

Made Stronger Through Fasting, Pt. 1

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Today we'll begin a new sermon series. It's the follow-up to the last series entitled *Glorify God* which focused on the importance of employing, utilizing prayer as a daily part of our lives; we have to put it to work. That's on our part. That's up to us and our response to God and the things He tells us we need to do, and that Christ said we need to do.

This new series now is entitled *Made Stronger Through Fasting* with this being *Part 1*.

I think it's important to point out something at this point that shows how God and Christ work with us to mold and fashion us through what's given from Sabbath to Sabbath and Holy Day to Holy Day. I think I'd be good to point out that neither Beth nor Jeremy had prepared and prerecorded their split sermon or didn't know what I was going to go through on Unleavened Bread if you will, and they had to prepare and plan those, and then prerecord them in advance.

They didn't know what I would be giving and yet we find that some of the same scriptures are referred to and some of the same points are referred to and it all went together with this particular season of the year. Those things don't happen by accident, and I'm always inspired by that. I didn't know what they were giving. I did later on when Jeremy had already prerecorded his, listened to part of that, and Beth's, didn't pay any attention to it at that point in time, but didn't know what she was giving. She didn't know where I was going.

So, anyway, to me it's always exciting to see how sermons always go together. That's something that has always been inspiring to me, especially when you talk about the Feast of Tabernacles a long time ago in Worldwide and some ministers who were the guest speakers or the primary speakers, some of them— How can I put this?—to me were a little uptight because they didn't want anyone else speaking on what they were. They didn't want anyone to cover the same scriptures or anything so they would ask for everyone who would be speaking at the Feast, for us to send in what we were covering, what scriptures we were using, and if we were using some of the same ones they would let us know.

But I've always found that God leads and guides and directs if we yield to that and want that in our lives, and even though some of the same scriptures are covered inevitably, especially at a Feast of Tabernacles, it's always from a different direction, it's always from a different focus and it gives a little bit more to it. It adds to it, it doesn't take away.

So, anyway, just keeping God in the picture and seeing how God works is an awesome thing, truly is. So, I had to say that before I went on because it's obvious here some of these things that overlap each other and where they're going, and why (and especially during this season of the year what we've just gone

through) because God is helping us to focus ever more so on these points that sometimes we let slide, let slip and don't incorporate, don't put to work, don't employ, don't utilize as we should in our lives.

This is what determines our very relationship with God Almighty. If we want that we should desire to follow the steps and do the things that God says we need to do in order to fulfill that, in order to become stronger in spirit, in order to produce greater fruit in our lives, in order to become stronger spiritually.

So, those things are up to us. Our prayers are exceedingly important to God. He knows what's in our mind, but we have to learn to express those things because it shows what's inside of us, shows our desires, our wants, our convictions as to following what God tells us to do and how to do it. And so, that's up to us. We have to grow in that. It's about our being molded and fashioned so that we respond. It shows what we want. "I want Your holy spirit. I need forgiven of my sins. I desire Your way of life. I want to conquer and overcome." And so, we express those things to God. He knows if it's in the mind. But it's not enough just to be in the mind, that this is what you want; you have to do it. Incredible, to go through those things.

Let's turn over to Revelation 5 today. We're going to tie this process of fasting and prayer together because, obviously, the prayer part leads into a greater power that's available to us and that's through the tool and the prayer of fasting that's coupled with prayer. And understanding that our prayers are exceedingly important to God because they reveal our spirit. They reveal what's inside of us in our true desire of wanting to have a right relationship with God. It's amazing. That's how it's revealed to God. It's the proof of it.

So, they reveal our true desire as well to grow and produce fruit. Is that what we want? Is that our desire? Do we want to be productive? Do we want to learn what sacrifice is about? Denying self. How much do we deny self for God's way of life, to live God's way of life in everything we do? Sometimes we get a little lax in some of those things and we have to ever examine them.

God wants us to grasp the importance of our relationship, of our prayers to Him, and shows some of these things then in scriptures like this in Revelation 5.

Revelation 5:1—Also, I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven Seals. So, we know what this is about. But it's always inspiring to go through some of these things and understand some of the timing involved in this and what God is saying about it and the importance of it.

Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to break the Seals and open the scroll? Yet no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth... The only thing that really would fit into this thing of being "under the earth" (Protestant world would probably think it's down in hell or wherever that place is), but it's about even those who have lived in times past who are dead. They weren't worthy. None of them were worthy. So, that's what it's pointing out here.

...were able to open or to look at it. So, I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll or to look at it. Now, that's an amazing thing. Here John is going through all this, he's talking about things that he's seeing, he doesn't understand what they are. Even after he's written them he doesn't understand what these things are about because they're for later on. So, they only see a little bit here and there.

To me, it's an amazing thing to understand that when God called Herbert Armstrong to begin restoring truth to the Church after the period of Sardis, He began revealing these things to him. Awesome! Or much of it. Not all of it but portions of it so that it began to fit together as understanding this was for the end-time, which we live in.

But one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed. A word meaning "to conquer" or "to overcome." It's a word that when we talk about overcoming it's about conquering because it's a matter of a battle, it's a matter of a war that we have to fight. We are in a war! You have to fight it and you have to have help to fight it because you can't do it on your own. I can't do it on my own. We have to have help from God to be able to conquer and overcome this kind of battle because there is a power that works against us, has always worked against God's Church.

Awesome, things that have happened out there that that being (Satan) tries to interfere, tries to lead astray, tries to hurt, tries to attack. And generally, he tries more so in that respect at the top and on through the Body as far as government is concerned. Because if he can strike there...?

That's why there was so much power during the Apostasy. He had incredible power. The most power he's ever had in the environment of God's Church was leading up to the Apostasy when an individual was given responsibility – or said that he had been given responsibility, which he hadn't been given – but nevertheless, he took that after Herbert Armstrong's death and yet was not obviously an apostle, and in time we had an Apostasy. Incredible, what we've experienced.

You have lived through some incredible times if you have lived through some of those. Some people here have, and some people didn't. They came in afterward. But witness of those things is awesome. God has witness of things through six thousand years and yet at the end here are some of the most profound.

I think of the time around Christ's first coming that was profound. Finally, after four thousand years the Messiah is here, he's coming. They didn't know he was going to die, that he came as the Passover, but that's what it led up to and those who were witness of all that. Then, Pentecost, they witnessed some profound things. Awesome!

I wouldn't want to live in any other age in seven thousand one hundred years. This is the one that for me has incredible meaning to it, power to it, an awesome period from a transformation of a period of time that all the people God has worked with in the past six thousand years have wanted this time to come

when Joshua (who they didn't know), but for the Messiah to come, for the Kingdom of God to be established on the earth.

They didn't know what that was all about, but they believed that God's government would reign in time, and they looked forward to the one who would come, the Messiah, if you will. We're living at that transition. We're going to see things; we're going to witness things that we get to have for all time. Awesome!

Verse 6—Then I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And so, things about the Church that begin to be talked about even more so, of the power that would come through Christ to be given to the Body of Christ, the Church of God, over periods of time, and those things are symbolic of some of that representation and what would take place.

Then he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. So again, the timeline? Awesome! We've already lived through part of this. Everything that happened from the time of the Apostasy on, it's about this, it's about this period of time the Seals were beginning to be opened up.

So again, toward the end of the seven eras from the Apostasy forward. Now, I've mentioned at times that as far as the periods of time being over, that Laodicea in that respect for all practical purposes is over because God is working with the remnant that is not a part of that anymore. Nevertheless, that is still out there because it was all spewed out of God's mouth. So, it still exists as far as those who were scattered. So again, but to understand what God is doing then with the remnant that was called out of that, that's totally separate from those seven periods.

Now, when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. So again, something that was going to picture 144,000 whom God has been working with from the beginning to the end here through time, different ones that would fit into this total count.

"Prayers of the saints," those whom God has set apart through time, those who have been a part of the Church over the past two thousand years then, those who are alive now that are going to finish this phase of the construction, if you will, to be a part of that. Awesome! And so, that's what it's talking about here in some of this. It's about all of those individuals.

So, showing that everyone that's going to be a part of the 144,000 have to have this relationship, do have that kind of relationship with God that is built upon prayer, that is built upon fasting, if you will, that we're getting ready to go into. It was a part of their lives because they wanted to have this relationship with God. They had a desire to see God's government, God's Kingdom, established on earth. They fought for it. They followed the example of the one, or if they didn't grasp that, obviously, in the first for

thousand years – there were things they did grasp – but especially for the Church to grasp that here is the one who did conquer, and we’re to follow suit. We’re to conquer and overcome!

He had to fight. This wasn’t a cakewalk for him. He was a human being. He had human flesh and he had to say no. His desire was fully of the mind of God however in ways that we can’t even begin to grasp, but still in a physical body, and he had to fight. He knows what it’s like to live in a physical body. But awesome, he always said no to anything that was wrong. It doesn’t mean it’s always easy.

When he fasted do you think it was any easier for him than it was for us? He had a relationship with God, and he stayed close to God in every respect, in every way. Awesome!

Verse 9—And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll, and to break its Seals. For you were slain, and have redeemed them, speaking of the saints in context here. So, even for the first Wave Loaf that covers those of the first four thousand years because they believed in God’s government, they believed there would be a Messiah from the very beginning. They didn’t always understand it fully, not even close to what God has given to us, but they had these basic beliefs about God and what God said.

And have redeemed them (the saints) **to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** So, this is what it’s building up to. It’s building up to this discussion here about the 144,000 and the exact numbers and the things that God is doing by the structure of His government and what’s going to be in His Kingdom. And so, of all people through time, incredible!

And have made them, speaking of the saints, **kings, and priests to our God.** That’s what it’s been about because that’s God’s government. To be in positions, to serve God over those who are going to be in the Millennium, over those in the Great White Throne, given some of the greatest opportunities we can’t even imagine. We can’t even begin to grasp.

I was thinking this morning, I think how little we see. It’s like you can’t even say a speck of sand. It’s like we’re a speck on a speck of sand we’re so puny, so small. We really are. We can’t even begin to grasp God and how great, how powerful, and how almighty He truly is and what He’s planned for us.

And made them kings, and priests to our God, and they, again, the saints, **shall reign on the earth.** It’s about God’s government.

So, let’s move on until it tells us about the Seventh Seal being broken, Revelation 8:1. So, to understand, because the scattered Body doesn’t understand these things. You think, how much have you been given? How much have we seen come to pass? To understand the first Seal, what it was all about when it was opened, the second, the third, and the fourth, things that happened with the Apostasy. Incredible! We didn’t understand it before but afterward God showed us this is what you’ve experienced, this is what you’ve gone through, this is what you have lived.

Revelation 8:1—Then when he had broken the Seventh Seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stood before God, and to them were given Seven Trumpets. Then another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censor, and there was given unto him much, or more if you will, incense, that's what it's about, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints. Because this is what it's symbolic of. Important to God? It reveals those who are in a right relationship with Him. This has to be there.

...to offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which are before the throne. This is a very unique period of time as well because there are those with whom God is working that are going to live on into the Millennium physically, but a part of the spiritual Body of Christ.

So, it goes on to say here then talking about more incense, to understand how important it is. **Verse 4—Then the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it into the earth. And there were voices or sounds and thunderings and lightning, and great shaking** (if you will). It says “**earthquakes**” here. That's how it's translated but so many of these things still involve the Church, and the world then as we go on with this obviously.

Then the seven angels who had the Seven Trumpets prepared themselves to sound. So again, things that God has given to us to understand, that certain things have already taken place, and yet there is a piece in here that we didn't come to understand until later on. And if you have patience, in time God reveals them to you.

So again, the incense is offered before each Trumpet. It's not just before the First Trumpet. Awesome! It isn't explained here but that's what is occurring in the progression of events as they move forward concerning the prayers of God's people. They also become more intense because this is the period of time this is happening.

We're going to experience a lot of this. We're going to see things that we can't even begin to imagine. We're going to experience things in a physical world, but even spiritually we're going to have the opportunity to experience various kinds of things that are awesome in every regard because of God and Christ because of His Church and what we're blessed to experience.

And truly, our prayers are going to become more intense as we go along here, they truly are, before God because there is going to be a need, a desire to rely on Him more, an eagerness to see all this end, an eagerness to see Joshua returning, an eagerness to see the end of the suffering of mankind and God bringing it to an end as Christ returns with 144,000. And until you go through and experience some of those things, we can talk about it, we can think about it, but we don't understand it yet. But we're going to experience it, what's written here.

Let's back up here a little bit to chapter 7 now. It's important to remember here what was stated then in this chapter here, chapter 7 that we're getting ready to go into concerning the events of the Sixth Seal and just before explaining the events of the Seven Trumpets of the Seventh Seal.

Revelation 7:1—Then after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.

We didn't know what this meant for a long time until God helped us to understand the ones that are there that have that announcement, it's not just an announcement that was made through Trumpets, because that was given to the Church, that's already been announced in that respect, but as far as the actual fulfillment of them, this is what this is talking about, the first four that take place, the first things that happen to this country, and that begin this whole process leading up to Christ's coming.

We understand it's going to begin here. There might be other things happening on other parts of the earth but for this to be fulfilled it's going to happen here.

So, it **was given to them to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth, neither the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.** It's not finished yet and it can't begin. So, what an awesome thing to understand, we're going to know something in a profound way that when we see the event of the First Trumpet take place, which we already know what it's going to be, we know the sealing has taken place. Awesome! That's why it's beginning because it can't begin until then.

I don't know about you but that gives me incredible peace of mind to know how God plans things, how God works with things and why it has to be that way, and why the Church continues in its power, its ability to do things to that point in time because it's all about molding and fashioning. It's about growing and coming to that point in time where the last one is sealed, when it's finally complete.

It's like when you build something. I enjoy doing things like that at times, except for my body now not enjoying it as much. But I enjoy seeing something begin and then put the finishing touches on it. It's always that last part when you're done, and you stand back. It's not a matter of all the other pieces, and it's not a matter of just that last piece, because it's not done until the last piece is in place, and then there is that joy and that satisfaction as you're able to stand back and look at it. I don't care what phase of kind of construction it is. Think about God. Think about Christ and how they feel about us, about the Body of Christ, the Church, His Family.

And I heard the number of those who were sealed. So, it's all about the sealing. And there were a hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes of the children of Israel.

So, I'm so thankful that since the Apostasy God has continued to reveal more and more about where we are. It gives us confidence and strength and help, and we're going to be able to experience things because it amplifies those things as we go through them, as we experience various things.

Just as it was with the First Seal, to understand what it was all about. Again, the scattered Church doesn't know that the Seals have been opened. And you think, what a blessing to know that we're up to the last one in the sense of understanding the events that are going to take place as a result of that. The Trumpets, it's already been opened, but it's a matter of the events taking place.

Let's look at a prayer of Daniel now and his example. It reflects the exact issues here that we're talking about contained in fasting before God. Because everything that's involved as a matter of fasting, this kind of summarizes it all; this all has to be a part of it. And to me, this is a great example.

Think of him and how things were revealed to him. He wanted to see it. He was given certain things and he wanted to see it, know what it was, know what he'd been given to write and record and what it meant. God told him no; it wasn't for his time, so he wasn't going to be given anything of it.

Daniel 9:1—In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years. God gave him this to understand. He was in captivity. He was experiencing what it was like and what happened to Judah as they were taken into Babylon.

It says here that he **understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Eternal came to Jeremiah the prophet.** So, it's written in Jeremiah about this and he's saying that God gave him understanding of what it was. ...**that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**

So again, it wasn't until sometime later after they'd already been there, but finally, God gave that to him to be able to see that from the time these began to the time it would come to an end and they would be able to go back and begin to rebuild, there would be "seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." That He was going to accomplish that.

Then I set my face unto the LORD God to seek by prayer and petition for favor, with fasting. So again, all these just go together. When you fast, this is a part of it. To understand some of the motivation, the reasons behind it, why we do it, it's about what we're able to receive from God as a matter of favor or grace, if you will. In the New Testament it talks about that, and all the things contained in that. It's about a relationship, of being able to draw closer to God, one of gratitude.

He was thankful. He was grateful for what he understood that it was given to him to understand why they were there and how long that time would be. So, he was thankful for that, to be able to see it. And so again, all this goes together. And it says, "with fasting." It humbled him. He was of a humble spirit, as

it says, **and sackcloth, and ashes**. That's what that reveals, that humility of spirit, in a thankfulness and gratitude to God he wanted to express certain things to God.

So, I prayed unto the Eternal my God and made my confession. You know, that's not something you just do once. You know, there are things that we did leading up to the Apostasy that still are a part of us that God has forgiven, but nevertheless, we're reminded of it, and we still remind God, "I know what I did! I know what I was a part of, and I'm sobered by that, I'm thankful for that, of knowing that." Because the more you know something like that and the more you determine not a phase of that, not a part of that is ever going to be repeated in your life, it gives you the power, the ability to fight and to conquer it even more so.

That's why I've cried out of recent time here that some of that spirit still exists, as all seven eras of the Church still exist within God's Church. It's always been that way. However, at certain times through history here in the last two thousand years, certain ones were predominant, more magnified, if you will, as far as a spirit, a mindset, and a way of thinking. Yet that last one is the one that's just a part of human nature and it's a part of letting down. It's a part of beginning to think more of ourselves than what we should. Those are all the danger signs.

That's why fasting is so important because fasting is about humbling ourselves before God, "I need God! And I'm willing to bring and want to bring this body into greater subjection to doing what is right before God, to reveal through what I go through and be reminded of it because I need reminding" – this is what we should all say – "that without God, that by letting down, by not eating or drinking food physically we understand what that means and that just drives the point home even more so."

That's why every Holy Day God reminds us of the meaning of the Holy Days. We should never get bored or tired of hearing about it. We should never get bored of going through Leviticus 23. And yet some people have and do. They get tired of hearing the same thing. Yet God says, "This is what you tell them. This is what you remind God's people of. This is what it means. This is what it's about. We keep the Passover every year; we read some of the exact same scriptures.

I don't even have to worry about having a different thing on the site right now (because I've messed up the last two), so the one we have, that's the one we're going to be using. I'm not even going to try it next year if we have next year. It's a good recording of what needs to be covered in Passover. Because it's the same, basically, year by year. Same scriptures. Same things we're supposed to look at and to be reminded of. They're beautiful.

It's such a conflict of the human mind. That should be something that inspires us every time we go through it. Every time we go through Passover it should be something we have gratitude for, thankfulness for, that has such great meaning to us. But sometimes it gets to a point where people are just going through the motions of something and it's kind of like getting tired of doing the same thing all the time and hearing the same thing all the time and it's like, "I already know all that."

No, you don't know it all. You don't know it. You build upon it. It's a process. There are things we think we know and yet there is always something that we can see more deeply within ourselves or whatever it might be that God is working to mold and fashion within us in our response.

I prayed unto the Eternal my God and made my confession. All prayer should consist of this, acknowledging to God what we are, how we think, especially in areas where we want help to do better. None of us are perfect. We're all imperfect. We're far ahead of the world because they don't have this, they don't have God's spirit, but we're still human and we still have weaknesses.

We still have selfish, carnal human nature, and it will always be with us until we're no longer in this body. That's a battle. That in itself should sober us, and we should be fearful of not doing the things we're supposed to do to combat it, to fight against it. Because the day you quit fighting against it, if that continues on and you're not praying as you should to fight it and conquer it, you'll lose it.

Because it's not conquered until you're done with self, until we're changed, until we're dead and to be resurrected later or changed immediately, in the moment, "in the twinkling of an eye," whatever that is for each person...or later on in the Millennium toward the end.

...and said, O LORD, the great and fearsome God. It doesn't mean we're afraid of God, but to understand what it's like to be in this carnal human body and what God says about it. That it's a fearful thing to be in this body because this body wants other things in life oftentimes. There are things that come into the mind.

I don't know about you, but there are times you get bombarded with things more often than others, and for one, I was bombarded during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and I had to fight and fight and cry out to God for help to fight. I knew what it was. I was being bombarded because it's not normal.

There are powers out there that are far greater than what we are, and they want us to stumble, they want us to let down, they want us to become Laodicean because the weaker we become, or whatever it might be. They want us to give into thinking. This is where it all starts, in your mind, and you have got to stop it in the moment of a thought.

When anything comes into your mind that is not in agreement with God that's where you have to fight it. You can't fight it at the moment it may come out in your actions in life in something you say or do or whatever it might be. The battle is in the mind. And if you can get to where you fight the battles in the mind, well, that's what it's about. Then it will never come out, never be, never exist. That's what Christ did. It was in his mind, and he said no.

Remember when he was tried, remember when Satan had his chance, his opportunity before Christ? And so, Christ stood his ground. He was of the mind of God, and Satan didn't grasp that. Nevertheless, in a very physical, human body. He kept telling him, in essence, "No." "No." "No." And if we think that was a cakewalk, being bombarded...? But he stuck to it, and because of that, different, different than what we

can grasp and comprehend. But we have to follow suit and do the same thing. “No.” “No.” “No.” Was it Ronald Regan’s wife, somebody, “Just say no!”

I’m sorry, I’m kind of going sideways here, but I’ll come back on course hopefully. But hearing something about all the drugs that are coming out of China, and someone made the comment on the news, “Do you know how many people die over there because of overdosing?” Now, I don’t know if it’s true or not but it’s probably not too far from it. And they said, “No one!” Now, I don’t know that I believe that, obviously, but the point being is that it’s coming over here so it’s like, “We’ve got to get on the Chinese because of what they’re doing. They’re making the stuff and they’re sending it over here!” You think, okay, what does that say about this country and people?

We live in a degenerate world. People that will make a choice whether it be young or old, it becomes a social thing and because of peer pressure? Sometimes people do this because of peer pressure so often, and they want to look a certain way. Especially when I grew up. It was like, this is what you do. I’m so thankful to my dad that he caught me smoking a little bit of his cigar one time in his office and he made me finish it. I thought anybody that smokes, they’re stark raving mad. I don’t want this in my body. That helped me a lot because it was stupid. And smoking anything in your body and taking it in like that it’s really pretty stupid, especially when you know what it causes today as far as cancers and emphysema and everything else.

I think of when I had my appendix taken out in Australia and I was in a room with five other people. All these men in here are different ages and they were having operations and parts of their throat taken out because of smoking. It’s what it was totally associated with. And you think, you had to carry it that far and some of you have to learn how to speak now because of what you did to your body?!

And so, the same thing like with TV. We blame someone else; we blame the Chinese. No, why can’t we control things here? Why can’t we control what comes across the border? We have the ability. Some of the stuff just so infuriates me, seeing things go the way they have. That’s the way we should be, to vex our righteous soul day by day like Lot did, hating what’s taking place and seeing the hypocrisy and all the things that are out there. Insanity! Absolute insanity!

Minds? I truly wonder at times how many when they’re resurrected are going to be able to be helped that have gone so far in their thinking. Do you think that there’ll be people who will be trying to manufacture some of that stuff in the future? Absolutely! The chemists, the people who know how to do it that liked what they had, that liked what they felt? You think you’re just going to change a mindset because the truth is there in front of you?

“The great and fearsome God.” We should fear how we’re made, susceptible, so susceptible to lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes. That’s what we are! And to understand that we’re accountable for those choices and decisions “I make.” It’s not somebody else. It’s not China’s fault, it’s our fault, “my fault,” or whatever it might be in life, to accept responsibility for our own choices.

...keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love You, and those who keep Your commandments.

Isn't that what we all want? I don't know. I don't know. Because I'll just tell you, we don't all want that. That's a hard thing sometimes to contemplate and to know.

But leaving or being put out is not over with. I've said what I've said, and it'll happen all the way to the end. How can that be possible? Well, because well before the end, whether it be two years, three years, five years before the end, before it, individuals have become so weak they cannot change. They've gone so far away from God though they might be in the environment of the Church, are not in the Church. And I hate that, but we're all responsible for ourselves.

"Who love You." These things reveal, do we love God? See, I hate this. I loathe selfishness that's in me, in my mind, but I love what God has given me to live that's His through the power of His spirit. That's what we grow in. Do we love it? Do we hold on to it? Do we have that relationship with God and love God? Do we say, "Father, I love You! Thank You for being so merciful to me, patient." Sometimes I marvel at God's patience with all of us because He is. He's patient with all of us and we're to be that way with one another.

That's what we miss sometimes. If we expect perfection out of everyone, where is your brain? Something's gone lopsided somewhere. Because who are you? Perfect? What is your perfection? Anyone who judges harshly, those are things they've got to learn.

...we have sinned. So, we can look at our past and realize it's so easy. Look what happened through Laodicea. Look what happens to an entire Church that God has to spew it out, separate it from His body. Because that's what it's about, it's about being separated from God and the flow of God's spirit. God wouldn't dwell in them. It got to a point where He wouldn't dwell in us all, not any of us. He made sure that we understood we were all cut off.

...and have committed iniquity. We, I, see that's what happened. **...and have done wickedly.** To go against God, to not follow, did not want, did not desire, to not do the things Christ had told us to do it's absolutely evil. I'm sure of this word, I didn't look it up, but I'm sure it's associated with the word "evil." It's evil. Carnal human nature is just absolutely evil.

That's something you have to become convicted in. I know it's the same spirit as that being who first started it all. It's the exact same ugly selfish spirit that wants to do something different from the way God says it's to be done. That's our choice. Do we want to do it the way God says it's to be done or do we want it still our way? Everyone who has ever been a part, they made that wrong decision. They want something else, whatever it is.

...and have rebelled. Turned against Christ. Candidly, become antichrist. I've known hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds – Worldwide, on into PKG – who have rebelled and turned against God.

To me, it reminds me of ideacity. I couldn't help but think of that this morning. When being invited up there to ideacity in Toronto and talking about the book at that time and then the individual who came on afterward who mocked Joshua. Mocked! Made fun of! I was so sickened that they would have someone come in to make fun of the things he went through and did in his life. People laughed. I think, one day I'm looking forward being able to visit them, and especially the one who did that. I'm going to in time be able to and remind him of what he did.

I wrote a letter up there to the guy, to the individual who sponsored the entire thing, and told him how I didn't go to their party afterward that they had for everyone, where they invited everyone in, and explained to them why I wasn't going to be there. Because of what they had to say about my elder brother and allowing someone like that, so despicable, to get up and speak in the manner that they did and how hideous that really was. That's what happens to those who become antichrist.

...have done wickedly and have rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments. So, that's what happens if we start departing from God and the precepts and judgments, the truths, the things He gives to us to understand and mold and fashion within us Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day. Forget them, depart from them. It happens all the time. It's happened many times already this year. Too many times. But it's happened many times already since the Feast of Tabernacles, and we're not there yet.

More? Undoubtedly. Before the Feast? Undoubtedly. Afterwards? Undoubtedly. Even if on Pentecost something begins. I don't know when things are going to begin, but it fits in perfectly if it did. Somewhere in there, whatever that period of time is, the Day of the Lord, whether it be a month, a year or whatever, very well could be a year when certain things begin. I don't know how long we're going to have to go through the things we do. God hasn't revealed that. He led, guided, and directed us to be able to appreciate certain things in that area, but to understand it fully, what He gives to it? Because it's what He assigns to it that determines what that period of time is because it can be a variable thing. But so often it is used for about a year, talked about a year. So, you wonder. What an incredible thing.

It's hard to imagine that it's been almost thirty years since the Apostasy. December, thirty years since the Apostasy. Amazing that that much time has gone by. And I know I don't have another thirty; I may not have three, I don't know. How long is it going to be? Don't know. But we look at the world, we look at the things that are taking place, and we see it ramping up more and more.

Amazing the things that are being said in Europe right now and toward the different ones in Europe between Russia and the Europeans. I'll tell you, they're being pushed into a corner, they really are, and their attitudes are changing more and more toward this country. They see that they must stand together, and they must stand alone without any interference from over here.

Wish I'd brought along some of those news things now. But anyway, maybe next time.

So, as we begin to dig more deeply into the subject of fasting, as we're going to do, we need to review some verses in John 14 again. We've looked at these several times through Passover season as well.

John 14:12—Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me... You think, well, surely everyone in the environment of the Church does. Nope. Not true. Not everyone. **...the works that I do shall they do also; and greater works than these shall they do, because I go to my Father.** So, it's available to us. There's a power there available to those who want it, desire it, and believe in Christ and what he had to say, and what he has to say here in John 14, and John 15, and John 16, and John 17, and John 18 about their desire to dwell in us. But we have to be forgiven of sin for that to happen. We have to have a relationship with them on a daily basis for this to happen, to be strong in their spirit.

Whatever you will ask in my name, that I will do. Awesome! But we have to understand the context, as I said over and over again. It's a matter of what he's saying here in the context. It's a matter of God's spirit being given and God's desire to give us that spirit, of God's desire to dwell in us, and of our desire to truly dwell in them because that's what it boils down to. That boils down to whether we truly believe Christ and believe in what he had to say and believe in who he is. He died so we could be forgiven of sin so that they could dwell in us. Do we believe that? Is that what we really believe? Because if we don't believe that we're not growing, we're not conquering, we're not being fed spiritually.

Whatever you will ask in my name, that I will do so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do. Powerful!

If you love me... Does everyone in the Church love him? Does everyone in the environment of the Church love him? No. And that's what's hard. That's what's hard. Yet God has allowed this to be the Church, the environment of the Church for the past two thousand years. The tares and the wheat together to the end. Together to the end. It's at that time it becomes fully cleansed. That's why it's being cleansed in the process leading up to it even now. But even more so once we get to that point.

...keep my commandments. "Keep my instruction." Sometimes the mind can deceive itself that it's about the Ten Commandments only and "I'm keeping the Ten Commandments." No, it's far more than that because those are broken down. They're broken down into revealing about the love of God and what the love of God is because that summarizes all the commandments in the first place. Then all the things of the precepts and instruction that go along with that, of things of how we're to live among ourselves within the Church and the Body and so forth. It just keeps being added to, all these things, instruction, that's given Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day. That's what this is about.

Because Joshua the Christ is the head of the Church. He's the head of the Body. He's the one that gives everything that we get that comes from God the Father. But it's been given to him to give to the Church. That's powerful, awesome to understand.

So, "If you love me, keep my instruction." Sometimes some people just separate it and think, "Well, that's his opinion. That's the way he sees it," and it doesn't matter what it is. Incredible.

Even I will pray the Father, and he will give you another comforter—"call to one's side," as I mentioned over and over again. That's what God has done. He gives us the power to accomplish that because it's about the holy spirit. **...that it may abide with you forever—even the spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive because it does not see it, neither knows it. But you know it.** Sometimes we don't grasp the marvel, the power that's been given to what we know. **...for it dwells with you and shall be in you.**

Let's turn over to 1 John 5; add this to that. It's amazing the things that are unique to John that God gave to him and what he gave later on in 1st John, 2nd John, and 3rd John because this thing about God's love is pounded home. But few who have ever read those things really grasp it. Even within the environment of the Church, many have not grasped it, what he's talking about.

1 John 5:12—Whoever has the Son has life. It's talking about a life that leads into life forever. It's talking about spirit life. We have something dwelling in us that is that kind of life in the mind that the world doesn't have, but we're able to experience it, we're able to have it. "Whoever has the Son." In other words, we have to have the Son dwelling within us to have this life. That's the life that brings God's word to life within us.

And whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life, does not have the strength of God in them because it's a matter of God's spirit.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God. Who believes, again? Everyone? It never has been in two thousand years. It never has been everyone in the environment of the Church. There's always been the tares as well as the wheat.

...so that you may know that you have eternal life. So, there's a confidence that we can have in a relationship with God that we know, we know where we are. We know that this is our way of life, "my" way of life and nothing else is going to get in the way because nothing is going to stop "me" from making those choices. "I" want God, "I" seek God. That's what we each have to do! And if we have that kind of mind nothing, no one, is going to stand in the way of that. That's how determined we have to be. No one!

"I don't care if I'm the last one!" That's how far it has to go in our thinking. That's our conviction. That has to be your conviction! Even if you're the last one to stand for God and God's truth and God's way of life. Absolutely! I don't care what anyone else says or does. I don't care if they hold a shotgun to my head! I don't care! All they can do is pull the trigger. It's over with quickly then. It's a whole lot faster than having a heart attack or dying slowly as sometimes people have to in life, physical life.

So, people can do whatever they want to do, but we have to be convicted of our life with God, that no one is going to tell us something different or move us to do something different or influence us to do

something different. Instead, we're going to stand firm and stand up for God's way of life no matter what we do. Whether we lose our job, whatever, it doesn't matter! But that's up to each of us whether we have that in us. It can't be really strong unless God's in us because you can't keep that unless God's in you. But if you want that, then you have to cry out for it every day.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe, so that we're able to believe in the name of the **Son of God.** Just because we say that we do, which the entire Protestant world says that as a whole, but it's not true, and it's not true in the Church of God, in the environment of the Church of God. In the Church, it's true. I hope we understand the difference. We're in the Church if God's spirit is dwelling in us, if we haven't pulled away too far to where we separated ourselves from God and the flow of His holy spirit in us.

This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will... So, that's what it's about. "According to His will." You want help in conquering something in yourself, in your nature, cry out to God.

I think of those numbers one, two, and three. I think of going through that and realizing, wow, the victories that God gives to you when you keep so focused on those things and pray about those things. Then after a while, they're things that are basically gone by the wayside. And so, you refine and start focusing on some other or whatever it might be that's in you in order to draw closer to God, keeping on guard. Because this is God's will, that we conquer and overcome, that we be strong in His spirit. ...**He hears us.**

Romans 12. So again, are we grasping even more deeply what God's will is when it comes to our prayers? He wants us to succeed but we can't without Him and His Son. Very common scriptures here, but to see them, to know them, to live them.

Romans 12:1—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice. Learning what that means is a long process in our growth because that becomes more and more refined through time. But it's very much about denying self, selfishness. It's about this battle that goes on in the human mind for the sake, especially when it comes for the sake of others. Denying oneself, "the way I think it should be," "what I think should be said," "what I think should be done," and on and on it goes, whatever that might be, whatever that entails.

What it means then to serve God, to be with God's people, to be with God's people at the Feast of Tabernacles, to be with God's people Sabbath by Sabbath. Is that a driving force in our minds? Do we relish being with God's people? Do we cherish that opportunity and realize this is our training ground, this is where so much is learned. It's within the fellowship of the Church that we're able to learn much. It's the experience of it that you can't learn just by being at home by yourself.

Now, if that's where you have to be because of health and age and so forth, so be it, and you've likely already gone through that process where you understand what it's like to be with others when you were healthy enough to do so, and those things are understandable.

...holy, acceptable unto God. These should be the things that we pray about, that we think about when we're looking at ourselves. **...which is your reasonable or rational,** as the word is, **service.** If you're thinking right, this is your rational service, reasonable service. To deny yourself. To say no. It's not about getting our way. It's not about having our way. It's about sacrifice. It's about others. It's about doing without certain things sometimes in order to do other things within the Church, like the Feast of Tabernacles.

So, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. It should be our deepest desire. Pray about that regularly, that you want self to change, you want it to be transformed, you want God's help in changing the thinking in here so that you're in agreement with God. That comes through experience and this relationship with God.

...by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. So, it's only by God's spirit living within us and by helping in living this way as a living sacrifice, if you will, through gaining the experience of what it's like to say no to self, and then to see what it's like saying yes to the way God says something is to be done, to experience that, to enjoy that, to realize how good it tastes spiritually to have peace and unity and oneness within the Body instead of this drama, drama, drama or whatever else it might be. It's a beautiful thing to experience God's peace because of doing things right. That's what this is talking about.

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Because that happens to every person who becomes antichrist. It happens to every person who begins to let down in their life spiritually. It happens to every person who doesn't pray every day. You begin to think more highly of yourself because you're not even thinking about it sometimes. It just happens because our carnal nature by design resists the things that are of the spirit, that are of God, like prayer. And if we don't grasp the need for that and fight for it, in fasting and so forth, if we're not fighting to do those things we're not going to be able to think rationally in the way God has given us ability to do so with His holy spirit. That's what this is talking about.

"Not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think." Now, we all have to go through a process of this because that's our carnal human nature. It's just the natural way of thinking, "more highly of ourselves." That's why we judge people the way we do because we pretty much got a hold of ourselves. We see others and we see how they are, and we think of different things about them, and we judge people and it's just natural, easy because we tend to feel that we can do that. The only way we can think that way is because of how we think about ourselves. To me, it's ugly.

“Not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.” If we don’t pray, we don’t really need God. We’re not really listening. We don’t really believe what Christ had to say. That’s the bottom line. We don’t really believe he is the Christ, the Messiah, our High Priest, our Passover. We really don’t believe it.

We have the knowledge of it. Isn’t that amazing? We have knowledge he’s our Passover, but do we believe it? Because if we believe it and we understand what it means that he’s our High Priest we’re going to repent constantly day by day of things that are wrong in us or that come into our mind and we want to fight against.

You know, it’s not sin until you’ve acted upon it, or you think about things for a long enough time it can be sin in the mind. But just because the wrong comes into the mind, you don’t accept it and you say, “No!” and you ask God for help to say no and to stand firm, whatever it is that it might be.

...but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to everyone the measure of faith. Where does that come from? It comes from a relationship with God. “The measure of faith.” The ability to hold on to what God has given you to believe and then to live it. You can’t do that yourself. The measure depends on the holy spirit and the amount and the ability of the flow of it into your being.

That’s why we’re told not to quench the spirit. Just like an artery, it starts getting clogged up, the heart may be strong, but when that blood begins to be just barely getting through it, it starts weakening the heart.

That’s the way for us spiritually. If we start quenching the spirit and the umbilical cord of God’s holy spirit coming into our lives and it gets smaller and smaller, and something is clogging up the way of God’s spirit coming into us, we don’t have as much to fight and do various things we need because we’re not crying out for it.

That’s why God tells us don’t quench the holy spirit. Because if we start doing that it becomes less and less and less and after a while it just can be totally cut off. And you know what that means? It means by our actions we have proven we’re not able to hold on. It’s not in our minds anymore. Powerful things. “The measure of faith.”

See, it makes it sound like, if we’re not careful here, “According as God has dealt to everyone a measure of faith.” It’s like, well, then that’s God’s responsibility and I don’t know how much He’s given to me, the measure of faith. That’s not what it’s talking about. That’s not what it’s saying. It’s up to you and your relationship with God whether or not He’s pouring out His spirit and it’s coming through fully opened up to you in the sense of Christ and God dwelling in you because you’re crying out for that strength and that power and that ability to fight your own carnal human nature. Awesome! Then He’ll give more. That’s what it’s about.

1 John 2:15, going back to 1 John. **Do not love the world, the way of the world.** Oh boy! We can say we don’t, but boy oh boy, a human mind does. It does! Too much so! It’s a battle we have. It’s a battle of the

mind. “Do not love the way of the world.” Pressure from the world to live a certain way, to do certain things and do them in a certain way.

I feel sorry for people who watch certain things on TV, and they begin to think that’s what life is really like, especially when it comes to a lot of – I’ll be candid with you – a lot of things having to do with romance and marriage. Some of that stuff is so full of bull as to what real life. Then a young person, they think that everything has to be a certain way. People think that a wedding has to be a certain way, and you have these pressures in this thinking, and then it goes on and on, and so, marriage is supposed to be this certain way.

The fact is that you have to work on it and a lot of it is saying no to self and yes to someone else and looking at self and realizing, “This is what I need to change to have a better marriage. It’s about giving not getting.” Yet people go into marriage with this concept. And where do you get it? From the world. Maybe music. It says certain things. And if it’s not like that it’s like people can become so disillusioned. It comes from living God’s way of life, and the world can’t experience that yet. But for the Church, that’s the way it should be. But even within the Church, there are battles.

Do not love the world, neither the things of the world. In other words, that are esteemed by the world. Things that can lead you off in a wrong direction, things that are to an extreme and not moderation, whatever that might be.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. Because there is a specific, certain way of life that we’re going to live as God’s people. We’re going to fight self. We’re going to be of a certain way toward others in our relationship and our thinking to them. That’s a constant battle, of one of conquering and overcoming. It can only be accomplished to the degree God’s spirit is in us and being able to fight it.

Verse 16—For all that is in the world... This is what we’re talking about then, **the lust of the flesh...** That’s what we have to be able to recognize, if something is a matter of the lust of the flesh. **...the lust of the eyes...** What we want, what we desire.

You know, sadly, today what’s happening in the Western world especially is people expect things. It’s been that way from generation to generation, but it gets worse. Because of credit cards and other things people want certain things now and get into horrible traps sometimes.

I was listening to some of that this morning on TV, how that credit card companies are really taking advantage of people under very high ways, and how they boosted into the billions because of the high-interest rates that they’re changing because people get caught in these traps because it’s a desire to have everything now. Sometimes it doesn’t work that way in real life if you’re budgeting your income and so forth, the things you have to wait on, the things you have to work for to accomplish and do.

But we don't live in that kind of society, that kind of a world today. We expect to have everything upfront. That's not real life. Where is the work? Well, that's going to happen over the next twenty, thirty, forty years trying to pay off those bills. Anyway, I'm sorry. Simplifying some of that.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Pride is one of the greatest enemies of all, it really is. Because it's about self and lifting self up and not even knowing we're doing it.

—**is not of the Father but is of the world.** That's why the matter of fasting, it always focuses on things about humility. Humility, a striving to see ourselves in the light of what we really are. Because of that, even being more thankful to God, His patience, His mercy, His help, His favor, His plan and purpose for us if we just yield ourselves to the process.

Even the world passes away, and the lust of it. There is going to be a time where there is no longer going to be lust. What an awesome thing! Where there will no longer be pride!

But whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 Thessalonians 5:14—Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, out of place, out of order. Sometimes those things have to take place to learn various lessons and hopefully to respond to God properly and keep moving forward. That's the desire. That's God's desire for us. He wants us to succeed.

...comfort the fainthearted, support the weak. You know, it's easy to read through verses like this and not grasp sometimes what that means in our lives in the relationship within the Body of Christ, within the Church of God. "Support the weak." We're not all at the same point at the same time, and sometimes we go through various things. We should be there for one another and praying for each other and things that people are going through if we're aware of them.

...be patient toward all. Be patient toward one another. God's being patient with you. He's being patient with me. There are things that He sees in me that I don't even begin to see. And sometimes because of maybe how long you've been in the Church or growth or whatever it might be, it's easy to see things in others then.

It's one of the warnings I've given oftentimes in the ministry. Be careful because God is going to give you an ability to help and to see certain things in a greater way than what you normally would be able to do. Because it's not about how good you are or what you're doing, it's about the fact that you're in a position, a job right now that requires that help. And if you're looking for that help God will give it to you, but you've got to be careful because it's going to be easy to see other things.

And oftentimes you have to move back and away from it, not inserting yourself, and understanding it's not one's place to insert oneself unless there is something that needs to be addressed as far as absolute

sin. Then to help so that hopefully someone will turn away from it, whatever. So, kind of summarizing some of that obviously.

So, we have to be careful with where we are and what we see in others and always understand, you know what? God sees a whole lot more in us, in “me” than we’d be able to see ever in anybody else that maybe needs to be worked upon or changed or grow in. We all need to grow! We all need to grow! That’s the bottom line. We all need to overcome certain things. Not a one of us is perfect! And if we have that kind of a mindset, it helps us. “I know what I am. I see how merciful, patient, longsuffering...” You have to think of the way God has treated us, “me,” each one of us, and to realize this is what we’re to live toward others because of love, of wanting to see them succeed and conquer and overcome.

... comfort the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient toward all. See that none render evil for evil to anyone, but ever follow that which is good. In other words, you seek to do it God’s way. **...both among yourselves and to all.** So, “among yourselves,” the Church of God, the Body of Christ, “and to all,” in the world around us. There’s a certain way we’re to respond to things and a certain way we should fight against.

Rejoice evermore. That’s how you rejoice. That’s how you’re able to be happy and fulfilled in living God’s way of life. The more we experience it the more fulfilling it is. But we have to experience it by doing the right things.

Pray without ceasing. Every day. That’s what this is about. “Pray without ceasing.” Never quit. Never let down. It may vary from time to time in length. It’s about what you pray about and the length of time you’re there and you do that. But it should be constantly. It should be one of the most important things of your day, to understand that.

Verse 18—In everything give thanks. In everything! Not just what human beings so often do when they consider themselves to be religious and they’re in a restaurant and they bow their heads, and they hold their hands together and put on this show. That doesn’t mean diddly squat! They’re just putting on a show and as God said they have their reward, in essence. That’s what they want; that’s what they get. It’s not a relationship with God.

And just about food? Because so often that’s what people do, “Thank you for this food and what else...?” And just do that over and over again. After a while, what does it mean to anyone?

“In everything.” That’s a lot! You see certain things? One of the big things for me on a constant basis is things in creation. Just the changing of seasons, whatever it might be, the beauty that God has created that we can drink in, we can enjoy. It’s like the expression, “Stop and smell the roses.” Sometimes it’s an awesome thing when we have God in the picture and realize that God made everything for us to enjoy. Beautiful!

In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Joshua the Christ concerning you. Here we are: **Do not quench the spirit.** Hence, “Pray without ceasing.”

Do not treat prophecy with contempt. That which is inspired in the sense of God’s word and what God gives Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day.

Prove all things. In other words, the things of God. Well, you do that by putting them into practice. That’s how we’re able to prove them. It’s not a matter that we’ve been given some kind of responsibility to get into the scriptures in the Strong’s Concordance and “I’ve got to prove whether this is right or wrong, and I think I see something different...” because I’ve had my fill of that in the Church since I’ve been called. Because that’s just human carnal nature. “Proving” is a matter of putting something to work, exercising, putting to work—just what we’ve talked about—God’s spirit. That’s up to us.

Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. What you experience that’s right, and you see those things, you know those things, and you’re not going to let go of them. You know, there’s a right way of doing things and there’s a wrong way.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. Even down to the most nitty gritty in that respect, to abstain, to not even want the appearance of something, to give the appearance of something evil. We should strive for that.

So, without continuing prayer, we can’t conquer self. We come to a point in time, if we started the process, that we can’t go any further. It’s a matter of a battle. We’re in a war. We cannot grow spiritually as we need. We cannot be assured of the power and strength of God’s life and His Son to be continuously dwelling in us. In short, we can’t be transformed in spirit and mind. God has to be there. That’s why we have to cry out to God continually, day by day. You can’t let one day slip in those things.

So again, prayer is an incredibly powerful tool that God has given to us, yet fasting that is coupled with prayer becomes even more powerful. That’s awesome to understand. Fasting coupled with prayer becomes more powerful. Do we need that help from time to time in our lives? We better know that we do so that we can be strengthened in God all that much more. Do we not want that?

So, from time to time, we need to go through that exercise. Just as from time to time we have to go through a Holy Day, annual Holy Day, in order to be rejuvenated, in order to be refocused. All the things that are involved in why God has us do that.

And so it is with fasting. It needs to be something that is in our life regularly, not just on the Day of Atonement because God commands it on that day. There have been all kinds of people through time in God’s Church, that’s all they’ve done at certain times in their life, just on the Day of Atonement. And if any of us are, just doing it on the Day of Atonement, you’re missing the mark and you don’t believe Christ to the degree you should, the instruction that he gives. So, there are times to repent even more so.

Fasting empowers our prayers and the strength of God's spirit in us. Awesome!

So, it's been quite a while since I called for a Churchwide fast. Well, it's been a while. We've had them regularly throughout the Church. And knowing human nature, I know that there are some, and likely many, who have let down in this area in their life. That's just carnal nature.

So again, it's not something we do only on Atonement. And if that's all that's happened in our life since last Atonement, well, shame on you, and that's something to repent of then, to let God know, "I've been relying on myself too much and I haven't grasped what's being told to me in this series and I want to grasp it more, I want to prove it."

How do you prove it? Do it! It's a powerful thing that God has given to us, to have the ability to do that. So, it should be something we employ in our lives at different times throughout the year. That's just the bottom line.

Having said all this, I'm going to call for a Churchwide fast for the weekend of May the 25th. Now that means you can do it on Friday. You can start anytime on Friday and Sabbath and Sunday.

So, again, the period of time you pick, that's up to you. It doesn't have to be from sundown to sundown. This is not Atonement. You know, sometimes in the Church people have felt they have to do it like Atonement. There's been a time when because that's the way Atonement was it's like, "I can't do it until the sun goes down, and then I..." Yeah, you can.

Sometimes because of health, you have to be careful. So, be careful of that too. There are some situations where because of age or whatever, it can be a detriment to you. That's not God's purpose in that. If you're able to go through one meal and miss it and water at that period of time, that's fine. But if you can't even do that you have to measure that between you and God. And God knows.

Sometimes it's harder, like I mentioned on Passover, for people not to have their feet washed, as we've gone through this a lot in the last twelve years or so of helping people, as people have gotten older and more frail and can't get up and down and whatever it might be that's a matter of health. Sometimes it's harder to not participate in it because we've been instructed that we shouldn't. Requires greater humility than it does sitting down and having your feet washed, or in washing someone else's feet. Hope we understand that, especially for people who have been a part of Worldwide. Because this stuff is so grilled in our minds we tend to think in a certain way.

So again, the weekend of May 25th, this means that we can join together in the fast beginning on Friday, the 24th, choose our own period to do it, on up through the 26th. Whatever works for you. And if it goes over into Monday, fine. Don't panic. It's whatever period of time within that time frame. That's just the general time period.

What an awesome thing we're able to do that as a Church, all of us at the same time, other than just Atonement. A desire to draw closer to God, become more thoroughly cleansed within the Body.

I think of some fasts that have been rather shocking – 2012 and 2013 – where it's been a desire to draw closer to God, that the Body become stronger, healthier spiritually, and a desire to see us cleansed individually and collectively. That's my prayer quite often with God. It's a great desire because we're better when we fight things in ourselves, seek to conquer things in our self, to have things exposed within our self, and ask God for help to conquer and overcome them.

So, individually, yes, and then collectively to be cleansed. It's a beautiful thing though hard to go through. Hard to go through when you go through things in yourself that you see need to be changed and to realize certain things in our nature that have to be changed and we have to fight it.

Well, we're going to stop there today because I'm getting into another phase of this. But again, we're going to keep talking about fasting for the next couple of weeks or so as we go through all this. As we go through that period of fast it'll also be addressed.

But again, there is so much in it, there really is, things that God wants us to focus on, to me that are an absolute marvel, beautiful, awesome to understand. *Part 2* next Sabbath.