apostle, as time went along he was shown less and less honor. It got worse and worse and worse. When he came back after his heart attack and the things he went through in the late 70's early 80's in putting the Church back on the right track so many things were already set in motion, evangelists that had already determined things that they were going to do because they knew he was going to die. He's getting close.

It's about power. It's about what they thought was better for the Church, how to run the church. It wasn't a matter of looking to God. How is God going to do this? What will God do? How will God carry things out? It wasn't a matter of faith and trust in God; it was a matter of what they were going to do. They'd already determined. There were already groups together deciding various things, pushing certain ones forward, certain ones pushing themselves forward because they wanted to be there in that position, and if not in that position, then right under whoever was going to be in that position.

Think God honored any of that? Well, we see the fruit of that. Not a bit of it. Every bit of it's been destroyed. Every one of them, they'll not be in the first resurrection at all. They'll be in the Great White Throne...for those who can be there.

**So that all should honor the Son**, again, understanding government, because he is the head of the Body, the Church. It's that authority has been given to him. It's an understanding of how he works within the Church. God tells us. And yet we see resistance of that from time to time within the Church, and so I speak about it because we should know better by now for the few who get tangled up in that sometimes.

**...even as they honor the Father**. Awesome what it says. That's pretty powerful. **Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father**. I think of whoever didn't show honor and respect toward Herbert Armstrong as God's apostle, they didn't honor God. But they didn't think that way. They just thought, "He's getting to be old. He's not doing things right. And we have to sit here and listen about those two trees again?" That's how some of them thought.

“He’s going through these two trees again,” toward the end there. “Must be losing it, just going back and talk about two trees.” Every time you could build upon that and learn something different than what you had before. Incredible.

**Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes on Him who sent me has everlasting life.** So, it’s a process. We’re blessed to be able to hold on to that, to see it, to believe it. ...and shall not come into condemnation but has passed from death unto life.

**Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they who hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.** So, I think of that great resurrection that’s going to take place and what’s going to be presented to God that’s in the wave loaves on Pentecost. It’s going to be an incredible thing, the beginning of God’s Family in a very powerful way. Now not just one but 144,000 more. Then later on into the millions. Incredible!

**Verse 27—and He has given him authority to execute (exercise, work) judgment also.** This is very much a part of what he does. And what does that mean? How is it executed? How is it accomplished? What is he working with? Us. So, he inspires things, he works with things, he builds and allows us to go through various kinds of things in order to learn from them, to be molded and fashioned. Then he works with us to help our minds to learn the same judgment because we have to respond to it and learn from it.

...because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice and shall come forth—they who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil, to the resurrection of... It’s not “damnation,” it’s of judgment, the execution of, if you will, final judgment.

Some things have to do with judgment, some things have to do with the Great White Throne. That is the reason it’s called that. It’s all about judgment and their time for judgment, the vast masses of humanity.

**I can of my own self do nothing.** So, this is going quite a way to get back to this point that he was saying earlier, “The Son can do nothing of himself,” and none of us can. We are not experts in anything, in one respect, but we’re to grow in being better, growing in this area of expertise as to God’s way of life. But when it comes to various things of life sometimes the way we live life is we think we are experts. We know. We have our opinions, and we know. “And if you don’t believe me, just ask me.” This is what we have to fight.

If nothing else I get through in this series it’s to understand that. We have got to do more in looking at our thinking, of our own opinions, the know-it-all attitudes. I loathe a know-it-all attitude and spirit because it has to change, it has to be changed, it has to be conquered. Because that isn’t of God. On the contrary, that’s a very dangerous spirit, and if we think we know it all and can’t be told anything, we resist God, because that will work its way into the Church and has. That’s the history of the Church.

That's the main thing I have dealt with in the ministry, that kind of thinking. People who know it all, you can't tell them anything! You can say things, but they don't listen because they already have their answers. Think, why do you sit in services? What are you doing? What's going in here? Or what's not going in here?

We have to be careful of our opinions and our ideas and our trying to give them to others because we're right. It's just not a good thing. The best thing we can do is be an example of this way of life, of what we're living, that we're living it. We're striving to live it toward one another, we're striving to treat each other properly, with respect because we know that you're God's children. That's how we should see each other.

And who are we, unless we've been given a part to do something in that? As a whole we're to back away unless it's a unique situation of sin and its absolute sin.

**I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just.** It's righteous. Anything that's righteous comes from God, and that's what he's saying. That's the confidence that's there, and if we can have that kind of confidence that's a good thing, that you've dealt with the situation or with somebody in a right way. Not because you're right, but you've done it in the right way.

Maybe it was one of being merciful. Maybe it was one of being patient. Maybe it was one of intervening because of sin and saying something one on one out of love because you don't want to see them lose out on what we're being given. Or you have the guts at least to go and counsel with the ministry and to say, "I don't know how to deal with this. What can I do because here is sin?" If sin is there we have a responsibility.

**As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me.** That says it all. What are we striving to do in our relationships with others, even in how we present something and how we say something? Even in that sometimes we just don't understand, is that right with God?

Now, the purpose of having gone into things in this series, *Understanding Government*, is because, again, from time to time it pops up within the Church that it's not understood. And so, God inspires, Christ does even more specifically, things that are to be given to the Church. That's why we're going through this particular series, so that certain corrections can be made in our lives. We all can make corrections in these things in our life and do them better. Number one, to become suspect of our own opinions, ideas, and things that we hold to be absolutely true and don't, won't budge in. Not listening to someone else, not considering something else.

There are so many ways of doing things in the world that have nothing to do with sin. You know, that's why it comes down to that so often. If it's a matter of sin, that's a different matter. But if it's a matter of a certain way of doing something don't raise it up on a pinnacle, that it's the only way of doing it.

That's why government today is so messed up. They don't grasp that. They don't work to support something that has said, "Let's do this, and let's strive to do it together." That's why God tells us even more so within the Church we better do it this way.

**1 Corinthians 1:10.** So, to grasp government more fully we have to embrace and obey God and what He says about judgment within the Church. **Now I implore you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Joshua the Christ, that you all speak the same thing.** Now, that doesn't mean about everything in life, though we have to be careful of that so that we're not stirring something up and trying to get someone else to do something different in their life that we feel is better for them.

You know, if something is good for you, fine. That's good. Embrace it. Maybe you'll learn later on that it's not as good. But it can go to anything in life we do, whether it be a job, whether it be health, whatever it is, marriage, rearing children, people have all kinds of ideas. But you know what? If someone, as an example, has children, it's their children. Someone, an outsider, is not able to come in and say, "This is what you should be doing with those children." People do this all the time. You have to be careful. They have to go through a process of learning. They're striving to do things in a certain way and it's in their responsibility to do so. And prayerfully, it'll be done well.

How many of us have done everything perfectly? I haven't. I didn't. No one gave me a book and told me, "This is how to be the best father," you know, or the best husband. There are things I regret in the very beginning I can't even begin to tell you. Every once in a while, I think about them because they nag the you-know-what out of me.

I think of when our first child was coming along. I hate hospitals. And so, she's in the hospital and getting really close, and the doctor suggested I go have breakfast. I don't know if it's because he knew that I wasn't all there or it's because of the situation. So, I went and had breakfast. I look back at that now and think, I did not belong in there having breakfast when she's going through this. I should have been there. Now, I haven't even told Laura that. See, all these years, been 47 years, it's finally come out. Well, not since that happened, because that happened a few years later.

But that, every once in a while, pops up in my mind, and I think, "What a butt you were! Selfish! Selfish one at that, to have not been there. Couldn't you see that?" And you know what? I couldn't. That's why I did it because I couldn't see it. I couldn't see how stupid that was, how dumb that was not to be there to support her, to give her the help and encouragement she needed at that time because I'm selfish by nature.

Now, who of us isn't? I could go on and on, but I don't want to do that today.

So, there are mistakes we make in childrearing. Well, how are we going to learn unless we make them? So, someone comes along, and they don't want you to make a certain mistake so

they're giving you advice constantly about how to do it a certain way and it's like, this is how they learn, and children learn from this process too.

God gives a wide margin of things you can do. Unless there is sin involved just keep out of it. If we could understand that concept - unless there is sin involved, it's none of our business. But so many people want to insert themselves in other people's lives so they can do things in what they think is maybe a better way or how to better handle something or what you should do.

There are things I see within the Church at different times that I know it's going to be tough and they're going to learn some hard lessons from all this. Every once in a while when the Feast comes around and different people are doing different things, and my wife and I sit around and talk about some of these things and we're looking at where people are going and what they're doing and it's like, "Man, this is going to be a toughie. They're going to learn some lessons through all this." At least I hope, because it isn't all going to go well, whatever they're trying to do. Well, we've been brought to this point in life to be able to work with those kinds of things.

But you know what? We don't go out and insert ourselves in those situations. That would be the wrong thing to do. Is there sin involved in so many of them? If there was then I would say something, but there's not. It's just that I know. How often do you think God looks upon us and sees us doing something? Does He stop us from doing something that's going to cause us harm, that we're going to hurt ourselves in, that we're going to do something stupid and have to pay for it or whatever it might be, and so He keeps us from doing it? Not at all. He lets us do it because we learn that way.

If we don't have these experiences, if we're in this protective bubble, we're never going to learn. So, God pushes us out there, and hopefully, if we have ears to hear, we'll learn. But so often in life human beings like to insert themselves. This is something I tell the ministry over and over again constantly, "Do not insert yourselves into the affairs of other people. It's not our job." The ministry in the past inserted themselves often into the affairs of brethren where they shouldn't have.

The only time that should ever be an issue is if there is sin, and then that has to be judged. Because not all sin is to be dealt with immediately by the ministry even.

But that's the way God works in our life and we're to learn from that. What we see the Father do, we see Him, we see how He deals with us. I've learned much from that in life, even within the ministry, how I've seen how God worked in my life, in our lives, and realize this is how God works, this is how we're supposed to work. This is what we're to do. The evidence is there; we're to learn from that.

**Now I implore you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Joshua the Christ that you all speak the same thing.** In other words, especially and primarily within the matter of unity and oneness of the Church. The same truths. In other words, if something comes along, some other

idea and belief, which happened often in Worldwide, in Laodicea, someone would come along with some other idea of scripture or whatever and start teaching it or telling it in a certain area. And it's like, it needs to be dealt with. That's sin.

When it comes to the truth we're all to be of the same mind and we're to hold on to the same thing. So, when a conspiracy theory or some goofy idea comes along in the Church we're to nip it in the bud because it's sin, it's divisive.

The worst one that ever came along, that had no effect on others, was flat earth idea. You think, how could someone come along, supposedly be in God's Church (that pretty much revealed I don't think they ever were, but anyway), and all of a sudden to believe in a flat earth? There are some out there I guess like that. It's like, you've never flown? Because, you see, you got to learn from that scientifically really fast, it's round. Unless you went on a real short trip. But even then, you should be able to learn from that process.

So, these things have happened in God's Church, and they lead people astray. I've known of so many people who have gone by the wayside because of latching on to goofy ideas. I have so many stories I could tell you about different things, even of what ministers have done and taught. Anyway, I don't even want to mention one that comes into mind right now.

I'll pass one along right quick like. There was one in one area one time that began to believe that there are going to be these things come down from outer space (spaceship) to take people. It was to a place of safety because they were so small they had to be shrunk, from what I remember, to be able to get into them to escape. It's like, okay, what chapter was that in? And there were people who swallowed some of those kinds of ideas. And you think, how far can the human mind go sometimes? It can go a long way. Anyway, God allowed it to happen for a time and then He dealt with it.

**But, we're all to speak the same thing so that there is no division among you, and that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, unity and oneness with God, it's God's way, and in the same judgment.** I'll go back to it probably until Christ returns because it's such an incredible thing that happened in our time.

It was make-up in Herbert Armstrong's time, but here in my time, our time, the time I'm living in, it's Covid and a shot. It's like, I was amazed at what came to the forefront through all that process, showing us that we're not striving to be of the same mind and of the same spirit, and that there be no divisions among us.

Because you know, the worst thing that can happen is when someone takes a stance that they're against something perhaps that's said by God's apostle and others in the congregation know it. That is the most horrible thing. It's worse than witchcraft. It's the most horrible thing a human being can do, one of the most horrible things a human being can do in the Church of God. To be an example of divisiveness and to throw that out there and possibly cause others to stumble by it or to have problems with it, to think it's okay to think like that and to speak that

way. Because if that's not nipped in the bud and dealt with that kind of thing spreads. That's exactly what's happened over and over and over again throughout Philadelphia and Laodicea.

**So that there be no divisions among you, and that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.** With what's said. If not, what are we doing here? Where do we receive what God gives to us? Are we to pick and choose what we receive? Is that what God has given us to do because of what things were done during Laodicea and because certain things were done by certain ministers in that period of time especially? Someone that taught 14/15<sup>th</sup> Passover? That's a different issue. Yeah, you know that's wrong and needs to be addressed and dealt with.

Then the warning here in Matthew 7 that I started to jump toward. And candidly, this thing of "being perfectly joined together, the same mind and the same judgment," that's understanding what government is all about. If we can grasp all that?

**Matthew 7:1—Judge not.** So again, we've gone through these in times past. In other words, from our own ways, our own opinions about matters. ...**so that you are not judged.** Basically here, even in this we're going to be judged just because we did it, because we did something wrong. It's already written, in that respect, in the sense of the way God judges matters. If we're wrong about a matter we're going to suffer for it because it's wrong.

Anyone who speaks out and does something that's divisive, it's wrong, and that's sin, and so they've already been judged by what they did. **For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged.** Exactly! **And with what measure you mete,** whatever you measure out in that respect, **it will be measured in return to you.**

**Now, why do you see the sliver that is in your brother's eye?** We read through this in time past, and every once in a while, we come across it again. It's such a simple concept but it's not easy to see, mainly because there is something big in our eyes and kind of in our head too if we're not able to do this.

But it's so easy to see what other people are doing wrong. Isn't that funny? That's our human nature. Our judging. Our opinion. Our way of doing it. We want to insert ourselves in their lives, to change their life, to make their life better (supposedly) because "It really needs help and it's my duty to do it." And you think, what a screwed-up mind to think we should be that way. It's not to be that way.

So again here, **Why do you see the sliver in your own brother's eye?** In other words, so often, and what my experience is, what people get upset about in other people's lives, they're so small in reality. If it's sin, that's different, but so often it's not. It's a little sliver of something that yes, is there a better way of doing it, yes, but it's not your job to go to them. They're going to learn through this process. And if they don't, well, they're God's and God will take care of that. If it's necessary they learn it they'll be taught, they'll learn, He'll take care of it.

**And consider not the log that's in your own eye? Or how will you tell your brother, Let me pull the sliver out of your eye...** So, it's that giving advice again. We know what's best for someone else. We want to give our opinion. We want to give what we have learned. Often today it's "What I've learned on the internet, and I'm expert in this particular field now." That's something you want to run from.

We have to be careful about those things. We can learn from things but it's for us to learn from those things ourselves, to go through it and hopefully profit by it, but it's not our job to go out and promote what we think is right for ourselves, that everybody else has to have the same thing! I wish everyone could see that.

**Or how will you tell your brother, Let me pull the sliver out of your eyes, and look, a log is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First, get rid of the log in your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to get the sliver out of your brother's eye.** For us that's saying we need to see where we think in a wrong way, and candidly, are sinning by esteeming our own ideas and thoughts by which we're judging people by in how they live their lives and what they're doing in their life when it has nothing to do with God's plan and God's purpose, when it has nothing to do with the truth. That in itself makes it wrong because that's not how we're to treat one another. That's a wrong judgment. So, judgment comes at us in many ways and it's difficult to learn some of that at times.

It's telling us here in this case what we need to see in ourselves is that our own thinking is messed up when we esteem our own ideas, "The way I see it," "The way I believe I am right." Any time you've ever been in an argument, a disagreement with anybody else, I don't care, you, as a whole, are dealing with and thinking from a vantage point of you know you're right. That's why you're standing your ground. You're right and they're wrong.

That's not what God's Family is based upon. That's not what relationships are to be based upon. They're about mercy. They're about love. They're about patience.

**You hypocrite! Get the log out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to get the sliver out of your brother's eye.** In other words, we can't even learn how to help people properly when it's proper to help them, as an example, to even to be able to judge that until we get rid of some of these logs that are in our own eyes.

I'm going to end in one area here, Ephesians 4, again, because this has so been a matter of things happening within the Church. Again, being reminded of something we should have learned by now and have deeply embedded within us, that some still struggle with from area to area, sometime even within the ministry, to understand how things work.

**Ephesians 4:4.** So, the context is continuing here from the previous verse speaking about unity of spirit and the bond of peace that we're to have. And it goes on to say, **We're to be of one body, one spirit, and just as you were called in one hope of your calling.** So, we've all been called by God, given special opportunity to change, to grow. **One Lord, one faith, one**

**baptism.** All simple things. **One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

Then verse 11, finally. How many times since I've been a minister have I gone through these verses? Quite often. So many have never, never, never, never, never embraced them nor learned from them. **And He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some as pastors and teachers.** So various forms of teachers within the ministry and it depends on the structure of what's happening at any point in time. Even in Worldwide that changed from time to time in how things were structured, and different names were given. But so many of them a matter of teachers and teaching and so forth.

Today we are very unique in the sense of primarily it's in one way and that's through God's apostle. Sometimes others speak. But again, we're so small and able to because of technology do things in an awesome way. It gives us a greater ability to have unity and oneness in a way that wasn't and didn't exist in Worldwide. They didn't have this technology.

So, "He gave some apostles, prophets..." This is about an order of things in God's Church. Sometimes even within the ministry people don't understand there is an order of things.

To understand how God feeds us, understand how Christ feeds us. Of all people we should understand how Christ teaches us, molds and fashions us, and leads us by now, where the truths have come from that we've been given. It should be an absolute no-brainer.

And yet sometimes people resist that. Like Covid. That's a small thing. But what's missing in one's mind if you're not able to hear God's apostle? Do we not grasp that place, that responsibility, that part of government in our life? And if we're not in unity with that what we're doing to ourselves, how we're hurting ourselves before God? Because He doesn't take these things lightly. Sometimes I found with even within the Church we have to understand there is an order of things.

**...unto the equipping of the saints.** I shouldn't even have to read that verse. I really don't even like reading it, to be honest with you, because I think it's something that we should all know. We may know it by knowledge, but we don't understand it in many cases, and don't live it in many cases. Because even there sometimes people are judging.

I've seen so often where people judge, "Well, this person here... and they do 'this' and they do 'that...' And I've seen them, and I know them... I knew them in the past and this is what they were like." Therefore, that gives them reason and ability then to say they're disagreeing with something they might say or something they might do. Think, you're missing the mark. You don't understand the order.

**...unto the equipping of the saints.** So, it's about making us stronger, making us better. **...for the work of ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ.** That's what Christ has given. It's about His Body. It is the Body of Christ. He is the one that gives these things, and how we

respond to what he gives to us, we're judge by. And if we want those things we'll cry out for them and desire to grow in them.

**...until we all come in the unity of the faith.** That's what it's all about, unity of the faith. The big thing in this series is that we come to understand more deeply that "all the ideas, ways, opinions, and so forth, that I have I can apply them to my life, but it's not my job to apply them to others." Because a lot of that is just not going to be right when it's all said and done. We think everything is right about our opinions and our ideas, but are they that important that we should hurt a brother or a sister?

**...that we all come into the unity...** This is what's important to God, being at one with Him, being unified. I think of something we tried to do after the Apostasy. We tried to be united. We used the name to hope it would be a goal for people to work at, being united. It didn't take long and God began to reveal we were far, far from united. That's a spiritual matter.

**...in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

There is one other thing I want to go through here just before we end this because we naturally rely upon our own judgments, our own way of seeing things, and in many ways, we have to do that in life. Because we know what we know to this point in time about things maybe of business, of our own physical life, our own lifestyle, our own health, and other, and relationships and stuff. We have to judge those things constantly about ourselves. That's what we're charged with, ourselves.

And hopefully, we'll grow and learn even from mistakes we make, often from mistakes we make, to how to do something better. That's how we become more convicted. Because if we didn't have those experiences we wouldn't become more convicted. And so, we're able to grow in those things, and it's about a process that takes time.

But so often the ability to apply some of the things we're talking about here, as far as the way we think about our own ideas, our own judgments, our own opinions, our ways is what it comes down to, to be able to grasp that we should be cautious of those things and to see the danger of it, it often eludes us. It truly does. It's just like it's not in our thinking.

We just automatically function in a way that we think is right and we have to be cautious of that. You want to make sure you're right, that you're doing God's will, that you're in unity with what God teaches us about how to treat people, about how to work with people, about how to love people, about how to be merciful to people, and on and on it goes. Those are the things that we need to raise up.

I was going to go into some more of that; I'm going to just stop there and we're going to follow this series up because we're not done with this. Because this thing of being able to see our own ideas, our own ways, our own thinking, and to realize there is so much to change in that in our

life because we automatically then judge others by that perspective, by that thinking. That's very wrong to do until we begin to look at them closely before we act upon them.

That's not something you can do by yourself because you can't see your own mind. You can't understand some of your own thinking. You can't understand some of the thinking about your own ways, about your own reasoning, about your approach to those things and how you treat others in that.

And so, the next series is about how to deal with that, because it's not an easy thing. It's a hard thing to conquer because it's so deeply embedded inside of us.