

Looking Ahead, Pt. 1

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Now that we have returned from the Feast overall, it's important that we begin looking ahead, which is what this sermon is entitled today, *Looking Ahead, Part 1*.

To begin looking ahead in the manner that we're going to be covering here and the focus that we're to have, we're going to start by taking a good look at this year's Feast. So, we're going to look back a little bit and review some of the things that we started out with at the Feast and then build upon that as we move forward.

From the very first day, we looked at what God tells us we are to be doing every Feast of Tabernacles, and that is to rejoice, and that's an awesome thing. This was indeed, for me, an awesome Feast, primarily because of the Church, the brethren. I'll just mention it up front; I'm going to get to it eventually anyway here. I wanted to bring it in, but I'll do it in the beginning here. In the beginning, we had a few little things (they're very little, very small), and I think of the establishment and learning to roll with the punches and what we'd said we were going to do. We were going to make it work!

Anyway, after we got past the meal – that was the thing I was the most concerned about, especially the special meals because they were coming out late and it's like argh! But, you know, we just roll with the punches and if we don't all get food then that's life. There are places to go get it afterwards. But anyway, it went very well and the few incidents that were there I thought I'd just mention that it was really refreshing seeing how quickly individuals responded. Human nature is human nature, we all have it, and as a whole there was that attitude and spirit of wanting to make things right or to, in essence, say, "I'm sorry," whatever it might be, and that's always a good thing when it happens that way, when an individual has a desire to make things right, to do things right. In times past that hasn't always been the case where people are willing to change when they receive correction or whatever it might be.

So again, that to me was a very rewarding thing...a very rewarding thing. It was encouraging to see that in people. The main thing was everybody got along so exceptionally well, and things went so smoothly and the farther we got into the Feast people were just awesome. It was a very rewarding time to be with people and see the different kinds of activities and what we were able to do together and constantly bumping into one another. Anyway, I'll probably come back to some of those as we go along.

But very inspiring, very exciting to see those things done, and it shows growth. It shows growth in the Body. And what can I say? That's a rewarding thing, and it's something you rejoice in then. It's something that causes you to be thankful. If you're thankful when you see the fruit of the different things that are taking place then that's a part of this process of rejoicing just as was brought out.

Leviticus 23; let's go back and take a look at it. **Leviticus 23:39—Also, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land...** And again, what an incredible thing here when you go back and you see little things here and there. But physical for them. For us, we see physical things and spiritual things that we're to grasp and comprehend. They only saw that which in essence was physical.

...you shall keep a Feast unto the Eternal seven days; on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. Even you shall take to yourselves on the first day boughs of good trees. So, I think of this word here right away, "fruit." It's the word for "fruit." What a crazy thing that so many things have been so twisted in scripture, and just the fact that this can be found 118 times translated properly, and then here they do this. You think, what are they drinking? I don't know.

...branches or hands of palms, of palm trees, and branches of thick trees and willows; and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God. So, we're commanded to do that, but again, what we focused upon at the Feast this year was to understand how you're able to rejoice in spirit and in truth. It always comes down to how thankful we are, and if we're really thanking God for the things that He gives to us, if we "see" them, if we think about them.

So, a part of the reason for going into this and looking ahead is that this is something we should be striving to grow in, to draw closer to God in, and in order to accomplish that we have to practice this more in our own lives, of looking at the various things. Not just having attended the Feast now but thinking about what we experienced and why we experienced and what some of the highlights were that inspired us and encouraged us more.

Because it's one thing to go out and do physical things. I think of the bull riding, the mechanical bull. Had to try that. I couldn't even hardly get on top of the thing. I have short legs, and this thing is up here somewhere, and you've got to jump up there and get on it. They don't have stirrups on a bull. I mean, what would that be? It'd mean it'd be docile if it had stirrups and a thing around them. Of course, this is a mechanical bull, it's not real. So, I couldn't get up there the first time.

Then the second time it came to me, this rubber thing you fall down into, it has air inside of it and they have a machine in there that keeps this thing inflated on the sides and at the bottom. So, I started jumping up and down on it. It has air inside of it, so I started jumping up and down and then I knew that when I got to the top that I could feel it, that's when you want to jump. It worked! I still struggled but I got up there.

But everybody had a ball, young and old alike. Incredible, different ones that tried it and just the ability to be out there. And again, the rewarding part for me was seeing the joy in people, the excitement in people, the hollering that was going on, and the cheering and sometimes cheering when they went off. "Yes!" So, all those things were enjoyable.

There are things like that you share together that draw us closer together as a Family. We experience things together; we're able to share things together, and those are rewarding. And so, to see all this take place and be a part of that, and constantly bumping into some. Maybe not spending very much time with each other as you bump into each other because everyone is doing different things, and you can't all be together. Although there were some places to eat there that did have some long tables that people could take their food out to it or whatever. But again, very rewarding, some of these things.

I think of the go-cart track area or whatever that thing is called, the carts, and the laser tag. I've never done those things before like that, especially the carts of that type, and I had a ball! Had a ball with the individuals there, even some of the smack talk that takes place when you do those things. I don't know if you have that expression. They may not have that in Australia, New Zealand, Europe. But "smack talk" is you're giving people a hard time and you're going to beat them or whatever it might be. And when you do poorly, we make fun of that. It's just about a good time and having fun back and forth.

And so, we challenge one another. Just like in the laser tag, I think we had twenty-some, twenty-four people in there at one time, something like that, in the Church, and you have these vests you wear, different colors, two different teams. And Gabe, he got first in that group as far as the highest points and I thought, how? Where? You been practicing this week after week or what? But again, a lot of fun. Things you remember, things you hold on to, and a closeness there that you're able to share. What an awesome thing to be thankful for that.

Then when you see God in the picture, He's made it all possible. Isn't that an awesome thing? God Almighty has given us an opportunity to be together on Holy Days or different places that we are at a Feast of Tabernacles, if you will, ever who came together there. It's awesome, it really is. God made it possible.

And so, the more thankful we are for the opportunities that God gives to us, that's something that can live within you on a spiritual plane. There's a thankfulness and a gratitude. But we have to thank God too.

So, think about some of those things. What do you have to be thankful for? One night I wasn't sleeping quite as well, I'm not sure why, maybe it was the bull, I don't know. But anyway, started thinking about all the things that we were doing together at the Feast, all the activities that were taking place, all the opportunities for fellowship that we had. And even though we might not be able to have as much in some cases because of people who have allergies (like myself), or the fact that big deal if I had to go someplace else in order to film everything or to have it live on YouTube. Everybody had the chance and the opportunity, obviously, to see it, and being able to fellowship before or after. Maybe not quite as much but we were still able to fellowship a lot.

And so, you make the most of some bad situations sometimes and there are lessons in all that. You just keep plugging forward and things work out and we're blessed. Not everything is smooth in life. Not

everything is obviously smooth at the Feast. But where they're rough in places and you just push forward – especially with one another and an attitude of mind we are more willing or more observant at a time like that to watch our own attitudes because we want others to have a good Feast as well. So anyway, it just goes on and on and on.

I started thinking about all the situations there that God made possible. And the more you think about those (because you have to think about them, the opportunities that God gave us) and the more thankful you are inside. How can you give that to someone, a rejoicing? Because it's about rejoicing in God and what God gives us and it's on a spiritual plane in that regard? It's one thing to have it physically, but it's another thing to have it in the relationships we have with one another that draw us closer together.

So again, it was stated at the Feast that indeed we're to be filled with excitement. That's a great time to be able to be filled with excitement. I mean, God gives us this opportunity to come together, we save for it, you save for it throughout the year, and you save aside that amount and then God says come here and enjoy yourself. What an incredible plan! To do various things that maybe you can't do during the rest of the year, or especially not with people in the Church on a large scale. Here we're able to do it on a larger scale as a whole for those who were able to attend. Things that we can do at the Feast that God has provided for us. A thankfulness. A gratefulness. So, if it's genuine and real inside there is a thinking toward God that does cause a rejoicing inside.

Let's turn over to Luke 17. So, as we begin this series it's good to reflect on what we had to be thankful for that in turn helped us to rejoice. When you think about those things and think about the times that you felt better at the Feast because of something you were able to do with others and you see God in the picture for what God provided and gave the opportunity for those things – because everyone is there because God has called them.

What an incredible thing! God has called us to be together as a Family, because people are striving to change. That's why I mentioned what I did at the very beginning. What an awesome thing that year by year we're growing if we're yielding ourselves to God. I feel that's what I saw the most of this year. The problems that were there, the things that were mentioned a couple times in sermons, they were so small compared to times and Feasts before going back in time. Very minor in that respect. And where there were things that needed to be corrected, the response was great! Because I haven't always seen that.

But here, what an awesome thing to see people yielding themselves to God. As people do that, as God's people do that, we're able to draw closer together, be more at one, and recognize we have a Family. We have a uniqueness of a spiritual Family that God has made possible. And because of the growth of individuals who are yielding themselves to God, receiving what they do, and making that spiritual growth, we become a stronger Body.

That's an incredible thing to experience when you think about it in those terms. We're closer, we're a stronger Body, we become a stronger Family. The ability to deal with problems and difficulties together what an awesome thing. And when you think about the Feast of Tabernacles then you think, make that thousands and thousands and thousands and tens of thousands times bigger as people change and grow through the Millennium what we're going to have as a world, as a society, and the rejoicing that people are going to be able to have in something that's real and something that's true.

The world, people do things together but it's not the same. People are able to have friends and so forth, but it's not the same. When you're bound by God's spirit because you're striving to grow in a unity and oneness, and we have all this in common, there is a greater strength and power in that that comes from God Almighty. He wants to rejoice in us and it's a spiritual thing. Because as He dwells in us, as He and Joshua dwell in us and that life is able to go out to others and then be received back and God receives it, how do you describe that except that you live it and experience it and realize this is what life is about? There's a richness and an excitement and a joy in life, a peace that the world doesn't have. And so, we yearn for that, we long for that for the world, for families, for people.

Luke 17:11—Now, it came to pass... And we've looked at this before when we talked about thankfulness a couple of years ago, or three years ago, whatever it was now. But going to add a little bit more to it this time.

Now, it came to pass that as he, speaking of Joshua, went to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as he entered a certain village, and there met him ten men who were lepers who were keeping their distance. And they raised up their voices and said, Joshua, Master (teacher), have mercy on us! So, when he saw them, he said to them, Go, show yourselves to the priests. So it was that as they went, they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God.

Now, reading this today with what we have talked about, about rejoicing at the Feast and keeping that command that God gave to us, it's far more inclusive when we understand what God is telling us. This is how we're supposed to be because of what's living inside of us on a spiritual plane. We should be able to rejoice if we have that mind, and this is the beginning of it, of seeing some of this, what it's about. It's thankfulness.

He was exceedingly thankful for what had happened to him and giving that thanks to the right source. So, it says, "he glorified God." Well, how did he do that? How did he glorify God? He was honoring God because he was acknowledging that God had done this, and because of that and what was inside of him because of what he was experiencing, he couldn't help himself in that respect. That gratitude was so deep inside of him that it came out in what he was saying, in what he was doing. He was reflecting the

fact that he was doing this in a way that should be done, period, when it comes down to having thankfulness to God.

And we respond to God; there's a glorifying God. That should be automatic. We glorify God by obeying God. We glorify God by that way of life, and we want it to be in us and to live within us and we cry out for it, for help to change so that the more we live this way of life that God gives to us, truly the more we glorify God in how we live, in what we do, in how we think toward one another. That's what glorifies God. It's not a matter just of words. It's not a matter of just being on our knees and crying out to God and thanking God. That's all a part of it but it has to be inside, what we're experiencing. That's what God desires to see.

So, what he was doing in this was he was rejoicing! Wouldn't you rejoice if you had been a leper? Sometimes it's hard to think about individuals and what they were living. You know, they used to have islands or places where people that were lepers were kept because no one wanted to catch it, no one else wanted it. And so, it had a unique term in that respect, "You're leprous," "You're a leper." That went synonymous with keeping away. You know, "Keep away from us! Don't be around us."

And so, they kept their distance, as it says in this example, they had their distance, but they were crying out because they understood how people felt, and they grasped that to a point. But it's something that they couldn't do. They couldn't go and be close to individuals in close contact with individuals. No hugging, you know, no shaking hands, nothing of that type whatsoever. They had to keep a distance, and they understood this. What a horrible thing to have to live your life like that, and if you knew what it looked like, it was ugly. I don't know if you've ever seen pictures of people who had leprosy, but it's ugly. The worse it is on the body the uglier it is.

So, when you don't have that anymore you would think that everyone would rejoice. But his rejoicing was based on what was inside of him, which was thankfulness. He was so thankful to God, so thankful that Joshua was there and said what he did to them. Incredible.

This is a very physical example of something we're to do in our lives regularly, thanking God. And the more we can thank God? Because if it's genuine and we truly believe it with all of our being it reflects something in the mind. It reflects truth. It reflects agreement. It reflects we acknowledge God Almighty, that we see that God Almighty gave this and there is that emotion and the feeling and that sense of thanking God from the deepest part of our being for what we have because we "see" it, we believe it, and we love it, and we want it more. We desire that unity and oneness with one another, without problems, without drama.

We don't want drama. The more you grow, the more you learn to hate drama. And you don't want to have drama with others, so you want to make peace, you want to be a peacemaker, you want to engage

in the things that we've been told to do, instructed to do, of how to live life together as a Family. Then the Family grows and grows greater and greater without drama. Peace. It's a beautiful thing to where you can do those things – going out together and doing things together and someone being on a bull and you're waiting for the time they fly off and you can say, "Yes!" and kind of have a little smack talk there back and forth, or whatever, you know, and goad them a little bit because you're close.

Those that I do that with I'm closer to because I know they'll do it back. Not disrespectfully, not in a wrong way, not with wrong feelings but because we're close, we're friends and we can do this back and forth and have fun with one another, enjoy one another without being offended. Sometimes people can't do things without getting offended at something that someone else says. The reality is, it comes to a point the closer we are and the more we grow in those things, we don't take offense at someone and what they might have said. We realize, well, maybe they had a bad day, maybe they're having had a tough day and said something a little more curt or to the point in a way.

I've had days like that. You've had days like that. So, hey, things happen sometimes and you're willing to be of a forgiving spirit and a forgiving attitude and it draws you closer together because you learn to love them more. To me, that's something awesome to pray about on a regular basis, "Help me to love Your people more." So, if we do that with one another and we're asking God for help in that then there are things we're going to catch more quickly when we start to say something that's wrong. And maybe it still comes out, but later on the more we're on guard to some of those things the better it gets, the more beautiful it is, the friendships, relationships, the closeness.

Verse 15—Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God. He couldn't hold it in. The contrast here is amazing. What about the rest of them? I mean, it really is mind-boggling what mankind is like. What a horrible thing to not be thankful but to be exceedingly selfish, not to thank God for the things we have. Just to be on the getting end of something, take something and do it selfishly so. Horrible. And so, that's the contrast.

But this individual said it with a loud voice. He didn't care, you know. **With a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at his feet**, speaking of what it's saying here, **giving him thanks. And even he was a Samaritan.** A foreigner. And yet this was something he recognized, and he knew who it came from in the sense of what had been going around and what had been talked around amongst people for so long there.

It was throughout the whole country things that he was doing. And then when he came by? That's why they went to him. Because they had already heard these stories of healings and so forth and it's like, "I want to be there when he comes by." Then when it happened and they were healed, just one, one really followed through and acknowledged God.

Now, in some ways, we're not a whole lot different sometimes as we grow. In keeping God in the picture in everything we have in the Body of Christ, everything we have in the environment of the Church of God, God has made possible. There should always be a thankfulness for various things that we're able to experience and have with one another. "Thank You, God." God gives the calling. And that kind of a mind, too, helps us to understand that we better be very careful in those relationships because every person belongs to God. God's servant. God's child. God's begotten child. And if we see those things and believe those things with all of our being and our mind, we're going to be more careful what comes out of us and what we say. Because it really is toward God. It's about God.

If we don't see God in the picture, then it's just a church in the world. That's all it is. And we've had those kinds of things happen within the Church where we haven't been as far in our growth. But the farther we go along, the more God is giving, the more refined we're becoming, the more He's cleansing the Body, individually as we cry out for it, and within the entire Body, the stronger the Body is becoming.

It's what I saw at the Feast. Beautiful. I can't help but get emotional. Because God made it possible, this closeness that we're able to have within the Body. To see people who were genuinely excited about being with one another, the sound. You know, generally, it's that way at all the Feasts. But you think, God's creating peace. We had a sermon about this before the Feast. God is creating peace, and He's doing it within everyone who's yielding themselves to Him, and it's within the entire Body. Not just within one or two, it's within the Body for all who want that, for all who are yielding themselves to that.

That's what I saw in a magnified way at this Feast above other Feasts. Which, to me, I don't want it to be a saying that we just say it or feel like we have to say it, but it really was for me the best Feast that I've ever experienced in God's Church because of that on a spiritual plane. Little ripples, small, and in the scheme of things really, really small things that took place, that were so minute and so minor. That in itself was refreshing because it's accomplished by individuals striving to be on guard themselves, striving to do what is right, having grown in the past year, able to produce more fruit in their lives.

And the more that happens as a Body, the more awesome it becomes. It gives us a bit more taste, if you will, of Elohim, because that's going to be multiplied so many times over once we're there that we really can't grasp it. But we get a taste of it every once in a while, and I had a great taste of it at the Feast this year, Elohim. It's far beyond that but we have a taste of it.

It's like agape, God's love. We don't have it all the time and we experience it, or we live it to varying degrees depending on where we are in that particular day and how much we've worked ourselves in drawing close to God and crying out for God, for His help and His spirit. But still, there is this carnality that's selfish and we have that battle that goes on. But what a beautiful thing as we're learning to conquer so much of that and becoming more at one with one another. It's a beautiful thing, truly is.

So, even that should help us to have a greater excitement about what's coming, about what God is doing, the Millennium. I think of Herbert Armstrong talking about it's going to take three or four generations to get things to where they're level to a point where they should be in that new age because we take a lot of baggage. People are going to bring a lot of baggage out of the world, the past and various things they've gone through, and it's easy to pass those things down then from generation to generation, that children pick them up.

To understand that all you have to do is look at the religions of the world or the places of skirmishes and problems in the world where people have wrong judgments towards others, sometimes because of race or because of a different nationality or because of occupation or whatever it is and this haughtiness that sometimes is there, and these things get passed (or the way people have been treated), and then it's passed on to the children and children's children. That's the hard part.

That's why Herbert Armstrong made the comment it's going to take three or four generations to really work through some of those things, to begin really getting rid of a lot of that, of the things that are wrong. Then to recognize what we can have.

So, I look back as you think about sitting on a booth, I think of looking back to Philadelphia and the growth pattern that was there, what we had and what we didn't have because we didn't know what we didn't have fully in that regard until we got to here and all the truths that God has given to us and the refinement that God is giving and the cleaning of the Body that God is doing. Because it's different and it's all about a process of cleansing the Body and preparing it for Christ's coming in a very unique way and preparing it for those who are going to live on into a physical life, continuing on in their lives and those who are going to be a part of 144,000. And that's awesome!

We're going through this process of how God is working with us in those things and it's exciting. The more we grow and the closer we get to that the more exciting it becomes. That's why I love how God has blessed us with a small Body and purposed it so. "Not by might, not by power," not by what we do. God's making that very clear when it's all said and done and all those who were a part of the scattered Body and all those who are able to come into and understand things in the Millennium and all those who are resurrected later on who were a part of the Church or whatever it might be and they're going to look back and realize this is what God did and He did it with such a small group, and He revealed powerfully so that He did it, that He is the one who accomplished it.

If we had a church the size of Worldwide, we'd be looking to ourselves, and "Look what we're able to accomplish." God doesn't want the slightest little bit of that in us, and so we don't have to worry about that. As hard as we try in some things it's like spinning your wheels because it's something that God is going to accomplish in His time and how He does it. And so, we do what we can while we can and so forth. I hope you understand what I'm saying.

It's just like understanding that we had all these ministers. I'm just going to look at the United States. Hundreds and hundreds of ministers throughout the United States and what happened? Well, in time, it's what happened in the angelic realm. God allowed it to happen in the Church. We're to learn from that, that if there is not a strong control on human beings, things are going to get out of hand. Why? "Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

As Herbert Armstrong got older those things came more and more to the surface. As he was getting closer to death, those things came more and more to the surface. Leaders in the Church began to get wrong thinking in their minds. "Who is going to be taking his place?" "Who should we back?" Or perhaps, "It's me." And you think, horrifying things that took place! As time went on there were different ones out here beginning to teach their own things. Why? Because there were no controls.

God knew what was going on. Headquarters didn't. There wasn't a means to do that. So, God allowed to happen within the Church what happened in the angelic realm, except what happened within the Church in that regard we have to be able to see the heinousness of it because we're talking about people begotten of God's holy spirit. Begotten of God's spirit in the mind! That stuff should have never, never happened. But somewhere along the line it began to happen, and God gave the time.

Lucifer had a lot of time, and then finally it happened, and the Church had a lot of time. Then Herbert Armstrong died. Look what happened. It didn't take long. When you look at the timing of it it really didn't take that long. It just shows being in this body, a body, and having the begetting of God's spirit doesn't guarantee anything except that God has told us that the road is there, it's easy if you do what is right. It's all there. But if you don't...? And that's the problem because of carnality, because of human nature, and so forth, that mankind cannot be entrusted with God's way for a long time. Not for long periods of time. That's just the way it is. Unless God give the ability or the things taking place within the Body.

He could have prevented the Apostasy. But it wasn't God's purpose. Do we grasp this? It's like what we talked about at the Feast. Do we see how God does the things He does and the way He does, and why? Do we grasp indeed deeply why the angelic realm was made as it was, being spirit but yet able to when it came to a point of accepting things that were different from God it was set immediately?

What an incredible miracle to understand that we're in a human body that can be impregnated with God's spirit, but that by choice this mind that has a spirit essence in it, it can be transformed, it can be reprogrammed by choice. "I want to be different. I don't want carnal, selfish human nature. I don't choose that way. I reject it. I want what God has!" And then to fight for it. What an amazing thing! God knows how to create Elohim, and He's giving us a chance to be part of it. But we have to go through this to get there.

And so, we had to experience what happened later in Worldwide, when Herbert Armstrong died and we had to come up to a time of an apostasy, to experience that, to see what human beings can do. Because one of the things that Herbert Armstrong stressed so powerfully so, that rings in my mind, “God can trust no one but God!” He made that point over and over again. No one can be fully trusted unless they’re a matter of being God.

We have to be able to become Elohim, to be out of this body and composed of that which is different, with God dwelling in us forever to ensure that which is perfect be forever. That there will never be anything that happens again where anyone will choose something different because they’re of one mind. They chose it. They wanted it. They embraced it and God gave it, and He gave the power to have it.

What an awesome thing to understand and to embrace! Why we’re this way. I don’t like “this.” That’s the choice. I don’t like selfishness. I hate it! I loathe it! I loathe and I’m learning to loathe it more and more – I loathe drama! I truly do! Because it’s the absolute opposite of peace, what God wants to give us. It’s the opposite of true Family. True Family. We can have physical families but it’s not true Family until we become part of the God Family, Elohim. Then It’s true and set forever. Beautiful.

Things to be thankful for, to take away from the Feast. To think about those kinds of things that were given to us, to realize that there is incredible wealth in what God is sharing with us, to understand why we’re this way, why we had to be created this way. These are the things that excite me, that make me excited. I’m thankful for them! And the more thankful I am in that regard the more I’m able to rejoice in it. It’s a spiritual thing. It’s just there! What an awesome thing to have in life.

Anyway, **verse 15—Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God.** He was rejoicing. He was so excited and thanking God for what he had. That’s why he had that kind of a response. The others? They were just selfish. What a horrible thing when people are just like a black hole and suck it all in and want to go out and have more and get more and have more in life and they are never fulfilled. This individual at this point, he was fulfilled in a very powerful way, truly was, though he was very physical and a Samaritan, as it says.

...and fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks. Even he was a Samaritan. So, Joshua answered and said, Were there not ten who were cleansed? So, where are the other nine? It’s kind of like the Church. Since the time of Christ, many have been called. Far more have been called than those who have been chosen out of all of that, then those who have gone through the process. Far more have left. Far more have turned against God and Christ. Far more.

So, should it be a shock to us on something like this, that nine went their way, weren’t thankful to God at all, didn’t show thanks to God at all? They were just on the getting end. They were just thankful now that

they were made normal and could go out and do whatever they wanted to do. I can guarantee you that wasn't good. It was all carnal and physical to them because now they're not repulsed by the public anymore. They're one of them. Isn't that great, to be like everybody else?

Verse 18—There are not any found who have returned to give glory to God except for this foreigner.

What an amazing thing. But one did and we can learn from this. It was because he was deeply thankful to God for what happened because he knew what happened to him wasn't normal. People who are lepers, people who have various ailments, physical things, healings that they heard about, people who were blind and could see, and they heard these stories. He was acknowledging what was true, only God can do such a thing. Only a God. Not that he knew much about it from him or what was taught, but he knew that this had to of come from God and so he rejoiced.

Colossians 3. So, there is a huge difference between being able to do things together, being able to have physical things together that we do as human beings in families and even a church, even through Worldwide and on, and it's another thing to be able to do those things because God's in the picture because you see God and what God is doing and we're thankful for that, we're thankful for the process of all that we're experiencing and we glorify God then.

Colossians 3:12—Therefore, as the elect of God... Those selected by God. Those who are called. It's such a crazy thing. You know, when I was younger I used to think, "Why not my brother, why not someone else, you know?" We see ourselves, what we were like (if we know what we were like), and we acknowledge those things and we think, why? And we don't have a reason. We don't know. We do learn very quickly if we're hearing and listening it's not because we are so good. I didn't have to kid myself. So, it endears us to God and to the truth that God is giving to us. Awesome!

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy... That's what God says, set apart for holy use and purpose. God draws us, He calls us, He begins opening up our mind to truth, and then we make choices whether we accept it, whether we embrace it, whether we want it. Those are big things because we're the only ones that can make the decision "This is what I want, yes." We're given the ability to "see" it first of all, to "see" something that the world can't see. That yes, there is a seventh-day Sabbath, yes, Easter and Halloween and Christmas and all these things, we can see how wrong they are, and it's in the mind. It's not because we figured it out. It's because God gives us the ability to see how bad, how wrong they are, how deceitful they are.

That's why it's blown my mind to know people have gone back to having a Christmas tree. You think, how could that happen? How could somebody do something like that, go back to putting lights up and knowing what they knew. But all that can be lost. But in the beginning, it's there. Yeah, it's obvious, the tree is wrong, the giving of gifts and the reasons behind it and what they're doing it for, and he wasn't even born that time of year. We can learn those things. It's not rocket science.

But to really “see” it? It’s something that God has to give. And so, we begin seeing those things and we begin seeing Holy Days, Passover. What an awesome thing to have Passover! What an incredible thing that something physical happened that led to something spiritual, and then getting rid of leaven, coming out of Egypt. We begin to see those things and they make so much sense. We see a plan then that we could never see before, and we know the world can’t see it. But then later on to reject it? It’s because of choices we make. It’s a horrible thing.

So, set apart for holy use and purpose to change, to be transformed in the mind. You’ve got to fight for it.

...and loved. By God! And then as we begin to grow in that then we begin to love one another more, we begin to see God in others and what God is doing in them. We should have been able to see that at the Feast. Everyone should have the ability to have seen that in others. You’re there because of what you believe. You’re embracing it because of what you believe. You’re going through what you’re going through together because of what you believe and your conviction to change and do things better. That makes us a family of God.

...and loved, put on... This has to do with, it says “**tender mercies**” here but that’s not the right word. It’s about the inward parts, the heart of; in other words, what’s deep inside of us. So, it’s something we have to think about. It’s something we have to pray about. It’s like hearing the sermons or the things included in sermons that have to do with David and realizing he was a man after God’s own heart. And then we realize, “That’s what I want! I want to be like that. I want to be a person who reflects a desire to draw closer to God, to please God, to honor God, to have a relationship there where He is my Father.”

I think every human being growing up, whether they’ve ever known their father or not, there is something inside where you want something. People who are adopted, they want something that they don’t have. But never had it. There’s something there. And on and on it goes. Someone loses at a very young age or whatever and doesn’t grow up then with a father or a mother, but in this case here talking about a father, there is that which is inside of us that’s just natural in the human mind that God has given in the spirit essence that’s in us. But how much more than when we begin to see it on a spiritual plane, a relationship with someone who knows how to be a Father forever? To have that closeness and that unity and that oneness? Awesome!

...and loved, put on, again here, **the inward heart of compassion.** Compassion. You have to have a mind of thankfulness to accomplish that, a mind toward others and how we live and how we think and the way God says to. And then we do that, and we realize we’re drawing closer to God in the process...and anyway.

...**kindness**. We understand what it's like for people to be kind. We're to learn from that. We recognize that God is kind to us in incredible ways and we want to be that way toward others. That's how to put on that right kind of a heart then and a desire toward others, and so forth.

Verse 13—fornbearing with one another. So, a lot of that boils down to are we thankful for one another? Are we thankful? Because the more we're thankful for one another, that God has called each person within the Body, that we're able to have this Body. It's not a matter of whether it be in the thousands because you can't get to know that many well. I've been in large congregations, and you can't get to know everyone. It's difficult enough at the Feast.

We're not able to spend much time with different ones but there is this closeness that's a bonding that's a result of God's spirit and we understand things in one another then. Then we do have the time to be in different groups. It's like trying to go out to a restaurant. You can only get so many, and we're limited. There is only so much you can hear, and you have to be pretty close to do that, like, right next to you, especially if it's loud and whatever. So, you're able to have that bond or friendship and so forth, but again, we learn to do these things.

...**fornbearing with one another**. So, that has to do with being patient. We don't change overnight. It takes time. I'm working on many things. I was working on many things when I was called, bigger things. But as long as you're in God's Church you're going to be working on many things because selfishness permeates our life. It's out there and it's a battle. It really is.

"Fornbearing with one another." So, we have to realize we have to be careful how we think toward one another and give people time, give people that mind of even forgiveness, forbearing forgiveness, being forgiving toward others. No holding things against others; giving people the chance to change, giving people the chance to grow. It takes time.

They maybe have a bad day. Have you ever had a bad day? I have a lot of them, what I would call "a bad day," or bad parts of the day. Then you got to get a hold of those things and work on those things. Life... life is work. It's a battle in this world when you're striving to live God's way of life. A lot of obstacles, a lot of things come at us.

...**and forgiving**—it follows it up, doesn't it—**and forgiving one another**. Because to forbear with someone you have to be of that mind, a forgiving spirit, a forgiving attitude toward others because you see the bigger picture of what God is doing in your life and in everyone else's life.

I love that word "gracious." Since we went through that about "mercy," and we see the word "gracious." When you think about what it means to be gracious to others it includes these things – forbearing, patience, forgiving. It's a part of what it means to be gracious. But that stems from how you think in the sense of love and care, to be gracious to others. God is that way to us so many times over and we're to

learn to do the same toward others because we love it, we love graciousness, what it means to be gracious.

And if anyone has a... It says “quarrel” in some translations, but it basically means “holds a fault against another.” Why do that? Hopefully, if it’s long-lasting and it goes on year after year, hopefully, they come to a point where they’re able to acknowledge certain things or see certain things in themselves and make that leap in growth.

I saw some of that this year. I feel like I’ve heard about some of that this year where if you look at last year and then you look at this year that there are individuals who have made a leap in some of those things. Perfect? Absolutely not. None of us are but making progress and growth. And to me, there is nothing more rewarding in the Body of Christ than to see growth, the ability to produce fruit. We should want to see that in one another.

And if anyone holds a fault against another, even as Christ forgave you, you should do the same. And so much of this goes back to this matter of being thankful, if we’re thankful for one another, if we’re thankful for the calling that God has given to each individual.

But above all things put on agape, God’s love, which binds together in perfection. So, that’s the ultimate of it all and it all leads to that. All these traits, all these qualities of being able to do these things in relationships and friendships is a matter of growing in God’s spirit, which is a matter of growing in God’s love, of something that God is helping the mind to transform to, into, more of His love. But it has to be fueled by His holy spirit, so we have to cry out to God for the help to strengthen that and to strengthen those convictions that He’s blessing us with in the mind as the mind is changing. Because it takes the fuel, if you will, the power of God’s spirit to make those things alive in a more meaningful way.

So, we always have to cry out to God every day for help. “I need Your spirit. I know I cannot do this and be on guard about various things without Your help!” And it might be an hour later, and I’ve already flubbed up, you know. Just put me on the highway and you find that out. It’s in the mind.

It’s why I want to get a Tesla truck. Yurii had one at the Feast, and I’ll probably have more to say about that later on because I think what an incredible vehicle. I know it’s the safest vehicle on the highway, and it kind of irks me to know of mankind and the selfishness of mankind. Human beings can do these things, especially if they all share and share. That’s what the Millennium will be like. People will share technology. We’re not even scratching the surface yet of what’s going to be done over that thousand years when people cooperate, when companies, if they’re like that, however they’re organized, are able to do such things in a cooperative manner, sharing.

Because I think of 45-50,000 people that get killed every year in car wrecks alone in this country. Do you know most of that could be avoided if people had been practicing for the last twenty years what one

individual of an owner is doing with the one vehicle? Seriously! There would not be the death tolls that we have today. That thing is like being in a cocoon of protection. That's why I want one! I also have to say that when I was in it, I just have to share this with you, when it was driving down the road on its own, after he put the address in. I didn't think about it until I got back, that I was so at peace. It was a mode called "chill." There are different programs you can put on there. One is the chill factor. You push "chill." I was chilled. I was calm.

If I'm in a vehicle, I'm sorry, I cannot help myself. That's why my wife hates to drive when I am in the vehicle. I'm looking around all the time; I'm looking in the mirrors and this thing of how are things going around us and so forth. And so, if I'm with someone and I'm not driving, I'm not in control, which is probably a good thing, it's like I can't help myself, it's just in my nature. So, I have to fight this. But when I was riding in that vehicle I got back and I thought, "I have never been on a ride where I have been so at peace in all my life." It might sound crazy but that's the truth. When I got back I thought, "This is awesome! I gotta have it." No! Everybody should have it.

So, you think about the Millennium, and you think about when people do things for the right reasons – safety, protection – what are we really going to be able to accomplish? We're just at the beginning stages of some of this, truly, of things that are going to be able to be changed. A lot of it's through things that are in God's creation that we just haven't learned to harness or work with yet. One day when we have all that, oh, amazing.

That's why I think of the people who are resurrected in the 144,000 and they see these highways and they see these vehicles and they see these jets and they see all these things and they're going to be a little dumbfounded. Well, take another thousand years, it's going to make that six-thousand-year span look pretty puny, it really is. Sorry I got a little sidetracked there, but I couldn't help it.

Verse 15—Even let the peace of God rule in your hearts. That says a lot there. That's really a sermon. What do you mean "rule"? Well, that's what we need to think about, "rule in your heart." It's a choice. So, we want that to be what rules our thinking in our life. We want to yield our self to that, to what it means to have peace toward one another in the Body always. Always. To have that mind of God. It comes from God. Peace comes from God. That's what He's creating. That's in us being created. Beautiful!

Let it **rule in your hearts**, in the innermost part of your being, **to which you were called in one body**. So, I was called into the Body, one Body, and everyone else who is of this mind, who has the impregnation of God's spirit, the begetting of God's spirit, to the same thing. And to be thankful for them, every one of them.

...and be thankful. Because this is the overriding thing. Always, always, always in understanding what God is doing, always being thankful. Because that's what stirs up the ability to rejoice on a spiritual plane with a life we have, that makes it fulfilling.

You think about the world and things they try; they go to try to do various things to enjoy life and those things are still lacking when something is over that they've experienced. But I think at the Feast it's not over in the sense of what we experienced. We are able to take it with us. The things we did, the experiences we had together, the closeness of what we see in the Body and it's a realization this is the Body of Christ, this is the Church of God, and it's getting better and better and better. Beautiful!

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing—it's not **“one another.”** We've been through this in the past. This is not translated well. It's about ourselves. It's about what we're doing.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves. We have to receive the teaching and the admonitions that God gives to us by our own choices. It's not a matter of going out here and trying to get others to change and do certain things the way we think they should be doing them; it's working on this pile of flesh.

...in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. This is something that is so easily taken in a protestant manner, the world does, because they can't help it, protestant. And it's not real, and this isn't something physical, it's spiritual. I've mentioned this in times past. But we receive a little bit at a time in that regard in something like this.

“Teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing...” It's the rejoicing in ourselves in God. It's a spiritual thing. It's not the physical things, that you have to go sing a song. “I think I probably ought to go sing a psalm now.” There are times we can do that and whatever, and we think of one every once in a while, think of some song that comes into the mind of things we sing or hear in services, but this is something that you live. It's something that's inside of you. It's in your being, which is about this matter of rejoicing on a spiritual plane in God in what He gives. It's the fullness inside. That's why these expressions are here.

Because if we can understand them on a physical plane, we're singing to God, we're thankful to God; it's about God, it's about what God is doing, on and on it goes. And yet this is what lives inside of us that we're able to respond to, and the more thankful we are for those things the more fulfilling that can become inside of us. “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” It's about God. It's about how we are inside and it's a matter of God being in the picture all the time. He makes it possible.

Indeed, whatever you do in word or deed... In other words, in speaking or action in your life—**do all — it's through the name of our Lord Joshua.** In other words, it requires help. We have to have help. We

need God's spirit constantly. That should be at the forefront. These are things we can experience and have, but it's accomplished through the power of God's spirit.

...giving thanks. See, it's always about thanks to God. It's about this mindset of something we're able to experience and live because of thankfulness, gratitude that's inside of who makes it possible. Just like that leper. Think about what we were. Think about what you were when you were first called or you made that decision and you came to that point in your life and changes began to take place because of your decisions, because of your choices. We have to be able to remember what we were.

You know, that's why this concept or this truth about healing is so important. We can look at a physical leper and the fact that they're healed physically, but we're being healed. We have to be healed in the mind. Self has to be healed. That's a marvel above and beyond things that are physical of healing. This is spiritual. It's of the mind. It's of the thinking. It's about a relationship with God. Beautiful!

...through the name of our Lord Joshua, giving thanks to God the Father through him. So, yes, there is thanks, but there is this matter of relying and crying out to God for the power of His spirit to live in us.

Let's turn over to Acts 3. I want to look at another example similar to the one in Luke 17 that we looked at about the leper. So, here is another example of something on a physical plane that we can learn something more deeply on a spiritual plane.

So, here is a time now Christ had been with the disciples for forty days and then he told them to wait for the holy spirit, in essence, for the Day of Pentecost, and that's when all these things come together. And so, now it starts in **Acts 3:1—Now, Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, in the ninth hour.** So, three o'clock in the afternoon. **And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms**—in other words, to ask for an offering or a handout of money, whatever—**from those who entered the temple.**

Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked for alms. Then looking upon him with John, Peter said, Look at us. So, here he is asking but now he makes the contact and says, in essence, to look upon us, listen, or whatever it is that's said here that takes place in this expression because it's kind of an awkward expression in how it's used here. But basically, it's making this eye contact.

So, it says, **He gave them attention expecting to receive something from them.** So, because of how he responded it wasn't just somebody that was going to walk on by. Because we've seen people in different places at times where someone may be asking for something, and sometimes you don't know whether it's real or not. Most of the time, frankly, in this world it isn't of something that someone truly needs. Anyway, long story.

Verse 6—Then Peter said, I do not have silver and gold, but what I have I will give to you. What an awesome thing to know this is what God was giving him at that moment in time. Because God had to make it very clear in the mind that this is what he was to do. God Almighty through the power of His spirit in essence speaking to him, communicating to his mind, “This is what you do.” It was automatic, quickly.

In the name of Joshua the Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. Awesome! **Then he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.** So, as he’s working to lift him up to give him a hand right away that power of God’s healing in his body starting to take place.

So, jumping up he stood and walked and entered into the temple with them walking, jumping, and praising God. So, awesome! You think of something like that happening, someone who has been like this, and all of a sudden, it’s gone. He didn’t have an ability to go out and work and do various things but for ability to live and so forth depended on the ability to receive that help and there wasn’t a system set up to accomplish this so that’s why he was there. People recognized him because he was always there so some would help him at different times.

Verse 9 it says, **So, all the people saw him walking and praising God.** He was rejoicing! Inside he was thanking God, praising God for what had taken place. I mean, wouldn’t you think that should be a response that people should have? Just like with those lepers, you think that would be, should be the response, but it’s not always with human beings. But in this case here he did the right thing, obviously.

Then they knew that he was the one who sat begging for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. So, it gave Peter the opportunity then to begin teaching some other things.

But what an incredible experience. But again here, the response from something so dramatic in his life, it’s something that was easier to do in one respect if you realize that this is unique in how it’s coming to you. He goes into the temple, he’s thanking God. He can’t help it; it’s just he is so excited!

Now, we are learning this but on a spiritual plane. Feast by Feast, Sabbath by Sabbath, year by year as we’re growing. It’s about this Body. It’s about the Body of Christ. It’s about the Family, the Church of God. We are Family in a unique way from God Almighty, with God Almighty and His Son, Joshua. That in itself, to understand those things and comprehend those things should move us so deeply inside, of thankfulness, of gratefulness. And if we see that then it’s more toward one another, and it’s toward God more genuinely so. Incredible what God gives to us.

So, he was made whole. He was thankful, and that's what resulted in the actions that he took in praising God. So, I'm not going to go into some of those scriptures today, but remember this part here, he was praising God. And that comes out. It's a thankfulness. It's a rejoicing inside for what took place.

Sometimes when we see those expressions, especially in the Psalms about praising God, it's not necessarily a song, which the Psalms as a whole were written by, most of them, by David. But they were always a matter of it's a thankfulness to God, thanking God in whatever way we do that, whether it be by prayer or by our response to various things that take place. But it's something inside that has to do with thankfulness that creates a rejoicing and an excitement of life and enjoyment of life that's rich. So, just another form here of rejoicing before and in God Almighty.

I want to stop there before we go on to the next one. Let's take one Psalm, Psalm 28 just to drive the point home. Well, part of it. **Psalm 28:1—To You, I will cry, O Eternal, my Rock.** So, there are prayers we have in life, there are things we experience in life, and these and things like this are truly beautiful in what they produce and create inside as we yield to them. "To You, I will cry, O Eternal, my Rock." So, it's crying out to the Self-existing One of Eternity, the Eternal God, and He is our Rock first and foremost.

Do not be silent to me. In other words, it's a desire and a cry to "listen, to hear, and to respond to my petition." Something I find at times in life, you can pray about some of the smallest of things, physical things, and maybe the weather like for the Feast, and it dropped like twenty degrees at one time from what it had been. And then you know that God heard a petition. Then toward the end started coming back again. Those things are exciting.

I don't care what it is in your life you pray about, but if you see there is something that happens in life on a regular basis when we pray about them and you realize God, He wants us to have this relationship with Him and there are things He does want to do with us. They might be small in different things in life. You can pray about the little things or big things, it doesn't matter. Sometimes God doesn't respond in that regard because there is something we need to learn, but so often He does. Those are the things we need to truly respond back to God in and thank Him for because a lot of times we don't as human beings.

To You, I will cry, O Eternal, my God. Do not be silent to me. Otherwise, if You are silent to me, I'll become like those who go down to the pit. In other words, here is a genuine desire toward God saying, "I need You. I need help. And if I don't receive this help from You..." Just like when we cry out for God's spirit, "If I don't receive it I won't be able to accomplish what You've called me to do." In this case here, he's saying, "Without You, I'll be like every other human being out here. I want You. I want Your life."

Here the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward You or toward Your holy sanctuary. So again here, this attitude of mind of crying out to God, of praying to God, of recognizing we need God's help.

Then dropping down to **verse 6** as an example here, goes on to say, **Blessed be the Eternal because He has heard the voice of my supplications.** So, what does it mean, “Blessed be the Eternal?” It’s a form of recognizing this comes from God, this has come from God. It’s a matter of thankfulness. It’s not a matter that we pass some blessing along to God, it’s how we think toward God. It’s what we see that God is doing in our lives, what God’s plan and purpose is accomplishing, and how it’s able to lift our lives up and strengthen us.

So indeed, what a blessing to have God, what a thing of thankfulness to have God in our life and that He’s heard. “Because He has heard the voice of my supplication.”

The Eternal is my strength and my shield. I think of when we went through the Apostasy. You think of various things that happened and became so clear very early on: “We don’t have a chance, we have absolutely nothing in understanding how this has happened and what’s taken place and what we’re living through except You give it to us to see and to know and to understand.” How can we know? How can we know at all anything? God begins to help us in our lives to help us to understand something like an Apostasy, what took place, how it took place, and so forth. Beautiful, incredible to see God’s answer.

Because the reality is at that time or any time in our life, unless God gives us the guidance and the direction and the help to see things that we need to see on a spiritual plane, we have no power, we have no ability. What good is human knowledge without God at the forefront leading and guiding and directing us through it?

Blessed be the Eternal, because He has heard the voice of my supplication. The Eternal is my strength and my shield. Do we realize that when we go off in the mornings, when we go off to work? God is our shield. It’s by His strength. It’s by His protection. We need that help in our life.

I think of an example sometimes I use in prayer, like, for God’s people, “Help us with that orb of protection.” That means all around us. It’s like being in that great big round rubber ball that you can roll down a hill in except this one is a bigger one. They have some that you can be totally inside of. But in this case, here it’s a matter of we want protection from the outside, whatever it might be, “We need to have Your help to have such protection in this world,” and to thank God that He grants us those kinds of things.

You know, there are all kinds of things that God intervenes in our lives we have no idea how often, how much. So, when you see certain things, the blessings we have in our life, understand, as a whole, in life indeed it’s because of God and what God gives to us. The more you recognize that, well, the more you rejoice inside.

Because God does make a difference with us, brethren. It doesn’t mean we don’t have to go through some difficult things at times, but that’s what we learn from. That’s what we learn through. God will use

those to help mold and fashion us. But through all that we have incredible favor, intervention, and protection of an angelic realm sometimes that we have no comprehension how many times they've intervened, truly.

I think of how so often various accidents that happen on a freeway or whatever and if I hadn't of done this or if this hadn't of happened and it's just a minute, half a minute, whatever it might have been that things can happen in our lives, could have happened in our lives. And was God there protecting? So often exactly so. So often, exactly so.

Blessed be the Eternal because He has heard the voice of my supplication. The Eternal is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. So, this is something we learn. We trust in God, and God's there to help us. When we're going through something that's hard, you know what? God is there to help us through it, whatever it might be. Even in that because there is that which we're to learn through it.

Therefore, my heart greatly rejoices. Why? How? It's because of the gratitude, the thankfulness, the ability to see this is God and this is God's care for us.

My heart greatly rejoices, and with my song, I will praise Him. And so, even in that, it's a matter of thankfulness, gratitude to God Almighty always.